

**LEADERSHIP STYLES OF TOP MANAGEMENT AND THEIR EFFECT ON  
UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE**

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## ABSTRACT

Leadership is a field of study that has been studied in management and organizational development for a number of years. It is becoming increasingly important to study leadership in the context of higher education institutions, especially in the African context. Kenya is currently experiencing a crisis in higher education with lecturer's strikes in public universities and students strikes in some private universities that have consequently led to university closures. The role that leadership plays in this is hard to ignore. That is why this study sought to investigate the link between leadership and performance and the differences between male and female leaders in higher education institutions in Kenya. The study employed descriptive research design targeting 74 accredited universities in Kenya. The population was distributed into 5 distinct groups from which a sample of 43 universities were selected to be studied. Stratified sampling technique was used to attain the required sample size. This study adopted a quantitative approach to assess leadership style of top management and performance of universities in Kenya. Both students and staff were subjected to the study in order to provide data on the link between leadership and performance in their respective institutions. In addition, there is not a large amount of literature on the link between leadership and performance in universities, in the African context. The study concluded that leadership styles affect the performance of universities in Kenya. Transformational and transactional leadership were found to have a significant association with performance of universities in Kenya. The study recommended emphasis on transformational leadership and transactional leadership in universities to boost performance of studied institutions.

**Key words:** Top Management, Leadership styles, Organisation performance, Higher education, University, Leadership

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## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- Top management:** Top management is the highest decision-making party in an organisation. In this study the top management was the vice chancellors
- Leadership:** Influence of one person over another or over a group of people
- Leadership Style:** This is the manner and approach of providing direction and motivating people
- Organisation Performance:** Sum total of an organisation's inputs and outputs
- Higher Education:** Optional final step of learning after completion of secondary level of education
- University:** A high-level educational institution in which students study for degrees and academic research is done.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

USA-	United States of America
UK-	United Kingdom
USIU-	United States International University
PAC-	Pan Africa Christian
JKUAT-	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
SPSS-	Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Background Information**

According to Brennan and Shah (2000), higher education around the world is under pressure to change. It is a fast-growing industry and its contribution to economic success is seen as vital, especially in the African context. Universities and institutions of higher learning are expected to create knowledge, to improve equity, and to respond to student needs and to do so more efficiently. Universities are increasingly competing for students, research funds and academic staff, both in the private and public sector.

In this complex environment, the governance of higher education institutions needs to be transformational in order to assure their independence and dynamism while promoting key economic and social objectives. In addition, Eberlin and Tatum (2008), as well as Robbins et al. (2009) asserted that the success of an organization, more specifically institutions of higher learning, largely depend on the quality of the decisions made by their leaders. This study sought to situate itself in the literature on leadership and specifically on the link between leadership styles and the performance of universities.

There are a number of leadership styles discussed in the literature, however, this study focussed on three leadership styles: transactional, transformational and situational (Bass, 1985). Moynihan (2012) argued that in the beginning, leadership theories focused primarily on specific characteristics and behaviours of leaders. However, as time went on, theories began to focus more on a leader's followers and the contextual nature of leadership. For example, the early theories, such as the great man theory and the trait theory, focused specifically on innate qualities leaders are born with. Within the next phase, which includes behaviourist theory, contingency theory focus shifted more toward what leaders do versus what traits they have. The final stage, which is the contemporary stage includes transactional theory, situational theory and transformational theory, where the relationship between the leader and his followers is explored.

Transformational leaders align the interests of the organization with its members. In contrast to the transactional leader who practices contingent reinforcement of followers, the transformational leader inspires, intellectually stimulates, and is individually considerate of them. Transactional leaders also recognize the importance of institutional roles and expectations. Fulfilling these goals is usually one of the priorities of a transactional leader (Bidwell, 2001). Transformational leadership may be directive or participative. Since it requires higher moral development, transformational leadership is recognized universally as a concept.

Furthermore, women leaders tend to be more transformational than their male counterparts. Transformational leadership is also seen as more effective than transactional leadership in a wide variety of business, military, industrial, hospital, and educational circumstances as has been highlighted in the literature (Bass, 2010). Situational leaders, in contrast to both transformational and transactional leaders are context dependent. Their leadership is dependent on the particular context that they find themselves in. The effectiveness of a situational leader is dependent on the organization's environment for example organizational structure, type of organization, type and number of employees and organizational culture.

Higher Education is becoming a major force for economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge focused global economy (Henard, 2008). In Africa, performance of universities has remained elusive (Kilemi & Njuguna, 2007) and higher education sector has constantly experienced severe struggle in the perspective of globalisation of education (Marginson, 2007). It has been noted that the swift expansion of universities education has compromised quality of education as is pointed out by the quality of teaching, research and library facilities; overcrowding in the hostels; increased student riots; and staff suspension (Owino, Kibera, Munyoki, & Wainaina, 2014). Despite the challenges associated with higher education, the quest for university education in Kenya has constantly increased thus making the need for revolution of the higher education sector to help achieve performance goals as well as attend to national challenges such as pursuit of socioeconomic development, realization of Vision 2030, assumption of innovation, creativity, and technology implementation (Gudo, Ole & Oanda, 2011).

Scholarly work shows that examining the relationship between organizational leadership and university performance is conflicting on how the concepts are interconnected as argued by Mabey, (2013) and that organizational leadership has a direct cause and effect relationship upon organizations and their Performance as measured by change tolerance, employee motivation and institutional effectiveness (Raja & Palanichamy, 2011). Thus, institutions that integrate appropriate institutional leadership are able to deal with environmental challenges and to gain competitive gain which are vital constituents and which acts as a strong support towards institutional performance. In this study, performance of universities was measured using non-financial parameters comprising of product outcome, student focused outcome, workforce outcome, process effectiveness outcome, financial and market outcome, and leadership and responsibility outcome.

According to the University Act (2012, the Vice Chancellor of a university is the chief executive of the university, he is the academic and administrative head of the university. He has the overall responsibility for the direction, organization, administration and programmes of the university. The study evaluated the leadership style of top management, which in this case is the Vice Chancellor, using questionnaires that were administered to student leaders, administrative staff, support staff and academic staff heads. As the Vice Chancellor is involved in the day to day management of the university then he is regularly interacting with the student leaders, administrative staff, support staff and academic staff heads.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

Universities in Kenya are undergoing a number of changes in order to ensure the graduation of quality graduates and address the challenges facing the education sector. These changes include new regulations for academic staff recruitment, greater financial restrictions, increased research and teaching obligations as well as wider cultural changes in terms of student expectations (Muricho & Chang'ach, 2013). The future of universities in Kenya depends on how well universities respond to these challenges. One of the key factors in determining how universities respond to these challenges is their leadership. The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship of various leadership styles on university performance in higher education institutions in Kenya. The efficiency of leadership styles of Vice Chancellors and heads of departments in universities have an effect on both the nature and the quality of education institutions.

Leadership is a well-researched and growing field of study in organizational management (Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2000; Lok, & Crawford 2004). In the private sector, the success of any business is often partially as a result of its leadership. Even in the public sector, leadership within the various ministries as well as political leadership is often discussed (Berg, & Rao, 2005; O'Brien, 2015). One area where leadership is perhaps not given enough attention is in the education sector. Here in Kenya, we have seen the issues surrounding educational leadership and performance in the secondary school sector with the former education cabinet secretary Dr. Fred Matiangi challenging secondary school leaders (Nation media, 2018).

In the literature on leadership in the education sector, a large part has focused on the secondary school and primary school level. The focus of this study was on the link between leadership and performance at the university level. The importance of this is emphasized as “Good leadership fosters change that is both transformative and sustainable. It can be concerned with moral or organizational matters. It can define a university’s role in the world beyond its walls, or determine the internal dynamics of the institution. Most importantly, it requires a worthy goal-vision, if you will--but it also requires persistence” (Ekman, 2003, p.2).

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this research was to determine the link between transactional, transformational and situational leadership and performance in higher education institutions in Kenya.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

- i. To investigate the relationship between transformational leadership style and performance in universities in Kenya.
- ii. To assess the relationship between transactional leadership style and performance in universities in Kenya.
- iii. To investigate the relationship between situational leadership style and performance in universities in Kenya.
- iv. To determine the difference in leadership styles between male and female leaders in top management of universities in Kenya.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

- i. What is the relationship between transactional leadership style and performance in universities in Kenya?
- ii. What is the relationship between transactional leadership style and performance in universities in Kenya?
- iii. Is there a relationship between situational leadership style and performance in universities in Kenya?
- iv. Is there a difference in leadership styles between male and female leaders in top management of universities in Kenya?

## **1.6 Scope of study**

The study covered accredited universities in Kenya. The researcher examined leadership styles of top management and their effect on university performance. The study assessed the performance based on product outcome, student focused outcome, workforce outcome, process effectiveness outcome, financial and market outcome, and leadership and responsibility outcome. Primary data was collected from the head of administrative staff, head of support staff, student leader and head of academic staff.

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

This study is relevant because it informs and adds to the literature on the link between leadership styles and performance in higher education institutions in Kenya.

The findings can be used to guide and inform the authorities appointing Vice Chancellors to university leadership positions in order to aim at better performance in the universities.

The study findings can be used by university leadership in that they will learn to align their leadership styles to achieve better performance.

There is need for more literature on the topic of leadership in institutions of higher education. This study will therefore seek to contribute to African scholarship on the subject.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the literature covering leadership in university education. It focusses on the various leadership styles in order to come up with a conceptual framework which will function as the theoretical framework for the study. The conceptual framework was utilized to frame the research in terms of developing the methodology and providing the themes for the analysis of the data.

### **2.2 Theoretical review**

#### **2.2.1 Related leadership theories**

There are three leadership theories that can be analysed when looking at leadership within organizations. These include trait leadership theories, situational leadership theories and contingency leadership theories (Fiedler, 1969; Okumbe, 1998). The trait theory of leadership focuses on the importance of a leader's personal characteristics in shaping the quality or style of his/her leadership. Some of these personal traits can include professional experience, academic achievements, gender and age.

The situational theory on leadership depends on context. It states that the characteristics that a leader will display are as a result of the situation that the leader finds himself in. According to this theory, there is therefore no firm set of rules or characteristics for a leader, it is rather the situation that a leader finds himself in that leads to a particular set of traits being adopted. At the university level for example, a vice chancellor should be able to tailor his leadership style to address the particular needs of his institution. In addition, Fiedler (1969) explains that a leader is in a better position to achieve positive outcomes for his organization if the particular organization is in a favourable situation. For example, if there are good communication structures and policies within the organization, then it will be easier for a leader to be more effective (Hoy & Miskel, 1982; Okumbe, 1998).

Contingency theories recognize that there is no best style of leadership, but rather a leader's effectiveness depends, or is contingent on the interaction of leader's behaviour and the situation.

This suggests that followers are as important as, if not more important than the leader in deciding which leadership style best fits the situation. In addition, the application of contingency theories to leadership embraces both trait and situational theories.

These theories informed this study by looking at how the specific contexts of the universities have influenced the leadership styles of their leaders. Of these three theories, the situational theory is the one that is most applicable to this particular research context. This model was developed in 1996 by Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson. It is based on the interrelationships among three salient elements of group dynamics: first is the extent of guidance and direction (i.e., task behaviour) a leader provides to members of the organization; second, the level of socio-emotional support (i.e., relationship behaviour) a leader provides to members of the organization; and thirdly, the readiness levels (i.e., maturity levels) that followers exhibit in working on tasks necessary for the achievement of organizational goals. This concept provides leaders with some understanding of the relationship between an effective style of leadership and the level of readiness of their subordinates.

Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (1996), as well as other leadership theorists such as Fiedler (1967) and Blake and Mouton (1964), maintain that no single leadership style is appropriate for all situations. Effective leaders adapt their leadership behaviours to the readiness levels of subordinates. This is the reason for the situational leadership theory being the most appropriate theoretical framework for this. It gives a flexible framework to look at various leadership styles within the contexts or situations of the universities that served as case studies. This leads us to a discussion in the next section of leadership styles and their link to university performance.

### **2.2.3 Leadership Styles**

There are a number of leadership styles that are discussed in the literature. The three key leadership styles are the transactional, transformational and the laissez-faire styles (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders align the interests of the organization with its members.

In contrast to the transactional leader who practices contingent reinforcement of followers, the transformational leader inspires, intellectually stimulates, and is individually considerate of them. Transformational leadership may be directive or participative.

Requiring higher moral development, transformational leadership is recognized universally as a concept. The preferred leadership style for most organizations and that is widely discussed in the academic literature is the transformational model as it is seen to encompass both aspects of strong and democratic leadership that seeks to grow an organization. Transformational leadership is one where leaders create a shared vision, develop and coach future leaders as well as encourage innovation and act with integrity and ethics (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

A number of other types of leadership are also discussed in the literature; these include autocratic and democratic leadership styles, as well as the laissez faire leadership style. Autocratic leadership is where all power and authority are centralized and rest in the leader of the organization or department. Authority is not delegated and there is a lack of effective communication from the leader to the subordinates (Hoy & Miskel, 1992). On the other hand, democratic leadership demonstrates openness and a willingness to negotiate, effective communication and delegation. As the name suggests, democratic leadership is more consultative and about demonstrating power decentralization and group participation as well as delegation of duties.

Autocratic leadership on the other hand is one where power resides in the leader and there is no room for delegation and communication channels between the leader and others in the organization are less clear (Budohi, 2014). One of the key areas of debate in the academic literature is whether there are differences in leadership styles between men and women. This will be discussed in more detail in the empirical review in the next section. It is important to do this as one of the research questions under investigation is to determine the differences in leadership style between men and women in higher education institutions in Kenya.

One other leadership styles discussed in the literature is the laissez faire one, which is more concerned with allowing employees the freedom to make their own decisions without the input from the particular leader. As the name of this leadership style suggests, the leader is very hands-off in his or her approach (Talbert & Milbrey, 1994). In this leadership style, the leader only intervenes when goals have not been met or a problem arises. It is therefore non-interventionist. The leader here does not take action until mistakes are brought to their attention. Laissez-faire behaviours are ones that delay decisions and give up responsibility.

Laissez-faire leaders offer no feedback or support to the follower. Laissez-faire leadership is a “hands-off” approach to leadership (Northouse, 2004). Laissez-faire leadership is also termed a non-leadership style and this is one of the reasons it will not be considered here as this study is concerned with more active leadership styles. Moreover, the laissez-faire leader avoids accepting responsibilities, is absent when needed, fails to follow up on requests for assistance, and resists expressing his or her views on important issues. The laissez-faire leader gives the majority of control in the decision-making process to the followers. The assumption of this type of leadership is that employees will be intrinsically motivated and should be left to their own devices to accomplish the job at hand (Jones & Rudd, 2008, p.92)

Other leadership styles that were not considered for this research as the transformational, transactional and situational leadership (that were focused on) include some of these elements under them. In addition, these three leadership styles are considered the dominant leadership ones when trying to understand organizational development. They are also the ones that are mostly utilized in empirical research.

#### **2.2.4 University performance**

The concept of university performance is one that can be investigated from a number of angles. In the first instance, we can look at university performance as from the academic perspective. This is how students perform as a result of set university examinations. For example, you can analyse how many students graduate with first class, second class and third-class honours over time or under different university leaders. Another way to look at performance is by focusing on the employees. Employee performance is used as a category of analysis in evaluating an organization’s overall performance. This can be analysed through employee performance reviews and employee satisfaction surveys. One other way that we can look at performance is through customer satisfaction, the customers in this case being university students.

Peacock (1995) and Pounder (2001) hold the view that there is no agreed upon definition of organizational effectiveness or performance and suggest that conflicts between managerial perspectives of success should be considered.

Pounder (2001) states that this is particularly so within the higher education sector where attempts to develop models of organizational effectiveness applicable to universities have not been forthcoming despite a worldwide call for universities to demonstrate “value for money”.

Organizational performance is a complex multidimensional phenomenon for which researchers have used different perspectives to measure. McNamara (2008) states that organizational performance involves recurring activities that establish organizational goals, monitors the progress towards the goals and makes adjustments to achieve the goals more effectively and efficiently. It can therefore be argued that organizational performance can be judged in terms of whether or not an organization has achieved the objectives set before it. The measure of performance that was utilized for this study is the Baldrige Performance Framework. This Framework focuses on customer satisfaction, whereby in the case of universities, the customer would be the students and staff composition, as well as the characteristics of the organizations leaders. This is why it is felt that it is the most appropriate measure to use for the purposes of this study.

An article published by Kilemi & Nguguna (2014) on challenges, issues and achievements of universities in Kenya noted that private and public universities had positive contribution to national development through training and preparation of human resources in various professions. However, this review did not focus on effect of leadership style on performance of universities, a gap this study sought to address. Similarly, Owino et al (2014) assessed service quality in Kenyan universities in the context of dimensional and contextual analysis. The study employed cross-sectional study design to collect data from 750 respondents using simple random sampling technique. The study found out that there existed a significance difference in the dimensions of service quality between public and private universities. However, they lacked element of leadership effect on performance of universities, a gap this study sought to address.

## **2.4 Empirical review**

### **2.4.1 Leadership**

The concept of leadership is one that is ever evolving and changing. Leadership can be defined as a process where a person seeks to influence a group of people in order to achieve certain objectives within an organization (Nworgu, 1991).

We can therefore look at leadership in two ways or as having two functions: giving direction and exercising influence. As these functions can be carried out differently, there are a number of leadership styles to consider (Budohi, 2014). Despite a large number of studies on leadership, it still remains a somewhat contested concept. A large part of the literature on leadership is focused on western societies, yet it is also important to consider cultural differences in how leadership is viewed in different societies.

Harber and Davies (1997) as well as Blunt and Jones (1997) for example argued that leadership in higher education institutions in developing countries tends to be authoritarian. This is not only leadership at the staff level but also leadership in the classroom where teaching is also conducted in an authoritarian manner with little room for discussion and debate. A contrary study to this has shown that the preferred leadership style in selected African countries is one that is charismatic, values-based and participative, and these findings are similar to those found in studies done in the west (Bolden & Kirk 2009). For the purposes of this study, leadership was understood as both a “process to influence people to achieve certain goals and results” as well as “focusing on the leader and his/her abilities and qualities” (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016, p.141).

Leadership tends to be viewed through the lens of vision and values, and management with processes and structures. There is a tendency to view good leadership as one with a clear vision and goals which are implemented through effective processes and structures. It is also important to distinguish between leadership and management. The two are not the same, and one can easily be a leader without being a manager. For example, a person can fulfil the inspirational side of leadership without being involved in the day to day running of an organization. Conversely, an individual can “monitor and control organizational activities” without taking on the inspirational aspects of leadership. But because we expect managers to lead, it is therefore appropriate to consider them as leaders (Schon, 1984).

A leader’s vision is one other aspect that is closely associated with an organization’s performance. It refers to the “future desirable state of an organization.” Vision is closely identified with an institution’s performance and can be defined as “attaching a label to the sort of dream or constellation of goals or scenarios that form in the mind of everyone from time to time.

These form readily in the minds of leaders who succeed in transforming their organizations” (Beare et al., 1993).

#### **2.4.1 Transformational leadership and university performance**

Hancott (2005) and Pieterse et al (2010) argued that transformational leadership is one that transforms followers to rise above their self-interest by altering their morale, ideals, interests and values as well as motivating them to perform better than initially expected. Transformational leaders give respect to and empower their followers to exude exceptionally high effort, high commitment and willingness to take risks (Senior & Fleming, 2006). Furthermore, there are four components of transformational leadership that are highlighted by Bass (2008): *role modelling, motivating, developing, and encouraging creativity*. Idealized Influence states that transformational leaders act as *role models* and that follower will seek to emulate their behaviour. In addition to being considered generally *extraordinary* leaders, the three attributes that ideally are demonstrated through idealized influence are a *willingness to take risks, consistent (versus arbitrary) behavior, and high levels of integrity and ethics*.

##### **i. Inspirational motivation talks of transformational leaders**

These leaders behave in ways that are *inspirational* to followers and provide *meaning* and a sense of *challenge* to their work. This is achieved in three different ways: involving followers in the *development of a preferred vision for the future, communicating clear expectations, and by demonstrating a clear commitment to the shared goals and vision* of the group or team.

##### **ii. Intellectual stimulation**

It is the component that states that transformational leaders include followers in addressing organizational problems and *stimulate and support them in being as creative and innovative as possible in identifying solutions*. The leaders accomplish this by encouraging followers to *challenge assumptions, reframe problems, and approach existing challenges in novel ways*. This is all supposed to be done in a context in which no idea is considered too stupid.

### iii. Individualized consideration

This component states that transformational leaders give *individualized attention* to each follower's *professional development* by acting as a *coach or mentor*. The key element of this component is that customized *learning opportunities* are designed for each follower based on that person's *unique needs and desires*. These learning opportunities are often *delegated action learning tasks* that the leader assigns and monitors.

What then is the link between transformational leadership and performance? Bryman (2005, 697) in his review of the literature on the link between leadership and effectiveness or performance in the higher education sector came up with some characteristics that were associated with the most effective leaders. These include: a clear sense of direction, allowing participation in key decision making, being considerate and trustworthy and communicating well. This review, however, only covered educational institutions in the USA and UK. The characteristics listed in the foregoing study are mostly associated with the transformational leadership style in the western context. Transformational leadership is seen as the style that is mostly effective in ensuring university performance. This is also the finding in the Kenyan context where a study on the link between transformational leadership and performance in Kenyan universities was investigated (Mbithi et al., 2016) Mbithi found out that there was a statistically significant, positive relationship between transformational leadership and university performance.

#### **2.4.2 Transactional leadership and university performance**

Contingent reward and management-by-exception are part of the transactional leadership style. Contingent Reward refers to how the leader and followers “exchange specific rewards for outcomes or results.” Within an organizational context, goals and objectives are agreed upon by both the leader and followers and the achievement is either rewarded or punished. The focus of this leadership style is therefore very much on fulfilling contractual obligations. They will expect performance from their subordinates as they are being given a salary to perform certain duties.

Management-by-exception is when a leader criticizes an employee in order to improve that individual's performance, or “uses negative reinforcement.” These types of leaders can be described as micro managers in that they follow the work of an employee closely so that they can

highlight any mistakes that have been made. This is especially true if there are any differences between the standards/goals that have been agreed upon and the performance of the employee. These leaders display a rules-based culture where they believe that the enforcement of organizational rules is essential to avoid mistakes (Jones & Rudd, 2008, p.91) Transactional contingent reward leadership behaviours have also been positively associated with high performance, although to a lesser degree than transformational leadership (Klimoski & Hayes 1980; Podsakoff et al. 1982, 1984; Boerner et al. 2007).

### **2.4.3 Situational leadership and university performance**

As the name suggests, situational leadership is context-dependent. It states that a leader's behaviour will be determined by the particular context that they find themselves in. Developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1997) situational leaders display a number of characteristics which include telling, selling, participating and delegating.

In the telling principle, people who are unable and unwilling to take responsibility need clear, specific directions and supervision. This style is called telling because it requires 'telling' people what, how, when, and where to perform. It emphasizes directive behaviour. Too much supportive behaviour with people at this level may be seen as permissive or, more important, as rewarding poor performance. Telling involves high task behaviour and low relationship behaviour.

In selling, people who are willing but unable to take responsibility need directive behaviour because of their lack of ability, and supportive behaviour to reinforce their willingness and enthusiasm. This style is called selling because most of the direction is still provided by the leader. Through two-way communication and explanations, the leader may guide the followers into desired behaviours. Selling involves high task and high relationship behaviour.

Participating is whereby the follower has the ability but lacks self-confidence or enthusiasm, so the leader needs to maintain two-way communications to support the follower's ability.

This style is called participating because the leader and follower share in decision making, but the leader is the facilitator. Participating involves high relationship behaviour and low task behaviour.

Delegating is where the people have both ability and motivation, and little direction or support is needed. Followers are permitted to decide how, when, and where to perform. They are psychologically mature and therefore do not need above-average amounts of two-way communication or supportive behaviour. Delegating involves low relationship behaviour and low task behaviour.

In summary, the key to situational leadership are to accurately assess the maturity level of the follower and to model behaviour appropriately. Implicit in situational leadership is leaders' helping followers to mature. Leadership behaviour should be adjusted through the four styles as the follower matures from low maturity with the first element to high maturity with the last element of situational leadership (Hersey et al 1979, p.422).

According to Fiedler (1967), the characteristics of a leader can influence leadership effectiveness as well as performance. Leaders who relate their styles to particular situational changes are more likely to be effective. Leadership style is therefore crucial to success and so leaders have to be flexible in adopting the right styles in various situations. Delegation, one key element of situational leadership is seen as a characteristic of the most effective leaders and a way to ensure school performance. According to Hopkins et al (1994), giving other people genuine authority does not mean enfeebling oneself, encouraging others to give creative leadership does not mean abdicating one's responsibility, giving others real responsibility does not mean leaving them to sink or swim, but rather to support them in developing the best possible way of going forward.

#### **2.4.4 Gender differences in leadership styles**

One of the research questions under investigation is whether there are differences between male and female leaders in their leadership styles. There have been a number of studies conducted on leadership differences between males and females but these have been inconclusive in finding differences between male and female leaders on their leadership styles.

Moreover, male and female leaders are sometimes not in similar leadership positions which make it hard to conduct an adequate comparison (Riggio, 2008). Indeed, according to de la Rey (2011), this debate has not been resolved but continues to rage with both sides presenting convincing evidence to back up their arguments.

Funk (2004) undertook a study to identify professional and personal characteristics, and styles of leadership in order to develop profiles of six outstanding female superintendents in Texas. Funk established that leadership characteristics of outstanding superintendents included being brave, caring, creative, courageous, committed, confident, energetic, healthy, honest, industrious, introspective, intuitive, knowledgeable, open-minded, passionate, pragmatic, reflective, responsible, risk-taking, trustworthy, and being well-informed. Qualities needed by successful superintendents included character, integrity, vision, courage, and passion. Critical skills for female superintendents were visioning, determining the real needs for their people, communicating, hiring the right people, delegating, developing team support, working effectively with people, and producing meaningful and lasting change.

On the other hand, Cuadrado (2012) asserted that men are generally considered more autocratic, task-oriented and are often described using adjectives like aggressive, enterprising, independent, self-sufficient, dominant, competent and rational. Women tend to be considered more democratic and adopt a participative leadership style. They are more relationship-oriented and are described using terms like caring, nurturing, generous, sensitive, understanding, affectionate, and compassionate.

In another study, Rarieya (2007) reported that there was scepticism about women in leadership positions, arguing that it was not their place. This was gained from interviews that female leaders in education gave about their experience being belittled by staff and parents. Because of this reaction to female leaders, women who pursue the non-traditional roles of a leader reject feminine roles and characteristics and have needs and styles similar to those of male leaders. The argument is that leaders in an organization are socialised and selected into their organisational role and that this overrides their gender role. This results in little difference between male and female leaders.

Moreover, by nature of their communication styles, women value workplace relationships more than men, suggesting that female leaders may foster closer bonds with their followers than their male counterparts. Contrastingly, men's status and power-oriented communication style suggests a more controlling and authoritative leadership approach. If men and women differ in their

communication styles and influence tactics then it is expected that there will be gender differences when it comes to leadership styles as well which was one of the research questions in this study.

## **2.5 Research gap**

From the literature review presented above, a large number of the studies use a quantitative methodology. This research used a quantitative descriptive methodology which provided a different perspective to the literature on leadership and academic performance. The second research gap regards to the location of the research. As has been highlighted in the literature, most studies in this topic emanate from the developed world. The study therefore adds on to the growing body of literature that seeks to understand the study of leadership from an African perspective. Bryman (2007) in his work on leadership has also indicated that there is a gap in the literature on leadership as concerns higher education institutions. This means that there is a lack of focus in these institutions when it comes to the literature on leadership and this is the gap that the current study sought to address.

The existing scholarly work lacks information on the effect of leadership on performance of university in Kenya. Consequently, there are a few studies that have focused on performance of higher education institution with evidence on leadership styles and university performance in Kenya and Africa at large. This study addressed this gap by examining the effect of leadership style on performance of universities in Kenya.

## **2.6 Conceptual framework**

In the literature reviewed in this study, theories of leadership, styles of leadership, the gender differences in leadership as well as transformational leadership, transactional leadership style and situational leadership style have all been discussed. These form a background for the creation of a conceptual framework that guided the research as highlighted in Figure 2.1. The independent variables are the three leadership styles and their elements, namely transformational leadership, transactional leadership and situational leadership.

The dependent variable was university performance. Gender was an intervening variable that formed one of the research questions for the study.

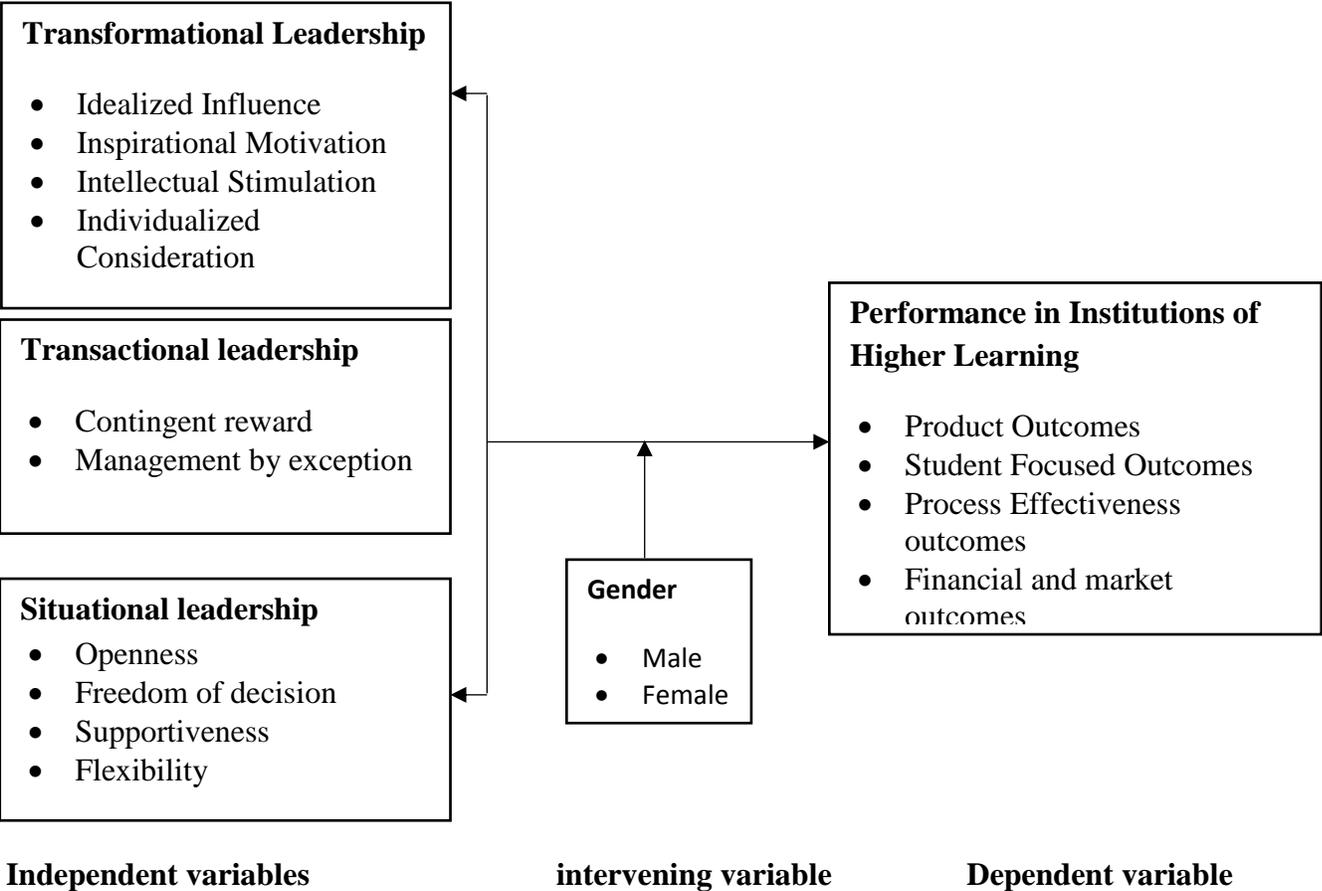


Figure 2. 1: Conceptual framework Source (Researcher, 2018)

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the methodology that was used in implementing the study. The methodology covers: the research design, target population, sampling techniques, sample size, research instruments, pilot study, validity, instruments reliability, the data collection techniques, data processing, analysis of data and finally considerations of ethics.

### **3.2 Research design**

This study used a descriptive research design adopting a quantitative approach. The descriptive research design is also appropriate in describing characteristics of the population such as opinions, attitudes and knowledge of a certain phenomenon (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). This allowed for the investigation of both leadership styles and university performance. A questionnaire was developed which contained questions around the key themes which leadership styles, performance. Gender was determined using the name of the institution as the Vice Chancellors of these institutions are on public domain.

### **3.3. Target population**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003), Population is defined as an entire group of individuals, events or objects having common observable characteristic. While Jankowicz, (2005) states that population is a complete set of people, occurrences or objects from which a sample was chosen. Population to the total of items about which information is required (Kothari, 2004). The target population for this study comprised of institutions of higher learning operating in Kenya, precisely Public Chartered Universities, Public Constituent Colleges, Private Chartered Universities, Private Constituent Colleges and Institutions with Letters of Interim Authority in Kenya. According to the Commission for University Education, the number of accredited institutions of higher learning in Kenya was 74. From each selected institution, the study targeted a student leader, head of administrative staff, head of support staff and head of academic staff.

**Table 3.1: Target population**

No.		Total number
1	Public Chartered Universities	31
2	Public Constituent Colleges	6
3	Private Chartered Universities	18
4	Private Constituent Colleges	5
5.	Institutions with Letters of Interim Authority	14
	Total	74

### 3.4 Sampling Design and sample size determination

Stratified sampling method was employed to ensure the various institutions of higher learning were fairly included in the survey. The target population was categorized into 5 strata, where each stratum represented was sampled to form the desired study sample. This was done to ensure that each characteristics of the sub-group was fairly represented in the study. Then simple random sampling was adopted to acquire the desired stratum sample.

$n = N / (1 + N * e^2)$  Where N: population size, n: sample size, e: significance level, for e.g. (0.1)

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{74}{(1+74*0.1*0.1)} \\ &= 42.52 \\ &= 43 \end{aligned}$$

The study administered questionnaires to four respondents per university; a student leader, head of administrative staff, head of support staff, head of academic staff.

There the sample size for the study was;

$$43*4=172 \text{ respondents}$$

**Table 3.2: Sample size determination**

No.		Stratum population	%	Stratum sample
1	Public Chartered Universities	31	58.12	18
2	Public Constituent Colleges	6	58.12	3
3	Private Chartered Universities	18	58.12	10
4	Private Constituent Colleges	5	58.12	3
5.	Institutions with Letters of Interim Authority	14	58.12	8
	Total	74	58.12	43

### **3.5. Data collection Instrument**

In the questionnaires, respondents filled the answers in written questionnaires and the researchers collected the filled questionnaires with the completed information (Orodho, 2003). The researcher carried out an in-depth literature review to design the questionnaire for the study. The constructs generated from literature review were used to design structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contained four sub-sections from which data was gathered; which are respondents' basic information, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, situational leadership and university performance. The questionnaire contained mixed questions where respondent rated on a five-point likert scale.

### **3.4 Data collection method**

This study used semi-structured questionnaire to collect data. There were a number of issues that were considered when designing the questionnaire. It was helpful first to distinguish between 5 distinct types of question content: behaviour, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes and attributes (De Vaus, 2007). In this particular case, we were interested in understanding beliefs and knowledge. The questions were developed so that the questionnaires did not take longer than one hour to complete. The questions were developed from the literature. For instance, Mbithi et al (2016) asked questions with regards to academic scores which were adapted to this study. In addition, the Baldrige performance framework used to develop questions that look at performance in institutions of higher education.

Due to the geographical location to be covered, the researcher recruited and trained research assistants to help in data collection. The research assistants were interviewed by the principal investigator, prior experience on data collection was given priority during recruitment process. The purposes of training research assistants helped them understand the purpose of the study, target group and how to make use of the research instruments. This involved taking them through each item in the instruments and explaining all the instructions. The training also focused on methods of data collection, with emphasis on ethical principles, how to create rapport with respondents and how to manage complete questionnaires (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996).

### **3.5 Data analysis and presentation**

The questionnaires were self-administered. Respondents were requested to participate in the study. On agreeing to participate, the researcher handed over the questionnaire to the respondent to fill. Questionnaires were collected and checked for completeness. Once verification was complete, the final data was transferred to Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for analysis. Data was analysed using SPSS Version 2.0 because it is a flexible program that allows for management of data into various formats. The original dataset was retained before analysis was carried out on the involved dataset in the analysis.

Exploratory data analysis technique was utilised in the initial stages of analysis to uncover the structure of data or values that were out of range. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard were used. Explorative data analysis was used to explore the data. The study employed inferential statistics to assess the transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and situational leadership on the performance of the universities in Kenya. Descriptive statistics was used as it provides distribution which is meaningful for scores of dispersion and distribution (Orodho, 2014). The inferential statistics was examined to determine effects of the transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and situational leadership on the performance of the universities in Kenya at  $\alpha=0.05$ .

### **3.6 Validity and reliability**

Reliability refers that collected data conducted by different investigators should be the same. Miller (1986) observed that reliability is related to the similarity and stability of a measurement within and over time period.

Similarly, Joppe (2000) defined reliability as ‘the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable’.

The Cronbach’s alpha was used in calculating the reliability and the internal consistency was valued at 0.919, 0.778, 0.702 and 0.849 for transformational leadership, transactional leadership, situational leadership and university performance respectively thus indicating high internal consistency (Hair, Tahtam, Anderson & Black, 1998).

**Table 3.3: Reliability Analysis**

Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Transformational leadership	0.919	14
Transactional leadership	0.778	17
Situational leadership	0.702	16
University performance	.849	14

Validity is the degree to which an empirical measure adequately shows the actual meaning of the concept under perspective (Baral & Bhargava, 2010). It is the extent to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure or the meaningfulness and accuracy of inferences, as per the research outcome (Orodho, 2009).

### **3.7 Ethical issues**

Any research that is to be conducted by human subjects must anticipate and address any ethical issues that may arise. The first ethical concern is capacity and informed consent. Participants in any research study had to have the mental and physical capacity to fill in a questionnaire. As the research participants were students and staff of universities over the age of 18, this condition was fulfilled.

In terms of informed consent, all the interviewees were asked to sign a consent form which gave details of the study, and informed the participants that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time if they wished.

There was a box that was checked to ensure that they had understood and a space where they could sign to indicate their consent to participate in the research. A second ethical issue was anonymity. The participants were not required to give their names to participate in the survey, and as such their anonymity was guaranteed. The document where they signed their consent was separated from the transcripts so as to maintain anonymity.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the data analysed by use of descriptive statistics. The chapter begins with a response rate followed by demographic information of the respondents and descriptive statistics. The study findings were presented as per the objectives of the study.

### **4.2. Respondents demographic characteristics**

#### **4.2.1 Response rate**

The sample size of this study was 172 respondents from universities in Kenya. Out of 172 questionnaires that were distributed to selected institutions, 123 responses were obtained, which gives a response rate of 71.5%. According to Kothari (2004) a response rate of 50% or more is adequate for analysis therefore the responses obtained was an acceptable basis for drawing conclusions.

#### **4.2.2. Participant Profile**

This section provides a profile of the respondents who were included in the study. This information is presented on a number of basic characteristics such as the participants' age group, gender, position, work experience and education. The information offers general understanding about the population under the study. An analysis of these variables provides the socially related context within which other subsequent factors falls.

**Table 4.1: Respondent's demographic characteristics**

		<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	28	22.8
	Male	95	77.2
	Total	123	100.0
<b>Age</b>	Under 24 Years	25	20.3
	25- 35 Years	7	5.7
	36- 44 Years	50	40.7
	Above 45 Years	41	33.3
	Total	123	100.0
<b>Work experience</b>	0-3 years	31	25.2
	7-10 Years	49	39.8
	Above 10 years	43	35.0
	Total	123	100.0
<b>Position</b>	Student leader	30	25.2
	Head of academic staff	33	27.7
	Head of administration staff	37	31.1
	Head of support staff	19	16.0
	Total	119	100.0
<b>Education</b>	High school certificate	20	18.2
	Doctorate	10	9.1
	Bachelor's Degree	54	49.1
	Master's degree	26	23.6
	Total	110	100.0

Majority of respondents were male who accounted for 77.2% with 22.3% females. Most of the respondents were aged between 36-44 years (40.7%) followed closely by those aged above 45 years (33.3%). The study also examined the working position, work experience and education. Most of the respondents had attained bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, followed closely with those who had master degree (23.6%).

It is worth noting those who had acquired only high school certificate were student leaders.

The study further found that most of respondents represented the administration staff with 7-10 years' work experience. There is high male representative in leadership than female counterparts. This might be explained by competition in learning institutions and responsibility bestowed on female gender that hampers fair competition in academic achievements.

#### **4.3. Relationship between transformational leadership style and performance of universities in Kenya**

The first objective of this study was to examine relationship between transformational leadership and performance of universities in Kenya. This was achieved using constructs shown in table 4.2 below. The researcher rated these responses on a 1-5 likert scale. Transformational leadership was assessed on a set of factors that include; management involvement of juniors in decision making, leader ability to influence others, motivation, concern on completeness of work, ability to make others feel valued in a team, and ability to integrate the opinion of others.

The study found top leadership involved juniors in decision making concerning matters affecting running of their institutions as implied by a mean of 4.293 and Std. dev. of .59002 which corresponds to agree on the likert scale used. Most respondents felt that their top university leaders had ability to influence those working around them (M=4.4, SD=.6184) as well as motivating staff towards common interest for the University (M=4.162, SD=.6559). It was further found that top leaders of examined universities had strong concern for completion of task on desired time (m=4.339, SD=.5756). The study also found that most respondents felt valued members of the team (M=4.265, SD=.5782), this might have been contributed flexibility of top leaders in engaging the team members to find solutions for various problems in the university fraternity.

The findings in this section imply that transformation leadership was common form leadership among the top university leadership in accredited Kenya universities. Leaders were found to be supportive to their teams making; involvement of juniors in decision making, motivation of juniors inspired their close team making them more confident to make decisions. This is shown by high level of agreement among the respondents observed in table 4.2 below. The small standard deviation shows that majority of the responses were closely tied.

**Table 4.2: Analysis of transformational leadership**

	D		N		A		SA		Std. Dev .	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%		
The top leadership involve us in major decision making			8	6.9	6	56.9	4	36.2	4.293	.5900
My leader has ability to influence those working around him/her	1	0.9	5	4.3	5	48.7	5	46.3	4.400	.6184
Top leaders motivates staff towards common interest for the university	4	3.4	5	4.3	7	65.0	3	27.4	4.162	.6559
Leaders are concerned in having task completed on time by employees			6	5.2	6	55.4	4	39.5	4.339	.5756
I feel valued as a member of the team			8	6.8	7	59.8	3	33.9	4.265	.5782
The university top leaders seek opinion on how to solve various problems in the organisation.			7	5.7	6	49.1	4	35.6	4.681	3.777

The researcher examined the effect of this form of leadership style on the performance of universities in Kenya. The performance was determined on basis of product outcome, student focused outcome, workforce outcome, processes effectiveness, financial and market outcomes and leadership and social responsibility. The study found a positive significant relationship between performance and transformation leadership at  $\alpha=0.05$  as shown in table 4.3 below. This implies that enhancing transformational leadership in Kenyan universities is potential factor of increasing performance of universities.

**Table 4.3: Relationship between transformational leadership and performance**

<b>Correlations</b>			
		Performance	Transformational leadership
Performance	Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.365**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	112	98
Transformational leadership	Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	.365**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	98	109
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

#### **4.4. Relationship between transactional leadership style and performance of universities in Kenya**

The second objective of this study was to examine the relationship between transactional leadership style and performance of universities in Kenya. This was achieved using constructs shown in table 4.4 below. The researcher rated these responses on a 1-5 likert scale. This was examined alongside feeling on adequacy of their rewards, team work, monitoring of performance, the university requirements on their job and encouragement of creativity and innovation among the staff for improvement.

The responses on adequacy of rewards tendered to agreement by majority of the respondents (M=4.336, SD=.6453). The study further found that the top leaders encouraged team work (M=4.431, SD=.5630), monitored the performance of team on regular basis (M=4.414, SD=.6603), duties and objectives of individuals were found to be well defined in majority of the respondents (M=4.266, SD=.7561). Finally on transactional leadership, the study noted top university leaders encourage creativity and innovation among the staff for the betterment of the organisation (M=4.129, SD=.8186) though their response varied widely on leadership encouragement of creativity.

As observed in the case of transformational leadership style, transactional leadership was dominant among the Vice Chancellors in Kenyan universities. This is characterised by their ability to adequately reward their workers, inspiring of teamwork spirit, monitor working, and ability to encourage creativity and innovation in their team.

**Table 4.4: Analysis of transactional leadership**

	SD		D		N		A		SA		Mean	Std. Dev.
	n	%	n	%	N	%	N	%	n	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
I feel adequately rewarded for my work.	0	0	1	0.9	8	6.9	58	50.0	49	42.2	4.336	.6453
Team work is encouraged at my work place?	0	0	0	0	4	3.4	58	50.0	54	46.6	4.431	.5630
My performance is regularly monitored	0	0	2	1.7	5	4.3	52	44.8	57	49.1	4.414	.6603
My goals and objectives clearly communicated	0	0	3	2.7	12	10.6	50	44.2	48	42.5	4.266	.7561
Top university leaders encourage creativity and innovation among the staff for the betterment of the organisation.	1	0.9	6	5.2	8	6.9	63	54.3	38	32.8	4.129	.8186

The researcher examined the effect of transactional leadership style on the performance of university in Kenya. The performance was determined on basis of product outcome, student focused outcome, workforce outcome, processes effectiveness, financial and market outcomes and leadership and social responsibility. On the other hand, transactional leadership style was evaluated on basis of adequacy of their rewards, team work, monitoring of performance, the university requirements on their job and encouragement of creativity and innovation among the staff for betterment.

The study found a positive significant relationship between performance and transformation leadership at  $\alpha=0.05$  as shown in table 4.5 below.

This implies that the relationship between transactional leadership and performance of universities is reliable; attempt to encourage performance of universities should focus on encouraging transactional leadership in their respective institutions. However, the amount of performance accounted by transactional leadership alone cannot account for sufficient institutional growth.

**Table 4.5: Relationship between transactional leadership style and performance of universities in Kenya**

<b>Correlations</b>			
		Performance	transactional Leadership
Performance	Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.244*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.014
	N	112	101
Transactional leadership	Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient	.244*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.
	N	101	111
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

**4.5. The relationship between situational leadership style and performance of universities in Kenya**

The study also evaluated relationship between situation leadership and performance of universities in Kenya. The study found that majority of respondents had open communication with their supervisors (M4.347, SD=.7014), it was also noted that majority of respondents were empowered to make decisions (m=3.910, SD=6243) and were adequately supported to meet their targets (M=4.310, SD=.6243). On the goals, they study noted that the respondents goals were simply broken down (M=4.367, SD=.5349). Finally on situation leadership, the study found leaders were flexible and open minded (M=4.128, SD=0.7256) as shown in table 4.6 below.

The study response shows situational leadership was encouraged by university top leaders.

Leaders were said to have observed open communication, freedom in making decision as well as offering adequate support to meet their work targets. However, the standard deviations show high variability in the responses.

**Table 4.6: Analysis of situation leadership**

	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Neutral</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
I have open communication with my supervisor	0	0	2	1.7	9	7.8	51	44.3	53	46.1	4.347	.7014
I am empowered to make decisions	1.0	.9	4.1	4.3	17.9	19.0	45.5	48.3	26.0	27.6	3.974	.8491
I am adequately supported to meet my targets	0	0	1	.9	7	6.0	63	54.3	45	38.8	4.310	.6243
My goals and objectives are simply broken down	0	0	0	0	3	2.6	68	58.1	46	39.3	4.367	.5349
My leader is flexible and open minded	1	.9	1	.9	15	12.8	65	55.6	35	29.9	4.128	.7256

The researcher examined the effect of situational leadership style on the performance of university in Kenya. The performance was determined on basis of product outcomes, student focused outcomes, workforce outcomes, processes effectiveness, financial and market outcomes and leadership and social responsibility. On the other hand situational leadership style was evaluated on basis of openness in communication, freedom in making decision, adequacy of support, clarity of goals and leadership flexibility and openness of mind. The study found a positive but

insignificant relationship between performance and situational leadership at  $\alpha=0.05$  as shown in table 4.7 below.

Though situational leadership is considered critical in fostering performance, the contribution of situational leadership on performance was not found significant. This implies that situational leadership was not observed as a key leadership aspect of most Vice Chancellors in Kenya.

**Table 4.7: Relationship between situational leadership style and performance of universities in Kenya**

Correlations				Performance	situational Leadership
Performance	Spearman's rho Correlation			1.000	.175
	Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.	.079
	N			112	102
Situational Leadership	Spearman's rho Correlation			.175	1.000
	Coefficient				
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.079	.
	N			102	113

#### **4.6. Difference in leadership styles between male and female leaders in top management of universities in Kenya**

To determine the difference in leadership style between male and female. The study conducted used analysis of variance to determine mean difference between female and male genders among the university Vice Chancellors in Kenya. The findings are presented in table 4.8 below.

**Table 4.8: Difference in leadership style between genders in top management**

ANOVA		Sum	of	Df	Mean	F	Sig.
		Squares			Square		
Transformational leadership	Between Groups	.223		1	.223	.423	.517
	Within Groups	56.489		107	.528		
	Total	56.713		108			
Transactional leadership	Between Groups	.078		1	.078	.351	.555
	Within Groups	24.228		109	.222		
	Total	24.306		110			
Situational leadership	Between Groups	.338		1	.338	1.675	.198
	Within Groups	22.375		111	.202		
	Total	22.712		112			

There was no significant difference between gender in regard to leadership styles and performance of university at  $\alpha=0.05$  as shown in table 4.8 above. This implies that there was no significance difference in leadership style observed between institution with female leaders and those with male leaders. This might have affected by nature of sampling where female headed learning institutions were not fairly represented.

#### **4.7. Performance of universities**

The performance of the universities were rated using six main factors; product outcome, student focus outcome, workforce outcome, processes effectiveness outcome, financial and market outcome, and leadership and responsibility.

#### 4.7.1. Product outcome

The study found the university ranking was rated to be on upward by majority of respondents (M=4.196, SD=.6192). Respondents also reported that most students who graduated from their universities were absorbed by the job market on completion of their degree courses (M=4.353, SD=.6885). This implies that most universities in Kenya strive to achieve product quality. However, most institutions in Kenya have one or two areas where they are stronger than their competitors.

**Table 4.9: Product outcomes**

	<i>SD</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>SA</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
	N	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%		
The university ranking has been on an upward trend	0	0	0	0	13	11.1	68	58.1	36	30.8	4.196	.6192
Most students get absorbed by the job market on completion of their degree courses	0	0	2	1.7	8	6.9	53	45.7	53	45.7	4.353	.6885

#### 4.7.2. Student focused outcomes

On student focused outcome, the study found out that most institutions rated their students to be self-driven (M=4.0940, SD=.83028). Students were also regarded as courteous to others (M=4.2759, SD=.62674) and with little interest of transferring to other universities (M=4.4103, SD=.58947). This implies that students had sense of responsibility as well as felt a sense of belonging in their respective institutions. They were generally considered to be self-driven, courteous to others and were not willing to transfer to other universities.

**Table 4.10: Student focused outcomes**

	<i>SD</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>SA</i>		<i>std.</i>	
	n	%	N	%	n	%	N	%	n	%	mean	dev.
Students are self-driven	1	.9	4	3.4	17	14.5	56	47.9	39	33.3	4.0940	.83028
Students are courteous to others	0	0	0	0	11	9.5	62	53.4	43	37.1	4.2759	.62674
Students do not show willingness to transfer to other universities	0	0	0	0	6	5.1	57	48.7	54	46.2	4.4103	.58947

**4.7.3. Workforce outcomes**

The response on workforce outcome recorded a varied response. Concerning training of lecturer in the subject area, the study recorded an average score with slightly high proportion of those who felt that lecturers in my university are trained in their subject areas. However, respondents argued that Support staff in my university was skilled in their areas of work (M=4.2845, SD=.6699), Lecturers worked well without supervision (M=4.1983, SD=.8966) and lecturers showed little interest to transfer to other universities (M=4.0182, SD=.9766). The finding shows that most of lecturer is not trained in the areas they are teaching in the respective colleges though they work without supervision. The findings also imply that support staff was skilled in their area of service.

**Table 4.11: Workforce outcomes**

	<i>SD</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>SA</i>		<i>std.</i>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%	mean	dev.
Lecturers in my university are trained in their subject areas	30	26.1	12	10.4	9	7.8	33	28.7	31	27.0	3.2000	1.5795
Support staff in my university are skilled in their areas of work	0	0	0	0	14	12.1	55	47.4	47	40.5	4.2845	.6699
Lecturers work well without supervision	1	.9	6	5.2	13	11.2	45	38.8	51	44.0	4.1983	.8966
Lecturers are not willing to transfer to other universities	2	1.8	9	8.2	12	10.9	49	44.5	38	34.5	4.0182	.9766

**4.7.4. Process effectiveness outcomes**

The other instrument used to assess performance was process effectiveness outcome. The study used various construct to measure process effectiveness outcomes; lecturer’s easiness access to teaching aids, lesson attendance, integration of technology in teaching, frequency of assessments, filling of materials, analysis of test results, frequency of meeting to discuss results and preparedness to emergencies.

Most respondents felt that lecturers had easy access to teaching aids (M=4.168, SD=.7781); Lecturers attended to all their lessons (M=4.578, SD=.5618), Technology was integrated in teaching (M=4.487, SD=.6929). The study also noted that there was regular assessment tests (M=4.388, SD=.6153), filing of materials in soft and hard copies for future use (M=4.276, SD=.7756) and use of computer in analysis of the results (M=4.414, SD=.6195). Respondents also reported that there were frequent meetings that were being held to discuss results (M=4.509, SD=0.5356). Finally on Process effectiveness outcomes, the respondents said that the universities showed preparedness for emergencies (M=4.170, SD=.5917).

The findings of the study implies that the processes outcomes were effective a factor that could be force behind performance of other areas of the institution.

**Table 4.12: Process effectiveness outcomes**

	<i>SD</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>SA</i>		<i>std.</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>dev.</i>
Lecturers have easy access to teaching aids	1	.9	2	1.8	14	12.4	56	49.6	40	35.4	4.168	.7781
Lecturers attend to all their lessons					4		41	3.4	71	35.3	4.578	.5618
Technology is integrated in teaching			3	2.6	4	3.5	42	36.5	66	57.4	4.487	.6929
Assessment tests are done at regular intervals			1	.9	5	4.3	58	50.0	52	44.8	4.388	.6153
Materials are filed in soft and hard copies for future use			4	3.4	11	9.5	50	43.1	51	44.0	4.276	.7756
Assessment test results are analyzed using computers			1	.9	5	4.3	55	47.4	55	47.4	4.414	.6195
Frequent meetings are held to discuss assessment test results					2	1.7	53	45.7	61	52.6	4.509	.5356
University operations show preparedness for emergencies					6	10.2	37	62.7	16	27.1	4.170	.5917

#### 4.7.5. Financial and market outcomes

The study also evaluated financial and market outcomes performance of universities in Kenya. The study found that there was a smooth running of university expenditure according to the budget (M=4.2712, SD=.5518), there was disagreement that Students were frequently sent home for university fees (M=4.1695, SD=.6473). This might have been supplemented by other mean of income generating activities reported by most respondents (M=4.1695, SD=.6473). The student enrolment trend was reported to be an upward trend by most universities (M=4.2034, SD=.5502).

**Table 4.13: Financial and market outcomes**

	<i>SD</i>		<i>D</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>SA</i>		<i>Std.</i>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Dev.</i>
University expenditure runs smoothly according to the budget	0	0	0	0	3	5.1	37	62.7	19	32.2	4.2712	0.5518
Students are sent home frequently for university fees	19	32.2	37	62.7	3	5.1	0	0	0	0	.8293	0.9470
There are income generating activities in my school	0	0	1	1.7	5	8.5	36	61.0	17	28.8	4.1695	0.6473
Student enrolment is on an upward trend	0	0	0	0	4	6.8	39	66.1	16	27.1	4.2034	.5502

**4.7.6. Leadership and social responsibility**

Finally on universities performance, the study examined leadership and social responsibility. The study found out that most of university had a strategic plan (M=4.228, SD=0.5981). It was also found that the deans use appraisal procedures to reward university personnel (4.3621, SD=0.71814). The study also noted that deans take lead in transformational processes (M=4.1695, SD=0.6985). The study also recorded that the deans funds university personnel for in-service courses (M=4.441, SD=0.5654), other findings on leadership are dean had written codes of ethics for the university personnel (M=4.509, SD=.5685). On the accessibility of the Vice Chancellors, the study found that in most institutions vice chancellor was not easily accessible the university communities as show in table 4.14 below.

**Table 4.14: Leadership and social responsibility**

	<i>SD</i>		<i>d</i>		<i>N</i>		<i>A</i>		<i>SA</i>		<i>std.</i>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	mean	dev.
My university has a strategic plan	0	0	0	0	5	8.8	34	59.6	18	31.6	4.228	.5981
The deans use appraisal procedures to reward university personnel	1	1.7	0	0	2	3.4	29	50.0	26	44.8	4.362	.7181
The deans take lead in transformational processes	1	1.7	0	0	4	6.8	37	62.7	17	28.8	4.170	.6985
The deans funds university personnel for in-service courses	0	0	0	0	2	3.4	29	49.2	28	47.5	4.441	.5654
The dean has written codes of ethics for the university personnel	0	0	0	0	2	3.4	25	42.4	32	54.2	4.509	.5685
The top leaders is easily accessible to the university community	22	38.6	31	54.4	4	7.0	0	0	0	0	.7934	.9391

## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This study sought to assess leadership styles of top management and their effect on university performance. To achieve this, the study investigated the relationship between transformational leadership style and performance in universities in Kenya, the relationship between transactional leadership style and performance in universities in Kenya, the relationship between situational leadership style and performance in universities in Kenya and the difference in leadership styles between male and female leaders in top management of universities in Kenya. This chapter presents a summary of the discussions, conclusions and recommendations for practice and further research.

### **5.2 Research summary**

The study received a response rate of 71.5% of targeted 172. Respondents from sampled 43 accredited universities in Kenya. 71.5% was considered sufficient for this study. According to Kothari (2004) a response rate of 50% or more is adequate for analysis therefore the responses obtained was an acceptable basis for drawing conclusions. Majority of respondents were male aged between 36-44 years. It was further noted that majority of respondents had a work experience of over 7 years and working as administrative staff during the study period. Majority of these respondents had bachelor's degree as the highest attained level of education.

Most universities recorded to have health performance based on the six scale evaluation factors used in this study; these were product outcome, student focus outcome, workforce outcome, processes effectiveness outcome, financial and market outcome, and responsibility and social responsibility. The universities in this performance paradigm were found positive. This might be influenced by nature of competition which normally exhibited by academic institutions. However, this success can be pigged on the leadership role in the universities. This finding supports the finding of Aschalew and Birshir (2016) who found that possible planning and distinguishing the daily practices from the strategic works are required for the academic leaders in order to perform their activities based on their level of significance to their colleges.

### **5.2.1. Relationship between transformational leadership style and performance of universities in Kenya**

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership that transforms followers to rise above their interest by altering the morale, ideas, interest and values as well as motivating them to perform better than initially intended (Conger, 1999). Top Kenyan university leaders were found to possess transformational leaders' traits, as described by the respondents of this study. Some of the strong transformational leaders' traits in these leaders include: ability to involve juniors in decision making, ability to inspire the junior staff, focus on completion of a task, instilling value of worthiness to junior staff, and ability to integrate opinions of junior staff. The study established a positive significant relationship between transformational leadership and performance of universities in Kenya. This study supports the findings of Militaru (2014) which found transformational leadership had ability to inspire creativity and innovation among the employees thus the performance of the learning institutions.

### **5.2.2. Relationship between transactional leadership style and performance of universities in Kenya**

Transactional leadership is a style of leadership that focuses on supervision, organisation and performance. The study assessed transactional leadership in Kenya accredited universities and it's affected on performance of universities in Kenya. The study found a significant relationship between transactional leadership and performance of Kenya accredited universities in Kenya. The study found a significant relationship between performance of Kenya accredited institution at  $\alpha=0.05$ . Transactional leadership was assessed based on; adequacy of staff reward, team work, work monitoring, clarity of work objective, encouragement of creativity and innovation. The study found top leadership in Kenyan university. In exercised transactional leadership by ensuring staff were reasonably rewarding rewarded, encouraging of team, monitoring of employees work, defining clear objective and goals and encouraging creativity and innovation among the staff members.

### **5.2.3. Relationship between situational leadership style and performance of universities in Kenya**

Situation leadership requires leader to adjust his style to fit the development level of the follow he/she is trying to influence. In this study situational leadership was evaluated on basis of open communication, freedom of making decision, support, breaking down goals, and objective of the of the employees, flexibility and openness of mind. The study found a positive but significant relationship between situation leadership and performance of universities in Kenya.

### **5.2.3. Difference in leadership styles between male and female leaders in top management of universities in Kenya**

Female leaders are perceived as exhibiting more transformational leadership behaviour than male leaders (Rohmann, & Rowold, 2009). This study however, did not find any significant difference between the male and female leadership style in Kenyan universities at  $\alpha=0.05$ . This study remained contrary with much scholarly work that observed differences between leadership by gender; scholars have shown that women are perceived as great social risk takers and this may be because of a greater social sensitivity, and being able to handle social uncertainty. Women are better at recognizing subtle facial expressions (Hoffman, Kessler, Eppel, Rukavina, & Traue, 2010), even when these expressions are showed very briefly (Hall & Matsumoto, 2004). Therefore this area can be furthers researched using institution where there are more women leaders.

## **5.3 Conclusion**

Transformational leadership affected performance of universities in Kenya, it was noted its transformational leaders in accredited universities in Kenya were able to incorporate others opinion, inspire others to make decision, cultivate the value of others and promotion of sense of belong among team members. Transactional leadership was also found to affect the performance of accredited universities in Kenya. The ability of leaders to appropriately reward its employees, encouragement of teamwork, setting of regular monitoring mechanism, clearly communicated goals and objectives; and promotion of creativity and innovation was related to performance of universities in Kenya.

However, there was no sufficient evidence to show that situational leadership was significantly related to performance of universities in Kenya. The data was also sufficient to show the leadership styles differed with leader gender among the top leaders in Kenya universities.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

From the findings of the study, the study recommended the adoption of leaders with transformational style in universities in Kenya as this promotes positive working relationships of staff member's thus encouraging performance of the organisation.

The study recommends appointment of leaders with transactional leadership style in universities. This will affect the performance of universities positively.

The study also recommends a study focusing a wider scope to assess the effects of situational leadership on performance of learning institution.

There was no sufficient evidence to show leadership style was dependent of gender in Kenya universities, therefore this study could be conducted in business industries where we have most women leaders in the organisation.

#### **5.5 Limitations of the study**

The findings of this study is limited to learning institution, the indicators for the performance of universities were tailored to fit into the context of learning institution thus generalization of the finding could only be done in a similar industry.

#### **5.6 Areas of further studies**

In effort understand the difference in leadership by genders; a comparative study should be conducted targeting two universities with direct comparison between the top university leaders.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: RESEARCH CONSENT

Topic of the Study:

**LEADERSHIP STYLES OF TOP MANAGEMENT AND THEIR EFFECT ON UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE**

Principal Investigator:

**Muindi Nelly Wanjiku**

**Strathmore University**

#### **Background:**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information

#### **The purpose of this study is:**

The purpose of this research is to determine the link between transactional, transformational and situational leadership and performance in higher education institutions in Kenya.

#### **Risks:**

The risks of this study are minimal. These risks are similar to those you experience when disclosing work-related information to others. The topics in the survey may upset some respondents. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

#### **Benefits:**

There will be no direct benefit to you for your participation in this study. However, we hope that the information obtained from this study will be used to inform leadership styles in institutions of higher education.

**Confidentiality:**

Please do NOT write any identifying information on your questionnaire. Your responses will be anonymous.

**Person to Contact:**

Should you have any questions about the research or any related matters, please contact the researcher directly.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you do decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part in this study, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You are free to not answer any question or questions if you choose. This will not affect the relationship you have with the researcher.

**Costs to Subject:**

There are no costs to you for your participation in this study

**Compensation:**

There is no monetary compensation to you for your participation in this study.

**Consent:**

By signing this consent form, I confirm that I have read and understood the information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Signature..... Date.....

**APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ACADEMIC STAFF, STUDENTS,  
ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE STAFF**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess leadership styles of top management and their effect on university performance. The information collected from this questionnaire will be confidential. Please check the box that best describes your feelings about the statements using the codes provided, where applicable.

*Instructions: please fill in the questionnaire by ticking the boxes where applicable*

**SECTION A: RESPONDENTS BASIC INFORMATION**

1. Name of the institution.....
  
2. Gender:  
Female [ ]                      Male [ ]
  
3. Age:  
24 & under [ ]      25-35 [ ]                      36-44 [ ]                      Above 45 [ ]
  
4. How much work experience do you have?  
a). 0-3 yrs [ ]      b). 4-6 yrs [ ]      c). 7-10 yrs [ ]      d). Above 10 yrs. [ ]
  
5. Which role do you perform in the school  
a). Student leader [ ]    b). Head of academic staff [ ]    c). Head of administration staff [ ]  
d). Head of support staff [ ]
  
6. What is the highest level of educational you have attained.  
High school certificate [ ]      Diploma [ ]                      Bachelor's degree [ ]  
Master's degree [ ]                      Doctorate [ ]                      other (please specify).....

**SECTION B: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**Strongly disagree (SDA) =1 Disagree (D) =2 Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree= (N) =3**

**Agree (A) =4 strongly agree (SA) =5**

<b>Tick one option</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
My leader involves me in major decision making					
My leader has the ability to influence those working around him/her					
Leaders motivate staff towards common interests for the university					
Leaders are concerned in having task completed on time by employees					
I feel valued as a member of the team					
The university top leaders seek options on how to solve various problems in the organisation.					

**SECTION C: TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**Strongly disagree (SDA) =1 Disagree (D) =2 Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree= (N) =3**

**Agree (A) =4 strongly agree (SA) =5**

<b>Tick one option</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I feel adequately rewarded for my work					
Team work is encouraged at my work place					
My performance is regularly monitored					
My goals and objectives are clearly communicated					

Top university leaders encourage creativity and innovation among the staff for the betterment of the organisation.					
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**SECTION D: SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

**Strongly disagree (SDA) =1 Disagree (D) =2 Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree= (N) =3**

**Agree (A) =4 strongly agree (SA) =5**

<b>Tick one option</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
I have open communication with my supervisor					
I am empowered to make decisions					
I am adequately supported to meet my targets					
My goals and objectives simply broken down					
My leader is flexible and open minded					

**SECTION E: UNIVERSITY PERFORMANCE**

**Strongly disagree (SDA) =1 Disagree (D) =2 Neutral/Neither agree nor disagree= (N) =3**

**Agree (A) =4 strongly agree (SA) =5**

		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Product outcomes</b>	1. The university ranking has been on an upward trend					
	2. Most students get absorbed by the job market on completion of their degree courses					
<b>Student focused outcomes</b>	1. Students are self-driven					
	2. Students are courteous to others					

	3. Students do not show willingness to transfer to other universities						
<b>Workforce outcomes</b>	1. Lecturers in my university are trained in their subject areas						
	2. Support staff in my university are skilled in their areas of work						
	3. Lecturers work well without supervision						
	4. Lecturers are not willing to transfer to other universities						
<b>Process effectiveness outcomes</b>	1. Lecturers have easy access to teaching aids						
	2. Lecturers attend to all their lessons						
	3. Technology is integrated in teaching						
	4. Assessment tests are done at regular intervals						
	5. Assessment test materials are filed in soft and hard copies for future use						
	6. Assessment test results are analysed using computers						
	7. Frequent meetings are held to discuss assessment test results						
	8. University operations show preparedness for emergencies						
<b>Financial and market outcomes</b>	1. University expenditure runs smoothly according to the budget						
	2. Students are sent home frequently for university fees						
	3. There are income generating activities in my school						
	4. Student enrolment is on an upward trend						
<b>Leadership and social responsibility</b>	1. My university has a strategic plan						
	2. The deans use appraisal procedures to reward university personnel						
	3. The deans take lead in transformational processes						
	4. The dean funds university personnel for in-service courses						
	5. The dean has written codes of ethics for the university personnel						
	6. The Vice Chancellor is easily accessible to the university community						
	7. My university has regular outreach programs						

## **APPENDIX III: STUDIED INSTITUTIONS**

### **PUBLIC CHARTERED UNIVERSITIES**

- 1 Jomo Kenyatta University of Technology
- 2 Kirinyaga University
- 3 Karatina University
- 4 Kenyatta University
- 5 Laikipia University
- 6 Maasai Mara University
- 7 Machakos University
- 8 Meru University of Science
- 9 Multimedia University of Kenya
- 10 Murang'a University of Technology
- 11 Technical University of Kenya
- 12 The Co-operative University of Kenya
- 13 University of Nairobi

### **PRIVATE CHARTERED UNIVERSITIES**

- 14 Africa Nazarene University
- 15 Catholic University of Eastern Africa
- 16 Daystar University
- 17 KCA University
- 18 Kenya Methodist University
- 19 Mount Kenya University
- 20 St. Paul's University
- 21 United States International University

## **PUBLIC CONSTITUENT COLLEGES**

- 22 Alupe University College
- 23 Kaimosi Friends University College
- 24 Tom Mboya University College
- 25 Tharaka University College

## **INSTITUTIONS WITH LETTERS OF INTERIM AUTHORITY**

- 26 Aga Khan University
- 27 Lukenya University
- 28 Pioneer International University
- 29 Presbyterian University of East Africa
- 30 Riara University
- 31 Zetech University

## APPENDIX IV: APPROVAL LETTER FROM SBS



Strathmore Business School

Wednesday, 23 May 2018

To whom It may concern,  
Dear Sir/ Madam,

**RE: FACILITATION OF RESEARCH –NELLY MUINDI**

This is to introduce Nelly Muindi who is a Master of Business Administration student at Strathmore Business School, admission number MBA/ 55689/14. As part of our MBA Program, Nelly is expected to do applied research and to undertake a project. This is in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the MBA course. To this effect, she would like to request for appropriate data from your organization.

Nelly is undertaking a research paper on-: “An Assessment of Leadership Styles of Top Management and Their Effect on University Performance.” The information obtained from your organization shall be treated confidentially and shall be used for academic purposes only. Our MBA seeks to establish links with industry, and one of these ways is by directing our research to areas that would be of direct use to industry. We would be glad to share our findings with you after the research, and we trust that you will find them of great interest and of practical value to your organization.

We appreciate your support and we shall be willing to provide any further information if required.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Muriithi Njogu'.

Muriithi Njogu.  
Director – MBA Programs



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