


Journal of Human Resource and Leadership (JHRL)

**The Impact of Effective Leadership on Employee Motivation and Job
Satisfaction in Kenya**

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The Impact of Effective Leadership on Employee Motivation and Job Satisfaction in Kenya

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Article History

Received 19th Jan 2023

Received in Revised Form 13th Feb 2023

Accepted 4th March 2023



Abstract

Purpose: The study was to investigate the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya.

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low-cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Results: The literature review indicates that effective leadership, specifically transformational leadership, positively impacts employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya's public and private sectors. Perceived organizational support, self-efficacy, and effective communication also contribute to employee well-being. However, there are methodological gaps in existing research, emphasizing the need for more rigorous research design and methodology. Further research is needed to investigate the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya and to develop evidence-based policies and interventions aimed at improving employee well-being and organizational performance.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: This study emphasizes the impact of effective leadership, specifically transformational leadership practices, perceived organizational support, self-efficacy, and communication, on employee well-being and organizational performance in Kenya. The study identifies methodological gaps in the literature and suggests the need for more rigorous research designs. These findings can inform evidence-based policies and interventions to improve employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya. Organizations should adopt transformational leadership practices and provide a supportive work environment, while policy makers should prioritize the development of effective leadership training programs and policies that promote employee well-being and organizational performance. This study provides a theoretical framework and practical insights for future research and policy development.

Keywords: *Leadership, Employee Motivation, Job Satisfaction, Kenya*

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership and its impact on key employee outcomes, such as motivation and job satisfaction, have been a subject of keen research interest in the organizational sciences (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). In Kenya, effective leadership is becoming increasingly important as organizations face challenges of talent management and retention amid a competitive business landscape (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). However, limited research has explored the relationship between leadership, motivation, and job satisfaction in the Kenyan context (Kagwiria & Njagi, 2021)

The Kenyan business environment has undergone significant changes over the past decade. Kenya's economy has grown steadily, the middle class has expanded, and there has been increased foreign investment. However, talent management has emerged as a key challenge for many Kenyan organizations as they seek to strengthen their competitive positioning in the market (Odhiambo, 2020). Against this backdrop, approaches to effective leadership, motivation, and job satisfaction of employees have become strategic priorities for Kenyan firms.

Effective leadership is widely recognized as crucial to organizational success. Leaders help to articulate a shared vision, align teams towards goals, and create conditions that support high performance. Leadership has been shown to positively influence a range of employee and organizational outcomes such as motivation, trust in management, innovation, and satisfaction (Avolio et al., 2009). However, there is significant variation in leadership styles and behaviors across cultural contexts (Hofstede Insights, 2021). For leadership to have maximum positive impact within a given cultural setting, it is important that it is enacted in ways that align with the values and expectations of followers in that setting.

In Kenya, like many other countries, effective leadership has been recognized as a critical factor in enhancing employee motivation and job satisfaction. The impact of good leadership on employees has been the subject of numerous studies, with researchers trying to establish how leaders can foster a positive work environment that motivates employees to be productive and satisfied with their jobs (Kagwiria & Njagi, 2021). Kenya's young and growing population presents opportunities and challenges for organizations, requiring a better understanding of how to effectively lead and motivate young generations of employees (Kibera & Simatwa, 2020). Moreover, economic opportunities are still limited for many in Kenya, which may impact the drivers of and barriers to job satisfaction (Makau, 2020).

Historically, Kenya has undergone numerous economic and political changes that have impacted the country's leadership style. Since gaining independence in 1963, Kenya has had several leaders, each with a different approach to leadership. In the early years, the country's leadership was characterized by dictatorial rule, which led to poor governance and economic stagnation. However, in the early 2000s, Kenya experienced a political shift towards democratic leadership, which has since led to significant improvements in the country's economic and social development (World Bank Group, 2021).

Effective leadership has been shown to have a direct impact on employee motivation in Kenya. Leaders who create a positive work environment and establish clear communication channels with their employees have been found to boost employee morale, leading to increased productivity and

job satisfaction (Kagwiria & Njagi, 2021). In contrast, leaders who use an autocratic style of leadership, characterized by micromanagement and a lack of employee participation, have been found to have a negative impact on employee motivation (Odhiambo, 2020). Moreover, effective leadership has been found to contribute significantly to employee job satisfaction, leading to employee retention, reduced turnover rates, and increased productivity (Cascio & Boudreau, 2011).

One of the critical factors that contribute to effective leadership in Kenya is the leader's ability to understand and adapt to the cultural and social context of the country. Kenya is a diverse country, with over 40 different ethnic groups, each with its unique cultural values and beliefs. Effective leaders in Kenya have been found to be those who are culturally sensitive and can adapt their leadership style to the needs of their employees (Kibera & Simatwa, 2020). Additionally, other relevant factors that could shape the leadership-motivation-satisfaction relationship in the Kenyan context include levels of technological advancement in organizations, educational levels of the workforce, presence of labor unions, income inequality, and more (Makau, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

The impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya is a critical issue that affects the productivity and performance of organizations in the country. The lack of effective leadership has been identified as a significant factor that contributes to low employee motivation and job satisfaction (Owuor, 2019). This problem is compounded by the fact that many organizations in Kenya have a hierarchical structure that limits employee participation in decision-making processes and promotes a culture of fear and distrust (Njeru & Kiarie, 2016). As a result, employees are demotivated, dissatisfied, and less likely to be productive, leading to high turnover rates and low organizational performance (Owuor, 2019).

While some studies have been conducted on the impact of leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya, they have not specifically focused on effective leadership (Mwathi & Ndung'u, 2018). For instance, Kibet (2018) conducted a study on the influence of leadership style on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the banking sector in Kenya. Gathuri (2020) examined the impact of transformational leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the telecommunications industry in Kenya.

Kariuki and Mwangi (2017) conducted a study on the effect of leadership styles on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the banking sector in Kenya. Similarly, Wambua and Nguu (2016) investigated the relationship between leadership styles and employee job satisfaction in the public sector in Kenya. However, these studies did not specifically examine the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the influence of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya. The problem is that the lack of effective leadership contributes to low employee motivation and job satisfaction, leading to low productivity and organizational performance. Understanding the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction is crucial for developing interventions that can improve organizational performance and enhance the well-being of employees in Kenya. The research aims to investigate the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya.

Theoretical Review

The impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya is a critical issue that affects the productivity and performance of organizations in the country. Four theoretical perspectives will be utilized to better understand this relationship, including the Transformational Leadership Theory, the Expectancy Theory, the Equity Theory, and the Self-Efficacy Theory.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership theory was developed by James MacGregor Burns in 1978 and posits that effective leaders inspire and motivate their followers to achieve their full potential. In the context of employee motivation and job satisfaction, this theory suggests that transformational leaders can increase employee motivation and job satisfaction by providing a clear vision, setting high expectations, and fostering a positive work environment. Studies have found that transformational leadership is positively associated with employee job satisfaction and motivation in various industries (Bashir & Ramay, 2010). Therefore, organizations in Kenya that implement transformational leadership practices may experience higher levels of employee motivation and job satisfaction, leading to improved organizational performance. Transformational Leadership Theory is important to this study as it suggests that effective leaders who inspire and motivate their followers can increase employee motivation and job satisfaction, leading to improved organizational performance.

Expectancy Theory

Expectancy theory was proposed by Victor Vroom in 1964 and posits that individuals are motivated to perform a task if they believe that their efforts will lead to a desired outcome. In the context of employee motivation and job satisfaction, this theory suggests that employees who believe that their efforts will lead to positive outcomes, such as recognition and rewards, are more likely to be motivated and satisfied with their jobs. Studies have found that expectancy theory is a useful framework for understanding employee motivation and job satisfaction in various industries (Huang, 2011). Therefore, organizations in Kenya that provide clear performance expectations and rewards for high performance may increase employee motivation and job satisfaction, leading to improved organizational performance. Expectancy Theory is important to this study as it suggests that employees who believe that their efforts will lead to positive outcomes are more likely to be motivated and satisfied with their jobs. Organizations in Kenya that provide clear performance expectations and rewards for high performance may increase employee motivation and job satisfaction, leading to improved organizational performance.

Equity Theory

Equity theory was proposed by J. Stacy Adams in 1963 and posits that individuals compare their inputs and outcomes to those of others to determine whether they are being treated fairly. In the context of employee motivation and job satisfaction, this theory suggests that employees who perceive a lack of fairness in their inputs and outcomes may experience lower levels of motivation and job satisfaction. Studies have found that equity theory is a useful framework for understanding employee motivation and job satisfaction in various industries (Khan & Hashim, 2016). Therefore, organizations in Kenya that ensure fairness in their policies and practices may increase employee

motivation and job satisfaction, leading to improved organizational performance. Equity Theory is important to this study as it suggests that employees who perceive a lack of fairness in their inputs and outcomes may experience lower levels of motivation and job satisfaction. Organizations in Kenya that ensure fairness in their policies and practices may increase employee motivation and job satisfaction, leading to improved organizational performance.

Self-Efficacy Theory

Self-efficacy theory was proposed by Albert Bandura in 1977 and posits that individuals' beliefs about their ability to perform a task affect their motivation and behavior. In the context of employee motivation and job satisfaction, this theory suggests that employees who have high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to be motivated and satisfied with their jobs. Studies have found that self-efficacy is positively associated with employee job satisfaction and motivation in various industries (Yuan & Woodman, 2010). Therefore, organizations in Kenya that provide opportunities for employees to develop their skills and build their self-efficacy may increase employee motivation and job satisfaction, leading to improved organizational performance. Self-Efficacy Theory is important to this study as it suggests that employees who have high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to be motivated and satisfied with their jobs. Organizations in Kenya that provide opportunities for employees to develop their skills and build their self-efficacy may increase employee motivation and job satisfaction, leading to improved organizational performance.

Empirical Review

Several studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between effective leadership, employee motivation, and job satisfaction in Kenya. The studies utilized different research designs, instruments, and theoretical frameworks to investigate the topic. Four empirical studies will be reviewed to provide insight into this relationship.

Mukuru (2018) examined the impact of transformational leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the public sector in Kenya. The study utilized a sample of 250 respondents drawn from different government ministries. The study found that transformational leadership has a positive impact on employee motivation and job satisfaction. The study recommended that public sector organizations should adopt transformational leadership practices to improve employee motivation and job satisfaction.

Wambua (2019) investigated the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the private sector in Kenya. The study utilized a sample of 150 respondents drawn from different private companies. The study found that transformational leadership style has a positive impact on employee motivation and job satisfaction. The study recommended that private sector organizations should adopt transformational leadership practices to enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction.

Mwai (2016) examined the relationship between perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and employee motivation in the banking sector in Kenya. The study utilized a sample of 300 respondents drawn from different banks. The study found that perceived organizational support has a positive impact on job satisfaction and employee motivation. The study recommended that

organizations should provide a supportive work environment to enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction.

Kinyua (2017) investigated the impact of self-efficacy on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the telecommunications sector in Kenya. The study utilized a sample of 200 respondents drawn from different telecommunication companies. The study found that self-efficacy has a positive impact on employee motivation and job satisfaction. The study recommended that organizations should provide opportunities for employees to develop their skills and build their self-efficacy to enhance employee motivation and job satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low-cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

RESULTS

The results were grouped into various research gap categories namely as conceptual, contextual, and geographical.

Conceptual Gaps

Conceptual is the missing gap of knowledge which is related to the role a variable play in an already existing body of knowledge and it is a sub-set of research gap. Ngugi (2019) conducted a study on the influence of leadership styles on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the banking sector in Kenya. Kariuki (2017) conducted a study on the impact of communication on leadership effectiveness in the public sector in Kenya. These two studies presented a conceptual gap since our study will focus on the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya.

Contextual and Geographical Gap

Contextual gap refers to a situation where there is a difference between what is being communicated and the context in which it is being communicated. It occurs when the intended meaning of a message is unclear because the audience does not have enough background knowledge or context to understand it fully. Geographical gap, on the other hand, refers to a situation where there is a physical distance between the sender and receiver of a message. It can create communication challenges, such as time zone differences, language barriers, and cultural differences, which may lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Omondi (2018) conducted a study on the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the healthcare sector in Nigeria. The study focused on the healthcare sector in Nigeria, presenting a contextual and geographical gap in the existing literature on the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya. Okoth (2017) conducted a study on the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the hospitality industry in Tanzania. The study focused on the hospitality industry

in Tanzania, presenting a contextual and geographical gap in the existing literature on the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya. Mugambi (2019) conducted a study on the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the education sector in Uganda. The study focused on the education sector in Uganda, presenting a contextual and geographical gap in the existing literature on the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya.

Methodological Gap

This type of research gap emerges as a result of the research methodology or design of existing studies. One research study that presents a methodological gap in the existing literature on the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya is the study conducted by Mukuru (2018). While the study investigated the impact of transformational leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the public sector in Kenya, it utilized a sample of 250 respondents and relied on self-reported data. This presents a methodological gap as the study did not use a randomized sample, and the data collected may be subject to self-report biases. Wambua (2019) conducted a study on the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation and job satisfaction in the private sector in Kenya. The study utilized a sample of 150 respondents drawn from different private companies and relied on self-reported data collected through questionnaires. This presents a methodological gap as the study did not use a randomized sample, and the data collected may be subject to self-report biases.

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Overall, the identified studies present methodological gaps in the existing literature on the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya. These gaps highlight the need for further research to use a more rigorous research design and methodology to investigate the impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya.

Conclusions

This study has demonstrated the significant impact of effective leadership on employee motivation and job satisfaction in Kenya. The findings reveal that when leaders exhibit transformational leadership behaviors, such as providing intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence, employees are more motivated and satisfied with their jobs. This is because effective leaders create a positive work environment that fosters teamwork, communication, and innovation, which in turn leads to increased productivity, higher job performance, and better employee retention rates. Therefore, it is vital for organizations in

Kenya to invest in leadership development programs that aim to enhance transformational leadership behaviors among their leaders. By doing so, they can create a more engaged and productive workforce that is committed to achieving organizational goals and objectives.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that organizations in Kenya invest in leadership development programs that focus on enhancing transformational leadership behaviors among their leaders. These programs should provide training and coaching to leaders on how to display behaviors such as providing intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. Additionally, organizations should provide opportunities for their leaders to practice these behaviors in real-life situations to reinforce their learning.

Furthermore, organizations should prioritize creating positive work environments that foster teamwork, communication, and innovation. This can be achieved by promoting a culture of open communication, providing opportunities for employee development and growth, and recognizing and rewarding high-performing employees. By creating a positive work environment, leaders can increase employee motivation and job satisfaction, which in turn leads to increased productivity and better organizational outcomes.

Finally, organizations should regularly assess the effectiveness of their leadership development programs and make necessary adjustments to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their leaders and employees. By continuously improving their leadership development programs, organizations can ensure that their leaders are equipped with the skills and behaviors necessary to motivate and engage their employees, leading to a more productive and satisfied workforce.

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