



Transformational leadership style and employee job satisfaction in county government of Kakamega, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Transformational leadership is critical because of its contribution to organizational positive outcomes such as improved performance, motivation, and employee job satisfaction. Existing empirical and extant literature confirms that there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction. This study complemented the findings by studying the effect of transformational leadership style on employee job satisfaction in the county government of Kakamega. A descriptive research design was adopted, focusing on employees at Kakamega County. Out of the 188 questionnaires issued, 174 (81 percent) filled and returned the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive and chi-square. The findings indicated that the transformational leadership style influences employee job satisfaction.

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Introduction

Transformational leadership has become a widely acclaimed concept in both academia and managerial practitioners owing to its contribution to organizational positive behavior such as commitment, reduced absenteeism, loyalty, job satisfaction, self-efficacy, motivation, creativity and organizational performance (Bronkhorst, Steijn & Vermeeren, 2015; Newland, Newton, Podlog, Legg & Tanner, 2015). Banerji and Krishnan (2000) note that transformational leadership interventions are becoming a necessity for organisations to become competitive in the global environment. Personal values that could have started out as separate but related, ultimately end up being fused into one common purpose, unleashing high amounts of energy and enthusiasm that reinforces the concept of a shared vision. Asrar-ul-Haqa and Kuchinke (2016) concurs that when transformational leadership style results in emotional attachment of the followers, and trust and respect towards the leader. In reciprocal, employees exhibit extraordinary behavior to fulfill their leader's shared vision

Drawing on the work of House (1977) and Burns (1978) in his book on Leadership, they introduced the transformational leadership theories, later expounded by Bass (1985). A plethora of studies show that transformational leadership is one of the most studied leadership styles (Gilbert, Horsnon & Kellowaj, 2016) owing to its influence in organizational success Tajasom, Hung, Nikbin, and Hyun (2015) echoe the same sentiment, that transformational leaders provide a vision which is twofold; motivation in achieving a particular goal and helping followers to accomplish the organizational goals and mission by working with them and through them and encouraging and influencing their beliefs, values, attitudes and behavior. They submitted that a transformational leader, leads their employees by providing them a vision and modifying their beliefs, attitudes and inspiring them.

The County Governments in Kenya have continuously reported a pattern of leadership failures like the nurses and doctors strikes in 2017 and 2019, indicating absence of proper leadership. In addition, public complaints about inefficiency, corruption, absenteeism of county official and negligence are among cited occurrences in the county. The advancement of County Integrated Development

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Plans (CIDP), Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), vision 2030 and the FOUR Agenda are key to the progress of the country. Ndegwa and Minja (2018) study on determinants of job satisfaction among county government enforcement officers in Nairobi County found that enforcement officers were largely dissatisfied. Behavioral tendency of harassment of hawkers, destroying their merchandise, threatening, beating and even killing those who failed to buy their way out through hefty bribes. The behavioral issues can be attributed to low level of job satisfaction of the officers. Chukwura (2017) implies that ineffective and detrimental leadership behaviour, termed as toxic, destructive, or tyrannical leadership, has an adverse impact, not only on the organization, but also on the well-being of the employees.

Despite extensive research on the influence of transformation leadership on job satisfaction, there is a glaring gap in the county governments in Kenya. Drawing from previous studies, the study was descriptive in nature employing descriptive statistics involving frequencies, measures of central tendency and chi-square with an endeavor of contributing to the growing body of knowledge in transformation leadership and employee satisfaction by answering the question; Does transformational leadership style influence employee satisfaction in Kakamega County?

The paper is organized as follows; the first section is an introduction, followed by a section of literature is presented, focusing on theoretical background, empirical studies and theory development. The next section looks at research methodology, detailing the research design, data collection and analysis. Lastly the findings are presented, a discussion and conclusion follow.

Literature Review

Theoretical Background and Conceptual Framework

The study is anchored on Herzberg Two-Factor theory based on the belief that a satisfied employee is a productive employee. Herzberg, Mausner and Sydnerman (1959) proposed that long term positive feelings towards a job is influenced by work itself, responsibility and advancement. Herzberg (1966) developed the Hygiene-Motivation theory incorporating two factors relating to the job; motivators and hygiene factors. He viewed motivators as intrinsic to the job encompassing, earlier proposition by Herzberg et al. (1959); achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility and advancement. Galanou, Georgakopoulos & Sotiropoulos (2010) suggest that factors that lead to satisfaction were intrinsic motivators which had little to do with pay but were more inclined towards responsibility and recognition. On the other hand, Hygiene factors were extrinsic to the job involving, company policy, administration and supervision, and salary, interpersonal relations with subordinates, peers and working conditions. Peerbhai (2006) points that hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction, but do not motivate. It is a preconception that hygiene factors should inherently be factored as part of the basic job design; hence, it could be viewed as a prerequisite for any job.

Herzberg (1966) viewed the two factors on different continuums arising from the job setting. He proposed that job satisfaction can be increased through intrinsic rewards or the motivators, while dissatisfaction could be achieved by maintaining hygiene factors since they do not directly relate to the task but influence the conditions that encompass performing the task. The theory assumes that the content of a person's job is the source of motivation. Therefore, jobs should include motivators that are intrinsically rewarding in order to realize job satisfaction. Motivators result in positive job attitudes because they satisfy the worker's need for self-actualization which is also supported by Maslow's Theory of Needs. When needs are met, they result in motivation, hence, job satisfaction.

Critics of Herzberg's theory argue that similar constructs cannot be measured for migrant and resident workers, as their need levels differ by a large degree. Findings from work done by Lundberg, Gudmundson, & Andersson (2009) reveal that feedback and responsibility had a greater impact on satisfaction than knowledge and training. Responsibility is seen as an indication of self-control and status in a working environment. It is also argued that the theory does not accommodate for differences between various people but assumes that every person will react similarly towards shifts in hygiene or motivation factors. Herzberg's theory suggests that challenging jobs which offer opportunities for advancement motivate people (Garg & Rastogi, 2005). Despite, the critique the theory has a wide applicability in modern research.

Job satisfaction

Gilbert, Hoesmon & Kelloway (2016) pointed that job satisfaction was one of the most studied concept in organizational research owing to its contribution to organizational outcomes such as employee commitment, reduced absenteeism, overall well-being, reduced turnover, attribute high levels of job satisfaction with reduced stress, higher empowerment, increased productivity, organizational growth, increased motivation among employees as well as organizational performance (Diaz-Serrano & Vieira, 2005; Sledge, Miles & Coppage, 2008).

Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian (1974) defined job satisfaction as the feeling an employee has about his or her job regarding pay, promotion, supervision, and the work itself. This definition is in line with hygiene factors, proposed by Elton Mayo and F.J. Roethlisberger in the Hawthorne studies (Bendix & Wickstrom, 2000). Ellickson & Logsdon (2002) definition encompasses the degree to which employees enjoy their work, similar to what Schermerhorn (1993) purported as a practical or emotional response towards several aspects of an employees' work. Newstrom (2007) and Kreitner & Kinicki (2009), definition encompass an emotional reaction (favourable or unfavourable) to an individual's responsibilities and workplace conditions. Generally put, job satisfaction, relates to an employee's attitude towards their work, heightened by pleasure or positive feelings the employee gains through achievements.

Based on the above definitions, job satisfaction results to positive and favourable attitudes towards the job, which are as a result of an employee's experiences at work. High satisfaction levels lead to positive feelings while low satisfaction levels lead to negative feelings. We argue that the degree of satisfaction largely depends upon the needs, expectations and the working environment of an individual. This implies that it is not a unitary concept; one can be relatively satisfied by one aspect of the job and dissatisfied with one or more facets (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2017). Some studies have argued that neither transactional nor transformational leadership style is capable of improving employee motivation and satisfaction level. However, despite employees favouring the contingent rewards aspects of transactional leadership, Epitropaki & Martin (2005b) suggest that employees prefer the inspiration and consideration aspects of transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership Style

Naidu & Van Der Walt (2005) view transformational leaders as people who inspire their followers to work towards the good of the company both in the short-term and long-term. Inspiration is created through influence and awareness about outcomes that relate to the realization of the organisation's vision. Ozaralli (2002) describes transformational leadership as a process where a strong personal identification is maintained with the leader. Mester & Roodt (2003) characterize a transformational leader as an empathetic person and people-oriented who focuses on people development. It follows that emotions and values where the role of the leader plays an integral part in making activities meaningful for followers.

As suggested by Maxwell (2005), the leaders gain influence through a relationship-building process and are seen to be trusting and supportive. It follows that the degree to which a leader is seen as transformational largely depends on the influence they have on followers. Undoubtedly, the transformational leader must harness skills to effectively communicate the vision and appeal to the interests of followers (Northouse, 2013). Transformational leadership style practices empathy, importance of collective identity, risk taking, kindness, relationship building and goal articulation (Jin, 2010). Adler & Reid (2008) also found that employees are most satisfied when their leader is supportive and considerate.

Research highlights transformational leadership as a preferred style to enhance performance levels in organisations. Nielsen, Yarker, Brenner & Randall (2008) infer that transformational leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their followers, stimulate awareness and enable them to transcend their own interests for the betterment of the organisation. Njiinu (2017) contemplates that transformational leaders motivate their followers to commit to the organizational objectives and perform beyond expectations. Transformational leaders strategically enhance job satisfaction levels by imparting a clear mission, vision and values to their followers (Cummings, McGregor, Davey & Lee, 2010).

Transformational leaders have the ability to influence followers to perform at maximum levels. This is achieved through their influence to inspire and challenge innovative thinking among followers with a view to solving problems differently. Avolio, Bass & Jung (1997) identified four dimensions of transformational leadership namely; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Chandrasekara, 2019)

Idealized Influence

The leader embraces high moral and ethical values and reinforces pride, respect and faith among followers. The leader makes an effort to promote his/her beliefs and values through influence (Flynn, 2009). Idealised influence comes into play when the leader expresses a sense of conviction and confidence, when making high impact decisions in the face of threats (Nielsen, Yarker, Brenner, Randall & Borg, 2008). Also known as charismatic leadership, Asrar-ul-Haqa & Kuchinke (2016), posit that the leaders act as role model by instilling pride and communicating a sense of mission and produces energy for achieving high work objectives (Brandt, Laitinen & Laitinen, 2016).

Through Idealised influence, leaders are able to provide followers with a sense of vision and mission, exhibit confidence whilst instilling emotions within their followers and make followers admire, respect and emulate them (Liang, Chang, Chi-wei, 2017). Ogola, Sikalieh & Linge (2017) describe idealised influence as a process where the leader instils faith, pride and respect among followers through inspiration. Coaching and mentoring initiatives allow for autonomy in decision making within a supportive environment. The idealized influence dimension of transformational leadership suggests that transformational leaders influence their subordinates by being role models (Belias & Koustelios, 2014).

Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation centres on promoting innovative ideas and creativity among followers to use their sense of logic and analyze situations using their creative thinking in a bid to find solutions (Njiinu, 2017). Intellectual stimulation occurs when the leader encourages creativity among followers to look for new and more efficient ways of solving problems by challenging the status quo (Mester, Visser & Roodt, 2013)

Much effort is placed on encouraging followers to proactively search for new ideas and to "think out of the box" when faced with challenges during daily activities. Barling, Comotois, Gaten & Kelly (2003) postulate that the leader encourages followers to challenge their conventional problem solving abilities and explore other avenues in order to stimulate deeper and innovative thinking. Brainstorming and problem solving techniques are utilized to guide the innovative thinking process. Intellectual stimulation ensures that employees are aware of their problems and capable enough to think about their problems in a more creative manner.

Individualized Consideration

Individualised consideration centres on identifying and addressing individual needs of followers through coaching and mentoring initiatives (Njiru, 2017). Mester, Visser & Roodt (2003) view it as an individualised consideration as a process whereby the leader identifies individual uniqueness, links to the needs to the organisational needs. This is supported by providing coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities. They recognize the unique needs for achievement, growth and desires by keenly listening to the needs and concern of followers. In so doing, they take care of the varying needs of autonomy, encouragement, responsibility, structure and instructions which fosters individual attention of followers as unique persons and doesn't reduce them to their function and roles (Brandt, Laitinen & Laitinen, 2016).

A supportive and caring climate is created by the leader, who plays the role of a listener by carefully identifying the strengths, weaknesses and development potentials of followers (Northouse, 2013). From the foregoing discussion, we can argue that a transformational leader can be viewed as a people orientated person who aligns followers towards the vision and goals of an organisation.

Empirical studies and hypothesis development

Previous studies have indicated that transformational leadership results in higher levels of job satisfaction than transactional leadership. Judge & Piccolo (2004) demonstrated a positive relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Berson & Linton (2005) study collaborate that a positive relationship exists between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction. Further support can be drawn from the findings of Nielsen et al., (2008) who found that transformational leadership was positively associated with better working conditions. Results of the study are in line with the supported Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which suggests that good working conditions lead to increased job satisfaction levels.

Hamidifar (2009) study in Islamic Azad University in Tehran demonstrated that transformational leadership positively determines the employees' job satisfaction. The findings showed that subordinates were more satisfied with transformational leadership style compared to other leadership style. Further, Bushra, Usman, & Naveed (2011) demonstrated that transformational leadership had a significant positive impact on the level of job satisfaction of employees.

Saad-Ur-Rehman, Mansoor & Bila (2012) study in the banking sector in Pakistan found that the branch manager greatly influenced employee job satisfaction. Latter study by Asrar-ul-Haqa and Kuchinke (2016) concur that Banking industry in Pakistan is prone to numerous challenges including employee turnover hence, the need for the human resource managers and top management to design effective leadership development programs. The aforementioned studies, leads us to the conclusion that transformational leadership has a positive influence on employee satisfaction. We therefore propose;

H₁: Transformational leadership style has a positive influence on employee job satisfaction at the County Government of Kakamega.

Research and Methodology

The study was descriptive in nature focusing on employees at Kakamega County. A preliminary version of the questionnaire was designed and content validity tested through expert opinions of faculty members in the school of business. A pilot study was then conducted and final questionnaire refined. Finally, 188 questionnaire were prepared and administered to employees in count government of Kakekmege. 174 responded translating into 81 percent response rate. Babbie (2007) notes that a response rate of about 60% is good, 70% very good while 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting from manual surveys. Baruchi & Holtom (2008) argues that the larger the response rate, the smaller the non-response error. Therefore the response rate for this study was deemed adequate.

From the 174 employees, 82(47%) of the respondents were female while 92(52%) were male. In relation to academic qualifications of the respondents, Majority 41(24%) had bachelor degree, 14(8%) had master qualification while none of the respondents had PhD qualification, implying that employees had adequate education.

On the number of years worked at the county, majority 88(51%) had worked for between 6-10 years while 56(32%) had worked for over ten years. This is an indication that the targeted organizations had employees with varied tenure and experience with their work and organization. With this varied experience the respondents the study was confident enough that their comments were going to be well informed.

On the department under which the respondents worked, 61(35%) worked for health department; 6(3%) worked for public administration; 17(10%) for transport and infrastructure; 8(5%) for youth and sports; 39(22%) for agriculture; 5(3%) for trade and industrialization; 18(10%) for education while 20(12%) for department of finance.

On the number of years employees had worked for the department, 48(17%) had worked for less than 1 year; 74(26%) for 1-5 years; 88(30%) for 6-10 years while 80(27%) had worked for over 10 years. On employee job category, 22(13%) were in the top management category; 37(66%) were middle level managers while 115(66%) were low- cadre management employees.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study were as shown in 1.0.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

		Frequency	Percent
Gender of Respondent	Male	92	53
	Female	82	47
	Total	174	100
Number of Years Worked for CG	Less than 1 year	6	3
	1-5 years	24	14
	6-10 years	88	51
	Over 10 years	56	32
	Total	174	100
Education Level	Other	13	8
	Certificate	40	23
	Diploma	66	38
	Bachelors	41	24
	Masters	14	8
	PHD	0	0
	Total	174	100
Employee Job Category	Top Management	22	13
	Middle Management	37	21
	Non-Management	115	66
	Total	174	100

Measures

Transformation leadership was the independent variable in the current study. It was measured using the 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5-strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree. 5 measures were used for transformational leadership. To ensure internal consistency, reliability was performed using Cronbach alpha. The dependent variable was employee job satisfaction, measured on a 5-point Likert type scale.

The study sought to examine the effect of transformational leadership on the employee satisfaction in Kakamega County. Overall Cronbach alpha for transformational leadership was 0.859, while employee satisfaction had an alpha of 0.826, indicating that reliability measures were adequate.

Results and Analyses

Descriptive statistics were used to measure the effect of transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction. Chi square was used to measure the effect of transformational leadership on employee job satisfaction. The results are presented in Table 2. Table 3 and Table 4.

The results of effect of transformational leadership are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Results for Transformational Leadership

Statement	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
My manager expresses confidence that goals will be met	19	10	28	16	8	10	80	46	29	17
The organization helps employees to develop their strength	18	10	9	5	8	5	117	67	22	13
My manager promotes an atmosphere of teamwork	28	16	67	39	3	2	57	33	19	11
My manager articulates a compelling vision for the future	28	16	30	17	1	1	93	53	22	13
My manager seeks different perspectives while solving problems	21	12	37	21	0	0	88	51	28	16

The results indicate the statement ‘my manager expresses confidence that goals will be met, 47(26%) disagreed, 8(11%) were neutral, while 109(63%) agreed. On the statement, ‘The organization helps employees to develop their strength,’ 27(15%) disagreed, 8(5%) were neutral while 139(80%), agreed.

Further, ‘My manager promotes an atmosphere of teamwork,’ 95(55%) disagreed, 3(2%) were neutral while 76(43%) agreed. On the statement ‘my manager articulates a compelling vision for the future, 58(33%) disagreed, 1(0%) were neutral while 115(66%) agreed. On average 37% disagreed while 63% agreed.

Employee Satisfaction

The study wanted to evaluate whether employees were satisfied while working at the County Government of Kakamega. Employee satisfaction was conceptualized using five statements. The study asked respondents to rate the statement provided based on a Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree. The results are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Employee Satisfaction

Statement	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I am satisfied with the quality of leadership style	38	22	70	40	37	21	19	11	10	6
I am very satisfied with my supervision	33	19	64	37	41	24	30	17	6	3
I am satisfied with my job	29	17	69	40	30	17	40	23	6	3
I am happy with the opportunity to get a better job in the organization	24	14	52	30	39	22	50	29	9	5
I am happy to recommend job seekers to this organization	33	19	63	36	42	24	29	17	7	4

Table 3.0 shows how respondents rated employee satisfaction in Kakamega County. Responses on the statements are as indicated. For example on the statement that ‘I am satisfied with the quality of leadership style,’ 108(62%) disagreed, 37(21%) were neutral while 29(17%) agreed. On the statement, ‘I am very satisfied with my supervision, 97(56%) disagreed, 41(24%) while 36(20%) agreed.

On the statement, ‘I am satisfied with my job, 76(57%) disagreed, 39(22%), were neutral while 46(26%) agreed. On the statement ‘I am happy with the opportunity to get a better job in the organization,’ 76(44%) disagreed, 42(24%) were neutral while 59(34%) agreed. On average 77% disagreed with the statements on job satisfaction while 23% agreed.

Test of Hypothesis

The study set to test the null hypothesis that transformational leadership has no significance influence on employee job satisfaction at the County Government of Kakamega. Table 4 shows the chi-square test statistics for the relationship.

Table 4: Chi-Square Test for Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction.

Chi-Square	173.014
Df	20
Asymp. Sig.	.000

From table 4.0, the calculated chi-square value obtained was 173.014. This value is greater the critical chi-square value at 5% level of confidence and 20 degrees of freedom. This study therefore rejects the null hypothesis set and accepts the alternative hypothesis that transformational leadership style has an influence on employee job satisfaction at the County Government of Kakamega.

Discussion of Findings

A key proposition of the study was that transformational leadership positively influences employee job satisfaction. Results from descriptive studies indicate employees were affirmative to the statements on transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction. The results of the chi-square 173.014. This value is greater the critical chi-square value at 5% level of confidence and 20 degrees of freedom. This study therefore rejects the null hypothesis set and confirms the alternative hypothesis that transformational leadership style has an influence on employee job satisfaction at the County Government of Kakamega. To this end, the findings are consistent with the growing body of research in organizational studies that suggests that leadership greatly influences organizational outcomes.

The findings of the chi square indicated that transformational leadership had a positive influence on employee job satisfaction. The findings of the study are in line with Berson & Linton (2005) found a positive relationship between transformational leadership style

and job satisfaction. Results of a study conducted by Nielsen et al., (2008) reveal that transformational leadership was positively associated with better employee working conditions. Results of the study are also supported by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which suggests that good working conditions lead to increased job satisfaction levels. Similar results reported by Hamidifar (2009) and Bushra et al. (2011) also found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction.

A notable contribution of the studies is that working conditions plays an integral play. However, there is also need of leaders who inspire and motivate employees which is achieved through influence and inspiring innovative thinking among followers with a view to solving problems differently. The study augurs with Epitropaki & Martin (2005) who note that employees prefer the inspiration and consideration aspects of transformational leadership and the contingent rewards aspect of transactional leadership.

Conclusions

The major objective of the study was to determine the effect of transformational leadership style on employee job satisfactions in county government of Kakamega. Transformational leadership was operationalized as idealized influence, individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. Descriptive statistics and chi-square were performed.

From a theoretical and empirical standpoint, the current study provides support for the growing body of knowledge advocating for transformational leadership in organizations. In addition, the research the study is in line with Herzberg theory of motivation, propositions that good working conditions lead to increased job satisfaction levels. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that transformational leadership influences employee job satisfaction.

While the study extends the frontiers of knowledge in the area of leadership, several weaknesses should be taken into consideration. First, the study relied on structured questioners which can lead to common bias method. Kariuki and Kiambati (2017) in their research recommended that to overcome the bias, researchers need to utilize other research tools such as interviews and focus group.

Second, the study was based on only one county government presenting a problem of generalization. We recommend that future studies should study more organizations. Lastly, the research design was mainly descriptive in nature, focusing on collecting data at one point in time. While the design is inexpensive, it is prone to risk of selection and measurement bias. To improve on the design, future studies could explore longitudinal studies, to assess the effect of transformational leadership on employee job satisfaction over a long period of time.

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