The Influence of Organizational Leadership on Performance of Universities in Kenya

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Abstract

Universities in Kenya are facing challenges arising from rapid expansion, increased high education demand and competitive pressures. With heightened levels of rivalry, the question of sustaining their performance is critical. Themain objective of this study was to investigate the effect of organizational leadership on performance of universities in Kenya. Organizational leadership was operationalized on the basis ofability to create clear strategies, envisioning corporate priorities, employee empowerment as well as infrastructural and resource support This study adopted a mixed research design consisting of explanatory and cross-sectional survey designs to determine the cause- and- effect of the study variables model incorporating the strategic leadership constructs was examined using multiple linear regression model.The target population of this study was 25 universities comprising of 289 respondents randomly selected from the top and middle level management.A semi- structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data while secondary data was collected using document review and was used to validate the primary data. Using stratified simple sampling method, a sample size of 168 respondents was selected. The response rate was approximately eighty eight percent and was adequate for making research inferences and drawing conclusions. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and this included percentages, frequencies, mean and standard deviations while inferential statistics involved regression analysis. The findings of this study established that organizational leadership has positive and significant influence on university performance in Kenya.This suggests that the quality of leadership traits directly impacts on the extent to which a university attains it goals. The study recommends that for universities in Kenya to sustain their performance, there is need for careful integration of carefully designed leadership strategies.As well as optimal investment in development of leadership skills.

Key words: Organizational leadership, Organizational performance, University performance, corporate priorities

Introduction

The role of leadership in ensuring high performance organizations and employee organizational commitment cannot be overemphasized (Ullah,2013; Murad, & Gill, 2016).Organizational leadership is an issue that is gaining widespread apprehension and taking centre stage discussion in virtually all boardrooms and which has initiated heated debate and thousands of empirical studies in the past one century. The quality of an organization's top leaders is a critical influence on its overall effectiveness and continuing adaptability. Yet little current research examines leadership within the context of organizations.

Despite the research efforts, literature appears disconnected and perhaps this is due to the fact that studies in organizational leadership are context free(Zaccaro&Klimoski, 2001).

Today's university educationsector has become so complex with fierce competition and heightened levels of rivalry which has forced many top managers to strive for better leadership talents to become more effective (Mostashari, 2009).Furthermore, Kenyan, universities are facing challenges arising from rapid expansion, increased high education demand and competitive pressures (Mbirithi, 2013).

Kjelin, (2009) explains organizational leadership as an ability of an organization to anticipate, envision, and maintain flexibility, and empower othersto create a strategic chance and a viable future of the organization. Further,organizational leadership is widely recognized as an important dual focused management approach that works towards what is best for employees and the management in order to sustain organizational survival and growth (Surya, (2015).

Despite the importance of organizational leadership to researchers and the top administration,there is uncertainty and diverse debate on the relation and impacts on performance especially within universities(Lankshear, Kerr, Laschinger& Wong 2013). Advanced leadership is seen to boost organizational performance and improve customer service delivery (Mathew,Esowe, &Ajagbe, 2016; Edoka, 2015) This study seeks to address this gap by advancing an empirical discussion on the relationship between organizational leadership and performance of universities.

A review of literature shows that examining the association between organizational leadership and university performance is divergent on how the concepts are interrelated as argued by Mabey, (2013) and thatorganizational leadership has a direct cause and effect relationship upon organizations and their Performance as measured by change tolerance, employee motivation and institutional effectiveness (Raja &Palanichamy, 2011).Thus, organizations that incorporate organizational leadership are able to deal with environmental complexities and to gain competitive advantage which are essential components and which acts as a strong pillar towards organizational performance.

This study developeda conceptual model of the hypothesised relationship between organizational leadership and university performance based on the agency theory and integrating various strands of research into a single model. The principal finding is that organizational leadership is valuable but the extent and dimension is affected by other factors including policies, organizational resources as well the competitive environment. This study examined the influence of organizational leadership on performance of universities in Kenya. The key dimensions of

strategic leadership comprise of strategy formulation, corporate priorities, empowerment, infrastructural and resource support are utilized in this study.

Performance of universities is measured using non -financial indicators comprising of teaching effectiveness, and research measures.

High Education in Kenya

Higher education plays a vital role of building the human resources capacity required to support theeconomic development and growth (Jalaliyoon&Taherdoost, 2012).Interestingly, Higher Education (HE) is becoming a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge driven global economy (Henard, 2008).In Africa, performance of universities has remained elusive (Kilemi&Njuguna, 2007) and HE sector has continued to experiencefierce competition in the context of globalisation of education (Marginson, 2007). The competitive arena has brought in new frameworks, which build upon strategic management or integration of the vision, mission, and objectives as important determinants of the direction the organisation is taking (Hinton, 2012) and which is considered crucial for the achievement of higher performance, direction, and consistency in the allocation of organisational resources (Marjanova&Fotov, 2014).A common characteristic of universities performance rests in its ability to translate its strategic intent into clear goals (Richard, Devinney, Yip, & Johnson, 2009).

The situation in Kenya is not any different as university education has become such a high profile issue in the 21st century (Mbirithi 2013).It has been noted that the rapid expansion of universities education has compromised the quality of education as is indicated bythe quality of

teaching, research and library facilities; overcrowding in the halls of residence; increased student riots; and staff dissolution (Owino, Kibera, Munyoki, and Wainaina (2014).

Under these circumstances, the sustainability of performance in Kenyan universities may remain an elusive goal.

Despite the challenges alluded to, the quest for university education in Kenya has continuously increased thus creating the need for transformation of the higher education sector in order to achieve performance goals as well as address national challenges such as pursuit of socio-economic development, achievement of Vision 2030, embracing innovation, creativity, and technology adoption (Gudo, Ole &Oanda, 2011).Existing organisational leadership studies have concentrated on other sectors mainly manufacturing sectors. This is limiting considering that organisation performance also affects service sectors such universities. Empirical evidence suggests that there exists a performance complexity in universities in Kenya.Furthermore, few endeavours have been directed towards understanding the manner in which organizational leadership impacts on the performance of universities in Kenya.This raises the question as to why there is a gap between organizational leadership and performance. Perhaps this is due to the inadequate attention given to the organizational leadership strategies and perhaps untapped opportunities to address this problem.

In an attempt to accelerate their performance, universities appear to be paying inadequate attention to organizational leadership which is embedded in the ability to create clear strategies, envision corporate priorities, promote employee empowerment as well as build infrastructural

and resource support. Indeed, the major challenge for universities lies in the inability to formulate strategic leadership strategies (Crawford, 2014).

It is against the backdrop of declining university performance and increased competitiveness that a debate has been triggered concerning the requirements for successful organizational performance (Mbirithi, 2007).In this context, the government is taking a fresh look at the performance standards of universities with a view to implementing those that constantly measure and quantify activities, such as superior teaching techniques and innovative exploration of research, that comply with government mandates and also increase the institutions' reputation and national ranking (Thugge, Heller &Kiringai, 2011). Therefore, this study sought to investigate the influence of organizational leadership on performance of universities in Kenya. The main research objective was to investigate impact of organizational leadership on performance of universities in Kenya. Organizational leadership was operationalized on the basis of creating clear strategies, envisioning corporate priorities, employee empowerment as well as infrastructural and resource support.A careful evaluation of these objectives highlights the importance of organizational leadership and justifies the concern to provide an empirical link between the two study constructs, organizational leadership and organizational performance.

Literature Review

Universalistic Theory

The universalistic theory is also referred to as the best practice model, which is based on the assumption that there is a set of superior or best strategic management practices, and that adopting them will inevitably lead to superior organizational performance (Luthans& Summer, 2005). The notion of best practice was identified initially in the early US models, many of which

mooted the idea that the adoption of certain 'best' strategic management practices would result in enhanced organizational performance.

Proponents of this theory state that there are certain organization practices that are better suited than others to improve organizational performance. Thus, the proponents of this approach considered that adoption of high performance practices of strategic management constitutes an excellent way to increased organizational value and consequently an increase in organizational efficiency and performance principles.

Organizational performance is a multidimensional concept which takes a more logical thought and as such its one area that has been targeted as a means of providing a competitive advantage. Over recent years, the business environment has become increasingly competitive, ultimately forcing managers across the globe to establish competitive strategies such as business processes and leadership skills that allowing them to compete within this environment. These strategies are formed in the hope of providing the organization with a sustainable competitive advantage (Hamlin, 2005). The Best Practice theory in this research provides an emphasis on techniques, processes and activities that are more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique, method, and process used by another organization (Lessard, Lucea, &Vives, 2013). It is argued that organizations such as universities will benefit and see improvements in organizational performance if they can identify, gain commitment to and implement a set of best strategic management practices Kreitz, (2008).

Resource Based View

Resource-based view (RBV) is one of the most widely accepted theories of strategic management (Barney, Ketchen, and Wright, (2011).The RBV theory focuses on how organizations should strategically position themselves in order to become competitive in volatile business environment Chepngeno,Wagoku&Okello(2012). The central premise of the RBV theory is to address the fundamental question of why firms are different and how firms achieve and sustain competitive advantages by deploying their resources. Fundamentally, this theory formulates the firm to be a bundle of resources and that these resources are combined in such a way which makes firms different from one another. The central proposition of the theory is that firms are heterogeneous in terms of their bundles of resources that they own and control and this heterogeneity is an outcome of resource market imperfections and resource immobility (Barney, 1991; Levie, 2006).

The RBV theory treats business as potential creators of value, added capabilities and potential core competences that enhance a firm performance (Halawi, Aronson & McCarthy, 2005). The RBV approach requires that a firm be seen not through its activities in the product market, but as a unique bundle of resources that are complex, intangible and dynamic (Aryanto, Fontana &Afiff, 2015).In particular, RBV theory looks at how organizations can combine resources in their networks in order create new products and improve performance.This theory is of importance because it explains that organizations should go beyond the traditional analysis of

internal and external environment and analyze the potential of its resources to generate sustainable competitive advantage and performance.

Empirical Review

Organizational Leadership and Performance

Organizations depend upon capable leadership to guide them through unprecedented changes. Yet, there is ample evidence in the literature that even some of the best and most venerable organizations are failing to adapt to change, implement their strategic plans successfully or prepare for a more uncertain future due to poor leadership (Pasmore, Lafferty & Spencer, 2009). A study by Uike (2013) provided similar sentiments that leadership constitute a determining factor in performance and this is through active participation of the leader. The scenario is clear that without proper leadership, even the best and boldest strategies and ideas die on the vine, their potential is never realized (Pasmore*et al.,* 2009).Further, Davies, (2004) argues that leaders not only improve the status of organizations through having a clear strategies as guided by corporate priorities but also build on the strategic capabilities. The study found a significant positive relationship between organizational leadership and performance.

Organizational performance generally is one of the most important constructs in management research and one that attracts great interest from researchers since it acts as an important criterion of evaluating organizations, their actions, and environments (Richard, Devinney, Yip, & Johnson, 2009).Consequently, organizational performance is the ultimate dependent variable of interest for researchers concerned with just about any area of management and one that is difficult, especially when what has to be measured keeps changing (Shook,2005:Richard, Devinney, Yip & Johnson, 2009).

Organizational performance is surprisingly an open question with few using consistent definitions and measures consequently (Kirby, 2005).According to Zuriekat, SalamehandAlrawashdeh, (2011), performance can be measured using financial and non-financial indicators. However, choosing performance measures to use is a challenge to many managers today (Kurien&Qureshi, 2011). According to Stede, Chow and Lin, (2006), the new competitive realities of increased customization and flexibilities have led to the use of nonfinancial measures of performance. This sentiment is shared by Gallani, KajiwaraandKrishnan, (2015) who indicated that new inadequacies in the financial performance measures have led to innovations of non-financial indicators and this is mainly because it is believed that they ultimately affect profitability.

In recent years there has been a strong drive to improve performance in universities in Kenya largely as a result of governmental desires to ensure these institutions become more accountable for their funding. In examining the construct of organizational performance, it is important to examine its relationship to the organizational effectiveness and mission accomplishments. Wang (2010) argued that performance of universities can be measured by the extent to which each of university functions is maintained toward the university goals and in relations to mission accomplishments. This argument was further ratified by Mandy (2009) who argued that the process of determining the performance of an organization such as a university requires a careful selection and measuring of a set of key variables that can allow an organization to detect as well as monitor its competitive position (Davood&Morteza, 2012).

Perhaps the most interesting arguments on university performance was by Amunga (2011) who argued that universities play a vital role in engaging in quality education, quality teaching and learning processes and even more so their social responsibilities. Thus, the success of every university in Kenya in the 21st century depends on how much quality, timely and relevant information its academic community is able to access and utilize and how the same community is able to contribute back into the community and into the knowledge basket. Under this framework, it would be logical to treat universities performance in terms of teaching quality, research and community service measured in terms of student enrolment levels, number of academic programs and amount of research grant won, knowledge creation, new programmes developed, public rating and reputation (Machuki&Aosa, 2011).

H_{01} : Organizational leadership has no influence on performance of university in Kenya.

Research Methodology

The study adopted explanatory and cross-sectional survey designs as recommended by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009). The purpose of adopting a mixed design was to obtain in-depth responses to achieve better understanding of the phenomena under, investigation and to test the cause-effect relationship between strategic intent execution and universities performance in Kenya. This is consistent with the recommendations by Saunders *et al.*, (2009) and Creswell, (2009) who asserted that a mixed-methods research provides researchers with an in-depth look at the context, processes, interactions and precise measurement of attitudes and outcomes.

In addition, this research design utilizes the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative research (Babbie, 2011).

The explanatory research design goes beyond the descriptive research design and attempts to explain the reason for an existing phenomenon through establishing casual relationships between variables in high education context (Sultan &Wong 2010).This research design allowed for generalization of the sampled survey findings while the cross-sectional design ensured administration of questionnaires from a large number of respondents in a relatively short time (Owino, *et al.,* 2014).The dependent variable was considered to be a continuous variable and thus regression analysis was adopted as recommended by field (2009). Univariate analysis used to perform regression on the relationship between the two study variables. In particular organizational leadership was regressed on performance as shown in the model below

$$\textbf{University Performance} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \textbf{Organizational Leadership} + \mathcal{E}$$

This study was undertaken at 25 universities in Kenya which have been in operation for more than two years from when this study was carried out. The unit of observation was the top level and middle level management comprising of deputy vice chancellors Academics, deputy vice chancellors finance and planning, Registrar academics and registrar administration and the middle level management consisting of the faculty dean and the chair of departments or their equivalent within the sampled universities.This is according to Teulir and Rouleau (2013) recommendations that top and middle level managers play a critical role in performance measures.

Since it was not possible to study the entire population, this study used stratified simple sampling methodas recommended by Shapiro (2006) in order to identify the respective respondents for each of the universities from whom primary data was collected. This sampling method involved dividing the population into strata in terms of employees in the top level management and employees in the middle level management and an appropriate sample was selected in each of the stages. The major advantage of this was that all units within the strata were considered (Nafiu, 2012). Furthermore, the method was flexible and helped the researcher to break down a big group in order to pull the desire sample size of interest. Gakungu, Gitau, Njoroge, and Kimani (2012) used this technique.

The study used both primary and secondary data which was based on the objective of the study, to investigate the influence of organizational leadership on performance of universities in Kenya. The recommendations of Malhorta (2007) is that examination of secondary data is a pre requisite of primary data. In this research, secondary data was collected through document review of the strategic plans for each of the universities, while an interview schedule was used to obtain further information from the respondents .Open ended questions were used to collect qualitative data in addition to reviews strategic plans, policy manuals, quality circles manuals and community partnership manuals were analysed. Qualitative data was useful as it generated additional information and also was used to validate data collected through the questionnaires. The researcher used research assistance to drop and pick the questionnaires from the respondents.

The questionnaire adopted a five scale likert scale statement and open and close-ended questions. The study questionnaire was tested for content validity which was enhanced through pre-testing on 10 respondents drawn from faculty section of some selected universities. The respondents in the pilot test did not form part of the final respondents (Field, 2013).Internal consistency of the research instrument was assessed by computing Cronbach alpha coefficients for all times and the value of the coefficient was found to be more than 0.7 hence all the items of the questionnaire were found to be reliable.Grinyer, (2009) asserts that the balancing act between the researcher and the care for the respondents is of paramount importance thus this research ensured ethical research conduct was maintained with all consideration of all matters pertaining to ethical concerns.

Results and Discussions

Out of the expected 168 responses, the study successfully managed to successfully get 149 filled-in and returned questionnaires. This represented an overall successful response rate of 88.6 per cent. The unsuccessful response rate of 11.4 per cent consisted of those questionnaires that were never returned. A response rate of 88.6 per cent is acceptable and sufficient for achieving the objectives of the study (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2003). Further the test between the independent dependent and dependent variable is discussed below:-

Descriptive Statistics

University Characteristics

This section presented the characteristics of the unit of study with respect to their status, age and level of employment.

Table 4.1: University Characteristics

Years from time of being chartered	Frequency	Percent
Below Two years	8	5.4
2-5 Years	16	10.7
6-9 Years	34	22.8
10-13 Years	15	10.1
Above 14 Years	76	51
Total	**149**	**100**
Status of the University	Frequency	Percent
Public Chartered	68	45.6
Public university Constituent college	4	2.7
Private chartered university	57	38.3
Operating under letters of Interim Authority	20	13.4
Total	**149**	**100**

Source: Survey Data (2016)

Table 4.1 indicates that 51% of the universities that participated in this research had existed for more than 14 years and only 5.4% had existed for two years and below since they were chartered Table 4.1 further shows that the respondents were evenly distributed across universities with different status and ownership with public chartered universities at 45.6%, public university constituent colleges 2.7%, private chartered universities 38.3 and those operating under letters of interim authority 13.4 %. This shows that 86.6% of the universities had received their charter. This is in line with the vision 2030 of provision of quality (HE) which contributes to accountability and research sustainability (Gudo*et al.,* 2011).

Descriptive Statistics on Organizational Leadership

This section discusses the descriptive statistics of independent variable which is organizational leadership as well as the dependent variable university performance used in the study based on the domains in the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics is useful as it highlights potential relationship between variable (Saunders *et al*., 2009). The Dispersion of the responses in each domain was considered and inferred using the mean and the standard deviation and this was as presented below. Organizational leadership was measured using four dimensions namely; creating clear strategies, corporate priority, empowerment and infrastructural and resource support. The descriptive statistics for each dimension are shown in table 4.2

Table 4.2: Organizational Leadership

	n	Min	Max	Mean	StdDev
Creating clear strategies					
The university has clear vision and mission statements	149	1	5	4.7	0.574
The vision of the university is widely understood and accepted by all in the university	149	1	5	4.1	0.896
Our vision/mission promotes long term thinking	149	3	5	4.3	0.665
Our vision/mission has an aspect of making us remain competitive	149	2	5	4.3	0.738
Our university has clear strategic goals that need to be achieved	149	1	5	4.2	0.893
our goals are developed through participation by all key members	149	1	5	3.8	1.027
The CEO commands the strategic direction of the university	149	1	5	4.1	0.961
The executive has a clear focus on implementing/executing strategic intent	149	1	5	4.0	0.911
Our leadership strategy supports the implementation of strategic intent	149	2	5	4.2	0.814
Without the right leadership our strategies would not work.	149	1	5	4.5	0.776
Aggregate				**4.22**	**0.825**
Corporate priority					
The executive considers the execution of strategic intent to be a top corporate priority	149	1	5	4.1	0.850
Strategic objectives are linked to corporate priorities	149	1	5	4.1	0.800
Enhanced policies and procedures for strategic intent execution	149	1	5	4.0	0.951
strategic plans enable us to know where to put more efforts	149	1	5	4.0	0.934
The top management demonstrates the ability to quickly and effectively execute strategic intent	149	1	5	4.0	0.981
Our strategic plan is aligned to our strategic priorities	149	1	5	4.0	0.934
Building strategy execution requires a focused leadership capabilities	149	1	5	4.3	0.821
Aggregate				**4.1**	**0.896**

Infrastructural and resource support					
Top management provide resources earmarked for strategy execution	149	1	5	3.6	0.970
I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.	149	1	5	3.6	0.960
Our obsession of winning is sometimes out of proportion with our resources	149	1	5	3.5	0.990
Strategic intent guide resource allocations	149	1	5	3.6	0.960
Resource allocation is aligned to organizational objective	149	1	5	3.7	1.208
Resource allocation is aligned to organizational objectives and the realization of our strategic intent.	149	1	5	3.6	0.940
The top management provides the infrastructure for implementation of strategic intent	149	1	5	3.7	0.950
Using Technology can facilitate our Strategic Intent	149	1	5	4.2	0.794
Technology adoption helps in creating and sustaining a high achievement and success in strategy execution	149	1	5	4.3	0.753
Aggregate Score				**3.8**	**0.947**
Aggregate score for organizational leadership				**3.93**	**0.915**

Source: (Survey Data, 2016)

The results in Table 4.2 indicate that the aggregate scores creating clear strategies had a mean of 4.22 and (standard deviation of 0.825), corporate priority had a mean of 4.1 and (standard deviation = 0.896), empowerment showed mean of 3.60 and (standard deviation = 0.990) and infrastructural and resource support as of mean of 3.80 and (standard deviation = 0.947). The results of the descriptive analysis revealed that the aggregate mean score for the four constructs of organizational leadership were approaching 4.00 on the 5- point likert scale used in this study.

The aggregate mean scores and standard deviation were 3.93 and 0.915 respectively. This implies that the respondents agreed that each of the statements listed in the dimensions under organizational leadership applied to their firms as demonstrated by the relatively small standard deviation. This infers that the respondents' responses closely clustered around the aggregate score of 4 and that there is agreement amongst the respondents that organizational leadership impacts on the performance of universities in Kenya. Infrastructural and resource support had the highest standard deviation of 0.915.

This high value concurs to the findings of another study byPasmore*et al*., (2009) who empirically established that resource allocation plays a key role in performance of organizations. This was further validated by research done by AMA, (2007) who found that having clear strategies, offering infrastructural support and resources are key in organizations that want to remain competitive.

Test of Hypothesis

In order to establish the statistical significance of the hypothesised relationships, univariate analysis was used to test the null hypothesis at 95 per cent confidence level (α=0.05). The research sought to assess the effect of organizational leadership on performance of universities in Kenya. To this end a null hypothesis with an assumption organizational leadership has no effect on performance of universities in Kenya was tested. Table 4.3 shows that the coefficient of organizational leadership was 4.176 with a t statistic of 4.89 and a corresponding P value of 0.000. Therefore, at 95% level of significance the null hypothesis was rejected implying that organizational leadership has significant effect on university performance in Kenya. Since the coefficient for organizational Leadership is positive it can be inferred that Organizational leadership has a positive effect on universities performance in Kenya. The magnitude of the coefficient of organizational leadership is 4.176; this implies that a one unit change in the score of organizational leadership leads to 4.176 units change in the score of university performance. The results are presented in table 4.3

Table 4.3: Effect of Organizational Leadership on University Performance

Post Estimation Diagnostics			
	Test Statistic	**P-value**	
Adjusted R-squared	0.4798		
R-squared	0.4835		
F-statistic (1, 143)	133.84	0.000****	
Breusch-Pagan Test (Heteroskedasticity)	0.02	0.8903***	
Ramsey Specification test	0.13	0.9426***	
Mean VIF	1.00		
Regression results			
	Coefficients	**t-statistic**	**P-value**
Organizational Leadership	6.155	11.57	0.000***
Constant	-9.851	-4.67	0.000***
Key ** significant at 5 percent *** significant at 1 percent			

Source: Survey Data(2016)

$$University\ Performance = -9.851 + 6.155\,\text{Organizational Leadership}$$

The specific objective sought to assess the effect of organizational leadership on performance of universities in Kenya. To this end a null hypothesis with an assumption organizational leadership has no effect on performance of universities in Kenya was tested. Table 4.3 shows that the coefficient of organizational leadership was 6.155 with a t statistic of 11.57 and a corresponding P value of 0.000. Therefore, at one per cent level of significance the null hypothesis was rejected implying that organizational leadership has significant effect on university performance in Kenya. Since the coefficient for organizational Leadership is positive it can be inferred that Organizational leadership has a positive and significant effect on universities performance in Kenya.

The magnitude of the coefficient of organizational leadership is 6.155; this implies that a one unit change in the score of organizational leadership leads to 6.155 units change in the score of university performance.

Qualitative data was collected from open ended questions that were designed to be explanatory in nature. The data was extracted and analysed on the basis of common themes and patterns. The findings were that there existed several organizational leadership challenges such leadership styles and communication disconnect and hence there is need to develop commitment by the members of an organization to key strategic decision. These are findings validated by Edoka, 2015;Muijs, 2011) who argued that organizations must utilize their organizational leadership on the interplay between creating clear strategies, prioritizing goals , infrastructural support as well as the connection of both, with behaviours of its employees remain competitive.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In exploring influence of organizational leadership on performance of universities in Kenya, this study focused on four major constructsnamely; creating clear strategies, corporate priority, empowerment and infrastructural and resource support. On the basis of the specific objective of this study and consequently the research findings of this research, organizational leadership has positive influence on performance of universities in Kenya.Universities in Kenya face challenges of increasing competitiveness and as a result are pressured to deliver their performance targets yet many believe that they are not able to consistently achieve their fullest potential. Furthermore, the demand for university education in Kenya continues to increase and the paradigm shift calls for a transformation of the higher education sector in the context of meeting national challenges of social- economic development and vision 2030.

In an attempt to accelerate their performance, the universities have paid inadequate attention on organizational leadership.

Further, the study showed that organizational leadership varies from one university to another depending on the ownership status. The expectation of this study was that organizational leadership was a key dimension and which affects university performance. This prospect was established through statistical analysis which indicated that organizational leadership positively affects performance.

This study foundout that organizational leadership had a positive influence on performance of universities in Kenya. In line with the findings of this study, the recommendation is that the university top management should consider embracing organizational leadership that entails development of clear strategies and corporate priorities. Equally, the top management should ensure that employees are empowered in order to attain corporate targets. Universities should also establish appropriate, reliable and diversifies leadership strategies aligned to their organizational goals and that further, top university management should provide an appropriate environment for consultation with employees. Future research should focus on other factors that affect university performance such as innovation and technological advancement.

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