INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE ON PERFORMANCE OF VIRTUAL PROJECT TEAMS IN SAFARICOM LIMITED

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Abstract

The main objective of the study was to establish the influence of transformational leadership styles on virtual team project performance in Safaricom Company limited. The study adopted descriptive design. The target population was 78 staff working in public TelePresence and Digital City projects in Safaricom Company Limited. Since the study population was small 78 staff, the study conducted a census survey. The data was gathered using questionnaires to collect both quantitative and qualitative information from the respondents. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS. The descriptive statistics, mean scores, standard deviations and percentages were used to analyze quantitative data. Qualitative data were analyzed using conceptual content analysis. Further inferential statistics such as correlation and regression were done. Correlation analysis was used to establish the strength of association between variables and regression analysis was done to established relationship between transformational leadership role and virtual team performance in Safaricom Company. Virtual team project performance success was determined by how leaders inspired team member to deliver a project to the agreed scope, time, cost and quality while maintaining a relationship and

not burning out the project team. The study established that there existed a positive relationship between influence of transformational leadership styles and virtual team performance in Safaricom Company limited. It was evident that management role and conflict management role are essential element of transformational leadership styles that influences virtual team performance in Safaricom Company limited as they were statistically significant.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, management, conflict role, virtual team performance

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are turning to the use of virtual teams due to globalization and advancement in technology. Advances in technology are enabling a variety of communication and collaboration tools that were previously unavailable or too expensive for most organizations to implement during project management (Tasa, Taggar, & Seijts, 2007). This has led to the increased use of virtual teams by organizations in project management to quickly address customer problems, develop products, deliver services, and tap a more diverse pool of employees across the organization. With the ability to form teams virtually, teams are operating across the limitations of distance, time, and organizational boundaries. Virtual teams use electronic collaboration technologies and other techniques to lower travel and facility costs, reduce project schedules, improve decision-making time, and communication (Zhu, Newman, Miao, & Hooke, 2013). The growing need to acquire a sustainable competitive advantage, many organizations have moved toward flattened hierarchies and self-managed teams (Antoni & Hertel, 2009). The use of teams has become an essential feature in many organizations (Tasa, Taggar, & Seijts, 2007). Given the reports from management and scholars emphasizing the importance of teams for organizational project success (Cohen & Bailey, 1997), understanding the antecedents of team performance is critical for academic and practitioner communities. Both people and organization are factors in determining whether virtual teams can be effective (Lipnack & Stamps, 1999). Among these factors, how team leaders lead their teams and the teams' problem solving processes are considered most critical factors (Kayworth & Leidner, 2002).

Virtual teams under transformational leadership help organizations decrease their response time to changes in today's hyper-competitive markets, enable companies to leverage expertise that is dispersed over geographic areas that was previously left untapped and lessen the disruption of the employee's life by requiring less travel time to meet with dispersed teams (Antoni & Hertel, 2009). Globalization has forced companies to employ effective leaders to influence success in project management. An organization with highly creative teams usually achieve project success Kark & Shamir (2002) argued that the influence of transformational

leaders is based on their success in connecting followers' self-concept or identity to the mission of their unit or organization so they become self expressive. Transformation leadership styles in fact have impacts to the creativity of individual, particularly transformational leadership has more positive impact to creativity in virtual teams (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999).Moreover, these behaviors may be instrumental in building pride in being associated with the leader and commitment to the leader, which can in turn, provide a commonality for members of the team to embrace. This shared pride and commitment to the leader has the potential to lead to increased cohesion, as members view themselves as privileged to be associated with the transformational leader (Arnold *et al.*, 2001).Transformational Leaders play a very important factor in the effective functioning of virtual teams and pay attention to work environments and organizational climate. They also coordinate project tasks and facilitate the group process to achieve teams' goals (Kayworth & Leidner, 2002).

Turner & Müller, (2005) reported that the project leadership style is a key success factor to project team performance. The transformational leadership style has been one of the most cited theories of leadership (Judge & Bono, 2000). Transformational leadership creates valuable and positive changes in its followers. Dvir, Eden, Avolio, and Shamir (2002) showed that transformational leadership is highly effective in terms of subordinates' development and performance. Although research on transformational leadership has consistently noted that there is an underlying process through which transformational leaders exhibit their influences on their followers' development and ultimately facilitate team performance (Wang & Howell, 2012), surprisingly relatively little research has explored this topic especially in project team settings.

Transformational leadership is an ongoing process where leaders and followers engage in dialogues to raise each other to higher levels of motivation and goals. Transformational leadership in project based telecommunication industry has been found to influence project success (Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006). A transformational leader often uses charismatic methods to attract people to the values of the leader. Burns believed that transformational leadership is more effective in management of virtual teams in project (Kayworth & Leidner, 2002). Transformational leaders influence subordinates by motivating and inspiring them to achieve organizational goals and help subordinates imagine appealing future outcomes related to the organization (Tucker & Russell, 2004). Transformational leaders are reliable leaders who generate commitment from followers which results in a sense of shared purpose as the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and foster commitment to a shared purpose is crucial (Nemanich & Keller, 2007). With the growing usage of technology, many organizations have moved toward achieving effective leadership in teams project management (Antoni & Hertel, 2009). The use for virtual teams has become an essential feature in technological

organizations project management. Tasa, Taggar and Seijts, (2007) indicated that the project leadership style especially transformational leadership style is a key success factor to project team performance. Although research on transformational leadership has consistently noted that there is an underlying process through which transformational leaders exhibit their influences on their followers development and ultimately facilitate team performance (Wang & Howell, 2012), surprisingly relatively little research has explored this topic especially in project team settings.

Among the process variables associated with the transformational leadership process, trust has been acknowledged as one important factor that can mediate the effect of the transformational leadership on group outcomes (Zhu, Newman, Miao, & Hooke, 2013). Another group process variable that may emerge in the transformational leadership process is collective efficacy (Zhang, Tsui, & Wang, 2011). Braun, Peus, Weisweiler & Frey (2013) posited that transformational leadership will increase shared vision and team commitment, which will in turn be related to increased team cohesion and increased team task performance, implying that leaders can have effects on team cohesion that ultimately lead to changes in team performance. Prior studies have found the effects of transformational leadership on collective efficacy, trust and team performance (Zhang, Tsui & Wang, 2011). However, the relationship between transformational leadership an performance of virtual teams in project management remain elusive.Failure by telecommunication companies in developing countries to adopt transformational leadership styles, has led to Information Communication Technology companies failing to achieve project success and in other cases ICT projects experience delays in achieving its objective (McMahon, 2001). Ineffective leadership has a negative impact on company virtual team performance as the team leaders become overly dominant with achieving project goals and overlook project team details in the company (Duarte & Snyder, 2001). The virtual team leader in the company promote timely feedback and reflection, and building on the team's strengths resulting to company resulting to customer satisfaction, speed development of products, timely in delivering of services and tapping a more diverse pool of virtual teams across the company's projects. Failure to institute transformational leaders in virtual teams make it difficult for virtual team to use electronic collaboration technologies thereby increasing travel and facility costs, increase project schedules, delays in decision-making and increase team conflicts (Zhang, Tsui & Wang 2011). Safaricom limited company in Kenya has attained high turnover rising from US$280 million in 2004-2005 to US$1.2 billion in 2011-2012 making it the leading mobile telecommunications company in Kenya (Nganga, 2012). Despite Safaricom company investing more than 10% of its resources in achieving transformational leadership, its role on virtual team performance is not yet determined, hampering difficulties in determining the

extent to which leadership plan and influence virtual project teams in achieving project success (Fan, 2009). Safaricom Company may also not ascertain the success of adopted transformational leadership on virtual project team performance (Ranajit, 2011).

Much of the previous study on project performance had focus on leadership and management styles. Munge (2011) carried out a study determining the effects of leadership styles on organization performance and its effects on employees in delivery of the assigned duties in KEMRI and KARI and found that transformational leadership had great impact on organizational performance and delivery of service compared to the other leadership styles. Ali (2011) assessed the manager's perception of role of leadership in change management in the mobile telephony industry in Kenya. There has been no study that has focus on establishing the influence of transformational leadership styles on virtual team performance. This study therefore sought to fill this knowledge gap by determining the role of transformational leadership styles on project virtual team performance focusing on Safaricom Kenya Limited.

Objectives of the Study

    i.   To determine the effects of transformational leadership management role on   project virtual team performance in Safaricom Company

    ii.   To establish the influence of transformational leader's conflict management role on virtual team performance in Safaricom Company.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical Review

Leadership is associated with organizational and staff performance ((Nguni, Sleegers, & Denessen, 2006). Personal and organizational behavior related to leadership demands a more candid look at the leadership styles which may have a positive or negative impact on these two variables ((Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Transformational leadership arouses transcendental interests in the followers and/or elevates their need and aspiration levels. In doing so, transformational leadership may result ultimately in a higher level of satisfaction and effectiveness among the led (Howarth & Rafferty, 2009).

Drawing on self-concept theory, Lord, Brown, and Freiberg (1999) suggested that leaders exert powerful and enduring effects on follower's work behavior by influencing the way followers view their identities, making their followers more likely to sacrifice for the success of the work unit. Gundersen, Hellesoy and Raeder (2012) argued that identification of followers' self is enhanced by transformational leaders because "the leaders increase the sense of self-worth among followers for such commitment, internalize the favorable attitudes of the followers

toward achieving the collective success. Transformational leaders emphasize the importance of each individual's contribution to the group or unit, getting followers to internalize and prioritize a larger collective cause over focusing just on self-interests (van Knippenberg *et al.*, 2004). Supporting these arguments, Dvir, Eden, Avolio, and Shamir (2002) reported that developing transformational leadership in platoon commanders increased their direct followers' unit identification and their indirect followers' performance. Nath, Sridhar, Adya, & Malik. (2006) suggested that self-efficacy is a possible mediating mechanism through which transformational leadership affects followers' performance. They further suggested that transformational leaders enhance followers' perception of self-efficacy by emphasizing positive visions, communicating high performance expectations, and expressing confidence in followers' abilities to contribute to the mission and goals of their organization (Bycio & Starsh, 2005). Kark and Shamir, (2002) have also suggested that transformational leaders build followers' feelings of self-efficacy by providing regular and adequate feedback to their followers. In other words, by understanding how followers view themselves, such leaders are able to help transform their self-concepts to enable followers to believe they can be successful at more challenging tasks.

One of the most widely-accepted theories of operational is Abraham Maslow's (1954), hierarchy of needs that classifies needs according to a pyramidal hierarchy, consisting of five levels, Physiological, Safety, Social, Self-Esteem and Self-actualization. Physiological needs are our most basic and strongest needs. If human being does not fulfill them, they will quite literally die. They represent basic needs for food, drink and shelter from the elements. Safety needs are our response to our desire for security. Piccoli, Powell, and Ives, (2004) noted that the need for protection from danger and harm and Social needs are those desires we have for human interaction, friendship, relationships and love. Esteem needs focus on our self-esteem and the need to feel independent and competent. According to Maslow (1954) the hierarchy is used to depict the different levels of importance of each need. The most predominant needs; those at the lower end of the pyramid, must be satisfied before the next higher level of needs can be addressed. Thus, although all people need food, safety, social acceptance and esteem, they must demand food first and more strongly than anything else. This hierarchy of needs gives us a beginning point for understanding how to motivate people in different situations.

According to Burns, transformational leadership can be seen when leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of moral and motivation. Through the strength of their vision and personality, transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions, and motivations to work towards common goals (Korek, Felfe & Zaepernick-Rothe, 2010). Unlike in the transactional approach, it is not based on a give and take relationship, but on the leader's personality, traits and ability to make a change through

example, articulation of an energizing vision and challenging goals. Transforming leaders are idealized in the sense that they are a moral exemplar of working towards the benefit of the team, organization and/or community (Feinberg, Ostroff & Burke, 2005). Burns (2010) theorized that transforming and transactional leadership was mutually exclusive styles. Burns' original idea was developed to what it is today referred to as Bass' Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Avolio, 2003).The extent, to which a leader is transformational, is measured first in terms of his influence on the followers. The followers of such a leader feel trust, admiration, loyalty and respect for the leader and because of the qualities of the transformational leader are willing to work harder than originally expected. These outcomes occur because the transformational leader offers followers something more than just working for self-gain they provide followers with an inspiring mission and vision and give them an identity (Lim & Ployhart, 2004). The leader transforms and motivates followers through his or her idealized influence, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration. In addition, this leader encourages followers to come up with new and unique ways to challenge the status quo and to alter the environment to support being successful (Howarth & Rafferty, 2009). Transformational leaders guide followers by providing them with a sense of meaning and challenge. They work enthusiastically and optimistically to foster the spirit of teamwork and commitment. The four elements which comprise TL theory include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Turner & Müller, 2005).

Transformational leadership has been linked to an array of outcomes, such as employee commitment to the organization and job satisfaction and satisfaction with a leader (Coulthard, 2004). Lipnack and Stamps, (2000) discovered that transformational leadership is positively related to a number of important organizational outcomes including perceived extra effort, organizational citizenship behaviors, and job satisfaction Transformational leaders articulate a vision that describes a better future and is congruent with the values of followers. The leader's personal example serves as a model of the kind of behavior required to attain the vision. The importance of a shared vision as a motivating force is found in both the team literature (Turner & Müller, 2005) and the leadership literature (Jung & Sosik, 2002; West, 2000). Where the team literature focuses on the sharedness of the team vision, which is held to be important for the achievement of a long-term orientation and longer-term goals of the team (Jung & Sosik, 2002), the leadership literature addresses leaders' capacity to develop and communicate a vision, which is attractive and motivating for followers, and which they collaboratively will try to attain (Lipnack & Stamps, 2000). Besides the proposed relationship with team process, many researchers argue that a link between transformational leadership and team performance should exist (Yukl, 1998), and several studies have tested this link. For instance, Lim and

Ployhart (2004) examined the impact of transformational leadership on team performance in combat teams and found a positive relationship. Another study found that transformational leadership positively affected group potency, and in turn group effectiveness (Spreitzer, 2003). Furthermore, a study among 47 intact teams found that transformational leadership was related to group effectiveness, through the effect on group cohesion, empowerment and collective efficacy (Pulley, Sessa & Malloy, 2002).

Evidence of a direct effect of idealized influence/inspirational motivation on individual performance exists (Hertel, Geister, & Konradt,2005), however, regarding teamwork processes and performance, we may want to consider more specifically the role that visioning behaviors play in promoting team cohesion, which has been noted to improve team performance .Yadav, Nath, Adya, and Sridhar, (2007) have examined visioning behavior and team/group factors in the past. Within charismatic leadership represented vision as empathetic language that involves the reinforcement of the group's collective identity. Similarly, Tasa, Taggar and Seijts (2007) suggested that visioning involves expressions of sharing as well, which are directed at building rapport and bonding with the team.

Although previous empirical findings displaying both direct effects of transformational leadership on performance (Avolio & Yammarino, 2002) mediated effects through cohesion (Bass *et al.*, 2003), no empirical effort to specifically link the visioning component of transformational leadership to group cohesion exists. Given the aforementioned links between charismatic leadership and shared vision, it expected that the charismatic component of transformational leadership that is idealized influence/inspirational motivation, will impact cohesion through development of a shared vision within the team (Driskell, Radtke & Salas, 2003). Behavior motivated by goal internalization occurs when individuals adopt attitudes and behaviors congruent with their personal value systems. Strong ideals and beliefs are paramount in this motivational source (Hollingshead, 2004). Individuals motivated by goal internalization believe in the cause and have developed a strong sense of duty to work toward the goal of the collective. This source of motivation is similar to Kelman's (2008) value system, internalized values, valence for outcome and pure moral involvement. Each of these perspectives emphasizes a virtuous character and a desire not to compromise these virtues. Transformational leader behaviors are most typically seen in persons who trust and believe in the goal of the organization naturally expanding to belief in the organization's cause. Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater and Spangler, (2004) examined motivation's predictive value for influence tactics and found significant correlations between goal internalization motivation and both inspirational appeals and rational persuasion. From a transformational leadership perspective, it is expected that goal internalization will relate to inspirational leadership and charismatic

behaviors. Barbuto *et al.* (2000) found significant relationships between leaders' goal internalization and use of transformational leadership behaviors (Turner & Müller, 2005). Leaders displaying a transformational style repeatedly emphasized the importance of working together, and linking team synergy that is the team decision is greater than the sum of individual decisions to successful collective outcomes. The transformational leader augmented the positive goal-setting effects of the transactional leader by projecting confidence in team members, emphasizing task interdependence, the importance of collective action, and the opportunity to learn from the other team members (Spreitzer, 2003).

Transformational leadership Conflict management Role

Past research in FTF contexts has supported the more positive effects of transformational, leadership, on team processes and outcomes (Nielsen & Daniels, 2012). Although both styles have been found to be effective and correlated (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), the literature seems to suggest that transformational leadership is more effective overall. For instance, transformational leadership in problem-solving teams leads to increased enthusiasm and confidence of team members, promoting understanding and appreciation of differing views, and intellectually stimulating members to re-examine critical assumptions and to view problems in new ways. These characteristics are thought to foster constructive, as opposed to defensive, team interaction (Poutiatine, 2009). Indeed, research has found support for a positive relationship between shared transformational leadership and constructive team interactions (Balthazard et al., 2002). Similar findings would be expected in a situation with a single transformational leader, whose behaviours would more likely foster constructive team interaction than would those of a transactional leader (Edwards & Sridhar, 2005).

Chou, Lin, Chang and Chuang (2013) carried out a study on transformational leadership and team performance the mediating roles of cognitive trust and collective efficacy. This study explores the relationships among transformational leadership style, cognitive trust, and collective efficacy as well as the impact of these variables on distal team performance. Data collected from 39 teams find that team cognitive trust as two process variables involves a transformational leadership process in which cognitive trust in the team leader and cognitive trust among team members mediate the impact of this leadership style on collective efficacy. Unlike previous studies, our results show that leveraging cognitive trust in the team leader is necessary but not sufficient for better proximal collective efficacy, which in turn facilitates distal team performance. Although cognitive trust among team members was more closely related to proximal collective efficacy than cognitive trust in the team leader was, the factors that foster the

development of cognitive trust among team members remain scantly explored in the transformational leadership literature and deserve more attention in future research.

Research Gap

The review of the literature indicate that advent of new technology-enabled organizational forms, firms are increasingly relying on virtual project teams to accomplish organizational objectives. Much study has focus on leadership effectiveness on team performance. The study reviewed indicates that transformational leadership influence performance of teams, yet studies focusing on influence of transformational leadership on performance of virtual team performance remain scanty. Little has however been done determining influence of transformational leadership role on project virtual team performance. This study sought to fill the existing knowledge gap be determining influence of transformational leadership role on virtual project team performance focusing on Safaricom Kenya Limited.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive design was adopted. This research design involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data. The adoption of the descriptive survey research is because it portrays an accurate profile of persons, events, or account of the characteristics, for example behavior, opinions, abilities, beliefs, and knowledge of a particular individual, situation or group (Burns and Grove 2003). The descriptive survey method is preferred because it ensures complete description of the situation, making sure that there is minimum bias in the collection of data (Kothari, 2008). A descriptive study also referred to as situational description of variables is concerned with finding out the what, where and how of a phenomenon. This design was considered suitable because it aids in collecting information from respondents on their attitudes, awareness and opinions in relation to the subject area. The descriptive research design enabled the study establishes the influence of transformational leadership roles on virtual team project performance in Safaricom Company limited.

Target Population

Target population is that population to which a researcher wants to generalize the results of a study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The target population in a research study comprised all those potential participants that could make up a study group (Kothari, 2004). A population frame is a comprehensive itemized list of all subjects, which comprise the study population, from which a sample will be taken (Lacey and Gerrish, 2006). For the purpose of this study, the

target population was 78 staff working in Safaricom public TelePresence and Safaricom Digital City projects in Safaricom Company Limited.

Table 1: Target population

Population Category	Frequency
IT project Managers	3
Project Officers	21
Virtual Project teams	54
Total	78

Source: Human Resources Department: Safaricom Company Limited (2014**)**

Sampling, Design and Procedure

Sampling as a selection of a few items from a bigger group (population) to become the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group (Cooper and Schinder, 2003). This is preferred because the study population is not homogeneous as it consisted of financial managers and assistance as well as credit officers. Since the study population of 78 staff was small, the study conducted a census survey.

The data was gathered using questionnaires to collect both quantitative and qualitative information from the respondent's. The study collected primary and secondary data. Primary data is the information the researcher obtained from the field and was collected using semi-structured questionnaires with open and closed ended questions. Drop and pick method was used to administer the questionnaires. Secondary data was collected from the company website, magazine and journal. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative techniques in analyzing the data for ease of analysis and interpretation. The collected data was thoroughly examined and checked for completeness and comprehensibility. The responses was edited, classified, coded and tabulated to analyze quantitative data using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version, 21) as it has current statistical specs for data analysis. Tables and charts were used for further representation for easy understanding and analysis. The descriptive statistics the mean scores, the standard deviations and percentages was used to analyze quantitative data. The descriptive statistics was interpreted to establish the extent to which transformational leadership roles influence virtual project team performance in Safaricom Company limited. Qualitative data that was collected through open ended questionnaire and was analyzed using conceptual content analysis. Content analysis is defined is a technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristic of messages and using the same approach to relate trends. According to Mugenda and Mugenda

(2003) the main purpose of content analysis is the study existing information in order to determine factors that explain a specific phenomenon.

Further inferential statistics such as correlation and regression was done. Correlation analysis was used to establish the strength of association between variables. Regression analysis was done to establish relationship between transformational leadership role and virtual team performance in Safaricom Company. The response on extent of transformational leadership adoption in Safaricom Company was measured by computing indices based on the responses derived from the Likert-Scaled questions.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
Management Role

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Figure 1: Managerial role

Project teams motivate team member to achieve project objectives
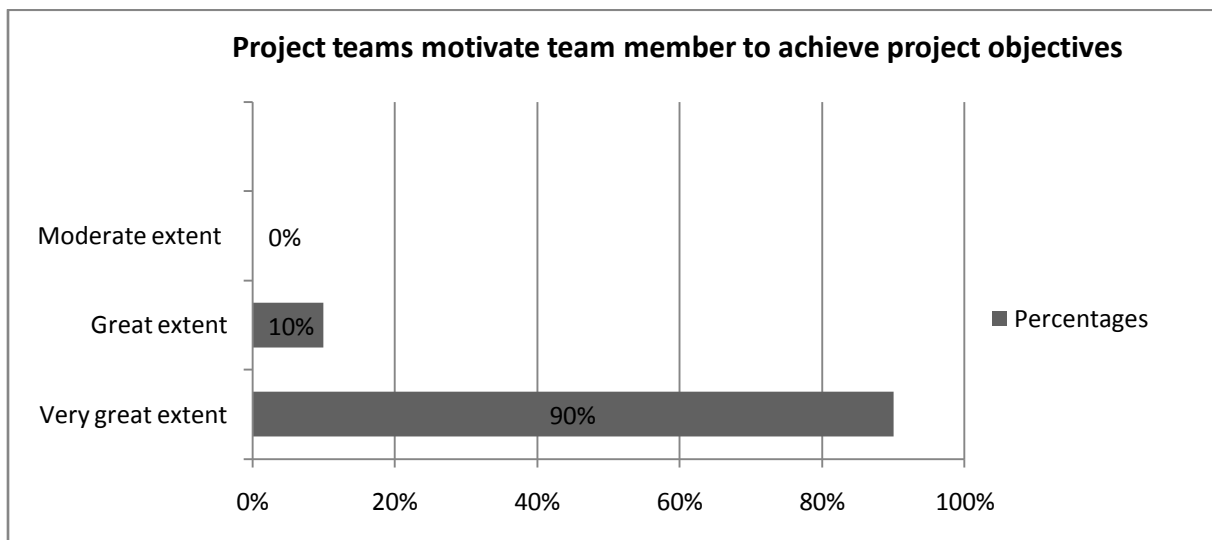
From the findings, majority 90% of the respondents indicated that leaders in project teams motivate team member to achieve project objectives to a very great extent while 10% indicated to great extent. Respondents further explained that the management has placed project leaders in charge who champion the project throughout the company, they also serves as a model of the kind of behavior required to attain the vision. This implies that leaders in project teams have the power to set goals and legitimize change. This is in line with Nemanich and Keller (2007), who stated that transformational leaders are reliable leaders who generate commitment from followers which results in a sense of shared purpose as the leader's ability to inspire, motivate and foster commitment to a shared purpose is crucial.

Project leaders share project vision with the team members

Table 1: Project leaders share project vision

	Frequency	Percent
Very great extent	44	59
Great extent	31	41
Moderate extent	0	0
Total	75	100

Results in Table 1 shows that 59% of the respondents indicated that project leaders shared project vision with the team members to a very great extent while 41% of the respondents indicated that project leaders shared project vision with the team members to a great extent. This implies that leader in Safaricom Company Limited continually strive to shared project vision with the team members.

This is in line with Jung and Sosik, (2002) who stated that where the team literature focuses on the tiredness of the team vision, which is held to be important for the achievement of a long-term orientation and longer-term goals of the team.

Whether project team leaders inspires team member to achieve team set target

The study sought to establish whether project team leaders inspired team member to achieve team set target. The findings are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Whether project team leaders inspires team member

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	75	100
Total	75	100

Findings in Table 2 indicate that project team leaders inspired team member to achieve team set target as indicated by all the respondents. Respondents further stated that leaders inspired team member to deliver a project to the agreed scope, time, cost and quality while maintaining a relationship. This implies that project team leaders had the capacity and will to rally the staff to a common purpose and inspires confidence hence virtual team project performance. This is in line with Korek, Felfe and Zaepernick-Rothe, (2010) who stated that through the strength of transformational leader's vision and personality, they are able to inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions and motivations to work towards common goals.

Leader motivational role and virtual team performance

Table 3: Leader motivational role and virtual team performance

Motivational roles	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	moderately agree	Agree	strongly agree	Mean	Standard deviation	Z-Score
Team leaders share mission with the team members	5	5	5	12	48	4.77	0.70	1.1857
The sharedness of the team vision influence achieving of project team targets	1	4	12	20	38	4.80	0.76	1.6842
Leaders in project teams influence achieving of project objectives	3	4	5	27	36	4.43	0.49	2.9591
The leaders collaborate with team member to attain high project team performance	4	5	9	11	46	4.42	0.48	0.0079
Team leaders recognizes effects of tem members encouraging them to meet set objectives	6	2	9	26	32	4.36	0.32	-1.3752
The team leaders ensure team member have the needed resources for them to perform their role without hindrances	11	11	11	17	25	4.46	0.45	1.0888

Results presented shows that, majority of the respondents strongly agreed sharedness of the team vision where team leaders share mission with the team members influence achieving of project team targets as indicated by a mean of 4.80 and 4.77 with a standard deviation of 0.76 and 0.70 indicating that the degree of variation among the respondents was significant. Most of the respondents agreed that the team leaders ensured that team member have the needed resources to perform their role, influenced achieving of project objectives, collaborate with team member to attain high project team performance and recognizes effects of team members encouraging them to meet set objectives as indicated by a mean of 4.46, 4.43, 4.42 and 4.36 with standard deviation of 0.55, 0.45, 0.49, 0.48 and 0.32 showing significance acceptances among the respondents.

The findings in Table 3 indicated Z score were determined and found to be (Z score=0.0079) meaning Z-Score was on the mean and deviation from the standard deviation zero. The positive Z-scores 2.9591 indicate that leaders in project teams influencing achievement of project objectives was the most significant aspect of motivation role influencing

virtual team performance .This clearly indicated that leader motivational role positively influences virtual team performance. This implies that individuals are motivated to achieve team success because they see team success as a validation of their skills and abilities thus high virtual team performance in the company. This concurred with Jung and Sosik (2002) who found that the leadership literature addresses leaders' capacity to develop and communicate a vision, which is attractive and motivating for followers, and which they collaboratively will try to attain. Further analysis from the interview guide found that interviewees indicated that the transformational leadership adopted by the virtual team leaders, helped team members by recognizing better performance, setting prioritize and organizational goals,giving gifts and awards. This implies that team leaders inspired and motivated team members influencing achieving of high virtual team performance. Lipnack and Stamps (2000) argue that a link between transformational leadership and team performance should exist while Lim and Ployhart (2004) examined the impact of transformational leadership on team performance in combat teams and found a positive relationship.

Conflict Management Role

The study went further to rate the level of effectiveness of team leaders in solving conflicts among project team's members and results presented on table 4.

Table 4: Effectiveness of team leaders in solving conflicts among project teams members

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	46	62
No	29	38
Total	75	100

Results shows that there was high and medium level of effectiveness of team leaders in solving conflicts among project teams members as indicated by 62% and 38% of the respondents. Respondents explained that team leaders are effective in preventing unnecessary friction and conflict, unclear boundaries and unproductive competition. This implies that project team leaders in Safaricom Company Limited tackles the tough issues of solving problem that is being created or the goal being disrupted by the conflicts. This is in line with Nielsen & Daniels, 2012) who state that transformational leadership in problem-solving teams leads to increased enthusiasm and confidence of team members, promoting understanding and appreciation of differing views and intellectually stimulating members to re-examine critical assumptions and to view problems in new ways.

Team leader solve misunderstanding among team members

The study sought to investigate the extent to which team leader solve misunderstanding among team members in order to achieve project team objective. The result of the data is as shown of Figure 2.

Figure 2: Team leader solve misunderstanding among team members
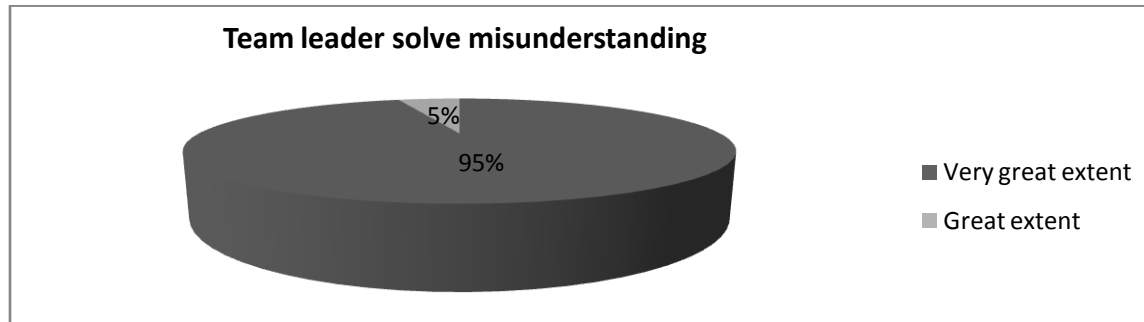
From the findings 95% of the respondents indicated that team leader solve misunderstanding among team members in order to achieve project team objective to a very great extent while 5% indicated to a great extent. Respondents explained that team leaders engage the group in openly discussing cultural differences and similarities to help develop communication norms. Once a misunderstanding is identified among team members, leaders clarify the issues arising. This implies that team leaders in Safaricom Company Limited deal with problems that befall the staff located in disparate geographic locations.

Team leader solve misunderstanding among team members

Table 5 Team leader solve misunderstanding among team members

	Frequency	Percentages
Very great extent	65	87
Great extent	10	13
Total	75	100

From the findings, 87% of the respondents indicated that team leader engage problem solving technique in solving conflict among team members to a very great extent while 13% indicated to a great extent. Respondents stated that leaders of the teams solves problems and develop policy alternatives to meet the challenges of working place. They also establish a close working relationship with the Executive Sponsor-the strategic decision maker empowering the team.

This implies that team leaders in Safaricom Company Limited use this style of transformational leadership conflict management role which involves a problem-solving orientation and a willingness to explore and work with the other person to find options that will be mutually acceptable and maximize joint gains. This is in line with Judge and Piccolo (2004) who suggest that transformational leadership is more effective in overall.

Team leader conflict management in company virtual teams

Table 5: Team leader conflict management in company virtual team

Conflict Management	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation	Z score
Team leaders promote understanding ensuring harmony among team members	35	28	4	0	8	4.47	0.45	1.9313
The team leaders find solution to problem facing team members increasing team enthusiasm	30	18	15	5	7	4.79	0.64	0.4843
Confidence of team members is raised by team leaders encouraging achievement of team performance	27	25	11	5	7	4.43	0.33	0.0024
Team leaders respect the views of the team members	39	20	15	1	0	4.52	0.48	1.4166
Team lead influence trust among members	36	18	13	8	0	4.66	0.53	2.7924
Team leader appreciate of differing views from the team members fostering team cohesiveness	41	17	7	8	2	4.75	0.65	1.3076
Team members provide quality software's due to team leader encouragement	30	28	4	0	13	4.32	0.30	1.3333

Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the team leaders find solution to problem facing team members increasing team enthusiasm, appreciate of differing views from the team members fostering team cohesiveness, influence trust among members and respect the views of the team members as indicated by a mean of 4.79, 4.75, 4.66 and 4.52 with standard deviation of 0.64, 0.65, 0.53 and 0.48. The study further found that most of the respondents agreed that team leaders promote understanding ensuring harmony among team members and that the confidence of team members is raised by team leaders encouraging achievement of team performance as indicated by a mean of 4.47 and 4.43 with standard deviation of 0.45 and

4.33. Team members provided quality software's due to team leader encouragement as indicated by a mean of 4.32 with standard deviation of 0.30. The findings in Table 4.11 indicated Z scores were determined and found to be (Z score=0.0024) meaning Z-Score was on the mean of 4.43. The positive Z-scores, 2.7924, indicated that team leader influencing trust among members was the most significant responses on team leader conflict management issues that impacts on virtual team performance in a company. The interviewees further revealed that team leaders manages conflicts among team members by facilitating dialogues, effective feedback communication and ensuring team members understand their responsibilities and ensuring they work in harmony and this influence achievement better outcomes.

Interviewees indicated that Team leaders in Safaricom develop ground rules at each meeting that incorporate processes or behaviors that the group will allow or prohibit. This implied that use of effective conflict management prevent anger, frustration or alienation and support team effectiveness in the context of virtual teams. This is in line with Jehn (1995) who found that team leader's functions emphasize primarily on the construction of team problems, generation of appropriate solutions, planning the implementation of the best-fitting one and coordinating and monitoring solution implementation.

The interviewees were asked to elaborate on whether team leaders influence virtual team performance due to conflict management. All the interviewees unanimously indicated that commitment was a significant predictor of successful conflict management. Interviewees further indicated that as team's leaders were actively involved in preventing and solving their conflict, significant increase in the relationship between commitment to team goals and team performance that is experienced. This implies that effective conflict management through effective leadership, motivation, and communication and listening influence virtual team performance. This is in line with Stevens and Campion, (1994) who stated that effective conflict management can lead to better team performance as a team is not dragged down by infighting and indecision.

Correlation analysis

A correlation analysis was conducted to establish influence of transformational leadership styles on virtual team project performance in Safaricom Company limited.

Table 6: Correlations Analysis

		Virtual Team Performance	Management role	Conflict management role
Virtual Team Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.001		
	N	75		
Management role	Pearson Correlation	.547*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.01		
	N	75	75	
Conflict management role	Pearson Correlation	.463*	.218	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.247	
	N	75	75	75

From the findings, the strength of association between management role and virtual team project performance in Safaricom Company limited was strong and positive having scored a correlation coefficient of 0.547 and a 95% precision level. The correlation was statistically significant since it had a P-Value of 0.01 which is less than 0.05 hence statistically significant. The study found that there existed a strong and positive correlation between conflict management role and virtual team project performance in Safaricom Company limited. Correlation coefficient of 0.463 and a 95% precision level was statistically significant since it had a P- Value of 0.03 which is less than 0.05. The study found that there existed a strong and positive correlation between communication role and virtual team project performance in Safaricom Company limited.

Regression Analysis

The study sought to establish the influence of transformational leadership styles on virtual team project performance in Safaricom Company limited.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Squared	Adjusted R Squared	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.79(a)	.624	.619	0.29

a Predictors: (Constant) Management role and Conflict management role

Dependent: Virtual Team Performance

The model column of multiple models was reduced to a single regression by SPSS command and with a model indicating 1 implied that the there was one linear model being used to determine the influence of transformational leadership styles on virtual team project performance in Safaricom Company limited.R is the square root of R-Squared. R is the correlation between the observed and predicted values of dependent variable. This implies that there was association of 0.79 between transformational leadership styles and virtual team project performance. R-Squared is the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable of virtual team performance that was explained by variations in the management role, conflict management role, communication role and coordinating role.

This implied that there was a variance of 62.4% between variables in general. However this does not reflect the extent to which any particular independent variables was associated with the virtual team performance. Adjusted R^2 is called the coefficient of determination which indicates how virtual team performance varies with variation in influence of management, conflict management, communication and coordinating roles. The study established that there existed a significance positive variation between transformational leadership roles and virtual team performance as r= 0.619, P=0.01 < 0.05.

Analysis of variance for the transformational leadership role on performance of virtual team

Table 8: ANOVA (b)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.642	8	.537	4.871	0.01(a)
	Residual	4.511	67	.049		
	Total	7.153	75			

a Predictors: (Constant) Management role and Conflict management role,

Dependent: Virtual Team Performance

The study established that there existed a significant goodness of fit between variable as F=4.871, P=0.01< 0.05. The calculated F=4.871 far exceeds the F-critical of 1.707.This implied there the level of variation between independence and dependent variable was significant at 95% confidence level.

Coefficients Estimate of the Variance

Table 9: Coefficients (a)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.000	.467		4.120	0.01
	Management role	3.838	.635	1.915	2.034	0.02
	Conflict management role	2.749	426	1.712	4.313	0.01

a Predictors: (Constant) Management role and Conflict management role,

Dependent: Virtual Team Performance

$Y = 7.000 + 3.838X_1 + 2.749X_2$

From the above regression model, it was found that virtual team project performance in Safaricom Company limited would be at 7.000 holding, management role, conflict management role, communication role and coordinating role constant at zero (0). The study established that there existed a significant positive relationship between managerial roles and virtual team performance as $r = 3.838$, $t = 2.034$, $P = 0.02 < 0.05$. Researcher had investigated the influence of conflict management role factors on virtual team performance; the evidence provided by the coefficients table shows that resolving and managing conflicts promote virtual team performance as $r = 2.749$, $t = 4.313$, $P = 0.03 < 0.05$. The study found that communication role had significant positive impact on virtual team performance in Safaricom Company limited as $r = 1.678$, $t = 2.906$, $P = 0.03 < 0.05$. The findings were in line with Chou, Lin, Chang and Chuang (2013) who carried out a study on transformational leadership and team performance the mediating roles of cognitive trust and collective efficacy. This study explored the relationships among transformational leadership style, cognitive trust and collective efficacy as well as the impact of these variables on distal team performance. To the interviewee's opinion on how team leaders influence team performance, the interviewees cited that team leaders responsibility involved obtaining, motivating, coordinating and monitoring the individuals under one's command. However, those leader responsibilities extend beyond the motivation and orchestration of collective action. Leaders are also responsible for training and developing the personnel resources under their command. This implies that create an environment oriented to trust, open communication, creative thinking, and cohesive team effort, provide the team with a vision of the project objectives and motivate and inspire team members. This is in line with

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) who found that team leaders often set meaningful objectives for their subordinates, establish mutual trust and commitments with them, enhance subordinates technical skills and provide other opportunities for subordinates.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The study established that virtual team leaders motivate team member to achieve project objectives to a very great extent. Project leaders shared project vision with the team members who motivate them influence strive to achieve their individual targets. Virtual The study established that team project performance was influence by virtual team leaders inspiring team members. The study revealed that team leaders shared mission with the team members, ensured that team member have the needed resources to perform their role, collaborated with team member to attain high project team performance and recognized effects of team members encouraging them to meet set objectives, influenced achieving of project objectives. The study revealed that there existed high level effectiveness of team leaders in solving conflicts among project team's members. This was evidenced by how the team leaders were effective in preventing unnecessary friction and conflict, unclear boundaries and unproductive competition. Team leaders solved misunderstanding among team members in order to achieve project team objective, they also engaged the group in openly discussing cultural differences and similarities to help develop communication norms. Once a misunderstanding was identified among team members, leaders clarified the issues arising.

Problem solving technique in solving conflict among team members was engaged to a very great extent. Teams solved problems and developed policy alternatives to meet the challenges of working place and established a close working relationship with the executive sponsor-the strategic decision maker empowering the team. Team leaders find solution to problem facing team members increasing team enthusiasm, appreciate of differing views from the team members fostering team cohesiveness, influence trust among members and respect the views of the team members, promote understanding ensuring harmony among team members and that the confidence of team members is raised by team leaders encouraging achievement of team performance. The study established that the team leaders were very effective in communicating to team members. Increased listening, prompt feedback and openness to suggestions within the team are necessary for effective performance. There was use of videoconference in communicating to team members. Team leaders provided prompt feedback encouraging team members to meet project team objective on time, empowered team members to achieve targets on times and increased listening to provide the correct direction in the team to achieve effective performance.

Effective leadership communication saved time and influenced completion of team project task within stipulated time, team leaders embraced open communication inspiring team members to attain quality outcomes, embraced e-mail, video and teleconferencing which improved team dynamics and also carried routine communication using electronic media saving project cost. The study established that leaders in the team ensured coordination function. The support of team leaders in coordination also raised the profile of an initiative and motivated team. There was a high level of coordination lender by leader in virtual team where leaders sought out opportunities to work with others incentivizing and recognizing staff involved in coordinated work. Team leaders ensured that resources and time are available for the team and managing external and political pressures so that coordination can occur. Leaders planned for individual team member activities to a very great extent. Respondents stated that most teams contain certain individuals who are primarily responsible for defining team goals and for developing and structuring the team to accomplish these missions.

CONCLUSIONS

Transformational leadership is crucial leaders are reliable to generate commitment from followers. Safaricom has the leader's ability to inspire, motivate and foster commitment which results to be important for the achievement of a long-term orientation and longer-term goals of the team. The study concluded that through the strength of transformational leader's vision and personality, virtual team members are inspired to change expectations, perceptions and motivations to work towards common goals. Conflict management role which involves a problem-solving orientation and a willingness to explore and work with the other person to find options that will be mutually acceptable and maximize joint gains is crucial virtual team performance. The study concluded that problem-solving teams leads to increased enthusiasm and confidence of team members, promoting understanding and appreciation of differing views and intellectually stimulating members to re-examine critical assumptions and to view problems in new ways. Communication in particular, reduces conflict in teams and improves team dynamics. It is concluded that team leader use of communication media such as videoconference and chat lead to more effective virtual team interactions in Safaricom public TelePresence and Safaricom Digital City projects in Safaricom Company Limited.

The performance requirements also have heightened the need for member coordination. Monitoring and coordinating activities are the most prominent responsibilities of virtual team leaders. Coordination role of team which involves obtaining, motivating, coordinating and monitoring the individuals under one's command leaders has a great influence on performance of the team in Safaricom. The team leaders have invested significant time and energy modeling

and supporting virtual team influence team performance. The study concluded that the transformational leadership impact positively on individual team performance when constantly monitor and coordinate member's efforts. Finally the study concluded that transformational leadership processes influence team effectiveness by their effects on four sets of team processes, cognitive, motivational, affective and coordination. That the success of the leader in defining team directions and organizing the team to maximize progress along such directions contributes significantly to team effectiveness. The availability of a flexible and configurable base infrastructure ensuring lateral communication is one of the main advantages of virtual teams and is adequate for effective virtual team performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Virtual teams need to understand much more so than co-located teams what goal they are working towards because they are working in such different areas. Performance of virtual teams is achieved by creating a state of shared understanding about goals and objectives, task requirements and interdependencies, roles and responsibilities. From the findings and the conclusion the study recommends for the adoption and implementation of transformation leadership where project team leaders will harness the performance of virtual teams by inspiring confidence, dealing with problems that befall face-to-face teams, increasing prompt communication as well as convincing and motivating team members. Project team leaders should have the potential to realize additional process gains and deliver high-quality solutions by bringing together diverse individuals with complementary knowledge without the limitations of physical, organizational or cultural boundaries. Competitive environment places a premium on the quality and speed of solutions, and technology is providing increasingly richer collaboration tools.

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