

# LEADERSHIP STYLES AND PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES IN EMBU COUNTY, KENYA

<sup>1</sup>KALLEN MUTHONI BASIL, <sup>2</sup>STEPHEN NTUARA KIRIINYA

<sup>1</sup>Department of Business Administration School of Business, Kenyatta University, KENYA

<sup>2</sup>The Technical University of Kenya, Kenya

---

**Abstract:** This study investigated leadership styles and performance of government ministries, Embu County, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Systematic sampling technique was used to sample five ministries thus very. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data. Secondary data was collected from the library and from organizations. The statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for statistical analysis. The study found that leadership styles correlates positively and significantly on performance of selected government ministries in Embu County, Kenya. The study recommended capacity building of all supervisors. The study also suggested further studies on the same on non-governmental organizations.

**Keywords:** Leadership styles, Performance, Strategy.

---

## 1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The success of an organizations depends on how strategies are implemented to realize the set goals and objectives (Speculand 2009). Strategy implementation dynamic when it comes to how organization improve performance (Jooste & Fourie, 2009). According to Sial et al., (2013), strategy implementation is very vital for survival and success of organizations. Therefore an organization should have top management commitment and selecting the best people to be successful in implementing its strategy (Chetty 2010). Zagotta and Robinso (2012), noted that for a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to succeed one should know strategy execution well. Without proper strategic implementation one cannot rip the expected benefits to the organization (Thompson and Arthur, 2007). According to Speculand, (2014) strategic management help accomplish goals through Human Resource and development (HRD). The study aims to establish the relationship between leadership styles and positive performance in order to enhance the performance of public sector.

### The Public Sector

The public sector services were started due to the inadequate services by the private sector to the society. The public sector therefore has had pressure to perform to achieve the organizational objectives. According to Somerville & Elliott, (2011) globalization exacts a lot of pressure. Strategic planning is part of Public Service reform initiatives in order to enhance efficiency in service delivery. The reform is performance based, on strategic management initiative. Thus, the government has pressure to improve on performance by initiating strategies that can improve service delivery through ministries through strategies like International Standard Organization (ISO), Information Technology (IT), Performance management and Performance Contracting (PC), outsourcing and strategic integration.

Strategic management initiatives were made a statutory requirement in Kenya. Vision 2030 is countries strategy aimed to improve service delivery and needs effective implementation that sets the goals and objectives that anchor government development to realize the Big four agenda. The implementation of Vision 2030 is done effectively through Medium Term Plans, (MTP) of five years. The first MTP of 2008 to 2012 implemented initial strategies by the flagship projects earmarked for each pillar while the successive ones will be implemented through the subsequent MTPs. To achieve this leadership styles in the public sector comes in handy for better performance.

### Statement of the Problem

Strategy implementation has effect on the administrative activities, thus very important to an organization (Shirley, 2008). Kenya has a vision 2030 strategic and its implementation is effective depicted by Kenya's five year MTP 2013- 2017. Miyogo (2015) noted that strategy implementation was an uphill task in government ministries in Kenya. Strategy implementation aid policy makers in the public sector as a noble role in achievement of Vision 2030. Strategy formulation and implementation started since independence, however the government ministries still lag behind in service delivery despite having the highest number of ISO 9001 certifications in East and Central Africa (ISO Survey-2008). The public sector has the best polices but poor strategic implementation plans leads to declining of performance (Evaluation of Performance of Public Agencies (EPPA) report 2006/2007). Leadership in public sector has a lot bureaucracy and non-performance HRM culture leading to poor service delivery. Effective implementation of strategies can be offered to sustain public sector performance (Ireland & Hitt, 2005).

The public sector continues to receive poor perception due to poor strategy implementation initiatives when serving the public. This prompts the big question how do the government ministries implement strategies that performance is affected. In 2003 the government initiated reforms with the objective of improving public service performance by introducing strategic management through Vision 2030 and Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) as government development plan. In 2014 His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta through reform program initiated strategic reforms to improve delivery of services in the government ministries to the general public. Little improvement is seen in the service delivery and performance of public sector despite the efforts by the government in transformation (RoK 2008). In this view the study endeavours to investigate and find out strategy implementation and performance of selected government ministries with focus to Embu County.

### General Objective

To establish the relationship between leadership styles and performance of selected government ministries in Embu County, Kenya.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Leadership Styles

It is the leadership responsibility to support strategy implementation by providing all the resources required and to steer the strategy implementation for effective achievement of objectives. To achieve this the leader has to possess the requisite skills to enable performance through positive transformation (Teece 2014). According to Thompson and Strickland (2007) leadership champion new strategies by supporting people. Leadership give direction to effective strategy implementation by motivating staff, communications, and having an organization culture and values that steers effective performance (Griffins 2013). During strategy implementation process the leader is the commander who formulates optimum strategies (Heracleous 2000). Leaders ensures there is effective communication of the strategy and employees are aware and ready to implement strategies. The public sector is affected when implementing strategies and suffer delayed implementation due to government issues which affect performance. The leadership style in the public sector can influence how best the formulated strategies can be implemented. The best leadership styles for strategy implementation include collaborative, cultural, coercive, commander and organizational change where the leader has to formulate strategy before implementation.

Leadership approaches are autocratic or participative and stakeholders are involved in the strategy implementation process. According to Ling, Siek, Lubatkin and Veiga (2008) there is significant relationship between CEOs who are transformational and organizational performance. The leaders' characteristics of their leadership affect organizational performance. If there is no leadership commitment it becomes negative signal to the organizational performance (Rapa

and Kauffman, 2005). Leaders in the public sector should have very positive perception of strategy for successful implementation. To successfully implement the strategy leaders have to know that lower managers have different perceptions as compared to top managers. Leaders must be aggressive in persuading the employees and giving ideas (Rapa and Kauffman, 2005). The leaders in the public sector have to use effective leadership styles exchanging rewards between subordinates and the leaders for service rendered for the ministries performance to be seen.

### Research Gaps

The public sector has always been left out on research especially on strategic management and the gap requires further investigation. There is need for research to be done in Kenya on strategy implementation in the public sector considering Kenya in 2010 promulgated the new constitution whose implementation is critical. There has been little known about strategy implementation in the developing countries in comparison to developed countries (Aldehayat, 2011). Kenya is a developing country which means there is limited focus on strategic management specifically on strategy implementation on performance of government ministries.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

According to Kothari (2004) research design gives research questions answers of the study. Research design is meant to collect, measure and analyzes data (Vaus, 2001). It is the decisions taken by a researcher on what, where, how much and by what means (Kothari, 2007). According to Cooper and Schindler (2011) the research design shows the tools to be used in collecting data and how analysis is to be done. Research design depends on the determination to answer the research questions (Sekaran, 2013; Saunders *et al.* 2009). Descriptive survey design was adopted to obtain the data in the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) survey design collects data from an identified group to determine the current status. In this case, it is strategy implementation and performance of government ministries, Embu County. Survey is one of the most commonly used method in primary data generating (Zikmund, 2010). The study took descriptive survey. The data collected was used to test leadership styles. This was appropriate in order to be able to collect original data that represents real situations.

### Target Population

Target population refers to the units which the study is to use for references (Kathori, 2006). It is the units from which the findings of the study are to be generalized (Dampsey, 2003). Mugenda & Mugenda, (2008) define population as specifications of group, objects, individuals, or events that have common characteristic. Borg, Gall and Gall (2007) specify target and accessible as the two types of population. The population of the study was 270 top, middle and lower MGT level employees in selected government ministries in Embu County, Kenya. This population was justified because they are the ones mandated to carry out strategic execution decisions in the public sector in Kenya.

### Sampling Frame

According to Kothari (2004) sampling frame represent the target population and where the units are usually potential members of the sample. Sampling frame refers to the population from which the sample to be used is selected (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). It is the units of the population from where a sample is drawn. According to Zikmund (2010) sampling frame is the elements collected where the sample is to be drawn. This study sampling frame was all top, middle and lower managers in government ministries in Embu County, Kenya.

### Sample Size and Sampling Technique

According to Borg, Gall and Gall (2008) a sample represents the characteristics of the population. The sample represents the population selected for analysis (Kothari, 2004). The sample must represent the population and should not be too large. Sampling techniques are usually probability or non-probability. Probability samples are those predicted to be capable of producing similar results. Non-probability sampling when repeated usually don't give identical results when repeated (Kothari, 2012). The study used mixed sampling designs.

Systematic sampling technique was used to pick five ministries based at Embu to represent all the civil servants. The systematic sampling according to Cooper and Schindler (2006) presents population with equal chances of selection. Every 4<sup>th</sup> Ministry as per appendix 3 was picked and further purposive sampling was used as to pick only top, middle and lower managers. The shown formula was used in determining the size of the sample as recommended by (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003)

### Data Collection Instruments

Data collecting instruments are procedures and the tools used in the measurement of variables (Cooper and Schindler 2011) and Mugenda and Mugenda 2012). According to Oso and Onen (2011), anything given for research inference as a fact is data. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data and considered the best because they are less costly especially when the population is spread geographically and is also wide. The questionnaires were standardized questions with uniformity. A questionnaire has anonymity and also convenient because it has uniformity thus getting data objectively (Krishnaswamy *et. al* 2006). Questionnaires are convenient because the respondents can have time to think about what to respond and also they are easy to collect and administer (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2004; Kothari, 2011). Thus questionnaires were used as the tools to collect primary data due to the many advantages that they have According to Krishnaswamy *et. al* (2006) items in the questionnaire are developed in such a way that they address specific objectives of the study. Secondary data was collected from the public organizations and library on strategy implementation and performance. The questionnaires were based on the Likert scale. Likert scale types of questions were well designed while considering the quantity and the quality of data expected to be collected.

### Reliability and Validity

According to (Neuman, 2003) reliability and validity measure research variables on accuracy of measures. Validity is the ability measure whether the questionnaire measures effectively. According to Orodho, (2003) reliability is the extent to which results are consistent over time. To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaires were carefully composed to avoid ambiguity. The questionnaires were pretested before the actual study after which corrections and adjustments was done to ensure reliability.

### Data Processing, Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis is cleaning, transforming, and modeling in order to come up with best information that support decision making in the best way possible (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). The questionnaires were edited before processing of responses for consistency and excluded incomplete ones from analysis. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Data was presented and reported using tables showing frequency distribution, pie charts and graphs for reader friendliness. The Likert-type scaling 1 to 5 was adopted. Multiple regression analysis and correlation models were used to establish the statistical relationship which exists between strategy implementation and performance of government ministries in Embu County, Kenya.

### Summary of Finding on Leadership Styles and Performance of Government Ministries

The objective was to establish the relationship between leadership styles and performance of selected government ministries in Embu County, Kenya. The study found out that a mean of score of 2.4890 participants agreed that employees are informed what needs to be done in a few words, a mean of 2.5859 agreed that employees are informed what to do in order be rewarded for their work, a mean of 2.5595 participants indicated that employees are given new ways of looking at complex issues. In the issues whether there is employees' feedback in the organization a mean of 3.2996 participants strongly agreed, a mean of 3.2154 participants agreed that Employees are rewarded on achieving their targets. On the issue whether employees are informed what they are entitled on targets achieved, a mean of 3.3241 participants agreed and finally on the issues whether employees know the standards to maintain at work a mean of 3.1345 participants agreed. Based on the findings this indicated that there was very strong relationship between leadership style and performance of selected government ministries in Embu County.

The study also found out that Leadership Styles and performance of selected government ministries correlated positively and significantly ( $r=0.548$ ,  $P<0.000$ ). This goes in line with Ling, Siek, Lubatkin and Veiga (2008) who asserted that there is a significant link between CEOs who are transformational and organizational performance. The leader's characteristics of their leadership affect organizational performance. If there is no leadership commitment it becomes negative signal to the organizational performance (Rapa and Kauffman, 2005).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study found that leadership styles being a challenge on strategy implementation and performance of public sector. Therefore the public sector needs to enhance and promote the available leadership styles to align performance with the continuous changing performance demands. The public sector has to endeavour to foster their skill and apply them during strategy implementation for better performance hence improved service delivery.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that there should be well built and stronger capacities in leadership skills in the public service based on findings of this study. From the findings, though most leaders had university level of education a substantial number had college level of education and these are mostly the middle level leaders who mostly implement strategies. Therefore the study recommends capacity building of all supervisors to improve their supervisory skills, especially in strategy implementation and this will see the government ministries have good service delivery which is performance and there will be improvement of perception of the public service.

#### Suggestion for Further Research

The study focus was on selected government ministries in Embu County. It is therefore recommended that subsequent studies can consider having the same study in non-governmental organizations to establish how leadership styles relate with performance as compared to government ministries.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] Aldehayyat, J. S., & Twaissi, N. (2011). Strategic planning and corporate performance relationship in small business firms: Evidence from a Middle East country context. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 6(8), 255.
- [2] Borg, W. R.; Gall M. D.; & Joyce P. Gall (2008). *Educational Research: An Introduction*. (8th Edition) ISBN-13: 978
- [3] Bossidy, L., Charan, R. & Burck, C. (2011). *Execution- The discipline of getting things done*. New York: Crown Publishing Group. *de/Meyer, R.* 682-691.
- [4] Chetty, T., (2010). *The Drivers and Inhibitors of Strategy Execution*. Gordon Institute of Business Studies: Pretoria.
- [5] Cooper, D.R., & Schindler, P.S. (2011). *Business Research Methods*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- [6] Currie, G. (2009), *The influence of middle managers in the business planning process: a case study in the UK NHS*, *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 10 pp.141-55.
- [7] Dampsey, B. (2003). *Research methods*. In 4th (Ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Publishers.
- [8] GOK Handbook, (2006). *A strategy for Performance Improvement in the Public Service*. Nairobi: Government Printers
- [9] Griffin, R. (2013). *Fundamentals of Management*. 7th edition, Cengage South Western Publishers (USA)
- [10] Griffin. (2006). *Effect Of Strategic Issue Management On Organizational Performance*. *Transnational Journal of Science and Technology*, 74 (6), 133-49.
- [11] Hart, D. M. (2010), "Introduction". Review of Policy Research Heracleous, L. (2000). The role of strategy implementation in organization development, *Organization Development Journal*, 18(3)
- [12] ISO (2015). *How automating your quality management solution will help foster compliance*; Geneva, Switzerland.
- [13] Jooste, C., & Fourie, B. (2009). The role of strategic leadership in effective strategy implementation: Perceptions of South African strategic leaders; *South African Business Review*.
- [14] Kaplan, R.S, Norton, D., & Barrows, E. (2011). *Developing the strategy: Vision values, gaps and Analysis*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

- [15] Kothari, C. R. (2012). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. (2nd Ed), Nairobi, Kenya: New Age International Publishers.
- [16] Kothari, C.R. (2011). *Research Methodology; Methods and Techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.
- [17] Kothari, C. R. (2007). *Research Methodology, Methods & Techniques*. 2nd ed. New Delhi: New Age International Ltd.
- [18] Kothari, C. R. (2006). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* (1st ed.). Nairobi: Age International Publishers.
- [19] Kothari, C.R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques*.(2nd Ed). New Delhi: New Age International (P) Limited.
- [20] Ling, Y., Simek, Z., Lubatkin, M., & Veiga, J. (2008). The impact of Transformational CEOs on Performance of Small-to Medium Sized firms: Does organizational context matter? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(4).
- [21] Miyogo, N., (2015). *Strategy Implementation Practices At Centre For Mathematics, Science And Technology Education [19]In Africa (CEMASTEA) In Kenya*. University of Nairobi MBA Project, Nairobi: Kenya.
- [22] Mugenda, O.M & Mugenda, A.G. (2008). *Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Acts Press, Nairobi, Kenya.
- [23] Mugenda, O.M. & Mugenda, A. G. (2003). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*, Nairobi, Acts Press.
- [24] Neuman, T. (2003). *Statistical approach to testing variables*. New York: McGraw-Hill
- [25] Orodho, T. (2003). *Statistics and applied mathematics*. New Delhi: Sage publications.
- [26] Oso, W.Y., & Onen, D. (2011). *A general guide to writing research proposal and report; hand book for beginning researchers*. Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- [27] Sekaran, U. (2013). *Research methods for business*. Singapore: Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- [28] Shirley, M. (2008). Empirical Effects of Performance Contracts: Evidence from China, *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization*, 17(2), 32-39.
- [29] Sial, A., Usman, M., Zufiqar, S., Satti, A., & Khursheed, I. (2013). Why do public sector organizations fail in implementation of strategic plan in Pakistan. *Public Policy and Administration Journal*, 3(1).
- [30] Somerville, K., & Elliott, C. (2011). Strategies to Improve Client Service: Exemplars in the Canadian Federal Government. *The Innovation Journal*, 16(2), 1-16.
- [31] Speculand, R. (2014). Bridging the strategy implementation skills gap. *Strategic direction, Emerald Group Publishing Limited*.
- [32] Speculand, R. (2009). Six necessary mind shifts for implementing strategy. *Business Strategy Series*, Volume: 10(3)
- [33] Teece, D. (2014). A dynamic capabilities-based entrepreneurial theory of multinational enterprise. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45, 8-37 Thompson, J.L. (2009). *Strategic Management: Awareness and Change*: Chapman and Hall.
- [34] Vaus, D. A. (2001). *Research Design in Social Research*. London: SAGE Publication.
- [35] Zagotta, R. & Robinson, D. (2012). Keys to Successful Strategy Execution. *Journal of Business Strategy*. 30-34.
- [36] Zikmund, W. G. (2010). *Business Research Methods*. (7Ed.), New Delhi, South Western.