

# Leadership In Technical Vocational Training: An Analysis Of The Influence Of Leadership Commitment On The Competitiveness Of TVET Institutions In Kenya

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**Abstract-** TVET institutions have been recognized as key economic drivers in both developing and developed countries across the globe. The institutions have highly contributed to growth of industries especially the manufacturing sector through provision of the required skills. In Kenya, TVET institutions are yet to gain the required attention based on the fact that they are regarded as the last running point for academic failures. It is on this merit that the study sought to establish the influence of leadership commitment on competitiveness of TVET institutions in Kenya. Descriptive research design was used in the study and the target population was the 68 TVET institutions in Kenya. A census was employed whereby all the 68 institutions were included in the study. Principals/their representatives/ HoD ICT, R&D and Finance were the units of observation. The findings revealed that leadership commitment through strategic direction, employee involvement and proper decision making enhanced the competitiveness of TVET institutions in Kenya. The study recommended that the management of TVET institutions ought to embrace leadership commitment and ensure effective use of resources availed to steer the efficiency of their operations.

**Index Terms-** Leadership Commitment, TVET institutions Organizational Competitiveness

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern World, leadership stands to be one of the major enablers of organizational success both in performance and sustainability. Through a properly streamlined leadership framework and committed individuals, modern organizations have been able to turn around and become global leaders at a very short period of time (Lussier & Achua, 2017). McCleskey (2014) describes leadership as a wide area in any given organization hence it can be focused on in different aspects such as the commitment of those in leadership, their style of leadership, competency and approaches of a leader. In this paper, leadership commitment has been focused on. This is an aspect of strategic leadership where a strategic leader upholds commitment and willingness to go out of their way for the purpose of the organizational goals.

The capability to lead, guide and support generating ideas and promoting sustainable innovation behaviours is a common

denominator for committed leaders (Sosik et al., 2015). Leadership commitment is about increasing the opportunities for employees to take part in the development of activities, and strike a balance in order to make employees work on good ideas. Leadership commitment plays an essential role in directing employees' energy in the right direction and encouraging them to become more creative to do their job to the fullest. Leaders also need to focus on developing the innovation, creativity and risk-taking skills of the teams that work for innovation in organizations in order to have well-equipped teams to achieve successful innovation (Shuria, 2015).

Organizational competitiveness has been a subject of focus for many decades among scholars, practitioners and the general public. The main idea behind competitiveness has been the ability of an organization to stand-tall in the midst of competitors offering the same product in the same market. A competitive organization is able to capture the market and gain more market penetration than the competitors. Organizational competitiveness is not only tied to profit-making entities but also to public entities and non-profit organizations. TVET colleges mainly being public organizations ought to be competitive in order to enhance their impact to the society and steer their continued growth, development and sustainability.

Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) institutions in Kenya have recently been upheld as key economic drivers and societal game-changers by their virtual of providing the market with the right technical skills required in the major industries in the country such as the manufacturing industry and the construction industry (GOK, 2017; Mwangi, 2019). While TVET colleges were recognized by the Kenya's vision 2030 as the key economic pillars in terms of bridging the skills gap, the institutions have highly gained focus and major expansion after 2013 where there has been a surge in the number of the institutions across the country. This was after the government embraced a programme of having a vocational training college in every constituency and increasingly encouraged the youth to join the institutions (MOE, 2015).

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The main driver for the government to focus on TVET colleges was the need for equipping the citizens particularly the

youth with the appropriate technical (practical) skills that are directly absorbed into the market as opposed to managerial skills that do not directly translate to economic activity after school. This was the reason behind construction of TVET colleges across the country and continued awareness creation to have more youth enroll to technical courses. The goals of TVET education are however yet to be achieved as many TVET colleges across the country continue to record low numbers of intake with some having empty buildings with no learners. Other TVET institutions as reported by the Ministry of Education lack adequate personnel and teaching and learning materials thus affecting the effective flow of the learning process. It therefore raises a question on the ability of the management of the TVET colleges to play their role in enhancing the competitiveness of the institutions. This paper therefore sought to assess the influence of leadership commitment on the competitiveness of TVET Institutions in Kenya.

### Research Hypotheses

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Leadership commitment has no significant influence on competitiveness of TVET institutions in Kenya

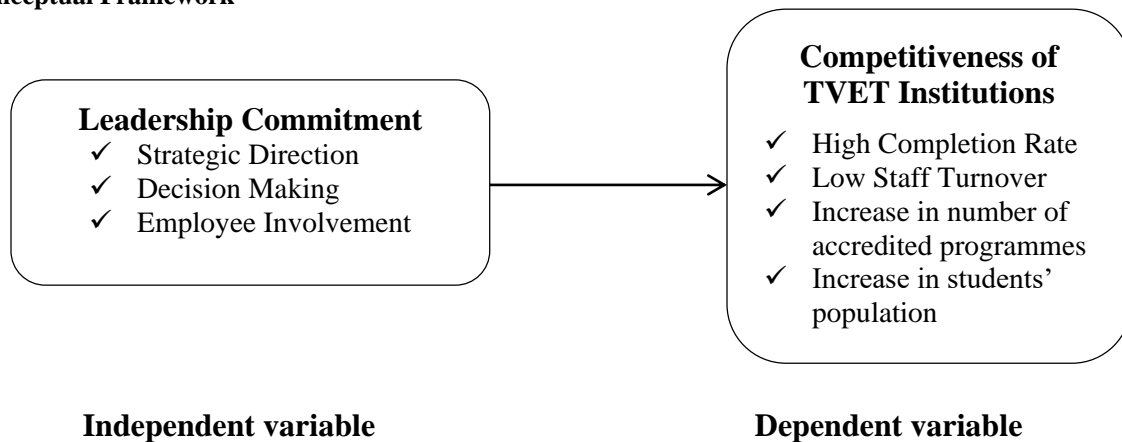
## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Foundation

#### 2.2.1 Contingency Theory of Leadership

Contingency theory of leadership was first publicized by Woodward (1958) but has since then received tremendous improvements and reviews that have seen it stand as one of the

### Conceptual Framework



### Empirical Literature

Gongbing, Zhou and Cai (2014) carried out a study on the impacts of top leadership competencies on organizational agility. The researchers aimed at establishing the role played by organizational leadership's ability to perform high range of managerial duties on the performance of state corporations in China. The scholars found that the managerial competency of an organizational leadership was determined by the skills and capabilities within the employees of the organizations and therefore defining operational competencies of an organization was best done by establishing the competencies of the employees. Their conclusion was based on their findings that leadership

major commonly known theories of leadership. The theory is an organizational management theory that has extensively focused on leadership in an organization and how managers can be global leaders with leadership capabilities in different business areas. The theory attempts to contemplate that the methods of leadership and tactics used to provide leadership by a certain leader depends on the contextual situation in which the leader experiences (Robbins, Judge, & Campbell, 2010).

The theory states that leadership traits and methods used in one sector or organization cannot necessarily fit to be used in another sector or organization or a time period. This is based on the changing factors such as technology advancements, market changes, environmental vitality as well as changes in size of the organization. In this perspective therefore, when a leader is dealing with a different organization from the one he or she was before, or need for changes in organizational management, the leader should embrace changes in the leadership strategies as well so as to accommodate and be able to cope with the new changes (Aver & Cadez, 2009).

According to Robbins *et al.* (2010), with changes in time, most organizations expand and others start using new operational methods with changes in technology and innovations as well. This therefore means that for a manager to ensure success of such an organization, he or she should adopt new methods of leadership as well and change the direction of management to enhance success of the organization. Therefore, TVET institutions require strategic leaders to align the institutions with global changes and for competitiveness by providing strategic direction, decision making and staff involvement.

competencies of an organization contributed to a great extent to the competitiveness of the organizations and performance as well (Gongbing, et al., 2014).

Ismail and Abidin (2010) carried out a study on the Impact of managers' commitment on their performance in the Malaysian private service sector. They found that managers' competencies influence the productivity of the private sectors to a great extent. They also established that through their skills, innovations were highly upheld in Malaysia. Years of schooling, training received when working and human capital influences the competency of a manager which is essential for organizational performance (Ismail and Abidin, 2010).

Locally, Rono and Bomet (2019) studied the influence of leadership strategy on strategic plan implementation in public Technical Training Institutions in Kenya. The authors established that leadership was a key driver to the implementation of strategic plans and the overall performance of the technical training institutes. According to Rono and Bomet (2019), through appropriate leadership strategies, the employees are more likely to feel part of the organization thus being focused towards implementing the organization’s strategic goals.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

##### Research Design

Descriptive research design was used in this study. It entails explanation of a phenomenon, estimating a proportion of a population with similar characteristics and ascertaining the relationship that occurs amid the variables under study (Myers, 2013; Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis, 2009).

##### Target Population and Sampling

The accredited TVET institutions in Kenya were targeted. According to Ministry of Education (MOE-2018), there were 68 registered operational TVET institutions in Kenya as of 2018. A census was used whereby all the 68 TVET institutions were selected while the principals, heads of finance department, heads of ICT and heads of R&D were purposively selected making the ample size to total to 272 respondents. The respondents were surveyed using a structured questionnaire.

##### Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data while the qualitative data was analysed through description and thematic analysis. Descriptive statistics

such as frequency distribution and measures of central tendency was used to analyse the demographic data. Testing of the hypothesis was done by calculating an F-Value using a two-way ANOVA.

#### V. FINDINGS

##### Leadership Commitment

The study sought to determine the influence of leadership commitment on the competitiveness of TVET institutions in Kenya. The main aspects of leadership focused on in the study included strategic direction, decision making, and employee involvement. According to Çetin, Karabay and Efe (2012), a committed leader shows the charisma, individual consideration, idealize influence, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation towards effective operation of the organization. The findings as shown in Table 1 revealed that majority of the respondents agreed with the statements on leadership commitment despite a significant number indicating that these aspects were not applied in their respective institutions. According to Rouleau and Giordano (2019), a leader who is keen to offer strategic direction to the followers (employees) ought to ensure that the vision and mission statements of the organizations are well communicated and set clear to all the employees. According to Dimitrios *et al.* (2013), leadership is about seeking support from the stakeholders and rallying them towards a common goal which is the key definition of inclusivity. Kitonga (2017) explains that leadership is a key aspect in an organizational performance but this is achieved through inclusivity and direction setting.

**Table 1: Descriptive Results on Leadership Commitment**

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
The institution has a clear, compelling and realistic map to the right destination	9.2%	18.3%	24.5%	21.8%	26.2%	3.37	1.29
There is a written mission and vision statements that clearly outlines who we are, what we do and for who	9.2%	14.4%	12.7%	36.7%	27.1%	3.58	1.27
The mission and Vision statement are regularly reviewed and if necessary revised	10.5%	10.9%	12.7%	37.6%	28.4%	3.62	1.28
There is robust and formal directional setting process (e.g strategic planning) that result in clear strategic direction	15.7%	12.7%	9.6%	31.9%	30.1%	3.48	1.43
Our decisions are inclusive, informed and bold at all level of the institution	5.7%	10.5%	21.4%	31.4%	31.0%	3.71	1.17
There are frequent consultative meetings with key stakeholders such as government officials, students, parents and staff	8.3%	13.1%	16.6%	33.6%	28.4%	3.60	1.25
Decisions are communicated among staff members, students and other key stakeholders	11.8%	17.0%	10.0%	28.8%	32.3%	3.52	1.39
The employees are involved and committed to the development and competitiveness of the institution	7.9%	13.5%	17.5%	32.8%	28.4%	3.60	1.24
Opinions of the employees are sought when making critical organizational decisions.	4.8%	12.7%	17.0%	39.7%	25.8%	3.69	1.12
There are effective communication channels to give feedback to the employees and exchange ideas with the management	3.9%	12.7%	13.1%	48.9%	21.4%	3.71	1.06

##### Competitiveness of the TVET Institutions

The study sought to establish the competitiveness of TVET colleges in Kenya and the major aspects of competitiveness used included the number of accredited courses, staff turnover, rates of completion and intake. According to UNESCO (2017), the success of technical training institutions is determined by their level and ability to compete with other higher learning institutions by attracting a reasonable number of students, offering variety courses and relevant to the market as well as instilling skills and competencies that can solve the modern-day problems. The findings as shown in Figure 2 revealed that the number of accredited courses across the TVET institutions increased

significantly from the year 2014 to 2018 while the number staff, graduated students, and admitted students had an insignificant trend which implies that the competitiveness was declining. According to Kyaw and Naing (2015), TVET colleges ought to come up with newer courses as frequently as possible as a show of enhanced innovation but they should not duplicate courses. Urdaneta (2017) indicates that the turnover rate in higher learning institutions especially the TVET colleges can be a major predictor of how things are as far as performance and competitiveness of these institutions is concerned.

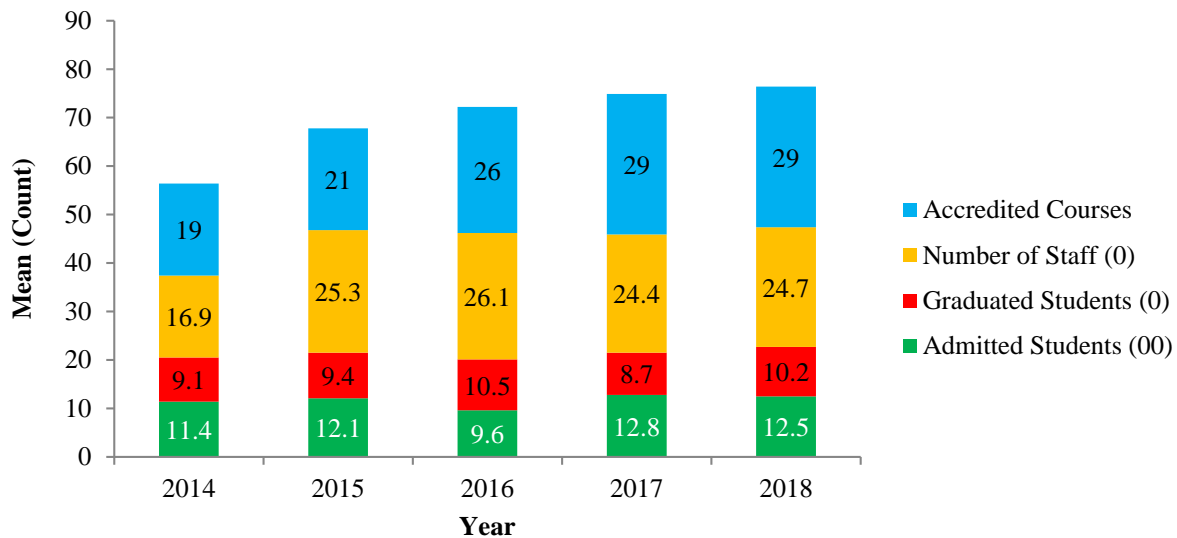


Figure 1: Competitiveness of TVET Institutions

**Hypothesis Testing**

The model results are as shown in Table 2. The model summary revealed that the R-square (R<sup>2</sup>) for the variable was 0.375. This implies that leadership commitment could explain up to 37.5% variation in the competitiveness of TVET institutions. The ANOVA results show the F-Statistic for the model was 136.342 at a significance level of 0.000. This implies that the model could significantly explain statistically the relationship between leadership commitment and the competitiveness of the TVET institutions in Kenya.

The regression coefficients results revealed that the Beta coefficient for leadership commitment is 0.542 at a significance

level of 0.000. This is an implication that leadership commitment has a significant and positive influence on the competitiveness of the TVET institutions in Kenya. The proposed model;  $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + e$ ; now become  $Y = 1.882 + 0.542X_1 + 0.046$ . This indicates that a unit change in leadership commitment would lead up to 54.2% increase in the competitiveness of TVET institutions in Kenya. To this end, the study therefore rejects the null hypothesis that leadership commitment has no significant influence on the competitiveness of TVET institutions in Kenya.

**Table 2: Inferential Results**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.613 <sup>a</sup>	.375	.372	.84202

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Commitment

**Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	96.666	1	96.666	136.342	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	160.943	227	.709		
	Total	257.609	228			

a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Commitment



**Regression Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	1.882	.176		10.671	.000
	Leadership	.542	.046	.613	11.677	.000
	Commitment					

a. Dependent Variable: Competitiveness

**VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Leaders in the TVET institutions were keen to establish strategic directions for the institutions while making the best use of employees through engagement and involvement in decision making processes. The institutions reaped from the outgoing nature of the leaders and ability to ensure that the mission, vision and core values of the institutions were upheld and reviewed to compel with the changes in the operating market.

It is recommended that the TVET institutions through the management embrace leadership commitment by ensuring that the leaders in whichever category draw a realistic and effective strategic direction for the organization. The TVET institutions ought to embrace effective involvement of the employees and other key stakeholders such as the community members in making critical decisions so as to reap support from the stakeholders.

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