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## ABSTRACT

*This paper presents literature review on sustaining competitiveness in public universities in Kenya. The overall objective of the study is to establish the effect of transformational leadership style on internal marketing in addressing the challenge of sustaining competitiveness in public universities in Kenya. The study involved desk research of peer reviewed journal articles and texts on leadership styles, transformational leadership, internal marketing and their relationships to competitiveness of public universities in Kenya. Content analysis which involved categorization of the subject in thematic areas for review and presentation was used. Literature review revealed that indeed competitiveness is bound to depend to a large extent on attracting competitive resource people, attractive courses, and attractive collaborations, sustainable programme funding and profitable operations. The study recommends transformational leadership as a leadership style which inspires and motivates followers to achieve key competencies for the competitiveness of universities.*

**Key words:** Leadership styles, Transformational leadership, Public universities in Kenya

## INTRODUCTION

Universities play an important role in driving change and exchanges in all other sectors in the economy. The University education sector is however fast growing and continues to experience numerous challenges, which point to the need to be competitive in order to survive both in the short and long run. With the increasingly growing number of universities and need to retain the competent manpower and to attract funds and students into their programmes, the ability to build and sustain competitiveness has become a real

issue for public universities. There is therefore a renewed need to address the issue of competitiveness, which heavily hinges on a model of leadership renown for the ability to create motivating and enabling internal environments that may inspire creativity and loyalty, for an organization to realize positive outcomes such as enhanced competencies and innovation, and to build and sustain attractive competitive programmes and collaborations.

Transformational leadership has been identified in the pertinent literature to embody such kind of leadership which is heavily linked with competitiveness of organizations. Competitiveness to a very large extent, as supported by the available literature, has also been noted to depend on Internal marketing or the process of creating enabling environment to ensure the availability of sufficient motivated, loyal, competent, and creative pool of manpower alongside financial, physical and material resources. A substantial number of studies accessed by the researcher have not explored the prospect of internal marketing to be the mediating factor for achieving competitiveness. Whereas the available literature from different parts of the world seem to support positive relationships between leadership style and internal marketing, and between internal marketing and firms performance, the researcher has not accessed similar or related studies that address the three variable of the study at the same time, and more so in Kenya and East Africa at large to provide a useful framework for addressing the challenge of competitiveness of the public universities.

This study is therefore motivated by the need to generate a working framework to establish the correlations between Transformational leadership style, the internal marketing strategies formulated and implemented by such leaders, and how these affect the competitiveness of Public universities in Kenya.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Leadership Theories in general*

The role of leadership in the success of organizations and institutions in particular is confirmed by the huge interest and contributions in leadership which has dominated literature for significant duration of time. Various scholars have made significant strides in making the understanding of leadership simpler and clearer through offering alternative theories. Among these scholars include Taylor (2014) who explains the role of theory as emanating from the need to explain and to predict natural phenomena and observes further the existence of many theories of leadership.

The emphasis of scholars on the substance of what makes effective leadership has greatly shifted with time. Gadot (2007) observes that studies on leadership have moved in several directions, but stresses on two major approaches namely the one focusing on leader's characteristics and behaviour, and the other on circumstances necessitating the demonstration of leadership and possible leadership style. Bolden, Gosling, Marturano,

and Dennison (2003) also point out that the review of leadership literature reveals an evolving series of thought from “Great men” and Traits theory to Transformational theory and notes further that, whereas early theories tend to focus on leaders’ characteristics and behaviour, later theories begin to consider the role of followers. Still on leadership continuum, Taylor (2014) identifies four major theoretical approaches to leadership as the Trait approach, which dominated upto the 1940s; The Behavioural Style approach, which flourished between 1940s and 1960s; Contingency approach of the 1960s to 1980s; and the new leadership approach since early 1980s to date.

### *The Trait Approach*

Mc Cleskey (2014) identifies the trait approach to be amongst the earliest leadership theories and stresses that the approach majorly assumes that leadership is a characteristic ability of extraordinary individuals. Consequently, personal characteristics such as traits, cognitive skills and interpersonal skills, by and large determine an individual potential for leadership roles. The trait approach concentrated on identifying and isolating the critical leadership traits, out of which people could then be recruited, selected and installed into leadership positions. (Bolden et al, 2003)

Mat (2008) points out that scholars use the traits, qualities and behaviours of leader to associate with the influence, motivation, intention and change themes in defining leadership. He observes further that the leadership concept is typically defined by the traits, the qualities and the behaviour of the leader. Northouse (2013) points out the physical factors such as height, and personality features such as introversion and extraversion among other characteristics, as some of the qualities that may be used to identify leaders. Basing his observation from the findings of a study conducted by Stogdill (1948, 1974), he identifies the traits positively associated with leadership to include ten characteristics, namely: Drive for responsibility and task completion;Vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals;Risk taking and originality in problem solving;Drive to exercise initiative in social situations; Self-confidence and sense of personal identity;Willingness to accept consequences of decision and action;Readiness to absorb interpersonal stress;Willingness to tolerate frustration and delay;Ability to influence other people’s behavior; and Capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand.

The trait approach was identified to have a major limitation stemming from the fact that many traits can be identified at any point in time with no consistent traits observable, and also for the fact that it is difficult to measure them. Taylor (2014) for instance points out that it is difficult to measure abstract intangibles like charisma, friendliness, domination, tolerance and self confidence, thus opening ways for reviewing other approaches such as the behavioural approach.

### *The Behavioural style Approach*

Out of the perceived limitations of the trait approach to leadership emerged the behavioural approach which emphasizes focusing on human relationships along with output and performances (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, and Dennison, 2003). While the trait approach focused on what leaders are, the behavioural style approach concentrates its focus on what leaders do and the behaviours displayed by them ( Taylor, 2014).

Just like DuBrin (2012) who defines leadership style as the typical pattern of behavior that a leader uses to influence his or her employees to achieve organizational goals and proceeds to provide the historically important Theory X and Theory Y as a classical example that can be interpreted as two contrasting leadership styles, Taylor (2014) also observes that the behavioural stream of thought is best expressed through the efforts of Douglas mc Gregor, and Blake and Mouton of the famous leadership grid among others. They both seem to point out that most approaches to leadership styles involve how much authority and control the leader turns over to the group. Cooper (2005), quoting Makin et al., (1996) identifies a number of leadership types that seemed to be emerging in the 1990s. He identifies them as ‘the bureaucrat’, ‘the autocrat’, ‘the wheeler-dealer’, ‘the laissez-faire’, ‘the reluctant’ and ‘the open manager’ all based on the observation of what they do and how they behave.

The limitation of the behavioural approach according to scholars mainly lie in the fact that a leader’s behavioural style may not meet the requirement of environmental situations and as such one behaviour may be best in one setting and another in a different setting ( Taylor, 2014). This essentially paved way to the contingency approach to leadership.

### *The contingency approach to leadership*

Contingency approach to leadership came up to indicate that the leadership to be used is contingent upon the situation, the people, the task, the organization and other environmental variables. Proponents of this approach include Fiedler’s contingency model, the Hersey Blanchard model of leadership, Tannenbaum and Schmidt’s leadership continuum, Adair’s Action centered leadership, among several many others (Bolden et al, 2003).

The writer of the paper “An Oracle White Paper June 2012 page 7” in explanation of the Situational leadership theory argues that the best type of leadership is determined by situational variables and that no one style of leadership pertains to all given workplace situations. Identifying the leadership style for an organization by using this approach includes identification of the type of work, the complexity of the organization, and the qualifications of the followers. The leadership style, for instance, that is required by a head of corporate security would obviously be vastly different from the leadership style of an art museum director: authoritative versus creative or charismatic.

### *The new leadership theories*

Taylor (2014) identifies charisma, laissez faire, transactional and Transformational theories as constituting the last leadership trend. Stone and Patterson (2005) point out that Transactional leadership focuses on ways to maintain the status quo and manage the day-to-day operations of a business, and does not focus on identifying the organization's goals and how employees can work toward and increase their productivity beyond stipulation (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991). They note that Transactional leaders approach followers with the goal of exchanging one thing for another (Burns, 1978). They observe that the concept of transactional leadership is narrow in that it does not take the entire situation, employee, or future of the organization in mind when offering rewards (Crosby, 1996), and ultimately focuses on control, not adaptation (Tracey & Hinkin, 1994).

Rashed and binti Daud (2013) notes that Transformational leader in the contrary can help the individual's growth of followers to the extent of his recognition rather than organization's expectation as they endeavor for more and high performance. They observe that Transformational leadership can be observed when both the leader and followers reach the highest levels of motivation and morale among them and high performance, as a consequence of the power of their personality and the clarity of their vision and the continuation of the leader to motivate these followers to work and achieve common goals. Nielsen, Randall, Yarker, and Brenner (2008) take note that Transformational leaders employ a visionary and creative style of leadership that inspires employees to broaden their interest in their work and to be innovative and creative. They provide some evidence that transformational leadership style is linked to employee psychological well-being.

### *Transformational Leadership*

Fok-Yew (2015) define transformational leadership as a motivational of leadership style with a clear organisational vision that stimulate and inspire which can achieved by establishing a closer rapport with employees, understanding their needs, and helping them to attain their potential, contributes to good outcomes for an organisation (Fitzgerald and Schutte, 2009). Trmal, Bustamam, and Mohamed (2015), defines Transformational leadership as leader behaviors that transform and inspire followers to perform beyond expectations while transcending self-interest for the good of the establishment that they are being employed by, and stresses that Creating high-performance workforce has become increasingly vital necessitating business leaders with ability to motivate organizational members to go beyond their task requirements (Avolio *et al.*, 2009).

Arham (2014) defines Transformational leadership as a process whereby leaders broaden and raise the interest of their employees, and proceeds to state that such leadership occurs when leaders generate awareness and acceptance of the purpose and mission of the organisation and when they help their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the benefit of the group (Bass, 1985; 1990; Daft, 2008). To Finley (2014) Transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and

creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and follower (Northouse, 2010). Similarly, Hall, Johnson, Wysocki, and Kepner (2008) states that Transformational leadership is the ability to get people to want to change, to improve, and to be led, and involves assessing associates' motives, satisfying their needs, and valuing them (Northouse, 2001).

Lindgreen, Palmer, Wetzels, and Antioco (2009) views Transformational leadership as a charismatic style in which followers move beyond pure self-interest, and where leaders change their organization's culture by understanding it and, subsequently, realigning it with a new vision and a revision of its shared assumptions, values, and norms. On the other hand, Lian and Tui (2012) refers to Transformational leadership as a process involving individuals, group and organization, and involves creating substantive change in the attitude of employees, moral elevation and organization direction.

Odumeru and Ogbonna (2013) describes a transformational leader as a person who stimulates and inspires (transform) followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes or one who empowers the followers and motivates them to work on transcendental goals instead of focusing solely on immediate interests. Finally Krishnan (2005) defines a transformational leader as one who recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower, and looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower.

According to Antonakis, Avolio, and Sivasubramaniam (2003) Transformational leaders are renown for being proactive, and for their ability to raise follower awareness for transcendent collective interests, and for stimulating followers to achieve extraordinary goals. They postulate that transformational leadership theory places great importance on developmental processes which engenders employee empowerment and enhanced competence, such as empowering followers and helping them become autonomous and competent individuals who reach self-actualization and high levels of morality; it regards these processes as the factors which are critical for distinguishing transformational leadership from other forms of leadership. This observation seems to complement Givens (2008), who holds the view that a leader's ability to motivate the follower to accomplish more than what the follower planned to accomplish is the hallmark of Transformational leadership . Transformational leadership has four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985).

There seem to be congruence in the substance that goes into Transformational leadership from the observation given by various scholars in attempting to define the concept. Prieto and Phipps (2009) drawing observation from (Bass, 1990) state that Transformational leadership occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees to work for the general good of the organization through generating awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group that stir employees to look beyond their own self interest. Such leaders they argue achieve these results though

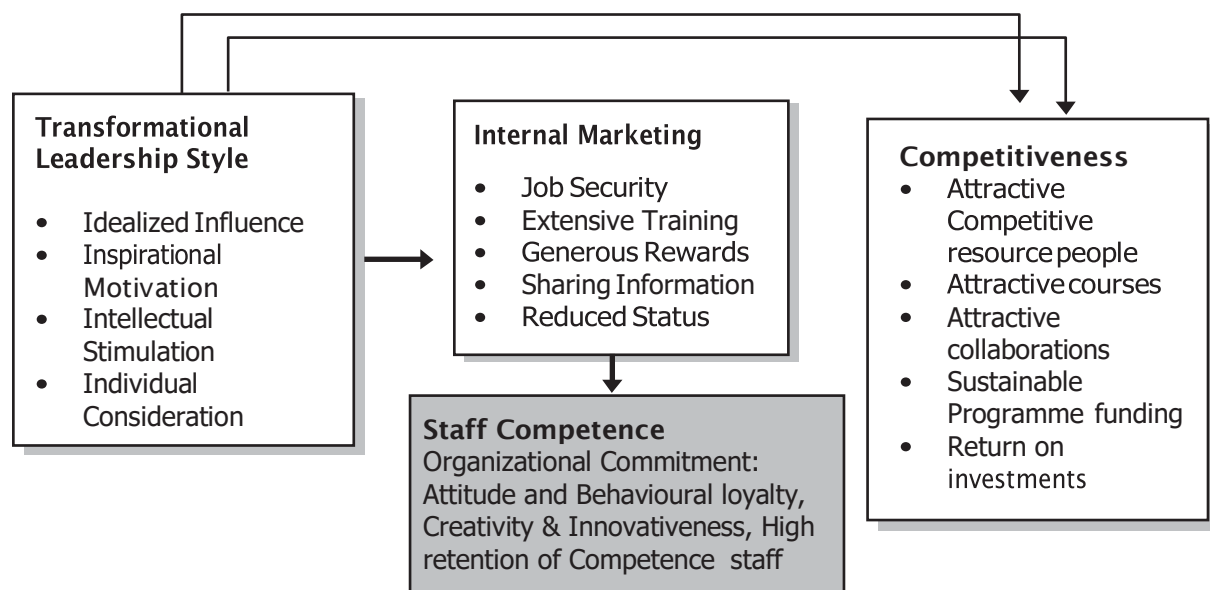
their own charismatic inspiration by meeting the emotional needs of each employee, and by intellectually stimulating employees to be more creative or innovative.

From observation stemming from above paragraphs on definition, a general conclusion may be drawn to the effect transformational leadership is one that highly depends on the individual leader’s ability to inspire and stimulate followers on higher ideals on the one hand, and the effective management or handling of the internal environmental processes that impact on the motivation of the employees on the other. Consequently, this study defines Transformational Leadership as: *“a leadership approach that aims at creating and sustaining an enabling internal organization environment, through inspirational and stimulating processes that leads to immediate and long term all round competitiveness for an organization”*

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.**

This study examines the relationship between Transformational leadership, internal marketing, and the competitiveness of Public Universities in Kenya. The expected relationships between the research variables are outlined in the model shown in Figure 1. The model shows that there is a relationship between Transformational leadership and the competitiveness of Public Universities in Kenya. It also shows that internal marketing impacts on staff competence which in turn affects competitiveness of universities in terms of: attractive competitive resource persons; attractive courses; attractive collaborations; sustainable programme funding and return on investments.

### Conceptual Framework



## METHODOLOGY

The study involved desk research of peer reviewed journal articles and texts on leadership styles, transformational leadership, internal marketing and their relationships to competitiveness of public universities in Kenya. Content analysis which involved categorization of the subject in thematic areas for review and presentation. The justification for this method was based on the availability of a wide array of scholarly work on the area of study.

## DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The model shows that there is positive relationship between Transformational leadership and the competitiveness of Public Universities in Kenya. Odumeru and Ogbonna (2013) provide empirical evidence that transformational leadership is strongly correlated with employee work outcomes such as: lower turnover rates, higher level of productivity, employee satisfaction, creativity, goal attainment and follower well-being. Ejere and Ugochukwu (2013) also establish positive relationship between Transformational Leadership with organizational performance, satisfaction and effectiveness, and concludes that transactional leadership style had a weak positive impact on organisational performance. Out of this observation, the study generates its first hypothesis:

Secondly, the conceptual model shows that Transformation leadership style has positive effect on internal marketing practices in universities in Kenya, which is consistent with the definition adopted by this study from the review of literature to the effect that Transformational Leadership is *“a leadership approach that aims at creating and sustaining an enabling internal organization environment, through inspirational and stimulating processes that leads to immediate and long term all round competitiveness for an organization”*. The model assumes that transformational leadership using their attributes namely Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, and Individualized consideration, create and sustain Internal marketing environment renown for job security, adequate skills built through extensive training, generous rewards, sharing information, employee’s empowerment and reduced status distinctions. Dalvi and Vahidi (2013) observes that employees gain positive perception, feeling, and attitude about their job that derives from factors such as job environment, organizational system, environmental relations, and the effects of sociocultural factors. They note that Job satisfaction not only can be helpful in the employees’ physical and mental health, but also is considered as one of the most effective factors for organizational efficiency, and for sustaining desirable organizational climate that attracts and maintains high skilled employees (Robins, 2011).

Thirdly, the model assumes a positive relationship between internal marketing and Organizational Commitment, Attitude and Behavioural loyalty, Creativity and

Innovativeness, and High retention of competent staff. This is in line with literature review findings. Poor et al. (2013) observe fairly predictable corresponding internal customer behaviour in a situation where the transformational leaders effectively implement the key elements of internal marketing practices. They envision internal customer loyalty, Job satisfaction and trust in the management to result from such environment. Zacharatos, Barling, and Iverson (2005) observe that training allows employees to acquire greater competencies to control their work, increase their problem-solving skills which lead them to perform their jobs more effectively and safely. Mutembei and Tirimba (2014) acknowledge that Past researchers have found evidence on the positive impact of training on productivity and where employees and employers were able to share the benefits from training. They revealed that training provides adequate criteria to an individual to perform better in a given task and subsequently contributes to the firm performance. Zacharatos, Barling, and Iverson (2005) notes that well-paid employees feel valued by the organization, and by explicitly choosing which behaviors are to be rewarded, organizations signal unambiguously which behaviors are valued. Mutembei and Tirimba (2014) observe that Reward system encourages employee to become motivated, thereby increase their participation in contributing innovation ideas, which leading to high organizational innovation.

Fourthly, the model assumes a positive relationship between Competencies the competitiveness of Public universities in Kenya. Ajitabh *et al.* (2004) notes that competitiveness emanates from the current performance of core processes such as strategic management processes, human resources processes, operations management processes and technology management processes, which enhances the ability of an organisation to compete more effectively. Che Rose *et al.*(2010) also argues that in order to achieve and sustain competitive advantage, a firm needs to creatively and proactively exploit the three generic sources, to preempt rivals attempt at these sources, and/or pursue any combination of proactive and preemptive effort. Ismail et al. (2012) confirm that Past studies indeed have shown significantly positive relationships among organisational resources, capabilities, systems and competitive advantage which is the foundation of competitiveness (Depperu, Cerrato 2005). Popa *et al.* (2011) hold the view that a company's competitive advantage resides in the availability of superior adequate financial, physical and human resources; Possession of superior technical, economic, organizational and managerial skills; and occupying a superior position on the market. Eder and Sawyer (2008) also consider creativity as key to competitiveness. Quoting Amabile (1988), Woodman, Sawyer, and Griffin (1993), observe that employee creativity, the generation of novel and useful ideas, procedures, and products is widely viewed as an important precursor for organizational innovation and productivity.

Finally, the model aims to confirm the model that assumes a consolidated positive relationship among Transformational leadership style, internal marketing and the competitiveness of Public Universities in Kenya. From the review of the pertinent

literature it has emerged clearly that such a framework seem not to have been created before and therefore the motivation to generate a working framework, which at present seem to be missing.

## **CONCLUSION**

Literature review has been able to reveal that indeed Competitiveness is bound to depend to a large extent on the attractively competitive resource people, attractive courses, and attractive collaborations, sustainable Programme funding and profitable operations. These in turn depends on the industry and creativity of the human resources, whose motivation results from an internal marketing environment that attracts, facilitates and retains the best services and attractive programmes. This ultimately rests with Transformational leadership, whose style of management inspires and motivates followers to achieve key competencies for the competitiveness of universities.

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