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## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE OF COMMERCIAL STATE CORPORATIONS IN KENYA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose of the study:** The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of transformational leadership on the performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya.

**Statement of the problem:** Commercial state corporations in Kenya face unique challenges such as political interference and resource constraints, which complicate the relationship between leadership and performance. While transformational leadership is widely recognized for its positive impact, its effectiveness in this specific context remained unclear.

**Methodology:** The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, targeting a population of 150 senior managers from 30 commercial state corporations. A sample of 100 managers was selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis.

**Findings:** The study found that transformational leadership had a significant positive impact on the performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya. The coefficient of determination (R Square) was 0.645, indicating that transformational leadership explained 64.5% of the variation in organizational performance. All four components of transformational leadership (inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence) showed positive relationships with performance.

**Conclusion:** The study concludes that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing the performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya. Despite the challenges faced by these organizations, transformational leadership practices can significantly improve organizational outcomes.

**Recommendations:** The study recommends that commercial state corporations in Kenya should invest in leadership development programs that emphasize transformational leadership skills. Policymakers should design initiatives to promote transformational leadership in public sector organizations, and recruitment processes should prioritize candidates with transformational leadership qualities. Further research should explore additional factors affecting performance in these organizations.

**Keywords:** *Transformational Leadership, Organizational Performance, Job Satisfaction, Employee Development, Public Sector, Kenya*

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## INTRODUCTION

The role of leadership in shaping organizational outcomes has been a focal point in organizational behavior research. Transformational leadership, characterized by inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence, has been shown to positively influence employee performance, satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Yukl, 1999). In the context of commercial state corporations in Kenya, which face unique challenges such as political interference and resource constraints, the role of transformational leadership is critical for driving performance (Koech & Namusonge, 2012; Mutuku, K'Obonyo, Awino, & Musyoka, 2012). The study was anchored on transformational leadership theory, which posits that leaders can transform their followers' attitudes and behaviors, leading to higher levels of performance and motivation (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). Additionally, the contingency theory suggests that the effectiveness of leadership styles depends on situational

factors, including organizational context and external environment (Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1982).

The rationale for this study stemmed from the unique challenges faced by commercial state corporations in Kenya, which operated at the intersection of public service and commercial enterprise. These organizations often struggle with issues of efficiency, political interference, and resource constraints, which could significantly impact their performance (Koech & Namusonge, 2012; Mutuku, K'Obonyo, Awino, & Musyoka, 2012). Thus, by focusing on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance in this specific context, this study contributed to both the theoretical understanding of leadership in public sector organizations and the practical application of leadership strategies in commercial state corporations. The research built upon previous studies such as Datche and Mukulu (2018), which found positive effects of transformational leadership on employee engagement in Kenyan public services and sought to extend these findings to the broader context of organizational performance in commercial state corporations.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Effective leadership is critical to organizational success, yet its impact on performance remains complex, particularly in contexts marked by political interference and resource constraints. This study focuses on the relationship between transformational leadership and the performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya. Transformational leadership is defined by key behaviors such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence—has been linked to improved employee performance and organizational effectiveness in various settings (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Yukl, 1999). However, research specifically addressing these dynamics in Kenyan state corporations is limited.

Commercial state corporations in Kenya face unique challenges, including political interference and resource constraints, which complicate the relationship between leadership and performance (Koech & Namusonge, 2012; Mutuku, K'Obonyo, Awino, & Musyoka, 2012). While transformational leadership is widely recognized for its positive impact on organizational performance (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Wang et al., 2011), studies in the Kenyan context suggest mixed results. For instance, Datche and Mukulu (2018) found positive effects on employee

engagement, while Koech and Namusonge (2012) noted that political factors could undermine leadership effectiveness.

The study sought to address these gaps by exploring whether transformational leadership practices can enhance performance in the face of the specific challenges encountered by Kenyan state corporations. It aimed to determine if transformational leadership components such as inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation can drive improvements in organizational performance despite political and resource-related obstacles. This research will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how transformational leadership can be leveraged to overcome contextual challenges and drive performance in Kenya's commercial state corporations.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between transformational leadership and the performance of commercial state institutions in Kenya.

### **RESEARCH HYPOTHEIS**

**Ho:** *There is no significant relationship between Transformational Leadership style and performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya.*

### **HEORITICAL REVIEW/ FRAMEWORK**

The study was anchored in two foundational leadership theories: Transformational Leadership Theory and Contingency Theory. Transformational Leadership Theory, as articulated by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985), asserted that leaders who could inspire and elevate their followers through vision, motivation, and support would achieve higher levels of performance and motivation within their teams. This theory emphasized the role of leaders in transforming followers' attitudes and behaviors, thereby fostering a more engaged and high-performing workforce. In addition to Transformational Leadership Theory, the study incorporated Contingency Theory, which highlighted the importance of situational factors in determining the effectiveness of leadership styles.

According to Fiedler (1967) and further developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1982), the success of different leadership approaches was contingent upon various situational elements, including organizational context and external environment. This theory suggested that there was no one-size-fits-all leadership style; instead, the effectiveness of a leadership approach depended on how well

it aligned with the specific circumstances faced by the organization. By integrating these two theories, the study aimed to explore how transformational leadership could be adapted to address the challenges posed by the specific situational factors within Kenyan commercial state corporations. This approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of how leadership styles interacted with contextual variables to influence organizational performance and effectiveness.

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Prior research highlights a positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance across various sectors, including public organizations (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Wang et al., 2011). This leadership style involves setting competitive strategies and addressing challenges to improve performance (Shields, 2019). Raluca-Elena (2020) emphasizes the role of transformational leadership in mobilizing resources for positive outcomes, making performance a key measure of its success. In Kenya, commercial state corporations often face losses due to mismanagement and poor strategies, compounded by political influences and corruption (Namusonge, 2018; Ngaithe et al., 2018). A case in point is the shutdown of Mumias Sugar, attributed to ineffective leadership. Conversely, Datche and Mukulu (2018) found that transformational leadership positively impacts employee engagement in Kenyan public services, despite occasional negative effects due to perceived lack of solidarity. Studies in different contexts, such as the UAE (Verman, 2020), Malaysia (Long et al., 2014), and the United States (Brown & Arendt, 2018), have shown mixed results. While Verman (2020) found a positive correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, Brown and Arendt (2018) did not find a significant link between inspirational motivation and performance. Similarly, Sadeghi and Pihie (2018) noted transformational leadership as a significant predictor of job satisfaction among university lecturers in Malaysia.

The intervening effect of job satisfaction on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance has been noted, with satisfied employees generally performing better (Sergeeva, 2018; Meyer, 2019). Lawler and Porter (2017) also emphasized the need for organizations to meet employees' expectations to maintain high performance. In specific cases like Safaricom, transformational leadership was linked to improved job satisfaction and staff retention (Ndisya & Juma, 2016). Overall, while transformational leadership is generally associated with positive outcomes, its effectiveness can vary based on context and implementation, as

demonstrated by studies in different regions and sectors (Nguni et al., 2016; Kissi et al., 2018; Schlechter, 2015).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

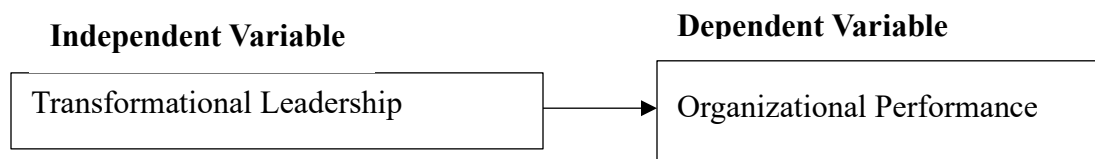


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, targeting a population of 150 senior managers from 30 commercial state corporations. A sample of 100 managers was selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring representation across different sectors. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which included items measuring transformational leadership behaviors and organizational performance. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis to test the study's hypothesis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between Transformational Leadership and the performance of commercial state institutions in Kenya. The descriptive statistics were analyzed using the mean statements on idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. The descriptive statistics were run using SPSS software. The results are as depicted in Table 1.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Transformational Leadership**

	<b>Inspirational Motivation</b>	<b>Intellectual Stimulation</b>	<b>Individualized Consideration</b>	<b>Idealized Influence</b>
N	113	113	113	113
Mean	4.151	3.782	3.691	3.931
Median	3.06	3.12	3.24	3.17
Std. Deviation	0.878	0.987	1.028	0.987
Skewness	-0.719	-0.66	-0.450	-0.760
Kurtosis	0.869	1.007	0.268	1.184

The results from Table 1 show the descriptive statistics that indicate central tendency and dispersion of all the measures of transformational leadership. The total number of respondents in each measure was 113. Distribution of data was measured using skewness and kurtosis, whereas

central tendency was measured using mean, median, and mode. The standard deviation was used to measure dispersion. The results show that Inspirational Motivation had a mean of 4.151 and a median of 3.06. The standard deviation of 0.878 showed that the members of the group differed from the mean value of 4.151 for the group in the observation. The measures of kurtosis and skewness are used to determine if indicators met normality assumptions (Kline, 2005). According to Bai and Ng (2005), if skewness is less than -1 or greater than 1, the distribution is highly skewed; if skewness is between -1 and -0.5 or between 0.5 and 1, the distribution is moderately skewed; if skewness is between -0.5 and 0.5, the distribution is approximately symmetric. Skewness for Inspirational Motivation was -0.719. Since the values were between -1 and -0.5, we thus conclude that the distribution is moderately skewed. Kurtosis results showed that Inspirational motivation had 0.869. Thus, we can conclude that the values were platykurtic since they are less than 3 and thus had a broad tail distribution and no outliers.

The results show that intellectual stimulation had a mean of 3.782 and a median of 3.12. The standard deviation of 0.987 showed that the members of the group differed from the mean value of 3.782 for the group in the observation. Skewness for intellectual stimulation was -0.66. Since the values were between -1 and -0.5, we thus conclude that the distribution is moderately skewed. Kurtosis results showed that intellectual stimulation had 1.007. Thus, we can conclude that the values were platykurtic since they are less than 3 and thus had a broad tail distribution and no outliers and met normality assumptions. The results showed that individualized consideration had a mean of 3.691 and a median of 3.24. The standard deviation of 1.028 showed that the members of the group differed from the mean value of 3.691 for the group in the observation. Skewness for individualized consideration was -0.450. Since the values were between -0.5 and 0.5, we thus conclude that the distribution is approximately symmetric. Kurtosis results showed that individualized consideration had 0.268. Thus, we can conclude that the values were platykurtic since they are less than 3 and thus had a broad tail distribution and no outliers.

Lastly, the results showed that idealized influence had a mean of 3.931 and a median of 3.17. The standard deviation of 0.987 showed that the members of the group differed from the mean value of 3.931 for the group in the observation. Skewness for idealized influence was -0.760. Since the values were between -1 and -0.5, we thus conclude that the distribution is moderately skewed.



Kurtosis results showed that idealized influence had 1.184. Thus, we can conclude that the values were platykurtic since they are less than 3 and thus had a broad tail distribution and no outliers.

**Table 2: Model Fitness for Transformational Leadership style**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.803a	0.645	0.64	0.27371

The study found that transformational leadership had a substantial impact on the performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya. As presented in Table 2, the coefficient of determination R Square was 0.645. The model indicated that Transformational Leadership explained 64.5% of the variation in performance of commercial state corporations. This implied that there existed a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya.

**Table 3: ANOVA for Transformational Leadership style and performance of commercial state corporations**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	41.043	4	10.261	136.966	.000b
	Residual	22.624	302	0.075		
	Total	63.667	306			

The study found that transformational leadership style had a significant positive influence on the performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya. As shown in Table 3, F-Calculated (4, 302) = 136.966, which was greater than F-Critical (1, 302) = 3.96 at the 95% confidence level. Results also showed that p-value = 0.000 < 0.05. This further confirmed that transformational leadership style positively and significantly influenced the performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya.

**Table 4: Transformational Leadership style and performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya.**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	2.120	0.047		45.531	0.000
Inspirational motivation	0.100	0.023	0.252	4.513	0.000
Intellectual stimulation	0.090	0.023	0.242	4.124	0.000
Individualized consideration	0.080	0.024	0.187	3.221	0.001
Idealized influence	0.090	0.023	0.221	3.822	0.000



The analysis of individual components of transformational leadership revealed their specific impacts on organizational performance. Findings presented in Table 4 showed that when transformational leadership through inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence was held constant, performance of commercial state corporations remained at 2.120. An increase in inspirational motivation by one unit led to an increase in performance of commercial state corporations by 0.100 units ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Similarly, an increase of one unit in intellectual stimulation resulted in a performance increase of 0.090 ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). When individualized consideration increased by one unit, performance of commercial state corporations increased by 0.080 ( $p\text{-value} = 0.001 < 0.05$ ).

Lastly, an increase in idealized influence by one unit led to an increase in performance of commercial state corporations by 0.090 units ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). Based on these findings, the study rejected the null hypothesis and adopted the alternative hypothesis that there was a significant relationship between transformational leadership and performance of commercial state corporations in Kenya. These results underscored the importance of transformational leadership practices in enhancing organizational performance within the context of Kenyan commercial state corporations. This can be summarized by the following model:

$$p = 2.120 + 0.100IM + 0.090IS + 0.080IC + 0.090II$$
$$= 2.120 + 0.100IM + 0.090IS + 0.080IC + 0.090II$$

Where;

P= Performance of commercial state corporations

IM= Inspirational Motivation

IS= Intellectual Stimulation

IC= Individualized Consideration

II= Idealized influence

Transformational leaders exhibit four key behaviors: inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation (Anon, 2019). These behaviors collectively enhance organizational performance, particularly in commercial state corporations, by

fostering a positive work environment, encouraging innovation, and aligning individual and organizational goals. The theoretical implications of the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance are significant. They highlight the critical role of transformational leadership in shaping organizational outcomes and provide a foundation for further exploration into how this leadership style affects different sectors, organizational culture, and change initiatives. Scholars can build on these findings to refine leadership theories and better understand the interaction between leadership styles and organizational contexts.

A holistic approach to leadership, focusing not only on financial metrics but also on employee engagement, innovation, and ethical standards, is crucial. Transformational leadership fosters a positive work environment, increasing employee satisfaction and productivity. The emphasis on ethical conduct aligns with global trends towards corporate social responsibility, as highlighted by Shareef and Atan (2018), who found that ethical leadership enhances organizational citizenship behavior and reduces turnover intentions. Shuslhan's (2018) study in the context of state Islamic senior high schools showed that effective leadership, particularly transformational, significantly improves student academic performance. This is consistent with other findings that transformational leadership positively impacts various organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction and performance, as demonstrated by Ndisya and Juma (2016) in Safaricom, and Jaroliya and Gyanchandani (2022).

Transformational leadership's role in inspiring creativity and fostering a vision of collective welfare is crucial. Al Harbi et al. (2019) argue that transformational leaders inspire employees to embrace innovative thinking and generative strategies. This leadership style's impact on organizational performance has been consistently positive, with studies like those by Bushra, Usman, and Naveed (2011), Soegihartono (2012), and others confirming its effectiveness. The significance of the four key behaviors—inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation—in influencing corporate performance is well-supported. For example, Mohammad et al. (2019) found a significant positive relationship between inspirational motivation and job satisfaction in Jordanian private hospitals. This aligns with findings by Conger and Kanungo (2018) and Chen (2019), who also reported positive correlations between transformational leadership and job satisfaction.

Individualized consideration, which includes training, coaching, and mentorship, is vital for enhancing performance in commercial state organizations. Studies by Tshikovhi (2020) and Otuko et al. (2018) demonstrated positive impacts of training and development programs on employee performance in various contexts, including South Africa's platinum mines and Mumias Sugar Company in Kenya. Anlesinya, Bukari, and Eshun (2021) found that employee development in Ghana's public sector had a significant, albeit negative, effect on organizational performance. This suggests that while transformational leadership generally promotes positive outcomes, the specific context and implementation of its components can vary, highlighting the need for tailored approaches.

In practical terms, commercial state corporations can implement targeted interventions based on these findings. Enhancing inspirational motivation can involve aligning organizational goals with employee aspirations, fostering a shared purpose. Intellectual stimulation can be encouraged through innovation hubs and continuous learning. Individualized consideration can be strengthened with personalized training and mentorship, while idealized influence can be reinforced by leaders exemplifying ethical behavior. By systematically addressing these components, organizations can cultivate a transformative leadership culture that drives performance and innovation across all levels.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this study underscores the significance of integrating Transformational Leadership Theory and Contingency Theory to effectively address the complexities faced by Kenyan commercial state corporations. By leveraging the principles of transformational leadership, which emphasize inspiring and elevating followers to achieve higher performance, and by considering the situational factors outlined in contingency theory, the study provides a comprehensive framework for enhancing leadership effectiveness. This dual theoretical approach allows for a nuanced analysis of how leadership styles can be adapted to meet the specific needs and challenges of diverse organizational contexts. The insights gained from this study are expected to inform strategies for improving leadership practices and organizational performance in Kenyan commercial state corporations, ultimately contributing to more effective and responsive management within the sector.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is recommended that commercial state corporations in Kenya invest in leadership development programs that emphasize transformational leadership skills. Such programs should focus on enhancing leaders' abilities to inspire, intellectually stimulate, and individually consider employees, thereby fostering a supportive and innovative organizational culture. Practically, the findings offer actionable insights for leaders in commercial state corporations in Kenya. By integrating transformational leadership principles into leadership development programs, organizations can cultivate leaders who inspire teams, encourage creativity, and drive positive changes. This approach, supported by empirical evidence, can be tailored to address the unique challenges faced by these corporations, leading to more effective leadership practices. Policymakers can also use these findings to design initiatives promoting transformational leadership in public sector organizations. Investment in leadership training and development can ensure leaders possess the necessary skills to guide their teams effectively. Recruitment processes can be refined to prioritize candidates with transformational leadership qualities, thereby enhancing organizational performance and navigating complex challenges.

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