



EFFECT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON THE PERFORMANCE OF VIHIGA COUNTY GOVERNMENT, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

While most devolved systems of government in Kenya have strategic plans bearing their vision, mission and objectives set to be achieved, their service delivery fall below customers' expectations. Good strategic plans put in place require good implementation which is steered by transformational leadership thus the need for this study. It is on this premise that this study is designed to investigate the effect of transformational leadership on the performance of devolved government systems in Vihiga County. The study was underpinned by the transformational leadership theory. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. There are six devolved government systems in Vihiga County. Primary data was collected by use of key informant method. Stratified and systematic sampling technique was used to select top management, middle management and low level management employees of Vihiga County government. Validity of the research instruments was attained by administering the instruments to pilot respondents who were not be included in the main study and also use of feedback to improve the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the scale, which was also be used assess the interval consistency among the research instrument items. The data collection instruments were administered to all the six devolved government systems. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of statistical package for social sciences computer software version 21. Transformational leadership was found to be a statistically significant contributor to the performance of the

county government of Vihiga ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, leaders should adopt transformational leadership practices in order to achieve the desired performance in the county governments in Kenya.

Key words: Transformational leadership, Performance, Vihiga County Government

Introduction

Transformational leadership theory was proposed by Bass in 1985 and it belongs to the exchange group of theories, it is the exchange, the nature of the relationship that underlies a leader's ability to direct and be effective. Accordingly, the transformational leadership theory states that leadership is the process by which a leader engages with others and is able to create a connection that results in increased motivation and morality in both followers and leaders (Cannella 2001). Transformational leadership theory expresses the necessity for a leader to be attentive to the needs and motives of followers in an attempt to help them exploit their full potential. Furthermore, transformational leadership typically describes how leaders can initiate, develop, and implement important changes in an organization (Boal and Hooijbag, 2001). This theory is often discussed in contrast with transactional leadership.

Transformational leadership theory focuses on work relationships that are intimately connected with the behavior and attitude of the leaders. According to Bass (1985), a leader should show empathy to the workers, exercises less supervision and encourage employee participation while workers should perceive leaders from an inspirational view with loyalty and enthusiasm. Leaders' personal quality persuades and influences their subordinates into working towards the set goals of the organization (Ahmed 2013). As such, leaders should use their knowledge, skills and principles of integrity and trust in transforming all those around them into willing followers (Pearce and Robinson, 2011).

Bass (1985) posits that leaders are effective depending on the work situation. That is, does the work warrant room for personal qualities of the leader such as kindness, participation and exercising self-control? If this is favorable, then they will appraise emotional and spiritual dimensions as well as the physical and mental aspects of both the leader and the workers. It is from the trust and confidence the workers have in the leaders that leads them to accept them (Odhiambo et al., 2014). Workers trust in a leader who exhibits his competence and effectiveness. The leaders provide direction and keep the mission in right with effectiveness and results and make the workers gain confidence and trust in the leader (Thompson, 2004).

Conceptual framework

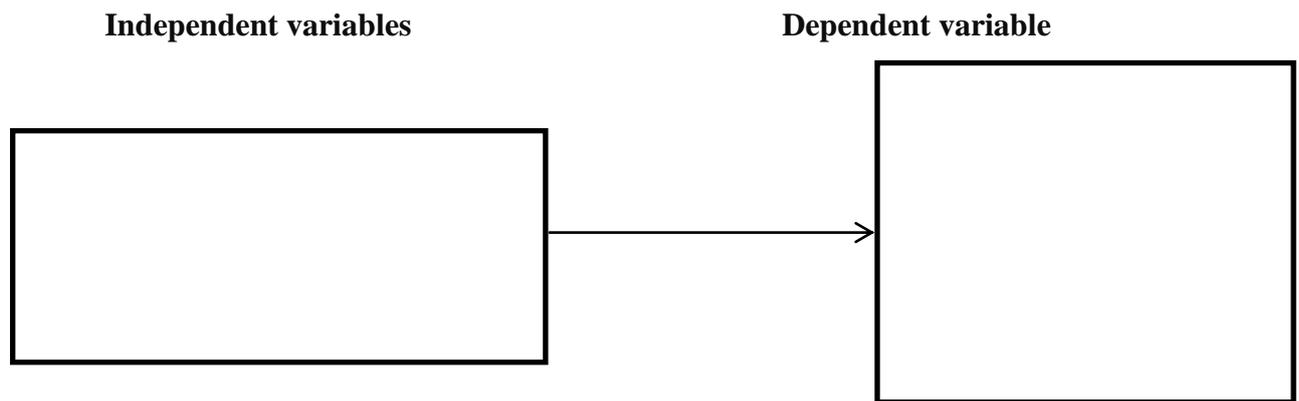


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

(Source; researcher's' own compilation, 2017)

Transformational Theory

Transformational leadership theory underlies various leadership techniques that might be helpful in transforming workers. For example, direct and intimate communication with the workers. The leaders exhibit a friendly and face-to-face interaction with the workers (Odhiambo et al., 2014). The leaders listen to the workers and provide solutions to their problems or involve them in problem-solving methods. They are easy to access, cheerful, pleasant in their outlook. The leaders explain to the workers the importance of their contribution to the welfare of the organization by encouraging their participation and in delegating duties (Northouse, 2013). These leaders make emotional appeals to the workers by striking the right balance between the employee's needs, and goals in a given situation. The transformational leader also uses the workers high level of enthusiasm and commitment towards achieving the goals by showing concern and believes in the worker's unseen potential (Banks &Hulme; Hambrick and Mason 1998).

Four main components underlie the transformational theory, these are: idealized influence or charisma; inspirational motivation; intellectual motivation and individual consideration (Salamon et al., 2012). Firstly, the idealized influence is characterized by making others feel good, making them proud to be associated with the leader and earning faith from the employees. According to Ndunge (2014), Charismatic leaders display convictions, take stands appeal to followers on an emotional level. This is about leaders having a clear set of values and demonstrating them in every action providing a role model for their followers (Lussier&Achila, 2010).

Secondly, inspirational motivation is characterized by how well the leaders communicate their goals and the ability to help others find meaning in their work (Mitula, 2004). Leaders with inspirational motivation challenges followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning for the task at hand. Followers need to have a strong sense of purpose if they are to be motivated to act (Bakar & Mahmood, 2014). Thirdly, intellectual stimulation is characterized by the leader's ability to make others think about new ways of performing work, new ways of looking at work and to be creative in their own problem-solving methods (Lyons, 2006). Finally, individualized consideration or individual attention is characterized by how well the leader encourages individuals to develop themselves, how much feedback the leader thinks he or she gives to followers and how well the leader takes to bring workers into the team or the group (Bass, 1990).

In sum, transformational theory relies much on the relationship cultivated by the leader among the workers in working towards the set goals through their commitment and enthusiasm (Brown & Harrison, 2005). The theory thus shows that a leader cannot be effective without the cooperation of the workers. This theory describes the leaders' involvement in changing the attitudes of the workers towards improving their productivity. This would in turn influence the overall organizational performance. (Arasa & Kioko, 2014; Bello, 2011).

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) perceives a survey as an attempt to collect data from members of population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. The descriptive survey research design is suitable because the researcher collected data and reported the way the situation was without manipulating any variables.

Target population

The target population consisted of all the employees of County Government of Vihiga. The County Government of Vihiga Databank (2015) indicated that the organization had a total of 5,900 employees spread between three broad categories namely; top management with 590 employees, middle level management with 1770 employees and lower level management/support with 3540 employees. The target population in the study who were County Government of Vihiga staff was viewed to be sufficient to allow for generalizations on

determinants of employee performance in County government of Vihiga and the wider County government of Kenya.

Description of Research Instruments

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected staff in their respective offices. It provided an opportunity for respondents to think through their answers and consult where necessary. Since the questionnaires were self-administered they were pre-tested to ensure elimination of vague questions for ease of understanding. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) notes that using questionnaires that are well structured guide respondents to provide relevant and precise information needed for the research. They also make tabulation of information much easier among other benefits of using the tool.

Validity of Research Instrument

Validity is the extent to which the instrument measures what it appears to measure according to the researcher's subjective assessment (Nachmas, 1958). A research instrument is valid depending on how the data collected is related in terms of how effective the items have sampled significant aspects of the purpose of the study. A pilot study was conducted to help establish content validity of the instrument. The questionnaire questions were constructed using valid wordings with logical sequencing of questions to ensure logical flow of information and thought process of respondents. The research instrument was reviewed and amended by experts in the area of study.

Reliability of research instruments

Koul (2003) states that the reliability of a test refers to the ability of that test to consistently yield the same results when repeated measurements are taken of the same individual under the same conditions. To establish the reliability of the questionnaires the instrument was provided to a total of 37 respondents (at least 10% of the sample size) from the neighbouring County government of Busia. The reliability of items was based on the estimates of the variability among the items. The reliability coefficient was determined using the Using Cronbach alpha coefficient.

Sample size determination

The formula according to Yamane 1967 was employed to obtain the sample size. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) systematic random sampling technique was used to obtain a sample from target population.

$$n_0 = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n_0 = \text{Sample size}$$

$$N = \text{Population size}$$

$$e = \text{Precision (5\%)}$$

$$n_0 = 5900$$

$$1 + 5900(0.05)^2 = 375$$

$$\text{Total sample} = 375$$

$$\text{Total sample} = 375$$

Sampling procedure

The study utilized stratified sampling in the selection of the sample. Employees in County Government of Vihiga were clustered into three strata. The strata were based on three broad employee categories in the organization; top management, middle management and low level management. Systematic sampling technique was applied to select individuals in the respective strata.

Table 1: Sampling matrix Category

	Target Population			Sample size		
	Permanent	Contract	Total	Permanent	Contract	Total
Top level	472	118	590	30	7	37
Middle level	1416	354	1770	90	23	113
Low level	2832	708	3540	180	45	225
TOTAL	4720	1180	5900	300	75	375

Description of Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire package was sent to potential respondents. In particular, the questionnaire included a cover letter outlining the purpose of the study, an introductory letter from Catholic University, Graduate School of Business and supporting authorization from the National Council on Research and Technology of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Technology. Directions on how to respond to the questionnaire and confidentiality issues were highlighted at the beginning of the questionnaire.

The respondents consisted of top management, middle management and low level management employees of the county government of Vihiga. This study employed self-administered survey approach. Particularly, the questionnaires were hand delivered to all departments in Vihiga County.

Primary data was used to address the constructs of transformational leadership and its relationship with the performance of the county government of Vihiga. Respondents were asked to assess scales operationalizing the study variables from a semi structured questionnaire containing direct measures and Likert type scales.

Description of Data Analysis and Procedures

In the current study quantitative data was collected. Data was classified according to the properties that characterize each of them. Respondents' total scores and percentages were used to analyse data. Respondents' scores were presented in descriptive statistics using tables and percentages. Cross tabulation and triangulation was done to ensure bias and misrepresentations of facts are put in check. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to establish the effect of transformational leadership on performance of the county government of Vihiga.

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their background information. The information was collected on their gender and age.

Table 2: Age

		Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-25	19	5
	26-36	94	25
	37-47	150	40
	Above 47	112	30
	Total	375	100.0

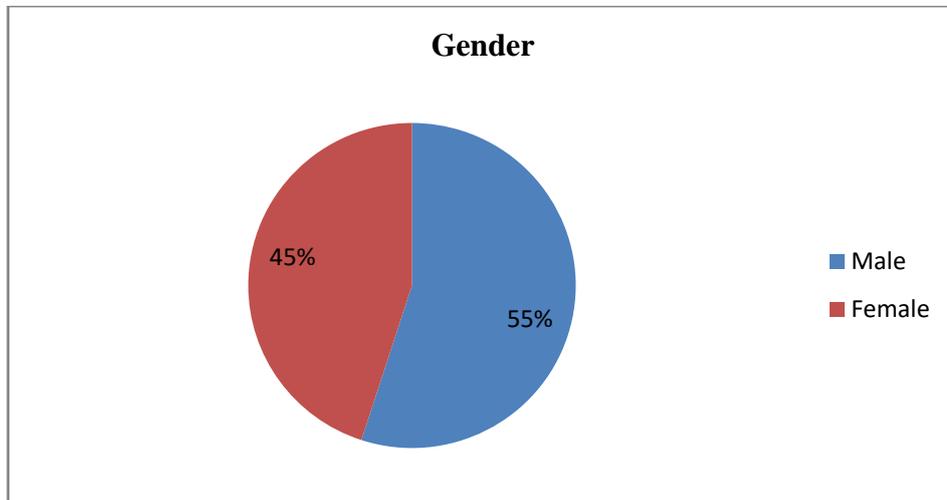
The analysis in table 4.1 above shows that majority of the respondents (40%) were aged between 37 and 47 years. This suggests that most of the respondents were in the middle of

their careers.

Gender

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender. Their responses are summarized in figure 4.1

Figure 2: Gender



The results in figure 2 above shows that 55% of the respondents were male while 45% were female.

Transformational Leadership

This objective sought to establish the how the employees of Vihiga apply different aspects of transformational leadership practices in daily operations. The responses are summarized in table 3.

Various sets of questions sought to establish how Vihiga County apply different aspects of transformational leadership practices in daily operations. A Likert scale of 1-5 was used to rate how the county government of Vihiga apply different aspects of transformational leadership.

The respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with various set of statements concerning the application of different aspects of transformational leadership practices in daily operations by the county government of Vihiga, where 1 was rated as strongly disagree, 2 was rated as disagree, 3 was rated as undecided, 4 was rated as agree, 5 was rated as strongly agree.

Table 4 shows the respondents' responses on how the county government of Vihiga apply different aspects of transformational leadership.

Table 3

Transformational leadership

	%	Mean	SD
I manage others by setting standards that we all agree with.	33.6	1.68	0.83
I ensure poor performance is corrected	30.0	1.50	0.74
I consistently provide coaching and feedback so that my team members know how they are doing	33.0	1.65	0.80
I help others with their self-development.	42.8	2.14	1.12
I ensure others get recognition and/or rewards when they achieve difficult or complex goals.	32.6	1.58	0.79
I provide challenges for my team members to help them grow	31.5	1.56	0.76

As shown in table 4, 33.6 % of the respondents agreed that they managed others by setting standards that they all agreed with. The mean of 1.68 also confirms that there was low level of agreement on this. This low number can be attributed to the fact that most of the employees of the county government of Vihiga did not manage their colleagues by setting standards that they all agreed with. The results show that 30% of the respondents agreed that they ensured poor performance is corrected. The mean of 1.50 also confirms that there was low level of agreement on this. This low number can be attributed to the fact that most of the employees of the county government of Vihiga did not ensure that poor performance is corrected.

Table 4 show that 33% of the respondents agreed that they consistently provided coaching and feedback to the team members. The mean of 1.65 also confirms that there was low level of agreement on this. This low number can be attributed to the fact that most of employees of the county government of Vihiga did not consistently provide coaching and feedback to their team members. In addition, 42.8% of the respondents agreed that they helped others with their self-development. The mean of 2.14 also confirms that there was low level of agreement

on this. This low number can be attributed to the fact that most of the employees of the county government of Vihiga do not help their colleagues with their self-development.

Table 4: Regression model

Model	B (Unstandardized coefficients)	Std. Error	Beta (Standardized coefficients)	T	Significance
Constant	3.615	2.946		1.286	0.001
X3 (transformatio nal leadership)	0.175	1.091	0.119	0.873	0.021

- a. Predictors: (constant) transformational leadership.
- b. Dependent variable: performance of the county government of Vihiga.

Source: research data (2017)

From the above regression equation, it was revealed that transformational leadership to a constant zero, performance of the county government of Vihiga would be at 3.615, a unit increase transformational leadership would lead to increase in the performance of the county government of Vihiga by a factor of 0.119. The p-value for the predictor variable (transformational leadership) was found to be less than 0.05 showing that transformational leadership affect the performance of the county government of Vihiga.

Discussions

Transformational Leadership and performance.

The findings of the current study show that a unit increase in transformational leadership would lead to increase in the performance of the county government of Vihiga by a factor of 0.119. The p-value for transformational leadership was found to be less than 0.05 showing that transformational leadership significantly affects the performance of the county government of Vihiga.

The findings of the current study are in tandem with studies conducted by, Howell and Avolio (1993), Bass(1999) and Fowler and O'Gorman, (2005). According Howell and Avolio (1993), transformational leadership, stimulates innovation and knowledge and generates advantages for organizational performance. Leaders should commit themselves to this style of leadership, undertaking self-evaluation of their way of acting (Bass, 1999). Transformational leaders have charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and

individualized consideration of employees (Bass, 1999; Bass and Avolio, 2000). Such leaders encourage good communication networks and a spirit of trust, enabling transmission and sharing of knowledge and generation of knowledge slack (Howell and Avolio, 1993).

Conclusion

This study concludes that transformational leadership was statistically a significant contributor to the performance of the county government of Vihiga. The findings revealed that transformational leadership practices positively affect the performance of the county government of Vihiga. The findings suggest the practice of transformational leadership practices is needed to enhance performance of the county government of Vihiga.

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