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Visionary Leadership Style and Performance of Construction Companies in Nakuru City

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Abstract: The main objective of the study was to assess the influence of visionary leadership on performance of construction companies in Nakuru City. The study was based on authentic leadership theory. The study used descriptive survey design. The study targeted employees and managers in category NCA 1 to category NCA5 in 30 construction companies. The sample size was 20 human resource staff, 40technical staff and 60 operational staff totalling to 100 respondents. The adopted stratified sampling technique. Data was collected using closed-ended questionnaires Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 25 was used for analysis. Descriptive as well as inferential statistics was used to examine the data. For inferential statistics, Pearson's Product Moment correlation and multiple regression models was employed to understand more about the relationships between the variables. Tables displayed the results of the analysis. This indicates that there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between visionary leadership style and performance of construction companies in Nakuru City, (r = 0.443; p < 0.0.05). The R-squared in this study was 0.770, which shows that visionary leadership style, can explain 77.0% of performance of construction companies in Nakuru City while other factors explain 23.0%. Visionary leadership style statistically influences performance of construction companies in Nakuru City.

Keywords: Authentic leadership , Construction , Visionary leadership style, Project performance

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Leadership diversity is essential in construction projects due to its potential to create a more inclusive and innovative work environment. It goes beyond superficial differences and recognizes that diverse teams can offer a broader range of skills, ideas, and experiences, (Cox, 2018). Such diversity often encompasses gender, ethnicity, age, cultural background, as well as diversity in experiences and skills. In a rapidly changing industry like construction, diverse leadership can provide a competitive edge, (Nielsen, 2019). A commitment to leadership diversity can make construction companies more attractive to potential employees. When diverse candidates see inclusive leadership, they are more likely to apply for positions within the organization, thus expanding the talent pool, (Holt, 2020). A diverse workforce can help companies tap into underutilized sources of talent, providing a competitive advantage in a tight labor market.

According to Berg and Karlsen (2019) there are several challenges that project leaders face in the course of implementing set projects. This includes but not limited to the type of leadership adopted by the leaders, socio-economic political environment prevailing at the time of project implementation and motivation level of the employees among others. This argument is echoed by Hauschild (2019) who opines that for a project to succeed, human related factors play a key role as opposed to technical factors. Further, Muchungu, (2019) also affirms the same arguing that the human component in project execution is key for project to produce intended results.

The elevation of Nakuru from a municipality to a city status has been characterised by a rapid increase in infrastructure development projects. Some of the projects include an upgrade of Lanet Army Barrack airstrip to an airport, improved roads and stadia, fire response infrastructure, Rironi-Mau Summit road, extension of SGR to Nakuru county, Mai Mahiu Inland Container Depot (ICD), ongoing rehabilitation of Nakuru-Kisumu Meter Gauge Railway line, State department of Housing and Urban Development affordable housing project, construction of a modern market and bus park and launch of a county revenue authority (Dundo, 2023).

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Leadership has been identified as one of the factors that contribute to construction organisation success. Effective leadership is essential in any company to achieve organizational goals and promote individual professional achievement. Construction companies in Nakuru City operate within a dynamic and competitive environment, where factors such as economic fluctuations, technological advancements, and evolving client expectations significantly influence their success. Leadership styles and approaches employed by construction company leaders play a pivotal role in navigating these challenges and driving organizational performance (Dundo, 2023).

Dlungwana & Rwelamila, (2018) have also strongly emphasized the importance of improving the management skills of contractors. Construction management capability can significantly contribute to the overall improvement of contractor's capability to deliver successful project. There are many realistic reasons such as closures, amendment of drawings and amendment of the design. In addition, there are other different reasons affecting Construction projects performance in Nakuru City such as poor management and leadership; inappropriate participants; poor relations and coordination; absence of motivation, control, monitor or decision-making systems; inadequate infrastructure, political problems; cultural problems and economic conditions (UNRWA, 2019).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The construction industry is a major contributor to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Kenyan economy and plays a leading role in determining economic growth. According to KNBS(2023) government approved expenditure on housing for 2022/23 increased to KSh19.0 billion from KSh 14.1 billion in 2021/22 while that of roads is expected to rose KSh 191.4 billion in the same period. Similarly in Nakuru city construction industry plays an integral part in shaping the city's past, present, and future. The elevation of Nakuru from a municipality to a city status has been characterised by a rapid increase in infrastructure development projects (Dundo, 2023). However, the performance of construction projects in Nakuru County is currently facing significant challenges related to the lack of leadership diversity. Despite the region's growing construction sector, the underrepresentation of diverse groups, including women and minorities, in leadership roles within the industry is impeding the success and growth of projects. According to data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2021), women make up a mere 16% of the total construction workforce in Kenya, with even lower representation in leadership roles. In Nakuru County, this disparity is equally pronounced, with few women holding key leadership positions, despite their potential to contribute innovative ideas and problem-solving skills.

Although the construction sector is an important sector it has its reasonable share of challenges such as poor-quality projects, poor governance, low productivity, lack of adequate collaboration, poor regulation, corruption, and cost and time overruns (Li, Greenwood, and Kassem, 2019). This challenges affect performance of projects in the sector and can be attributed to leadership. There is an increasing understanding that leadership is critical to project performance (Schmid, &Adams, 2018). Leadership have impact on project culture, project strategy, and project team commitment (Shore, 2019). Many projects continue to fail regardless of the developments in project management methodologies, leadership being a major (Ellemers, DeGilder, & Haslam, 2019).

Various studies have been done on the impact of leadership on projects. Study by Junwei Zheng (2017) in China on effects of different types of leadership on innovation performance in a construction project-based organization identified that leadership is essential for enacting and implementing innovative organizational strategy. The study was done in China. Kalambaya (2021) did a study to ascertain how leadership styles influence employee performance in construction firms in Cape Town. The results revealed that project managers' leadership styles affected performance of subordinate employees. The focus on transactional and transformational styles. A study done by Kiioh (2018) on leadership and performance of IT projects found out that the leadership competency required for successful project performance was lacking despite the huge investment and use of established project methods and techniques. The study were conducted in other countries and counties and not Nakuru. They also focused on other elements of performance and not leadership styles. Therefore, this study seeks to address this critical knowledge gap by examining the influence of leadership diversity approaches on the performance of construction companies in Nakuru City.

1.2 Specific Objective

The specific objective was:

i.To examine the influence of visionary leadership style on performance of construction companies in Nakuru City.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

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 H_{01} : Visionary leadership style has no statistically influence on the performance of construction companies in Nakuru City

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Authentic Leadership Theory

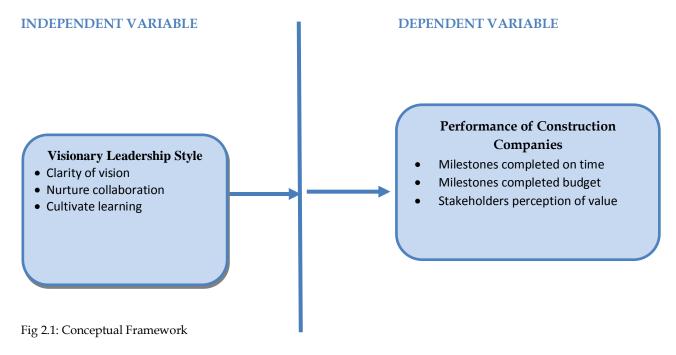
This theory, first introduced by scholars Bruce J. Avolio and William L. Gardner in the (2005), has gained prominence as a way to understand effective leadership in contemporary organizations (Walumbwa et al., 2008). This theory posits that authentic leaders are those who lead with sincerity and transparency, staying true to their personal values and beliefs while cultivating positive relationships with their followers (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Such leaders possess a deep understanding of themselves, acknowledging their strengths, weaknesses, and emotional landscapes, all of which guide their actions and decisions (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). They demonstrate a willingness to embrace diverse viewpoints and seek input from others, ensuring that decisions are not clouded by personal biases (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Authentic leaders prioritize ethical behaviour, acting in alignment with their moral principles even in the face of challenging choices (Avolio & Gardner, 2015). Their positive outlook, emotional intelligence, and resilience inspire and motivate others, fostering trust, loyalty, and commitment among their followers (Gardner et al., 2011). Furthermore, they serve as role models for ethical conduct, setting high standards and encouraging ethical behaviour within their organizations (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). In essence, Authentic leadership theory highlights the transformative power of leaders who remain true to themselves, ultimately creating environments where individuals are motivated, engaged, and empowered to contribute to organizational success (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

In this context, a visionary leader, guided by a clear and inspiring vision for the company's future, can embody the principles of authenticity and ethical conduct that Authentic leadership theory emphasizes. By staying true to their values and beliefs, such a leader not only inspires trust and commitment but also fosters an organizational culture built on transparency and integrity. Therefore, the influence of visionary leadership, when grounded in the principles of authentic leadership theory, can have a profound and positive impact on the performance and success of construction companies in Nakuru City.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework covers the main features of a study and their presumed relationship.



2.3 Review of Literature on Variables

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All stakeholders, from the lowest-ranking employee to the most senior executive, are involved in decision-making under visionary leadership. A participative leader demands that their team members address problems competently and with confidence. They are asked to contribute their ideas, points of view, and skills; each participant has the ability to vote or choose the path of action. Everyone's needs and desires are taken into consideration; no one person has the last say in the process. They argue that by functional corporation and working together a visionary leadership style has higher chances of performance. When there is visionary leaders, workers tend to pull together and at the end of the day, the results are better.

According to Foster (2020), a visionary or participative leadership style entails the leader delegating decision-making authority to group members while fostering the members' interests and upholding social equality. According to Probst (2021), people who participate in decision-making increase personal value in the organization and improve understanding and perception among co-workers and superiors. By empowering employees and prioritizing their requirements, the visionary approach can, thus, motivate superior employee task and extra-role performance (Conger & Kanungo, 2019).

2.4 Empirical review

In their study Okoro and Obi, (2020) conducted a study on the impact of visionary leadership on construction company performance in Nigeria The study included a sample size of 1,000 participants, consisting of 250 employees and 20 top-level executives from 20 construction companies in Nigeria. Data was collected through structured questionnaires for the survey, and interviews with key executives for the qualitative aspect. Data analysis involved regression analysis for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between visionary leadership and company performance. Visionary leaders were found to foster innovation and motivation among employees, contributing to better overall performance

Tan and Lim, (2019) did a study on the visionary leadership and construction company success in Singapore. The research employed a longitudinal case study design, analysing four construction companies in Singapore. Key executives and employees were interviewed, and data was collected through document analysis, financial records, and direct observations. Qualitative analysis was conducted on interview data, while financial and performance data were compared over the five-year period. The study found that visionary leaders in the selected companies played a crucial role in setting long-term strategic goals and fostering a culture of innovation, resulting in sustained growth and success.

Furthermore, Chinyemba and Ngulube (2018) did a study on the visionary leadership in construction companies in South Africa. A Comparative Analysis . The study compared construction companies in South Africa led by visionary leaders with those led by non-visionary leaders. It included a sample size of 20 companies (10 visionary and 10 non-visionary) with data collected through structured interviews, document analysis, and financial reports. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The study found that companies with visionary leaders outperformed their counterparts in terms of innovation, growth, and overall performance

III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Research design is defined as advance planning of methods to be adopted for collecting relevant data and the techniques to be used in their analysis, keeping in view the objective of the research and the availability of staff, time and money (Cooper & Schindler, 2019). The study used descriptive survey design. The researcher made observations of phenomenon under study without any manipulation but present the report as per observation.

3.2 Population

Asiamah (2017) opines that a study population includes all the subjects bound by the study observation as a collection of all subjects. This is supported by Cooper and Schindler (2019) who argues that a study population includes all that the study targets to draw information .The study targeted employees and managers in category NCA 1 to category NCA5 construction companies

3.3 Sampling Frame

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The unit of observation are the 30 construction companies .The unit of analysis are the 20 human resource staff ,40technical staff and 60 operational staff totalling to100 respondents drawn from the 30 registered construction companies in Nakuru City as captured in Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1: Sample Frame

Category	Number
Human resource Staff	20
Technical Staff	40
Operational Staff	60
Total	100

3.4 Sampling size and Sampling technique

The sample size refers to the proportion of The sample size was 100 respondents. The study used census sampling to target all the study population since the population of the sample is small. According to Tam (2020) a small population is better sampled wholesome as a study.'

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using closed-ended questionnaires. The questionnaire were used because of ease of data collection and cost effectiveness

3.5 Data analysis and presentation.

According to Peersman (2019) data analysis procedures includes the act of packaging the collected data into information, putting it in order and structuring its main components in a way that the findings can easily and effectively be communicated. Once the data was obtained from the field, quantitative data will be sorted, coded and entered into software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version and analysed both descriptively and through regression. This was done by tallying up responses, computing percentages of variations as well as describing and interpreting the data in line with the study objectives and assumptions depict variable characteristics. The study adopted following regression model specification;

 $Y = \beta 0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$

Where;

Y = Performance of Construction Companies

β0= Constant

 X_1 = Visionary Leadership Style

 β_1 is the regression coefficient

 ε = the estimated error of the regression model.

IV RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Responses	Frequency	Percentage	
Expected Responses	100	100	

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Received Responses	83	83
None Responses	17	17
Total	96	100

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

The study requested respondents to give opinions in regard to visionary leadership style on performance of construction companies in Nakuru City. The interpretation of the findings was made based on the mean and standard deviation.

4.2.1 Descriptive Analysis for Project Planning Practice

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the extent to which influence of visionary leadership style on performance of construction companies in Nakuru City. The findings are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2: Project Planning Practices

	N	SA	A	N	D	SD		
Statement		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	Mean	Std. Dev
The top leadership in my company communicates a clear and inspiring vision for the future.	83	(26)	(47)	(17)	(10)	(0)	3.887	0.907
The vision of the company is regularly reinforced and emphasized by our leadership	83	(37)	(45)	(13)	(5)	(0)	4.113	0.870
Collaboration is actively encouraged and rewarded in the company	83	55	42	3	0	0	4.516	0.565
The company's culture fosters an environment where employees work together effectively.	83	57	37	6	0	0	4.500	0.621
The company invests in training and development opportunities for employees	83	39	44	11	6	0	4.145	0.866
My company invests in training and development opportunities for employees	83	37	34	10	16	3	3.855	1.185

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According to the findings, majority of the respondents (73%) agreed that the top leadership in my company communicates a clear and inspiring vision for the future with a mean of 3.887 and the standard deviation of 0.907. The findings further indicated that majority of the respondents (82%) agreed that the vision of the company is regularly reinforced and emphasized by our leadership with a mean of 4.113 and the standard deviation of 0.870. In addition majority of the respondents (97%) agreed that collaboration is actively encouraged and rewarded in the company with a mean of 4.516 and the standard deviation 0.565. The study findings are in line with the findings of Mangote, (2018) who found that encouraging and rewarding collaboration within a company is essential for fostering a positive work environment, boosting productivity, and achieving long-term success. When collaboration is actively promoted and acknowledged, employees are more likely to work together, share knowledge, and collectively contribute to the organization's goals

The findings further indicated that majority of the respondents (94%) agreed that the company's culture fosters an environment where employees work together effectively with of mean 4.500 and the standard deviation of 0.621. In addition majority of the respondents (83%) agreed that the company invests in training and development opportunities for employees with a mean of 4.145 and the standard deviation of 0.866.

According to the findings majority of the respondents (71%) agreed the company invests in training and development opportunities for employees with a mean of 3.855 and a standard deviation of 1.185. The study finding are in line with those of Faruk (2022) who found that investing in training and development opportunities for employees is a strategic decision that can yield numerous benefits for a company.

4.3 Inferential Statistics Findings

Inferential statistics makes inferences and predictions about a population based on a sample of data taken from the population in question. The study used Pearson correlation analysis and regression analysis

4.3.1. Correlation Analysis

4.3.1.1 Visionary Leadership Style on Performance of Construction Companies

The study sought to establish the correlation between influence of visionary leadership style and performance of construction companies in Nakuru City. The findings are presented in Table 4.3

Table 4. 3: Visionary Leadership Style and Performance of Construction Companies

Variable		Project Performance	
Visionary Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	.443*	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	83	

^{*.} Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As indicated in Table 4.3, the study indicates that there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between visionary leadership style and performance of construction companies in Nakuru City, (r = 0.443; p < 0.05). The study agreed with those of Liao, (2019) who found a strong positive correlation between visionary leadership and the performance of construction companies. Construction firms led by visionary leaders demonstrated higher project success rates, increased profitability, and sustained growth The analysis of the findings, since p-value (p=0.000) is less than α value ($\alpha=0.05$), we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that planning influences farm forestry project performance.

4.4 Regression Analysis

4.4.1 Regression Model Summary

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The study conducted a regression analysis to find out the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables as shown in Table 4.4

Table 4. 4: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig. F Change
1	.878a	.770	.068	. 66461	.000

The R-squared in this study was 0.770, which shows that the four independent variables (visionary leadership style, affiliative leadership style, participative leadership style and coaching leadership style) can explain 77.0% of performance of construction companies in Nakuru City while other factors explain 23.0%.

4.4.2 Multiregression Analysis of Visionary Leadership

The study also conducted a regression analysis to establish the regression coefficients. Table 4.5 shows the results

Table 4. 5: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstan Coeffici	dardized ients	Standardized Coefficients		
		В	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0.38	.145		0.260	.798
	Visionary Leadership Style	.019	.098	.019	.189	.023

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Construction Companies

The study also conducted a regression analysis to establish the regression coefficients. Table 4.5 demonstrates distinct but related statistical results. Generally, the indicated results were in tandem with the following regression model.

$$Y = β0+ β1X1 +ε$$
.

$Y = 0.38 + 0.019X1 + \varepsilon$

Holding all the variables constant, a unit increase in visionary leadership style would lead to a 0.596 improvement in performance of construction companies in Nakuru.

From the findings the p-value was 0.023 which was less the 0.05 significant level. Therefore, based on the rule of significance, the study rejects the null hypothesis (H01) and concluded that visionary leadership style statistically influences performance of construction companies in Nakuru City

V. CONCLUSION

From the findings the study concluded that the company invests in training and development opportunities for employees. The study also concluded that there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between visionary leadership style and performance of construction companies in Nakuru City. The study agreed with those of Guo and Huang, (2019) who found a strong positive correlation between visionary leadership and the performance of construction companies. Construction firms led by visionary leaders demonstrated higher project success rates, increased profitability, and sustained growth.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

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The study recommended that Construction firms should prioritize leadership development programs that nurture visionary leadership skills among their executives and managers. The study recommended that construction companies should encourage leaders to communicate a clear and inspiring vision for the company's future to motivate employees and align their efforts with organizational goals

The researcher suggested that further studies should be conducted to investigate the barriers and enablers that construction companies in Nakuru City face when implementing diversity approaches in leadership roles. Identify strategies to overcome these barriers and maximize the benefits of diversity in leadership. Moreover, the researcher suggested that another study should examine the long-term impact of leadership diversity on the sustainability and resilience of construction firms in Nakuru City. Assess how diversity contributes to adaptability and competitiveness in a rapidly changing construction industry. Since the study was conducted in Nakuru City County, the researcher suggested that a similar study should be conducted in other counties like Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa City Counties for generalization of the study findings.

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