



EFFECT OF CHARISMA ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF STATE CORPORATIONS IN KENYA

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Abstract

Performance of many State Corporations in Kenya has been below expected levels. The government spends billions to service loans defaulted by State Corporations annually. The Annual Public Debt Report 2011/2012, indicates that of the Kshs. 961.3 million payments made by the Government on Guaranteed Debt in 2011/12, 95.6% was on debt accruing to two State Corporations, pointing to significant defaults in payments. As at June 2013, the status of publicly guaranteed debt for state corporations stood at Ksh 47,168.60 million. Specifically, the study sought to find out the effect of charisma on performance of State corporations in Kenya. In order to meet the objective of this study, relevant leadership theories and various leadership styles were reviewed thoroughly. Literature relating to each of the four independent variables was reviewed, as well as literature relating to the dependent variable. The study adopted a descriptive research design. This study used primary data obtained using a structured and semi-structured questionnaire and captured through a 5-point type Likert scale. From a population of 5,140 leaders, data was collected from a sample of 165 respondents randomly selected, from 8 randomly selected state corporations in Kenya. More data on the performance of these 8 State corporations was collected from the division of performance contracting of the Ministry of Devolution and Planning. The study used construct validity employing both convergent and discriminant validity dimensions. After quantitative data was obtained through questionnaires, it was prepared in readiness for analysis by editing, handling blank responses, coding, categorizing and then keyed into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 for analysis. The study found that there was a significant relationship between charismatic

leadership style and organizational performance. The study concludes that a leadership that is charismatic exerts a positive and significant influence on the performance of state corporations in Kenya.

Keywords: State corporations, Charismatic leadership, Public debt, Performance

INTRODUCTION

Globally, leadership research on transformational leadership has focused on the content and impact of leaders (Sahgal & Pathak, 2007). According to Sahgal and Pathak (2007), emphasis has been on qualities and dispositions of leaders; how they influence change in organizations and how they inspire followers to increase their performance, motivation, and morale. Inspiration and motivation are items of inspirational motivation, a construct of transformational leadership. The GLOBE study of 62 societies examines culture as it relates to leadership in all the major regions of the world. According to this study, effective leadership styles of participation common in the individualist west are questionable in the collectivist east while Asian managers heavily emphasize paternalistic leadership and group maintenance activities.

According to this global study, charismatic leaders are recognizable but may demonstrate high degrees of assertive, such as John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., or quietly non-assertive, like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Mother Teresa. The GLOBE study by House and Javidan (2004), as cited in Shebaya (2011), found out that in the U.S, leaders who listens carefully to what the follower is saying is valued, while in China, it's the leader who praises the follower in the presence of other followers who is valued. Careful listening is an aspect of individual consideration in transformational leadership, while praising a follower is an aspect of idealised influence in transformational leadership.

Kenya, like many other African countries, emerged from the structural adjustment programmes (SAPS) era of the 1980s both strained and scorched by the several reforms in public sector management. These programmes have been linked to the high rate of income inequality, inflation, unemployment, retrenchment, and so on, which have lowered living standards (Mbithe, Mwabu, & Awiti, 2017). Consequently, emphasis was then shifted to the introduction of New Public sector Management models in reform programmes of several public sector institutions, State Corporations included. The Public Sector reforms of 1993 were implemented in three phases. The first phase focused on cost containment, the second focused on rationalization of government ministries and departments, while the third, which was guided by Economic Recovery policy directions, adopted Performance Contracting (PC) in public service as a strategy for improving service delivery to Kenyans. Although the economy grew at

an average of 5.4% during the period 2003-2007, this could not be sustained and quickly dropped to an average of 4.2% during the period 2008-2011 (Randa & Gubbins, 2013).

During the year 2012 evaluation of State Corporations, it was noted that the performance of State Corporations had declined from 64.8% in 2009/2010 to 64.6% in 2010/2011 (GoK, 2012). According to the Budget implementation Review Report for the period 2012/2013, the performance of many State corporations in Kenya has been disappointing (GoK, 2013). The report of the presidential taskforce on parastatal reforms (GoK, 2013b) points out cases of complete failure and missed opportunities from established State Corporations. For most of these corporations, the report attributed their failure to the lack of strategic vision of what this entity could and should do. For State corporations to be part of the engine to drive Vision 2030, where the economy is projected to grow at a sustained annual rate of 10 per cent, attention will now need to shift to leadership development. According to Bass and Avolio (2004), as cited in Amirul and Daud (2012), transformational approach creates significant change in the life of people and organizations. With this in mind, it is safe to conclude that realization of the outcomes envisaged in Vision 2030 is almost guaranteed under transformational leadership.

Statement of the Problem Statement

According to the Budget implementation Review Report for the period 2012/2013, the performance of many State corporations in Kenya has been disappointing. The report gives an example where Ksh 1.93 billion was spent to service loan defaulted by three State Corporations (GoK, 2013). The Annual Public Debt Report 2011/2012, indicates that of the Kshs. 961.3 million payments by the Government on Guaranteed Debt in 2011/12, 95.6% was on debt accruing to two (2) State Corporations, pointing to significant defaults in payments. As at June 2013, the status of publicly guaranteed debt for state corporations stood at Ksh 47,168.60 million.

According to the Parliamentary Public Investment Committee (GoK, 2011), Leaders in State corporations have failed to position these organizations for success. The report by Mwaura (2007) revealed that failure in state corporations is largely a function of weak leadership arising from the dependence of directors on political actors. Kihara, Yano and Mori (2013), concluded that commitment of leaders affects the process of implementing the performance systems in an organization to a great extent. The report of the presidential taskforce on parastatal reforms (GoK, 2013b) points out a number of cases of complete leadership failure and missed opportunities from established state corporations. For instance, the Kenya Railways Corporation is a shell of its former self, despite its earlier significant role in Kenya's wealth creation. The lack of leadership vision of what this entity could and should do has led to

selection of sub-optimal choices that have cascaded negative effects into the wider economy, beyond the railways itself.

Research has shown that leadership effectiveness and motivation can contribute to growth and social good in Africa (Agulanna, 2006). Even with this finding, the concept of leadership effectiveness and motivation are poorly contextualised because the African perspective of leadership effectiveness and motivation are poorly articulated and understood (Senaji et al., 2014). Further, a limited number of studies have paid attention towards understanding the process of transformational leadership behaviour in enhancing organisational performance. The GLOBE study for instance presents just one page on sub-Saharan Africa in its book of studies and offers limited findings in its analysis of empirical data (House & Javidan, 2004; as cited by Shebaya, 2011). It is against this backdrop that this study investigated the effect of transformational leadership styles on the performance of State corporations in Kenya. The limited number of studies for Kenya on the role of charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration on organisational performance of state corporations called for this study.

Objective of the Study

To analyse the effect of charisma on organisational performance of state corporations in Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Trait Leadership theory

Trait leadership is defined as integrated patterns of personal characteristics that reflect a range of individual differences and foster consistent leader effectiveness across a variety of group and organisational situations (Zaccaro, Kemp & Bader, 2004, as cited in Zaccaro, 2007). The theory of trait leadership developed from early leadership research which focused primarily on finding a group of heritable attributes that differentiated leaders from non-leaders. Traits theory focuses purely on a leader's personality traits.

Yukl (2013), suggests that the big five broadly defined personality traits are surgency, dependability, agreeableness, adjustment and intellectual outlook. Surgency in a leader requires extroversion, energy and a high activity level, and a need for power (assertiveness). Conscientiousness in leaders requires dependability, personal integrity and the need for achievement. Agreeableness in leaders requires a need to be cheerful and optimistic, nurturing (sympathetic, helpful) and a need for affiliation. Adjustment means that a leader must show emotional stability, self-esteem and self-control. Intellectual outlook in leaders indicates their curiosity and inquisitively, open mindedness and learning oriented.

The Conscientiousness trait can be linked to charisma where because of dependability and personal integrity, the leader can instil pride, faith and respect in the follower. Further, personal integrity positions a leader to be a role model. The agreeableness and adjustment traits positions the leader to provide emotional appeals, to motivate and inspire the follower and enable the follower to envision an attractive future, all of which are proxies of inspirational motivation in transformational leadership. The intellectual outlook trait can be linked to intellectual stimulation style in transformational leadership. In both cases, leadership stimulates effort for innovation and creativity, remains open-minded, and promotes logical thinking. This theory supports the variable intellectual stimulation since personal characteristics here influence leadership.

Effect of Charisma on performance of state corporations

The study on leadership effectiveness, motivation and culture in Africa by Senaji et al. (2014), found out that vision was an important descriptor of what makes a leader effective. On average, being visionary was rated as number one descriptor of an effective leader in Kenya with a score of 4.80. This exploratory study conducted in Ghana, Egypt, Nigeria and Uganda used the Delphi technique with a small sample of corporate, community and religious leaders.

Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa, and Nwankwere (2011), evaluated the effect of leadership styles on organisational performance in selected small scale enterprises. The analysis has shown that charismatic leadership style exerts positive but insignificant effect on followers and performance. The major objective of this study was to determine effect of leadership styles on performance in small scale enterprises in Ikosi-Ketu Council development area of Lagos state, Nigeria. Transformational and transactional leadership styles were considered in this study. Transformational leadership behaviours and performance/outcome considered relevant in the study were charisma, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation/individual consideration; and effectiveness, extra effort and satisfaction, respectively.

The study by Krishna (2011) examined the effects of transformational leadership on team performance and commitment. In the study, hypotheses were tested in two levels. First, correlations among transformational leadership, team performance, psychological empowerment and organisational commitment were analysed. In addition, to correlation analysis a series of regression analysis were conducted to test the hypotheses. Hierarchical regression analysis was also performed to test the mediating role of psychological empowerment. Results revealed a positive relation between transformational leadership and effectiveness, extra effort, satisfaction, and psychological empowerment.

Tosi, Misangyi, Fanelli, Waldman, and Yammarino (2004), as cited in Ling *et al.* (2008), examined a sample of Fortune 500 companies over a 10-year period and reported that the top

managers' ratings of CEO charisma, a key attribute of transformational leadership, were unrelated to firm performance. Using data from 48 Fortune 500 firms, Waldman, Ramirez, House, and Puranam (2001), as cited in Ling *et al.* (2008), failed to find any main effects of CEO charisma on firm performance. Likewise, on the basis of 770 surveys from top management team members in 128 companies, Agle, Nagarajan, Sonnenfeld, and Srinivasan (2006), found that although previous organisational performance was attributed to perceptions of CEO charisma, subsequent performance was not. Similarly, Ensley, Pearce, and Hmieleski's (2006), study of 66 firms found no evidence to support a positive main effect of CEO transformational leadership on firm performance. One known exception to these findings is by Waldman, Javidan, and Varella (2004), as cited in Ling *et al.* (2008), who found charisma to be positively related to firm performance.

Scholars such as De Hoogh have integrated the wide variety of personality-centred research on the antecedents of charismatic leadership by focusing on the Big Five personality traits, such as leaders' extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism (Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011). With these Big Five traits representing broad constructs that incorporate many other personality dispositions it appears useful for systematically cumulating prior research findings. Accordingly, Bono and Judge (2004), as cited in Ayiro (2014), meta-analysed 26 independent studies on the personality antecedents of charismatic leadership, utilizing the Big Five framework to organize prior results. Together, the Big Five were found to explain a total of 12% of the variance in charismatic leadership behaviours, with a significant positive effect for extraversion ($\rho = .22$) and a significant negative effect for neuroticism (Bono & Judge, 2004; as cited in Ayiro, 2014).

Empirical studies have been inconclusive, offering support for both of these perspectives. Bligh, Kohles, and Meindl (2004), as cited in Willis *et al.* (2013) found president George W. Bush's rhetorical language to contain more charismatic elements in the aftermath of the crisis induced by the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. In contrast, Bligh, Kohles, and Pillai (2011), as cited in Willis *et al.* (2013) reported charismatic leadership ratings for California's then governor Gray Davis to be negatively related to raters' perceptions of a state of crisis in California. In summary, the literature suggests that crisis and threat situations may be important for the emergence of both charismatic and prevention-oriented leadership behaviours. It is noteworthy, however, that research findings on the specific effects of such conditions on charismatic leadership have been contradictory.

The study by Bono and Timothy (2004), as cited in Ayiro (2014), was a meta-analysis of the relationship between personality and ratings of transformational and transactional leadership behaviours. Using the 5-factor model of personality as an organizing framework, the authors

accumulated 384 correlations from 26 independent studies. Personality traits were related to 3 dimensions of transformational leadership, idealized influence, inspirational motivation (charisma), intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration and 3 dimensions of transactional leadership contingent reward, management by exception—active, and passive leadership. Extraversion was the strongest and most consistent correlate of transformational leadership. Although results provided some support for the dispositional basis of transformational leadership— especially with respect to the charisma dimension—generally, weak associations suggested the importance of future research to focus on both narrower personality traits and non-dispositional determinants of transformational and transactional leadership.

Some visionary, passion driven and influential leaders, possessing all qualities of charismatic leaders have proven themselves to be more dictators than leaders. Thus, charisma has often been couched in terms of positive and negative side of leadership with the inclusion of qualities such as narcissism, manipulation, alienation of people and defensiveness. Bass and Riggio (2010), have written about international charismatic leaders who wreaked havoc, death and destruction, well known examples being Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot, Josef Stalin and Osama Bin Laden. These leaders are referred to as Pseudo transformational since they exhibit many elements of transformational leadership, but have personal, exploitative and self-aggrandizing motives (Bass & Riggio, 2010). As a result of the identified shadow side of charisma including extreme narcissism, in which a leader loses touch with reality and leads others towards their own self-serving gains at the organisations' peril.

From the foregoing literature, it is apparent that Charismatic leadership can be learned, contrary to popular belief that leaders are not born with the capability of creating a collective feeling amongst followers by making use of a compelling vision. By providing leaders with practical training sessions regarding the use of charismatic leadership, humor, and how to convey the organizational strategy properly, leaders can learn how to influence followers with their compelling vision, through role modelling, by instilling pride, faith and respect and by discussing important values and beliefs for their respective organizations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted both descriptive and quantitative approaches. The study used the positivism philosophy since it is a survey research study; it focused on the descriptive, relational and causal aspects of the research study variables. According to Burke (2007), interpretive paradigm is used to understand the World of human experiences.

The leaders from all State corporations formed the population for this study. These are the high-level employees in state corporations who are involved in organisation wide decision

making. They included top management team, managers, managing directors, General managers, departmental leaders and their deputies; lecturers, Vice Chancellors and their Deputies, and Chief Executive Officers. The total number of leaders in state corporations is estimated at 5,140. A simple random sampling was used to select one State Corporations from each of these categories with a total of 165 leaders provided feedback for this study. For the measurement of leadership attributes, and leadership outcomes, a 16 items structured Questionnaire was used for data collection.

A pilot test was conducted in the Kenya Bureau of Standards and Coast Water Services Board. This enabled the researcher test for reliability and validity of the instruments. Data was finally subjected to descriptive statistics.

FINDINGS

Charismatic Leadership Style

In this study, charismatic leadership style was measured by four questions focusing on values and beliefs, vision and mission, pride, faith and respect, confidence and role model. The respondents were asked their opinion regarding charismatic leadership and organisational performance in state corporations. Specifically, they were asked to rate on a scale of 0=Not at all, 1= Once in a while, 2=Sometimes, 3= Fairly Often and 4=Frequently, if not always. The analysis is presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Charismatic Leadership Style

	Not at all	Once in a while	Sometime	Fairly Often	Frequently, if not always	Mean	Std. Dev
Instills in me a sense of Vision and Mission	9.9%	9.3%	8.7%	32.3%	39.8%	2.83	1.32
Talks about important values and beliefs	13.0%	7.5%	19.9%	28.6%	31.1%	2.57	1.35
Instills pride, faith and respect and considers moral & ethical consequences of decisions	19.3%	16.1%	13.7%	26.1%	24.8%	2.21	1.47
Displays confidence and is a role model	16.1%	18.0%	18.6%	19.9%	27.3%	2.74	1.44
Average						2.59	1.40

According to results in Table 1, majority of the respondents who represented 39.8% of the respondents agreed that their leaders frequently, if not always instills in them a sense of vision

and mission, 32.3% indicated that their leader fairly often, 9.9% indicated that not at all, 9.3% indicated that once in a while 8.7% indicated that their leaders instilled a sense of vision and mission sometimes. 31.1% of the respondents agreed that their leaders frequently, if not always talks about important values and beliefs, 28.6% indicated that their leader fairly often. 26.1% indicated that their leaders fairly often instill pride, faith and respect and considers moral & ethical consequences of decisions, 24.8% indicated that they did so frequently, if not always. Finally, 27.3% indicated that their leaders displayed confidence and role model while 19.9% indicated fairly often.

On a five-point scale, the average mean of the responses was 2.59 which mean that majority of the respondents indicated fairly often response; however, the answers were varied as shown by a standard deviation of 1.40.

Organisational Performance of State Corporation in Kenya

In this section, organisational performance was measured by five questions focusing on service delivery and operations. The respondents were asked give their opinion on organisational performance of state corporations in Kenya. Specifically, they were asked to rate on a scale of 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=moderately agree, 4=Agree and 5=Strongly Agree. The analysis is presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Organisational Performance

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderately Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev
There is improved service delivery and service delivery innovations.	9.3%	12.4%	17.4%	32.3%	28.6%	3.58	1.28
Customer satisfactions feedback have improved over time due to better resolution of public complains.	3.7%	8.1%	10.6%	53.4%	24.2%	3.86	1.00
The organization has been ISO certified as a result of improved automation of services.	9.3%	2.5%	9.3%	55.9%	23.0%	3.81	1.11
Project implementation completion rate has improved over time.	5.0%	5.6%	11.8%	54.7%	23.0%	3.85	1.00
Project implementation cost Efficiency has been on the upward trend	13.0%	13.0%	9.9%	32.3%	31.7%	3.57	1.39
Average						3.78	1.10

According to results in Table 2, majority of the respondents who represented 60.9% agreed that there was improved service delivery and service delivery innovations, 77.6% agreed that customer satisfactions feedback have improved over time due to better resolution of public complains, 78.9% of the respondents agreed that the organization has been ISO certified as a result of improved automation of services, 77.7% of the respondents agreed that project implementation completion rate has improved over time, while 64.0% of the respondents agreed that project implementation cost efficiency has been on the upward trend.

On a five-point scale, the average mean of the responses was 3.78 which mean that majority of the respondents agreed with most of the statements; however, the answers were varied as shown by a standard deviation of 1.10. The highest of the mean was 5 while the lowest was 1.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results of this study, most leaders in State Corporations displayed charismatic characteristics which contribute to improved organisational performance of State Corporations in Kenya. The leaders instil pride, faith and respect in followers and consider moral and ethical consequences of the decisions they make. Furthermore, the leaders display confidence and are role models to their followers. In order to achieve improved organisational performance of State corporations, there is need to invest in leadership training and capacity development programmes that will enhance leadership charismatic skills. In particular, leadership that instils a strong sense of Mission and Vision in the followers is required. Vision is an important descriptor of what makes a leader effective. Being visionary was rated as number one descriptor of an effective leader in Kenya. State Corporations in Kenya require a leadership that spends more time to talk about important values and beliefs of the organisation they lead. Values, and beliefs in an organisation constitute an integral part of and provides structure and stability for people as they attempt to understand the world around them. A goods value framework provides a framework for how leaders and followers treat each other at work, how customers are treated, and helps make a sense of leaders and followers working fit in the big picture. Values and beliefs provide a framework for achieving the vision and increasing the effectiveness of the organisation. This also creates an environment for conducive job satisfaction as well as finding work which is exciting and challenging.

The study is a justification of the fact that a state corporation whose leaders are charismatic, individually considerate of their followers, who are inspirationally motivating and who are intellectually stimulating will steer their organisation to be more effective. In particular, the study recommends:

The Cabinet Secretaries, majority of them involved in appointing leaders of State corporations should take note of the critical role of transformational leadership in state corporations. Appointments, particularly of chairpersons of state corporations should seriously consider the transformative configuration of the holder of this office. Political considerations should therefore be surrogate to transformational considerations.

The Government and the private sector need to seriously consider investing in the development and implementation of a curriculum on transformational leadership. Training on transformational leadership must start early in the life of a child, if current and future investments are to be sustained. It is therefore necessary for basic education to make it mandatory for every child to cover substantial training on transformational leadership.

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