IMPACT OF E-LEADERSHIP ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN KENYA: A CASE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

Electronic leadership is basically becoming a norm in contemporary organizations. Despite the effectiveness and efficiency attached to e-leadership, its extent of adoption seems to be at the infancy stage in most of Kenyan Organizations. The purpose of this paper was to assess the impact of e-leadership on Service delivery in Kenya’s Public Universities. The objectives of the study were: to establish the level of adoption of e-leadership in Kenya’s Public Universities, to establish the impact of e-leadership on communication in the public universities and to establish effects of e-leadership on service delivery in Kenya’s Public Universities. The study adopted a Meta-analysis of empirical literature on the topic. The study was underpinned by Technology Acceptance Model by Davis (1989). The study established variability in the level of embracement of e-leadership amongst the universities, that there was a strong positive relationship between e-leadership and service delivery, that e-leadership enhances faster and effective communication. The study findings have implications on the corporations’ need to embrace e-leadership for their effectiveness.

Keywords: E-leadership, Service Delivery, Public Universities

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to assess the impact of e-leadership on Service delivery in Kenya’s Public Universities. The objectives of the study were: to establish the level of adoption of e-leadership in Kenya’s Public Universities, to establish the impact of e-leadership on communication in the public universities and to establish effects of e-leadership on service delivery in Kenya’s Public Universities. The study objectives guided the logical flow of information. The study established variability in the level of embracement of e-leadership amongst the universities, that there was a strong positive relationship between e-leadership and service delivery, that e-leadership enhances faster and effective communication. The study findings have implications on the corporations’ need to embrace e-leadership for their effectiveness. The study is presented as follows: Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results and Discussions, Conclusions, and Implications of the Study Findings.
E-Leadership in higher educational institutions in the world is being embraced in the world but at varying scales depending on level of acceptance of technology in the day-to-day service transactions in the corporations. The scale of its adoption appears to be higher in the developed countries as compared to the less developed countries where it is still at the infancy stage. Global Intervening unforeseen circumstances like the Corona Virus (Covid-19 Pandemic) in a way of control of spread strategy compelled many heads of organization in the world to embrace e-leadership as way of keeping distance to control the spread of the Novel Corona Virus-2019.

Banerjee & Chau (2004) on qualification framework for analyzing e-government convergence capability in developing countries used a literature review approach to collect information. The study established that less developed countries have very low level of convergence of e-governance model due to a number of reasons including reluctance to embrace ICT in the daily business transactions amongst many sectors of the government, consequently many governments have done very little investment in the ICT sector which could enhance adoption of e-government.

A study by Jameson (2013) decried lack of research in e-leadership. That is part of the emerging technology enhanced leadership research in regard to management of higher educational institutions. That a more rigorous educational Technology research in regard to e-leadership need to be put in place as deemed appropriate.

China & Chua (2017) on how e-leadership is practiced in a school in virtual learning environment entered: a grounded model study maintain that e-leadership is technology mediated to bring a change in behavior as performed by individuals or e-groups in organizations. A model was developed from the study consisting of 8 themes namely: readiness, practices, strategies, support, culture, needs and obstacles. That validity and reliability of the model were further ascertained with a quantitative summary study involving 320 school administrators. Findings that there is a need for a grounded model for e-leadership in schools. The study investigated e-leadership practices among users of virtual learning in schools. The study used survey design in which semi-structured interviews were administered to the head teachers, students, parents, and the schools’ software experts.

The study to the effect of e-leadership on service delivery in public universities is a new area not yet sufficiently addressed and therefore this study will bridge the knowledge gap in the area.

Below is a map of Kenya showing geospatial locales of higher institutions of learning in Kenya.
2. METHOD

The research involved review of empirical literature on e-leadership in Kenyan Public Universities. The research methodology involved the use of meta-analysis through which the data from a number of independent studies that used different tools and approaches but addressing the same theme were utilized in order to determine the overall trends. The main reason for using the meta-analysis technique is to help in combining the results of a number of different reports addressing a single common theme in order to create a more precise estimate of an affect (Ferrer, 1998).

Some of the methods used by various researchers whose work were analyzed include: Descriptive survey design; Descriptive statistics and Heckman PR obit Model; Mixed method approach; Heckman Sample selective model; Focus group discussions; Participatory and Epidemiological methods; Consensus model; Qualitative and quantitative approaches and Literature review design.
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussions are presented according to the study objectives.

3.1. On establishing the level of adoption of e-leadership in Kenya’s Public Universities

A study by Tarus et al. (2015) on challenges of implementation of e-learning in Kenya: A Case of Kenyan Public Universities used a descriptive survey design in which a total of 148 university staff drawn from 3 leading Kenyan Public universities were surveyed. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. The findings of the study indicated that: e-learning has come with a multiple of challenges weighting down on its implementation process that requires address if it were to be smoothly adopted. That the challenges include lack sufficient ICT infrastructure, lack of pedagogical knowledge on part of the lecturers, Students’ perceived usefulness of e-learning, lack of sufficient internet connectedness, inadequate time for online interaction from both the students and the lecturers, lack of Senate originated e-learning policy in the Public universities, poor state of the few computers available in the universities amongst other factors. These findings have implications on sufficient corporate investment on the ICT infrastructure including the hardware and the software part including Wi-Fi /and or internet connectedness.

A study by Mutisya & Makokha (2016) on Challenges affecting adoption of e-learning in Public Universities in Kenya adopted a descriptive survey design in which 420 Lecturers and 210 university students were sampled for the study. The study used survey instruments such as questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the data. The study established that: the most biting challenges toward adoption of e-learning in Kenya’s public universities include heavy workload, insufficient internet connectedness, denial of copyright for e-learning developed modules, limited ICT skills amongst students and lecturers, inadequate computer labs lack of time for online interaction and lack of computers and laptops. The implications of the study findings on corporate ICT policies originated by Senate, improved investment in ICT infrastructure ranging from purchase on computers in good conditions, establishment of computer rooms, improved internet connectedness, sufficient refresher courses to the instructors on e-pedagogy and too giving students basic computer literacy training by the universities’ ICT departments as a prerequisite toward adoption of e-learning.

A study by Awuor & Kaburu (2014) on E-learning in Public Institution in Kenya: Implementation Challenges adopted Mixed methodology that targeted teachers, schools, students and principals.15 schools, 15 teachers, and 150 students were sampled for the study. The study established several challenges to e-learning implementation including inadequate ICT Infrastructure, lack of requisite ICT skills and knowledge, Lack of clear ICT policy that would sufficiently pave the way for e-learning adoption. Implications of the study findings on ICT policy issues and e-learning being put as a basic requirement in the 21st century educational dispensation.
Gati & Namusonge (2019) on strategic innovation and service delivery in public universities in Kenya: A Case of Kenyatta University on a population of 72000 were admitted in Kenyatta University from amongst whom a sample of 200 students using Nassiuma’s Formula. Data were collected through questionnaires. A case study design was adopted while regression analysis was done using SPSS computer software program version 22. The study adopted Multiple regression analysis to estimate the model for the study. The coefficient of correlation was 0.912 indicating strong relationships between the variables and \( R^2 \) was 0.814 demonstrating a strong correlation between the variables and service delivery in KU. However, the other factors not considered in the study contribute 18.6% of the service delivery at KU. The findings have implications on strategic innovation service delivery towards perfection of service delivery that meet threshold of customer satisfaction.

Study by Erika (2020) on e-leadership how to be boss in instant messaging the role on Non-Verbal communication maintain that doing leadership in the virtual realm has now become a routine part of many leaders’ daily work yet in our understanding how leader act in mediated environs-channels are limited. In the application of micro-level analysis to naturally occurring instant messages and conversations. This exposes the strategies leaders use to achieve a complex range of communication goals; to get work done while fostering informality and collegiality, and creating a sense of real and not virtual collaboration between team members. The findings further the understanding in domains namely provide empirical grounding for e-leadership theories exposing practices from real-life interactions and contribute to discursive leadership literature in non-verbal communication practices. Findings has implications on management and leadership training by drawing attention to the linguistic and digital resources. Leaders have at their disposals in the virtual work environs.

Bansal & Singh (2005) on from e-leadership: a paradigm shift observes that in today’s business organizations in the application of Information Technology (IT) and how it affects complex interpersonal relationships on organizational use of local area network (LANs) and Wide area networks (WANs) may have considerable effects on communication since it is transmitted within and outside organizational chain of command, as well as altering the patterns of communication. It seems that IT is reviving a mechanized management approach characteristic of Scientific management system of standardized work procedures, operations and rules and prescribed behaviors.

3.2. On establishing the impact of e-leadership on communication in the public universities in Kenya

Study by Feschchenko et al. (2023) on digital corporate communication algorithmic leadership and management are categorical that in the era when software algorithmic leadership and managerial are controlling organization and workers around the world. Algorithm managerial leadership have gained attention in both academia and practice. Theory about communicating constituted organization (CCO).

Ibrahim et al. (2018) on effect of leadership and team communication in well-being of school leaders in Malyasia adopted a cross-sectional design in which 879 teachers were
sampled to participate in the study. Data were collected through questionnaires. Findings indicated that online interaction, file sharing online, and team virtual communications contributed positively to the welfare of teachers it also helps to solve the busy workloads of head teachers. The findings have implications on adoption of mobile technology to perform the leadership actions in school.

Kashive et al. (2022) on virtual team performance: e-leadership roles in the era of COVID-19 is categorical on emergence of virtual teams in all organizations where the role of e-leadership became handy. Better understanding of team virtual performance .Contingency perspective behavioral complexity on leadership (BCL). Data were collected on those virtual team workers 200 questionnaires were distributed and 175 were returned (87.25%). A path Model was built using partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM). Findings indicated that: Communication quality-partial mediator for relationship between external leaders role and trust . Role clarity fully mediated that rests between leaders , roles and conflicts . Internal and external e-leadership demonstrated effectiveness.

A study by Chondo (2021) on Digital Transformation Occasioned by Covid-19 and Service Delivery among Public Universities in Nairobi County, Kenya adopted a descriptive survey design targeted students of a total of 900,046 undergraduate and post graduate students in main campuses in Public universities in Nairobi County, Kenya. A total of 399 were sampled for the study. Findings of the study demonstrated that: virtual classroom and learning management influence digital transformation. That there is a positive relationship between digital transformation and service delivery.

A study by Riany et al. (2021) on Influence of electronic services on Public Service delivery by state Agencies in Kenya used Theory of acceptance in the study and also used descriptive study design. The target population consisted of 4230 employees with management cadre, 132 state agencies, executive agencies and 25 Independent regulatory authorities. A formula was used to sample 365 workers to participate in the study. Finding demonstrated that E-Government has a strong positive relationship with improved public service delivery.

Mwirigi (2018) on influence of leadership orchestration on electronic readiness accession in higher Education institution in Kenya while examining e-readiness of higher educational institutions, points out the KENET surveys towards establishment of Kenyans’ e-readiness in the years 2006, 2008 and 2013. The findings of the surveys clearly demonstrates a gap between e-readiness theory and practice so that there is more of a theoretical orientation however the rate of implementation is too sluggish.

The study by Mwirigi (2018) adopted e-readiness assessment model based on people, process, technology nexus and service quality nutshell. A cross-sectional survey was adopted in which 336 respondents were sampled for the study and 9 institutions were too sampled for the study. An online questionnaire was administered and triangulated. Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and interview guide too. Correlational linear analysis was adopted and $t$-test for testing hypothesis. The study established that leader dimensions ranged from being
a conductor, a developer, an architect, an auctioneer. That strong positive relationship with e-readiness access each predictor predict e-readiness. Stepwise regression was used. Implications of the findings is on emphasis of the adoption of e-leadership towards making efficient management that are achievable within the framework of expectations of an organizational leader.

A study by Nang’unda (2018) on an assessment of principals’ leadership in ICT integration in Public Secondary Schools in Bungoma County, Kenya adopted a descriptive correlational study design in which 82 Principals of public secondary schools, 82 deputy principals, 123 directors of study, and 359 class teachers were sampled for the study. Interviews and questionnaires were administered to the respective respondents to collect the data. Qualitative data were collected through the interviews, while chi square $\chi^2$ was used to work of cross tabulated data dealing with the issue of influence and relationship between principals’ leadership and ICT integration in school. To establish extent of ICT integration from various respondents, the responses were as follows: principals’ scores on AMR=2.76, Class Teachers AMR=2.55, for Deputy Principals AMR=2.55. That offices were somewhat integrated with ICT as follows Finance had responses on scores showing 62.2%, Training level of integration was 64.5%, administration 62.2%, influenced principals’ ICT integration and ICT integration for PTA was 85.5%, Virement of school funds 84.15%. Impact of ICT integration on principals’ office AMR=3.03, Directors of studies AMR=3.9. These findings have implications on stakeholders and principals’ and organizational factors that necessitate integration of ICT into the day-to-day affairs of transactions in the schools.

Jane (2020) on digitization readiness assessment in Public Organizations: A Case of Kenya National Examination Council used purposive sampling of 100 respondents. Findings showed that: most critical indicators address governance of ICT Projects critical indicators address control measures of the same while less critical factors are supportive. The emergent of digitized preparedness index of KNEC was found to be 2.88 in the scale of 1-4, where 2.5 was the minimum expected level of readiness. Competency readiness, digitization readiness assessment model is useful to public organizations’ readiness for ICT integration.

A study by Ngugi (2022) on determinants of E-Government: A Case of Nakuru Town Huduma Center. Huduma center was born in 2013 that integrated government service into the e-platform in Huduma centers distributed in all the headquarters of all the 47 counties. The study used mixed methodology approach. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The findings have implications on integration of e-Government services towards improved integrated government approach.

A study by Behtski & Liversage (2019) on e-leadership on small and medium enterprises in developing world is categorical as to the digitization of SMEs in LDCs that would guarantee faster production and commercialization. Eleven successful SME practitioners were sampled for the study from the city of Johannesburg where at the time of the study there were 2,240 SME Firms.
Clark (2018) on E-leadership through strategic alignment: an empirical study of small and medium sized enterprises in the digital age underscores the critical role played by the SMEs in the European economy. That a critical challenge faced by SMEs leadership is how to optimally align business strategy with digital technology to fully leverage the potential offered by these technologies on pursuit of longevity and growth empirically driven e-leadership model. In-depth interviews were held with 42 selected successful SMEs leaders to validate, advance, and substantiate a Model on the SME e-leadership concerns.

3.3. On establishing effects of e-leadership on service delivery in Kenya’s Public Universities

In Kenya, a study by Limpese (2018) on integrating ICT in enabling e-leadership in Public Secondary Schools in Busia County, Kenya adopted a descriptive survey study design. One hundred and forty-Five Public secondary schools in Busia County were targeted. The study was underpinned by the diffusion of innovations model by Rogers. Cross-sectional survey design was used in a systematic random sampling, 14 Public secondary schools, 42 teachers and 14 principals and 14 support staff were sampled for the study. The study established low levels of adoption of e-leadership in Public Secondary Schools in Busia County, even though the respondents rated high e-leadership and faster communication in schools, e-leadership and efficient service delivery, but there was low internet connectedness among the secondary schools in Busia County, occasioned by power outages. The study recommended better strategies to e-leadership adoption in Public Secondary Schools in Busia County.

Njogu (2003) on a survey of extent of ICT adoption in State Corporation in Kenya underscores the significance of ICT adoption that it is efficient, cost saving, time saving, gives room for accountability, enhances economic growth and productivity. The study investigated the extent of ICT adoption, in areas such as network access, internet connectedness, ICT infrastructure, e-leadership, policy on ICT infrastructure and human capacity development towards ICT Literacy. The study established that the corporation was below 34% ICT adoption, poor ICT infrastructure and reluctance of the Corporation’s Management to fully embrace ICT in their day-to-day modus operandi, including e-leadership.

A study by Lankisa (2022) on the Role of e-leadership in employee productivity: A Case of University of Nairobi, observe that e-leadership is being embraced in many organizations across the globe. That ICT adoption has brought a new leadership paradigm a departure from a traditional leadership model to ICT mediated which in essence is not only convenient but too innovative, cost effective, time saving enhance corporate communication, accountability, has room for upscaling amongst other associated benefits. The study focused on specific leadership variables such as leader’s commercial skills, social skills, technical skills and how they influenced staff productivity. Questionnaires were administered to collect data. The study established that: how staff got updates concerning work or delivery of the assigned roles were enhanced by e-leadership paradigm. That leadership acted as liaison officers to the workers. That leaders had supportive behavior as compared to the
electronic platforms and were willing to assist the staff where possible. That most university leaders were technology literate and were willing and able to use it in their day-to-day management functions. That technology was satisfying in enhancing service delivery, staff productivity, accountability and consequently, electronic monitoring of work done, assignment of duties was very satisfactory to the university employees. The study further indicated that the three independent leadership variables of social skills, leadership skills and technical skills had significant correlations with employee productivity. Recommendations that organizations should embrace e-leadership paradigm as a modern practice in management.

A study by Wariuko et al. (2018) on Human Resource Capacity and Adoption of E-Government for improved service delivery in Kajiado County, Kenya had their study resting on Pragmatic Paradigm and exploited descriptive survey design in which 335 respondents out of a population of 2660 workers. Quantitative data were collected using semi-structured questionnaire. Regression Models and Correlational models were used to analyze the data collected through inferential statistics and test hypotheses. Qualitative data were collected through Content analysis. The findings of the study established that human resource capacity had had a strong positive influence on adoption of E-Government ($r=0.0595$, $p=0.00$). Implications of the study findings on emphasis of e-Government amongst workers.

Sunrise et al. (2020) on effects of e-leadership style on organizational commitment and service quality towards Indonesian School Performance used survey design and administered electronic questionnaire to the 200 teachers who were snowball sampled for the study at a school in Banten. The study findings showed that: e-leadership, organizational commitment and service quality significantly influenced organizational performance. The first leadership research model with e-leadership, organizational commitment and service quality variables on such performance is handy.

A study by Neerja et al. (2020) on Virtual Team Performance: E-leadership roles in the era of COVID-19 is categorical of the challenge posed to leaders by the Pandemic, circumstance of which spanned the adoption of e-leadership as an immediate approach towards keeping distance between the employees to check its spread, especially in the public sector. It revolutionized leadership to adopt e-approach. Findings show that practice of e-leadership in public sector has experienced a myriad of challenges even though it is an efficient and noble approach to leadership practice. That these challenges accepted the organizational operations in terms of time management, use of ICT in doing transactions, meeting media, digital literacy, transparency, time saving. These indicators are important in assessing culture of the organizations before, during and after the COVID-19 Pandemic. However multi-tasking remains a great challenge in the digital era.

Sinclair (2014) dilemma in facing e-leadership on cross-cultural platform. First leadership on online educational leaders to incorporate global views on lecturers e-lecturers-learners owing to the conditional influence of desperate cultural characteristics. Effective e-leadership in cultural settings require e-leadership to relinquish an agreement of culture and insisted use holistic means to achieve efficacious ends. Yet security of, empirical measurement of societal syndrome indicates Anglo-Western approach to knowledge sharing and creative synergies’-leaders in cross-cultural education delivery shall need to overcome
the dilemma. A composite approach incorporating both finding needs to be encouraged to break the dilemma.

A study by Iraqat & Khalaf (2018) on does building trust enhance the effect of e-leadership on organizational commitment: empirical evidence from Islamic Banks in Palestine established that: e-leadership is significantly related to building trust and organizational commitment of the virtual teams in Islamic Banks in Palestine; the three dimensions of e-leadership (engage, execute, and elastic) significantly predicted organizational commitment and building trust is significantly predicted organizational commitment in Islamic Banks in Palestine. The study findings have implications on banking procedures that are more elastic and more suitable for banking services.

4. CONCLUSION

Even though leadership is a current globalized approach with all its associated benefits, its level of implementation is still at the infancy stage. E-leadership implementation in Kenya’s Public Universities is at the infancy stage. That there is a strong relationship between e-leadership and service delivery. That e-leadership has led to improved communications in public universities. However, e-leadership too seems to promote mechanized work procedures that were characteristic of Scientific management.

The findings have implications on the need to sustainably embrace e-leadership in universities. More investments in e-leadership is necessary.

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