
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF CHARTERED UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aimed at establishing the relationship between leadership practices and performance of chartered universities in Kenya.

Statement of the problem:

Effective leadership practices are essential cornerstone to ensure university performance while sustaining the university's competitive advantage in the unpredictable aggressive marketplace. However, studies show that many universities in Kenya have failed to implement well-thought-out good leadership and performance practices.

Research methodology: The study adopted a positivist research philosophy and a cross-sectional design. The target population was 49 chartered universities operating in Kenya. Data was collected from academic registrars, persons in charge of human resources, finance, quality assurance and student chairpersons. Primary data was collected using a survey questionnaire combining closed-ended and open-ended questions distributed to 4 employees from the university management and 1 student chair as respondents. Data were analyzed using descriptive and regression analysis.

Results of the study: The correlation results indicated a positive and significant association between leadership practices and performance ($r=.855$; $sig=.000$). The null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Hence, a strong and statistically significant relationship between leadership practices and performance of chartered universities in Kenya exists.

Conclusion: The findings are useful to the leadership of Kenyan universities in the formulation of strategies for improving performance. The results of this study may serve as a basis for university leaders to assess their leadership strengths and weaknesses and would use the findings to become more effective university leaders.

Recommendations: The study recommends that chartered universities in Kenya should take into account all the various dimensions of leadership practices for a better performance.

Keywords: *Leadership practices, performance, Chartered Universities, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

Universities in the world exist to create and communicate knowledge, mainly through research and teaching. University education is the engine that drives the economy, creates opportunity, and gives people a place to learn more, dream more, and pursue their dreams to do more and become more (Bates, 2008). Further, higher education affects every area of national development and deserves requisite attention (Ghosh et al., 2015). In Africa, Akomolafe and Ibijola (2014) portray university education as a cornerstone for development that is useful in any country. Thus, universities are critical in preparing a country to gain a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. Therefore, universities are expected to produce graduates who have the necessary knowledge and skills required to compete at the continental labor market. With a well-educated society, university education is expected to make good contribution and useful for the development of the nation. Every society is expected to achieve the highest level of education. To build a good academic culture in a university, one of the conditions required to achieve this is good leadership practice and performance.

In Kenya, studies on university performance have generated varied results. Both public and private universities are viewed as an instrument for national development and social change (Mbithi et al., 2016). Mwiria and Ng'ethe (2006) highlight that university education plays an important role in facilitating technological progress and empowering countries with important source of new ideas, and necessary human capital for economic development. Mulili (2014) reported that the implementation of good leadership practices in universities is crucial to determine and influence good performance. Therefore, effective leadership practices are crucial to organizational survival in the present highly competitive and continuously evolving business environments to strengthen the habit of operating in a way of harmonizing supervision, external

quality assurance, setting standards for operation and monitoring high performance in universities.

Leadership is a complex word that has attracted many scholars. According to Kouzes and Posner (2017), leadership is the art of motivating others to fight for common goals. Northouse (2016) refers to leadership as the process by which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Gardner (2011) defines a leader as someone who, through word and/or personal example, significantly influences the behaviours, thoughts, and/or feelings of a significant number of his/her followers. Kouzes and Posner (2017) point out the five exemplary leadership practices that can help leaders achieve their goals or accomplish extraordinary things. Each leadership practice will be examined to find out if there is a substantial impact on organizational performance. Kouzes and Posner (2016) argued that modeling the way entails being willing to go first, living the behaviours that they choose others to emulate. Because people will believe what they see their leaders consistently do rather than what they hear them say. Inspiring a shared vision is predicated on the assumption that by communicating significant ideas and causes that capture people's attention, the people in the organization will be more motivated. According to Kouzes and Posner (2017), challenging the process implies that leaders should not be satisfied with doing business as usual. Leaders seek out novel ways to improve the organization. They experiment, take risks, and accept the inevitable setbacks as learning opportunities as a result. Finally, empowering others to act refers to leaders involving followers in planning and giving them a say in decision-making, and strengthening them to feel capable and powerful (Kouzes & Posner, 2016). Hence, the study sought to establish the relationship between leadership practices and performance of chartered universities in Kenya.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Universities in the world are established to produce the skilled manpower required for national development. In Africa, Akomolafe and Ibijola (2014) ascertain that universities play a fundamental role in preparing a nation to gain a global competitive advantage. As such, they are expected to produce graduates who possess the necessary knowledge and skills needed in the global labor market. In a well-educated society, a university education is expected to make a good contribution and be useful for the development of the nation. However, according to the

World Bank Report (2004), 23,000 qualified academic staff were emigrating from Africa each year in search of better working conditions. Lack of good working conditions and motivation mechanism has no doubt, translated into lecturer's low morale which in turn translated into student's poor academic performance.

Universities in Kenya have faced challenges in recent years, such as lowering the enrollment rate of college students, lack of effective and efficient quality service delivery to clients, inadequate quality manpower, inadequate research, staff turnover, followed by student anxiety and increased faculty strikes, and generally increased exposure to market forces due to competition (Mbithi et al, 2016; Okeyo, 2017). This affected the quality of education and created a false general image of quality of education and performance (Wanzala, 2013). In addition, the expansion of higher education has experienced crises leading to poor quality, relevance, unsustainable funding, limited research, low morale and inadequate facilities.

Most public universities are unable to cover the necessary operating costs such as salaries, pensions, medical care, and maintenance of facilities and equipment. As Abagi (2008) argued, the future of chartered universities in Kenya depends on how well university leadership can meet these challenges. And one of the major key factors in assessing how a university responds to these challenges is the appropriate leadership practices. According to Ogaja and Kimiti (2016), many Kenyan universities have failed to put in place well-planned good leadership and performance practices. As Maxwell (2018) stated, "Everything rises and falls on leadership" (p. 8). Therefore, as Literature indicates, numerous studies acknowledge that lack of proper implementation of good leadership styles has been an obstacle of better performance (Okeyo, 2017).

However, an important gap in the literature has not been adequately researched on the relationship between leadership practices and the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. Scholars have therefore called for further studies on leadership practices in universities. According to Mulinge et al. (2017), proper implementation of effective leadership practices in universities is critical for creating academic excellence and better performance. In response to these appeals for further research, this study examines the relationship among leadership practices and performance of chartered universities in Kenya. The researcher hopes that applying

effective leadership practices within existing university regulations, would have a positive impact on university performance not only in Kenya but also in other countries in the whole world.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To establish the relationship between leadership practices and performance of chartered universities in Kenya.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between leadership practices and performance of chartered universities in Kenya.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was anchored on the transformational leadership theory. James MacGregor Burns (1978) was the first to coin the term transformational leadership and further developed by Bernard Bass in 1985 who defined transformational leadership as the relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation. Simply put, transformational leadership seeks to transform, and the leader inspires and motivates followers. Bass (1998) indicated the main four components of transformational leadership namely, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence and individual consideration. According to Tyssen et al. (2014), transformational leaders inspire their followers to perform above expectations by cultivating a climate of trust, creating and representing compelling future vision.

Transformational leadership is a process by which leaders and followers assist one another in reaching higher levels of morale and motivation (Burns, 1978). According to Bhatti et al. (2013), transformational leadership is a process in which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation. In this way, anyone with ideals and moral values can have an impact on an organization. The emphasis on idealized influence on positive values, beliefs, and morals on followers like stakeholders, which is ethical leadership in this study, was the strength of this theory in my study. In this study, intellectual stimulation takes the form of various innovations within organizational activities that improve performance. Chartered universities in Kenya can be improved by providing leaders and their followers with the

necessary skills through relevant staff training, which, according to Bass, relates to individualized consideration. Furthermore, organizations should establish mutually agreed-upon performance goals, which, according to Bass, should include inspirational motivation. Therefore, the anchor theory of this study emerged as transformational leadership theory.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Various researchers in the literature have looked into leadership practices and the relationship between these practices and organizational performance (Sandbakken, 2006; Endrissat, 2013; Alhadid, 2016). Results confirmed that there is a direct relationship between leadership practices and performance. Sandbakken (2006) discussed the relationship between leadership practices and performance and indicated that leadership plays an important role in today's organization and is considered as a master key of administration, which can reinforce in the achievement of organizational effectiveness and efficiencies. According to the literature (Endrissat, 2013; Alhadid, 2016), there is a direct relationship between leadership practices and performance.

Alhadid (2016) examined the relationship between leadership practices and organizational performance in the Jordanian commercial banks where team-building, supporting, mentoring, rewarding, and consulting were the constructs for leadership practices, while organizational performance was measured by dimensions such as financial and non-financial performance. The study adopted descriptive survey design and correlational survey research design. Primary data was gathered by use of a questionnaire and document review. Through testing, the study findings revealed that the team building and supporting, rewarding and consulting is most affecting on organizational performance and there is no effect from mentoring. The study was limited to commercial banks in Jordan country and focused on different constructs of leadership practices other than the constructs the current study is looking at.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional survey research design was used in conjunction with a positivistic philosophy approach which posits that to empirically establish the relationships between variables of a study, hypotheses are formulated and through the observed effects they are verified or refuted. The design of this study was a descriptive survey as it helps to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects under study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2013). The target population

of the study comprised 49 chartered universities in Kenya both public and private that offer their own degree programmes as of 2018. The study used primary data that was collected through a semi-structured questionnaire. Respondents included academic registrars, officers in charge of human resources, finance, quality assurance and student council chair of all the 49 chartered universities in Kenya who took part in the study. Data were analyzed using descriptive and regression analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Statistics for Leadership Practices

The descriptive statistics for leadership practices are presented below. The description of each of the measures of leadership practices is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Leadership practices

Leadership practices	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
Modeling the way				
In this university leaders effectively model the behaviour they expect from others.	203	3.80	0.68	0.18
In this university, leaders demonstrate by words and actions their own values and those that are equally important to the organization.	203	3.98	0.83	0.21
Leaders in this university practice what they preach. Their words and deeds are consistently aligned.	203	3.72	0.74	0.20
Average		3.83	0.75	0.20
Inspiring a shared vision				
In this university leaders engage others in tying their personal dreams to the aspirations of the group to create a shared vision	203	4.04	0.57	0.14
In this university leaders boldly and creatively communicate their hopes and future dreams.	203	4.17	0.58	0.14
In this university leaders seek input, and engage everyone in shaping the vision of how to achieve a collective goal.	203	3.67	0.80	0.22
Average		3.96	0.65	0.17
Challenging the Process				
In this university leaders are pioneers at taking the initiative in searching for innovative ways to improve their own work and that of their teams.	203	4.14	0.58	0.14
Leaders in this university give people challenging tasks, to experiment and take risks, to continually learn from experience.	203	3.97	0.74	0.19
Leaders in this university create a climate in which employees feel safe and supported in challenging the status quo.	203	4.00	0.71	0.18
Average		4.04	0.68	0.17
Enabling others to act				
In this university leaders involve employees in decision making and goal setting.	203	3.63	0.71	0.20
In this university leaders treats others with respect.	203	4.33	0.60	0.14
In this university leaders create atmosphere of trust.	203	4.35	0.91	0.25
Average		4.10	0.75	0.19
Encouraging the heart				
In this university leaders celebrate others' accomplishments in personal and meaningful ways.	203	3.97	0.59	0.15
In this university, leaders recognize others' contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence.	203	4.00	0.49	0.12
In this university, leaders give praise for a job well done.	203	3.92	0.59	0.15
Average		3.96	0.56	0.14

Based on the study results presented in Table 1, the average mean score of the survey questions under modeling the way was 3.83, with a standard deviation of 0.75 and a coefficient of variation of 0.20. The coefficient of variation measures the dispersion of data points around the mean. This signified that the majority of the respondents agreed that university leaders effectively model the behaviour they expect from others, demonstrate by words and actions their values and those that are equally important to the organization, practice what they preach, and their words and deeds are consistently aligned. Moreover, it was established that the mean score of the survey question under inspiring a shared vision was 3.96 with a standard deviation of 0.65 and a coefficient of variation of 0.17. This indicated majority of the respondents agreed that university leaders engage others in tying their dreams to the aspirations of the group to create a shared vision, leaders boldly and creatively communicate their hopes and future dreams, seek input, and engage everyone in shaping the vision of how to achieve a collective goal.

In addition, it was found that the mean score of the survey question under challenging the process was 4.04 with a standard deviation of 0.68 and a coefficient of variation of 0.17. This signified that the majority of the respondents agreed the university leaders are pioneers at taking the initiative in searching for innovative ways to improve their work and that of their teams, give people challenging tasks, experiment and take risks, continually learn from experience and create a climate in which employees feel safe and supported in challenging the status quo. Further, it was noted that the mean score of the statements under enabling others to act was 4.10 with a standard deviation of 0.75 and a coefficient of variation of 0.19. This signified that most of the respondents agreed that university leaders involve employees in decision-making and goal setting, treat others with respect, and create an atmosphere of trust. In addition, it was noted that the mean score under the survey questions of encouraging the heart was 3.96 with a standard deviation of 0.56 and a coefficient of variation of 0.14. This meant that most of the respondents agreed that university leaders celebrate others' accomplishments in personal and meaningful ways, recognize others' contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence and praise a job well done.

Descriptive Statistics for Performance

The dependent variable in the study was performance. The descriptive statistics for performance based on the findings from the respondents are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Performance

Regulatory Framework	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Coefficient of Variation
Teaching quality				
In this university, lecturers are competent in the planning, preparation and delivery of lectures.	203	4.49	0.62	0.14
This university has adequate highly qualified teaching staff.	203	4.34	0.88	0.20
The teaching quality that this university is giving its students gives them a high level of competition in the labour and employment market.	203	4.03	0.72	0.18
Average		4.29	0.74	0.17
Research quality				
This university has invested in research and innovation and has a high number of successful research granted applications.	203	3.38	0.90	0.26
In this university, faculty members have published academic books, journal articles with well-respected international publishers.	203	3.89	0.74	0.19
This university engages the industry and other key stakeholders (owners, employers, employees, parents, customers, community) in developing curriculum for degree courses that meet the labour market demands.	203	3.41	0.71	0.21
Average		3.56	0.78	0.22
Financial viability				
This university has experienced adequate continuous increase of cash flow for the last five years.	203	3.58	0.73	0.20
This university pays its employees and suppliers regularly and fairly.	203	3.45	0.93	0.27
This university has experienced adequate continuous revenue growth for the last five years.	203	3.83	0.94	0.25
Average		3.62	0.87	0.24
Student success				
In this university, students graduate in a given time period and I feel satisfied with the percentage of students who graduate and the amount of time it takes them.	203	4.19	0.44	0.11
In this university, graduate students finish their research degrees in a given time period and I feel satisfied with degree completion rates of students.	203	4.16	0.42	0.10
This university keeps track of students after graduation to see where their education takes them.	203	2.93	1.16	0.40
Average		3.76	0.68	0.20
Employee satisfaction				
This university offers employees adequate and continuous personal opportunities for growth.	203	3.32	0.62	0.19
The leadership of this university regularly provides constructive feedback to each employee and recognizes them for achieving the proposed objectives.		3.51	0.83	0.24
In this university, overall employees are satisfied with their jobs.	203	3.79	0.79	0.21
Average		3.54	0.75	0.21

The results presented in Table 2 indicate that the mean score of survey questions under teaching quality was 4.29 with a standard deviation of 0.74 and a coefficient of variation of 0.17. This meant that most respondents agreed that lecturers are competent in planning, preparing, and delivering lectures. Universities have adequate, highly qualified teaching staff and teaching quality to students, giving them a high level of competition in the labour and employment market. The study found that the mean score of the survey questions under research quality was 3.56 with a standard deviation of 0.78 and a coefficient of variation of 0.22. This signified that most respondents agreed that universities have invested in research and innovation and have a high number of successful research granted applications. Faculty members have published academic books and journal articles with well-respected international publishers. The universities engage the industry and other key stakeholders (owners, employers, employees, parents, customers, and community) in developing curriculum for degree courses that meet the labour market demands.

The study revealed that the mean score of the survey questions under financial viability was 3.62, with a standard deviation of 0.87 and a coefficient of variation of 0.24. The study results signified that the majority of the respondents agreed that universities have experienced an adequate continuous increase in cash flow for the last five years, and the university pays its employees and suppliers regularly and fairly. The university has experienced adequate continuous revenue growth over the previous five years. In addition, the mean score of the survey questions under student success was found to be 3.76 with a standard deviation of 0.68 and a coefficient of variation of 0.20. This suggested that the majority of the respondents agreed that students graduate in a given time period and feel satisfied with the percentage of students who graduate and the amount of time it takes them, graduate students finish their research degrees in a given time period and I feel satisfied with degree completion rates of students and the university keeps track of students after graduation to see where their education takes them.

The study further noted that the mean score of the survey questions under employee satisfaction was 3.54 with a standard deviation of 0.75 and a coefficient of variation of 0.2. This indicated that the majority of the respondents agreed that the universities offer employees adequate and continuous personal opportunities for growth, the leadership of the universities regularly

provides constructive feedback to each employee and recognizes them for achieving the proposed objectives, and overall, employees are satisfied with their jobs.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis shows the movement/association of the variables. The positive correlation indicates variables move in the same direction, while the negative correlation implies the association among the variables moves in the opposite direction. There is no association when the correlation is zero. The study results of the correlation are summarized in Table 3

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

Variables		Performance	Leadership practices
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Leadership practices	Pearson Correlation	.855**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

The study results of the correlation analysis in Table 3 indicate that a positive and significant association exists between leadership practices and performance ($r=.855$, $p=.000$). This implied that an increase in leadership practices will lead to an improvement in performance in chartered universities.

Hypothesis Testing

The study tested the hypotheses based on the study objectives. The four objectives of the study were supported by the four hypotheses, which all were stated null. The discussions of the hypotheses testing are presented below in sections.

Leadership Practices and Performance of Chartered Universities in Kenya

The first hypothesis to be tested was:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between leadership practices and the performance of chartered universities in Kenya.

The regression results tested the hypothesis and were determined by the p-value. The summary of the model fitness results is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Model Fitness for Leadership Practices

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.815a	0.664	0.656	0.2272

a Predictors: (Constant), leadership practices (modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, encouraging the heart). The results presented in Table 4 establish that leadership practices (modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, encouraging the heart) are satisfactory in determining the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. The coefficient of determination, also known as the R square, was found to be 0.664 (66.4%). This implied that leadership practices (modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, encouraging the heart) could explain 66.4% of the variations in the performance of chartered universities in Kenya. Moreover, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was determined, and the study results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.107	5	4.021	77.888	.000b
	Residual	10.171	197	0.052		
	Total	30.278	202			

a Dependent Variable: Performance

b Predictors: (Constant), Leadership practices (modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, encouraging the heart)

Based on the study results presented in Table 5, the p-value was found to be 0 .000, which is less than 0.05; thus, leadership practices (modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, encouraging the heart) are significant in explaining the performance. Further, the results of regressions of the coefficient of leadership practices (modelling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, encouraging the heart) are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Regression coefficients of Sub-variables of Leadership Practices

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.314	0.188		1.672	0.096
	Modeling the way	0.122	0.036	0.192	3.374	0.001
	Inspiring a shared vision	0.375	0.049	0.405	7.708	0.000
	Challenging the Process	0.127	0.047	0.151	2.713	0.007
	Enabling others to act	0.149	0.048	0.169	3.097	0.002
	Encouraging the heart	0.102	0.050	0.113	2.041	0.043

a Dependent Variable: Performance

The results can be summarized by the following model;

$$P = 0.314 + 0.122MW + 0.375IV + 0.127CP + 0.149EA + 0.102EH$$

Where;

P=Performance

MW= Modeling the way

IV= Inspiring a shared vision

CP= Challenging the Process

EA= Enabling others to act

EH= Encouraging the heart

Table 6 shows that modelling the way is positively and significantly related to performance ($\beta=0.122$, $p=0.001$). The results imply that a unitary change in modelling the way leads to a change in performance of chartered universities in Kenya by 0.122 units when other factors are held constant. It was found that inspiring a shared vision is positively and significantly related to performance ($\beta=0.375$, $p=0.000$). This signified a unitary improvement in inspiring a shared vision that would lead to an increase in performance of chartered universities in Kenya by 0.375 units when other factors are held constant. In addition, the study found that challenging the process is positively and significantly related to performance ($\beta=0.127$, $p=0.007$). This meant a

unitary change in challenging the process would increase the performance of chartered universities in Kenya by 0.127 units when other factors are held constant.

Moreover, enabling others to act was found to be positively and significantly related to performance ($\beta=0.149$, $p=0.002$). This implied a unitary increase in enabling others to act would lead to an increase in performance of chartered universities in Kenya by 0.149 units when other factors are held constant. Lastly, the study found that encouraging the heart is positively and significantly related to performance ($\beta=0.102$, $p=0.043$). This signified a unitary change in encouraging the heart would lead to an increase in performance of chartered universities in Kenya by 0.102 units when other factors are held constant. The study found that the p values obtained from the sub-variables of leadership practices in Table 6 are less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between leadership practices and the performance of chartered universities in Kenya.

CONCLUSION

The study established there is a strong positive correlation between leadership practices and performance of chartered Universities in Kenya. The study put out that there is a significant relationship between leadership practices and performance of chartered Universities in Kenya. A positive and significant relationship exists between leadership practices and performance of chartered Universities in Kenya. The null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The study concluded that leadership practices have an impact on performance of chartered universities in Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study primarily targeted chartered university leaders in Kenya. Further research could be broadened to include all universities in Kenya as well as universities in other nations. This would provide for a complete grasp of the importance of leadership practices that university leaders should employ in their leadership roles. Additionally, other existing leadership instruments can be utilized to examine and better understand in-depth leadership practices of university leaders. Furthermore, another suggestion would be to arrange a leadership-training program to educate university leaders on their existing poor leadership practices and then evaluate their leadership practices after the training.

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