

Transformational Leadership and Organizational Performance in Kenyan Faith - Based Higher Learning Institutions

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Abstract: *This study examines the impact of transformational leadership on the organizational performance of private faith - based higher learning institutions in Kenya. Utilizing a quantitative research approach, data were collected through surveys administered to leaders and staff. Regression analysis was employed to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance. Findings suggest that transformational leadership significantly enhances organizational performance, providing valuable insights for leadership practices in these institutions.*

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Organizational Performance, Private Faith - Based Institutions, Higher Education, Kenya

1. Introduction

Private faith - based higher learning institutions in Kenya play a significant role in the country's education sector, providing quality education and contributing to the socio - economic development of the nation. These institutions are led by various leaders, including vice - chancellors, deans, and department heads, who are responsible for guiding the organizations toward their goals.

1.1 Background of the Study

Performance in an organization entails evaluating a company's performance by contrasting it with its predetermined objectives and goals. Alternatively put, organizational performance includes actual outcomes as opposed to desired outcomes. It alludes to the amount, quality, proficiency and productivity of organizational tasks accomplished in a specific period. It underscores the level of accomplishment of objectives

According to Dignan (2019) organizational performance implies arriving at objectives that accomplish the organization's central goal. This normally implies satisfying an arrangement spread out by initiative. Organizational performance, as defined by Zhuo (2019), is the degree to which the work outcome evaluates the fulfillment of the work mission, excellent services, client connections, and intangible assets. Kaplan and Norton (2001) defined organizational performance as the capacity of the organization to employ its material and human resources efficiently and effectively in order to accomplish its objectives. Organizational performance has also been described as how an organization achieves its goals and is based on a variety of factors, including the effectiveness of business processes, employee productivity, the alignment of business functions with the

organization's strategy, and organizational climate and culture (Smith & Hill, 2019). Performance has been defined as a set of financial and nonfinancial indicators which offer information on the degree of achievement of objectives and results (Taouab & Issor, 2019). Organizational performance refers to the degree to which an organization positions itself on the business market by utilizing some informational, financial, and human resources, in order to achieve its set targets (Contu, 2020).

Higher learning institutions that are dedicated to fostering employee growth are urged to enhance both internal and external performance. The development of people must be in line with the organization's aims and objectives where the employees understand how they contribute to achieve organizational success. Managers who are effective support the development of people in order to perform optimally. Therefore, organizational performance alludes to the amount, quality, proficiency and productivity of organizational tasks accomplished in a specific period. It underscores the level of accomplishment of set objectives in an organization.

The sole role and responsibility of managers is to use their subordinates to forward the objectives of the organization. Therefore, it is anticipated of them to develop original plans to improve organizational performance. One of the many ways that managers could use to improve performance in organizations is the transformational leadership style.

One leadership style emerges often in the existing literature on higher education leadership: transformational leadership, or the capacity to influence others to change (Bass, 1985). As much as transformational leadership may be an unsatisfactory paradigm for understanding higher education leadership according to (Piorkowska, 2021), it remains the most discussed leadership model in the higher education litera

texts. Previous research has deduced that transformational leadership is an imperative aspect of leadership quality in creating higher education training programs and develop future employee recruitment polities. (Ahmed et al., 2020). An effective transformational leader provokes the followers to move towards the organizations' strategic objectives and goals and facilitates effective corporate strategy implementation. Early research on transformational leadership focused on the role of leaders and their association with followers (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). Transformational leadership, according to Ammar et al. (2018), is the ability to influence and guide followers to accomplish shared objectives that support organizational success.

Transformational leadership is defined by high levels of morale and motivation among followers and leaders. One of the most crucial components of an organization's ability to continue operating in the face of challenges brought on by the international economic landscape is effective leadership. Successful transformational leaders motivate and influence their staff to improve organizational performance.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite their importance, there is limited research focusing on the leadership styles employed in private faith - based institutions and their impact on organizational performance. Understanding the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance in these institutions is crucial for improving their effectiveness and ensuring their long - term sustainability.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance in private faith - based higher learning institutions in Kenya, providing insights into leadership practices that enhance institutional effectiveness.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to establish the effect of transformational leadership on the organizational performance of private faith - based higher learning institutions in Kenya.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research fills a gap in the literature by focusing on the leadership practices within private faith - based higher learning institutions. The findings offer valuable insights for administrators and policymakers, helping them adopt effective leadership strategies to improve organizational performance.

2. Literature Review

Transformational leadership has become interestingly one of the most influential model of leadership within higher education over the past several decades (Berkovich, 2016). This leadership style, characterized by idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and

individualized consideration, has been found to significantly impact organizational performance. Previous studies support that amidst several leadership styles, transformational leadership style is conventionally practiced in organizations, and it is a critical factor in organizational performance (Arif & Akram, 2018). Literary works further explain that each aspect of transformational leadership influences how well employees perform at work by inspiring and motivating them to voluntarily aim higher than they have previously done. The dimensions of transformational leadership are: Idealized influence which refers to the charismatic quality of a leader who serves as a role model to the followers and draws admiration, respect and trust from the employees (Hutagalung et al., 2021). The second one is intellectual stimulation which refers to the leader's ability to help followers think on their own, by progressively challenging them by interrogating and advancing their beliefs, assumptions and values, thereby followers get motivated to be more creative and innovative in solving problems (Magasi, 2021).

The third one; Inspirational Motivation entails the suitability of a leader to stimulate the followers' emotional commitment and enthusiasm to a mission by not only giving challenging duties and advancing high expectations of what needs to be achieved, but also exemplifies commitment to the shared vision (Muppidathi & Krishnan, 2021). The last one is individualized consideration, whereby the leader aids the followers to become fully actualized by equipping them with personalized career guidance (Alshamsi et al., 2020). This is echoed by Arokiasamy and Tat (2020) who affirm that a well - articulated vision reinforced by articulate communication makes the vision explicit, important and engaging, to the extent that staff are motivated to believe in their capabilities despite the challenges posed to efficiently complete their assigned tasks.

Transformational leadership style, characterized by idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration, has been found to significantly impact organizational performance (Hutagalung et al., 2021; Magasi, 2021; Muppidathi & Krishnan, 2021; Alshamsi et al., 2020). Leaders who exhibit idealized influence serve as role models, earning the trust and respect of their followers, while those who provide intellectual stimulation encourage innovative thinking and problem - solving among employees (Magasi, 2021). Inspirational motivation involves instilling enthusiasm and commitment to a shared vision, fostering a sense of purpose and direction within the organization (Muppidathi & Krishnan, 2021). Additionally, leaders who offer individualized consideration provide personalized support and guidance, nurturing the development and growth of their employees (Alshamsi et al., 2020). Together, these dimensions of transformational leadership contribute to a positive organizational culture and drive performance excellence.

Empirical research corroborates the significance of transformational leadership in enhancing organizational success, particularly in higher education institutions.

Okoli et al. (2021) assessed the extent to which transformational leadership influences organizational success in institutions of institutes of higher learning in the state of

Anambra, Southeast of Nigeria. The research applied a cross-sectional research design. The sample size was 325 staff members from each university. Questionnaires were used and the results showed that transformational leadership had a significant positive correlation in institutions of higher learning. The research concluded that transformational leadership is a crucial success component that brings change in staff and universities. His study revealed a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership and organizational success. Research opines that transformational leadership positively influences staff performance in challenging environments. This is due to the fact that it is the most befitting leadership style that can aptly control and guide in resource management in challenging environments (LaRocca & Groves, 2021).

Waham et al. (2020), analyzed the effect that leadership style and job satisfaction had on organizational performance in institutions of higher learning in Iraq. A total of 387 academic staff were sampled from five public universities and surveyed by using self-administered questionnaires. The study used a quantitative research method. The data was analyzed using Structural equation modelling (SEM) and regression analysis. The results revealed that leadership style had a positive significant effect on organizational performance. The study looked at leadership style in general and transactional leaders as well as transformational leaders were the top leadership styles that led to better organizational performance in the institutions. The study did not point out the preferred leadership style, thus the need to research further in to the transformational leadership style. This in essence will assist higher learning institutions embrace the right leaders, as an important leadership trait in cultivating capacity building programs and crafting future recruitment policies.

Jameel and Ahmad (2020) investigated how leadership style increases performance of academic staff in nine Iraq universities. The research was descriptive in nature and used the multifactor leadership questionnaire which analyzed the leadership behaviour of 297 leaders. He opined that education in the university is regarded as effective when it balances the needs of the various stakeholders (customers, owners, community) as well as the employees' needs. He gave empirical evidence showing that the leadership style could increase the performance of the organization. Organizational performance has been proven to be highly impacted by individualized consideration (Alshamsi et al., 2020). Leaders with idealized influence set an example for their followers, gaining their trust and respect, while those who stimulate the mind foster creativity and problem-solving among staff members. Within the organization, inspirational motivation is creating a feeling of direction and purpose by inspiring passion and dedication to a common goal (Muppudathi & Krishnan, 2021). Furthermore, leaders that demonstrate individual consideration offer tailored support and direction, fostering the advancement and maturation of their staff members (Alshamsi et al., 2020). When combined, these transformative leadership traits promote performance excellence and a positive company culture.

Leadership styles and work satisfaction in Lithuanian higher education institutions were investigated by Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016). The goal was to see if leadership

influenced the attitudes and performance of employees. A causal study review methodology was used to determine the preferred leadership style for academic staff drawn from a sample in higher education institutions in Lithuania. 146 employees of the sample universities managed to complete the Leadership style questionnaire given. The study's main aim was to see how supervisory leadership styles affect faculty job satisfaction by comparing the views of subordinates and supervisors. The statistical method of ANOVA (analysis of variance) was used, and the conclusion was that leadership style has a considerable beneficial impact on faculty job satisfaction, with democratic and transformational leadership having the largest positive impact and controlling autocratic leadership style having the lowest. The study's conclusion was that supervisors could improve their faculty members' job satisfaction by defining their role as leaders and displaying leadership.

Shulhan (2018) investigated leadership style in a Tulungagung madrasah in Indonesia, to see if leadership style principles improve teacher effectiveness. The main objective of the study was to examine the leadership style of state Islamic senior high school principals, specifically how successfully the principals encourage, mobilize, direct, and evaluate teachers' performance to help pupils achieve academic success. The study used a qualitative approach with various case studies on three schools. Teachers and administrators were asked to validate the performance of the principals and whether their leadership influences good management practices, institutional policies and procedures, and the execution of school dynamics and students' academic success. The study found that the principals of Islamic state senior high schools are the fundamental figures in the institutions, and oversee implementing incentives, motivation programs, intensive communication, and transparent administrative management, which includes mobilizing workshops, training, and the provision of internet facilities and rewards; directing, which includes extra teaching hours, collaboration with other agencies, and evaluation, which includes class grading. The study found that having a good leadership style improves pupils' academic performance. More research is needed in analyzing if a relationship exists between transformational leadership and organizational performance, in developing countries (Atoko, 2023).

Despite these insights, further research is warranted to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance in diverse cultural and institutional contexts, particularly in developing countries like Kenya. This study sought to contribute to this area of research by providing a deeper understanding of how transformational leadership influences organizational performance within the unique context of faith-based higher learning institutions in Kenya, thereby informing leadership practices and strategies for enhancing organizational effectiveness and success. The study went beyond identifying the obstacles impending organizational success and furnished clearer explanations on how to achieve organizational performance effectively.

The regulatory framework for higher education institutions specifies how the institutions perform various functions and

offers direction to accredited and unaccredited higher learning institutions.

Beyond its financial value, higher education is a significant driver of social mobility and a crucial instrument for improving life chances for people from underprivileged origins. Concerns about increasing and widening participation of stakeholders in regulatory policy formulation in higher education, to removing barriers that hinder organizational performance at higher learning institutions are some of the issues that this study seeks to address. These concerns go beyond having a uniform formal equality for the institutions, to having ways of incorporating various legislations that are cognizant of the faith and culture of various institutions.

A research was carried out by Rubera, (2022) on the effect of the regulatory framework on the performance of Kenya's chartered universities in terms of leadership practices. The study population was 49 chartered universities. The study asserts that underperformance by the majority of chartered universities in Kenya over the years, is a result of weak leadership techniques used by university administrators who have neglected regulatory framework as one of the key mechanisms by which strategic leaders lead their organizations to sustainability. He further recommended that authorities like the Commission for University Education should place a strong emphasis on promoting academic freedom, and the requirements and standards for academic excellence should also be followed by universities. Higher education governance has shifted from funding - based instruments to a more identifiably regulatory mode of governance, in terms of government oversight (McAaffrey, 2018).

Another study by Scott (2021) was carried out in Ireland on how to manage higher education institutes on a changing regulatory environment. The study opines that regulation of higher education has a mixed level of mutuality, competitiveness, and control. In some systems, mutuality is thought to be in danger and design - based control generally has a less role and this has impacted on the overall performance of higher education institutions in Ireland. Today, the mutuality function is typically part of a larger hierarchical structure where oversight necessitates actions being made. The research was qualitative in nature and thus this research will go further and acquire quantitative data.

Boru and Kuhlil (2017) studied the regulatory measures influence on bank performance in Ethiopia. Their study results revealed a link between some of the regulatory factors and performance metrics that is statistically significant. The study's key findings, however, concern the negative effects on performance of various policy directives from the regulator. For instance, there was a statistically significant inverse association between bank performance and branch expansion and bill purchasing. While certain regulatory factors were found to have a statistically significant association with performance metrics, such as capital expansion contributing positively to performances, others, such as branch expansion and bill purchasing, had adverse effects on performance. The research had mixed results giving both positive and negative effects and was not conclusive on the impact of regulation on

bank performance.

A research by Wu et al. (2022) opined that transformational leaders play a crucial role in navigating regulatory challenges and ensuring organizational compliance. Transformational leadership positively affects safety compliance when employees' feel obligated towards their leader. However, by increasing risk tolerance for safety, transformational leadership also has a negative effect on compliance. The study demonstrated how the conformity procedures are dependent on how employees perceive the safety climate. It was discovered that, a high perceived safety climate reinforces the felt obligation - based positive indirect effect of transformational leadership on safety compliance, whereas a low perceived safety climate reinforces the safety risk tolerance - based negative indirect effect of transformational leadership on safety compliance. These mixed findings require that more in - depth research is undertaken, to underscore the importance of regulatory flexibility and adaptability in optimizing organizational performance within a dynamic regulatory environment. In the future, this should be one of the areas where regulatory policy needs to be flexible. However, other policy directions, like the necessity for capital expansion, continue to contribute favorably to performances.

Beyond its financial value, higher education is a significant driver of social mobility and a crucial instrument for improving life chances for people from underprivileged origins. The risk of disregarding or undervaluing other institutional goals, such as the kind of leadership, is present when one set of values, such as gender equality, is strongly emphasized at the expense of other organizational values (Bhopal & Henderson, 2019). Many nations that regulate higher education place a lot of emphasis on maintaining and even strengthening universities' organizational autonomy for a variety of reasons, including the idea that autonomy is the basis for effective performance. Additionally, there are democratic justifications for elevating autonomous universities as significant hubs of independent knowledge and education in democracies. The autonomy of universities varies greatly, even within Western Europe, with English universities typically having the most liberty when it comes to important organizational decisions while French universities typically have the least autonomy (Boer & Enders, 2017).

In Kenya, the Commission for University Education plays a central role in setting and enforcing regulatory policies for higher education institutions. However, it is crucial for these policies to align with the diverse goals and values of faith - based higher learning institutions. These institutions often have unique missions and objectives rooted in religious principles, necessitating a regulatory framework that accommodates their specific needs and aspirations. Therefore, there is a need for collaboration between regulatory authorities and higher education institutions to ensure that regulatory policies promote institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and internationalization while upholding standards of excellence and accountability. The Commission for University in Kenya should have policies that encourage institutions to internationalize their programs so that they tap into the international markets, to self - sustain

the institutions monetarily and bring considerable non-monetary benefits. Regulatory policies in Kenya are set at a national level, it's also important to have representation from the higher learning institutions, and have the policies reviewed to accommodate the goals of faith based higher learning institutions in Kenya.

Transformational leadership has been widely studied in various organizational contexts and has been shown to have a positive impact on organizational performance (Bass, 1985; Avolio et al., 2009). According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers to achieve higher levels of performance by articulating a compelling vision, fostering innovation, and promoting individual development.

In the context of higher education institutions, transformational leadership has been linked to improved student outcomes, faculty satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood et al., 2004). Avolio et al. (2009) emphasize the importance of transformational leadership in creating a supportive and empowering work environment that fosters collaboration, creativity, and excellence.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance in private faith-based higher learning institutions in Kenya. A cross-sectional research design is employed to collect data at a single point in time, allowing for the examination of variables and their associations within the institutions.

The target population for this study included leaders and staff members of private faith-based higher learning institutions in Kenya. A stratified random sampling technique is utilized to select a representative sample from the population. The sample size is determined using the Yamane formula, ensuring adequate representation from different categories of respondents, including senior management, middle management, teaching staff, and non-teaching staff.

Data collection was conducted using self-administered questionnaires distributed electronically to the selected participants. The questionnaires were designed to capture information on transformational leadership, organizational performance, and other relevant variables. Surveys, interviews, and document analysis are employed as primary data collection methods, supplemented by secondary data sources such as official reports and publications.

A pilot study was conducted in one of the higher learning institutions to test the reliability of the research instruments. A structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of respondents who are not part of the main study to identify and address any potential issues with the instruments.

Content and construct validity of the research instruments were ensured through expert review and piloting. The reliability of the instruments was tested using Cronbach's

alpha coefficient, with values above 0.7 considered acceptable for reliability.

Quantitative data collected from the surveys was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution tables and measures of central tendency, are employed to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, such as regression analysis and correlation coefficients, are used to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance.

4. Findings

A linear regression model was employed to examine the relationship between the predictor variable X1 (representing transformational leadership) and the criterion variable Y (organizational performance).

Model summary for the influence of transformational leadership on organizational performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.657 ^a	0.431	0.43	0.4744

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	62.167	1	62.167	276.193	.000 ^b
	Residual	81.931	311	0.225		
	Total	144.098	312			

a. Dependent Variable: y

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	1.632	0.155		10.509	0
	x1	0.624	0.038	0.657	16.619	0

a. Dependent Variable: y

b. Predictors: (Constant), x1

The study reveals that the model displayed a significant association, as evidenced by a statistically significant F-statistic (F = 276.193, p < .001) in the ANOVA table. This model accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in organizational performance, with an R-squared value of .431, indicating that approximately 43.1% of the variance in Y could be explained by X1. The adjusted R-squared value remained at .430, suggesting the model's appropriateness for the data.

The coefficients in the regression equation reveal valuable insights. The constant (intercept) was estimated at 1.632 (t = 10.509, p < .001), indicating that when X1 (transformational leadership) is zero, the predicted organizational performance is 1.632. The coefficient for X1 was 0.624 (t = 16.619, p < .001), signifying a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance. Therefore, for each unit increase in X1, the predicted organizational performance increases by 0.624 units.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates a significant positive impact of transformational leadership on the organizational performance of private faith - based higher learning institutions in Kenya. Transformational leaders who inspire, motivate, and empower their followers contribute to enhanced organizational effectiveness. These findings highlight the importance of developing transformational leadership qualities to drive positive outcomes in educational institutions.

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