

Follower-Characteristics as Antecedents of LMX Relationships on Organizational Performance of PWDs Institutions

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Abstract

Currently, there exists great effort to ensure enhanced mainstreaming of persons living with disability (PWDs). Such efforts have surfaced despite a myriad of challenges. This study was founded on two objectives: follower characteristics as antecedents of LMX on organization performance in PWDs institutions and moderating effect of organization culture on follower-characteristics of LMX relationships and organization performance in PWDs institutions. The study was founded on two theories namely: Leader-Member exchange theory and Social Exchange theory. A conceptual framework presented the relationship between the variables of the study. Descriptive research design was used and the target population was lower level managers and subordinates at all levels within the organization. Stratified sampling of the various departments in the selected institutions were applied and random sampling and convenience sampling were used in the generation of the sample size. The study used a sample size of 39 and semi-structured questionnaires were used as data collection tool. A pilot study was conducted and applied Cronbach alpha reliability estimate. SPSS for windows version 21 was used to analyze data using descriptive statistics. Study results provided a reliable follower-characteristics framework of Leader-member relationships in organizations. One of the findings of the study was that followers possessed diverse characteristics that had a significant influence on leadership. Hence, the study concluded that focusing on follower-characteristics aids in availing new ideas on handling their work as well as interacting with their supervisors. In addition, followers are expected to ensure that they put their ego in control. The study recommends that followers are encouraged to consider fellow workers views to enhance creativity in problem solving. The study also recommends that followers be tasked with ensuring that they hold themselves to a high standard of personal success to achieve team goals.

Key Words: Antecedents, Leader-Member Exchange(LMX), follower-characteristics

Introduction

Conventionally, a person who is 'led' by the superior is 'subordinate' or 'follower'. However, the main concern in LMX collected works development is the highlighting on the desire for higher coherence between theory and pragmatic inquiries Gottfredson et al., 2020). According to Graenet al., (2020) the prominence of leader-member exchanges and the leadership process of conversations between the parties bring about a healthy relationship. Further, leadership on a dyadic level means effective relations between leaders and supporters built on reverence and

responsibility (Graen et al., 2020). Further, of interest is also the locus of control (LOC) which is an aspect in psychology that concerns an individual's conviction in what produces positive or negative results in their lives, whether generalized or in a specific area of disciplines (Nowicki, 2016). In Kenya, The National council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) was formulated with the directive of advocating for the rights and equity in requirements of prospects for persons with disabilities at national, regional and international levels. NCPWD is a state corporation enacted by an Act of Parliament; the

Persons with Disabilities Act No. 14 of 2003 and executed in November 2004. The composition of this council is housed in some government ministries and agencies for persons with disabilities. This council launched a Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and its fourth strategic objective is to strengthen National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCWPD's) to guarantee capacity for effective and efficient service delivery, which emphasizes on the human resources management purpose. Capacity building and leadership training programs are significant for ensuring involvement of people with disabilities as leaders and facilitating to improve efforts in enabling management to employ peoples with disabilities (IFES and NDI, 2014). Several training elements, modules and models have been formulated to pinpoint obstacles and enable stakeholders to overcome them.

In the contemporary world, leadership is a multi-layered practice individual involve in to achieve private aspirations. Persons working with disabilities have a right to be treated like other workers. A few people efficaciously achieve desirable goals. In presumption, these persons are intrinsically different (Tillman et al., 2010). This means that the source of their varying dispositions and qualities may be inherent or acquired. However, the effect of acquired environmental influences during the time of individual growth and enlargement may nurture their attainment of certain skills, distinct desires and exceptional personalities (Madanchian et al., 2017). Personnel with a resilient insight of social exchange are motivated to a higher level. When the appropriate characteristics are acquired, then an opportunity to lead others arises. This occurrence of change engenders more research interests among scholars to determine the effect of these characteristics to their work. If these two aspects of leadership are established, then it will be easier to increase performance within the organization.

Although a lot of studies have established the contribution of LMX in organizations, a gap still exists. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to identify the correlation between the antecedents of LMX relationships on organization performance. There are two specific objectives that guided this study; to establish the effect of

follower-characteristics on PWD Institutions performance in Kenya, to identify the moderating effect of organization culture on follower-characteristics of LMX on PWD Institutions performance in Kenya. This study was of significance in many ways and was projected to be beneficial to many groups: Clear basis on how followers can enhance their relationship is paramount for any aspiring organization. This study provided a blend of appropriate leader and member characteristics that contribute to boost performance. Hence, organizations benefited from better performance in all aspects of development. Research under leadership in an organization context is not exhaustive. New insights on leader member relationships would provide rich literature for scholars to pursue their research interests.

The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory was conceptualized by Graen & Cashman (1975) and Dansereau et al., (1975). The LMX theory of leadership concerns the qualities for the effective of the relationship between a leader and a certain member of a group, unit or organization and it is the elementary unit of analysis (dyad). This theory has continued to evolve to pay attention on the significance of cohesive peculiar relationships between leaders and their factions (Martin et al., 2019). It is significant to admit that leadership takes place in a group context since members of such a unit are involved in various social progressions (Gottfredson et al., 2020). The focus in this study is on the relationships and transformations between the theoretical expectations of LMX theory and how the core notions are expounded in empirical studies. This is evident that LMX theory has brought about a number of valuable endeavors, both theoretical and practical, it still faces a number of challenges. A key significant criticism of LMX majority of studies have inclined to gather employees' point of view on data of LMX (Northouse 2012). The significance of this theory to the present study is that it provides an analysis leader perceive juniors as individuals. This theory regarded leadership as a dyadic practice concerning leaders and an individual employee.

The Social Exchange Theory was advanced by Homans (1958). The proponent stated that social

exchange was the exchange of relationships, concrete or imperceptible and satisfying or exorbitant, among two people. This theory presents a high worth of exchange of each person's social capital which becomes crucial as it brings about mutual benefits of the relationship (Håvardet al., 2021). This means that the social capital of leaders or followers may hence be valuable to the other, that affect the sustainability of a vibrant LMX relationship. A criticism of this theory include a query on the degree to which individuals act in such a coherent and logical manner where these exchanges are often dictated by social structure rather than the individuals (Kuvaas & Buch, 2020). The significance of this theory to the present study is that it presents a structure of company culture that encourages sociability to help workers feel attached at a personal level to their organization on a personal level.

Subordinate Competencies

Many researchers view followers traits as independent variables of the leadership process. Buch et al., (2014) and the present study presents this concept as an independent variable of antecedents of LMX relationships. Some studies have observed deviations in LMX and performance over a period of time (e.g., Bauer & Green, 1996; Bauer et al., 2006; Nahrgang, et al., 2009). According to Kuvaas & Buch, (2020) it was observed that individual competencies and main performance pointers are significant to the leaders and followers as this would help predict future employee performance. In the context of a place of work, employees will often equate their LMX relations with other juniors and these associations will influence self-concept and insights of objectivity, trustworthiness and other traits (Gottfredson et al., 2020). The present study seeks to find out key features of the interchange processes amongst followers consistent with the hypothetical foundations of LMX theory and leads to organizational performance.

Locus of Control

Locus of control in psychology is a person's belief on the sources of good or bad results in his life

equally, it refers to a person's individualized expectations regarding the control over successive events (Kuvaas & Buch, 2020). In addition, followers are required to experience and validate a sufficient level of well-being when working within a team. This is because followers work efficiently as a unit so as to achieve positive organizational outcomes, support one another as well as their leader (Babic et al., 2019). In essence, team members have shown to have an influential effect on colleagues that the negative aspects are unnoticed (Kuvaas & Buch (2020). It is evident that, leadership comprises of mutual goal-enactment activities and paramount working relationship of followers and the leader (Premru, 2019; Kuvaas & Buch (2020). Locus of control is viewed as one-dimensional (internal to external) and there are three independent dimensions: Internality (future outcomes exist in predominantly in individual), Chance (fate determines events) , and Powerful Others (that control is outside of oneself) (Babic et al., 2019; Kuvaas & Buch, 2020). According to this model, each of the dimensions of locus of control act individually and at the same time separately. For instance, an individual may concurrently perceive that themselves and powerful others have an effect. Hence, Mulk & Lassk (2019) note that there exists a progressive relationship between internal locus of control and performance.

Organizational Performance

Past studies on LMX have focused on social values and job performance outcomes and not on employee's job satisfaction. Hence, the present study is beneficial to highlight the interconnectedness between follower-characteristics of LMX relationships and organizational performance. Research has found merits in improved influence and job satisfaction (Babic et al., 2019; Premru, 2019). Those with enhanced LMX relationships with their supervisors experience unlimited access to resources from leaders hence boosting their performance (Premru, 2019). This means that more challenging and tasking roles are allocated to followers with greater degree of mutual trust, admiration, and responsibility in the relations with leaders. Generally, studies report these good-quality relationships with leaders can influence work outcomes positively (Babic et al.,

2019; Premru, 2019; Kuvaas & Buch, 2020).

Research Methodology

Descriptive research design was used for the present study. As Kothari, (2019) affirms that descriptive design is mostly valuable where a researcher examines a new phenomenon. In the present study, descriptive research design helped to engage participants in their usual daily activities. The population of this study were the Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the counties of Mombasa and Kilifi along the Kenya coast. Only 2 organizations were selected from each county. Middle/lower level managers and subordinates from the organizations formed the unit of observation for this study. The study involved a total of 4 employees, 2 from each department.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

According to Kothari, (2019) it is appropriate to use a sample size to represent the targeted population of the study. A sample frame was selected from the organization upon which a sample size was drawn. A sample size is sufficient to show the exact and real outcome of a study (Kothari, 2019). A total of 39 employees, who were picked through stratified sampling as well as convenience sampling were sampled in this present study. About 30% of the sample was utilized. Johnson et al., (2020) 30% is a fitting sample for such a population. The 39 employees comprised of employees from all levels of the organization.

The present study used quantitative data and online structured questionnaires. The study used a modified version of the seven-item supervisor LMX scale (LMX-7) (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The tool presents individuals self-report the level of mutual respect, trustworthiness and responsibility correlating to the superior-subordinate associations. The questionnaire had both close-ended and open-ended questions highlighting the antecedents of LMX relationships on

organizational performance. Questions on the moderator organization culture were also presented. The study applied the LMX scale according to Liden et al., (1932). The study used the five-step Likert-type design ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It was important to carry out a pilot-study prior to the data collection week as it provides a provisional measure of the planned events and activities to be used during the actual data collection period (Jaramilla & Lazo, 2010). About 1% of the sample size was used comprising of 1 manager and 1 subordinate from the two targeted PWDs organizations. The 2 respondents in the pilot study were from a public organization. These respondents were also picked by convenience sampling. The two respondents did not participate in the actual study as the main study was based in the counties of Mombasa and Kilifi. The validity test was significant for the study as it improves the probability that the current study would immensely contribute to the course of universal laws and get validated data elsewhere (Jaramilla & Lazo, 2010). The study intended to guarantee reliability of the research by use of Cronbach's alpha measure, as it intends to test the internal consistency, of a set of items. This is because according to Cronbach, (1975) reliability is the degree to which it is a reliable measure of a notion and Cronbach's alpha is one way of defining the strengths of that consistency. The participants were picked by convenience sampling from the departments and a total of 25 respondents formed part of the sample size. Actual data was collected within a month on online basis. The study used online survey format of questionnaires using word processing software for easier analysis with SPSS. The participants were able to answer the online questionnaires at their own convenient time.

Results and Discussion

Data was coded, classified and recorded.

The findings showed that: there were (30.8%; n = 12) of respondents between 25 – 30 years, (30.8%; n = 12) between the age of 31-40 years and (38.5%; n = 15) between above the age of 40 years. Concerning age; the study found out that there were more male respondents (56.4%; n = 22) and a lower number for the female respondents (41%; n = 16). There was no much significance of the difference in gender. The findings also showed that majority of respondents worked for more than ten (10) years in their organizations (67.6%; n = 26). Equally, majority of respondents had above graduate education level (84%; n = 33) signifying the important of engaging employees on merit in PWDs organizations.

The Cronbach alpha results demonstrated that alpha coefficients of the study variables were above the critical 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). Follower characteristics stood at 0.827 with 6 items; organizational performance at 0.705 with 6 items and organizational culture

with 0.821 with 6 items. This showed that all the values were greater than 0.7 hence showing acceptable internal consistency. Implying that the reliability coefficients for the items were sufficiently consistent and the measure was reliable.

Regression analysis was carried out to establish whether follower-characteristics of LMX relationships had significant effect on organizational performance (Table 1). The results show the explanatory power of follower-characteristics was altered once the moderator (organizational culture) was introduced into the model (R Square = 0.628). Hence, it suggests that the moderating variable, has a high significant effect antecedents of women leadership performance. The p-value is $0.00 < 0.05$, indicating that there was a significant statistical relationship between follower-characteristics as an antecedent of LMX relationships and organization performance.

Table 1. Followers-characteristics goodness of fit model summary test results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.811 ^a	.658	.594	3.16292	.658	10.281	6	32	.000	1.792

a. Predictors: (Constant),
 b. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

Results of ANOVA test (Table 2) shows that the independent variable is statistically significant to predict the dependent variable, $F(6, 32) = 10.281$, p-value is 0.00 which is < 0.0005 showing that the regression model is a good fit of the data.

Table 2. Follower-characteristics ANOVA test results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	617.100	6	102.850	10.281	.000 ^b
	Residual	320.130	32	10.004		
	Total	937.231	38			

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant),

According to the finding follower-characteristics as an antecedent of LMX relationships is of great significance for aspiring organizations that would like to

enhance their performance (Table 3). Results shows that follower-characteristics had significant influence on organizational performance ($p < 0.05$).

Table 3. Follower-characteristics combined coefficients test results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
				Beta		
1	(Constant)	8.831	1.959		4.508	.000
	Follower-characteristics	.635	.101	.718	6.277	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organization Performance

Equation 1 shows a significant relationship between follower-characteristics on LMX relationships and organizational

performance. The following model was used in the linear regression:

$$Y = 8.831 + 0.635X_1 + e \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 1}$$

Where, Y= Organization Performance = error β_0 = represent constant

X_1 = Follower-characteristics

A multi-regression test was carried out to determine the moderation effect of organization culture on follower-characteristics of LMX relationships and organizational performance (Table 4).

Results show a weak statistical significant effect of organizational culture on follower-characteristics of LMX relationships to impact on organizational performance ($p > 0.05$).

Table 4. Follower-characteristics combined model summary test results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.761 ^a	.580	.568	3.23307	.580	49.661	1	36	.000	
2	.768 ^b	.590	.566	3.23987	.010	.849	1	35	.363	1.732

a. Predictors: (Constant), Follower-characteristics

b. Predictors: (Constant), Follower-characteristics, Organization Culture

c. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

Further the explanatory power of follower characteristics measures competencies and locus of control were altered when organizational culture was merged into the model (R square = 0.58). This suggested that the moderator had a high significant

influence on follower-characteristics as an antecedents of LMX relationships to enhance organizational performance (Table 5). This implies that there was statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$).

Table 5. Moderated regression coefficient of follower-characteristics test results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	8.107	1.828		4.435	.000
	Follower-characteristics	.661	.094	.761	7.047	.000
2	(Constant)	8.173	1.833		4.458	.000
	Follower-characteristics	.778	.158	.896	4.926	.000
	Organizational Culture	-.127	.138	-.168	-.921	.363

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

Therefore, since the coefficient was negative, it indicates that as follower-characteristics are enhanced in LMX relationships, organizational culture was not influenced.

Multiple linear equation used had the following model:

$$Y = -0.778 + -0.127X_1 + e \dots \dots \dots \text{Equation 2}$$

Where, Y= Organizational Performance of PWDs organizations

β_0 = represent constant

X_2 = interaction effect between follower-characteristics and organizational culture

e = represent error term showing other aspects that relate to the dependent variable.

Hence it was concluded that there was no moderating effect of organizational culture on follower-characteristic of LMX relationships on organizational performance in PWDs institutions.

Conclusions and Recommendations

According to the results of this study, it was evident that follower-characteristics of LMX relationships have a significant effect on organizational performance. The findings of Kahya and Sahin, (2018) show that in PWDs institutions, it was important for people to strengthen their LMX relationships to enhance their output. Results also demonstrated that leaders needed to pay a lot of attention of follower-characteristics so as to enhance their working relationships. Therefore, the results of the current study can help managers in PWDs institutions to inculcate positive behaviors of their followers. Regression analyses of the study suggested that positive follower-characteristics would improve the quality of LMX relationships hence enhance organizational performance.

Based on this study, follower-characteristics of employees in PWDs institutions should be nurtured and considered as an effective tool through the lens of exchange theory. This finding proposed to influence policy regarding engaging employees in PWDs institutions such that employees supported to develop LMX relationships hence improve organizational performance. Since the study had a rigorous methodology in data collection, the results of this study are accurate and reliable hence they can be generalized to a larger extent. This study also provides new insights to the discipline of nature of LMX relationships with regard to follower-characteristics and its role on organizational performance.

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