THE EFFECT OF THE GROUP LEADER’S MOTIVATION SKILLS ON
PERFORMANCE OF THE GROUPS FUNDED BY WOMEN ENTERPRISE FUND IN
KIAMBU COUNTY IN KENYA

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Abstract

The Kenyan government has a lot of interest in the empowerment of women and youth as it believes that they will be the cornerstone of Kenya’s economic development. Therefore, the establishment of effective and efficient leadership skills among women group leaders in the Women Enterprise fund (WEF) is critical for the performance of these groups since leadership is considered a critical indicator of organizational and group success. This study therefore sought to establish the effect of the group leader’s motivation skills on performance of the women groups. The target population for group members was 53 women groups. The sample size used was 307 respondents. Simple random sampling was used. Primary data was used and questionnaires were used to collect data. The data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics 20.0.1. The inferential statistics involved the use of Pearson’s correlation and M logit. The results indicated that leader motivational skills have an influence on the Women Enterprise group’s performance. A leader’s ability to motivate others who are affecting his work will make him an effective leader and will bring positive change in an organization. The impact of leadership on motivation tends to be inferred by outcomes, particularly focusing on group or organization performance. The effect motivation has on the behaviour of employees is that it creates a focus on specific assignments, persons or topics that might be in question. Furthermore, it creates energy, effort and a determination which creates more persistence. It was established that log odds of a unit increase in motivational skills of the group multiplies
the odds of the women enterprise group’s performance bing high than being of average performance by 7.23 as indicated by the exponential beta results (Exp(B)= 7.23). The study concludes that good leader motivational skills could improve an organisation or group. It is recommended that Women Enterprise Fund should advocate for member involvement in order to motivate members which leads to more commitment and resourcefulness. It should encourage leadership styles that are participatory. WEF should also seek to sensitize leaders on the importance of member motivation through simple measures like use of praise. WEF should also sensitize leaders on the importance of the leader supporting members in group activities and establish strict measures and monitoring where group rules are strictly followed to discourage unequal treatment of members by leaders.

**Key words: motivation skills, performance, women groups**
INTRODUCTION

Background and research gap

Motivation plays a key role in employee job performance. If the employees are not satisfied with their jobs and not motivated to fulfil their tasks and achieve their goals, the organization cannot attain success (Dobre, 2013). Intrinsic motivation is an internal process that directs behaviour. Thus, the more individuals are intrinsically interested in the goals they pursue, the more they are likely to attain these goals (Re´em, 2011). According to Robison (2010), motivation is important because of its relation to performance. As a result, motivated employees become the greatest asset of any organization. Motivated employees feel less stress, enjoy their work, and as a result have better physical and mental health. Findings by Gilley, McMillan and Gilley (2009) also indicate that a leader’s ability to motivate others who are affecting his work will make him an effective leader and will bring positive change in an organization.

This thought is further supported by Khan and Ahmad (2012) and Qureshi (2009) who conclude in their research that if a leader has the ability to be an effective leader at lower level management, the leader must have the ability to motivate to get the work done because actual work is done at this level of management and these managers mostly interact with employees on a daily basis. The impact of leadership on motivation tends to be inferred by outcomes, particularly focusing on group or organization performance. The effect motivation has on the behaviour of employees is that it creates
a focus on specific assignments, persons or topics that might be in question. Furthermore it creates energy, effort and a determination which creates more persistence. Lastly, it affects the job in the sense that the employees will make plans for how the given job will succeed (Krogh, 2010).

Re´em (2011) study in Berlin on motivating public sector employees supports the view that motivation plays a key role in job performance. It refutes the common belief that public sector managers do not have means to stimulate their employees due to rigid civil-service laws. Managers have to internalize that employee performance, productivity and retention all depend on their ability to motivate. The study supports intrinsic motivation as it is an internal process that directs behaviour. Thus, the more individuals are intrinsically interested in the goals they pursue, the more they are likely to attain these goals. Intrinsic motivators include commitment, achievement, responsibility, growth (training), interesting work, important work, participation, fairness and work-life balance. Extrinsic motivators are rewarding, recognition, feedback, interpersonal relationships, growth (career advancement) and a working environment.

Dobre (2013) in Romania researched on ‘employee motivation and organizational performance’. The study emphasizes empowerment and recognition that increase employee motivation. If empowerment and recognition of employees is increased, their motivation to work will also improve, as well as their accomplishments and the organizational performance. Nevertheless, employee dissatisfaction caused by monotonous jobs and pressure from clients might weaken organizational performance.
Therefore, absenteeism rates may increase and employees might leave the organization to join competitors that offer better work conditions and higher incentives. The study emphasizes that if employees are not satisfied with their jobs and not motivated to fulfill their tasks and achieve their goals, the organization cannot attain success. Satisfied and motivated employees will contribute to enhanced organizational productivity which leads to better profits.

Cristini (2011) study in Italy entitled 'employees' motivation and high performance workplace practices' shows that employees can also be motivated through proper leadership. In order to achieve goals, the leader should gain the employees’ trust and make them follow him. Morris (2009) also did a study on employee work motivation and discretionary work effort and collected data from 12 organizations in the local government sector in Australia. Discretionary work effort is work effort that is voluntary, is above and beyond what is minimally required or normally expected to avoid reprimand or dismissal and is organizationally functional. It promotes organizational performance and effectiveness. The findings suggested 4 key non-monetary environment characteristics that are perceived as types of perks in the public sector which included intrinsically motivating job characteristics, co-worker support, leader support and organizational support. The irks were autocratic leader behaviour, workload pressures and resource constraints, co-worker shirking and excessive bureaucracy. These relate to employee level of discretionary work effort.

Hossain and Hossain (2012) study on factors affecting employee’s motivation in the fast food industry in the United Kingdom agrees that lack of motivation among employees
leads to poor performance and high employee turnover. This makes the attainment of goals of organization unrealistic and unachievable. The study identified six broad categories of motivation factors such as the work itself and environment, supervisor relations, company itself and matters, recognition, development and growth and finally pay and benefits. The study found that non-financial factors have a significantly higher impact on the employee's motivation than the financial factors. ‘The work itself and environment’ was identified as the factor that motivated employees highly.

Manzoor (2012) research paper in Pakistan on the impact of employees’ motivation on organizational effectiveness identified the factors that affect employee motivation and examined the relationship between organizational effectiveness and employee motivation. The study focused on the practice and observance of empowerment and employee recognition for enhancing employee motivation which leads to organizational effectiveness. The paper supports that motivation is purely and simply leadership behaviour and that empowerment and recognition have positive effect on employee motivation. Empowering is giving authority and liberating potential of employees. Also, the study supports that recognizing employees work increases their motivation to accomplish tasks and execute responsibilities towards them by the organization. However, autocratic leadership styles suppress innovativeness and motivation which has a direct negative effect on organizational performance, growth and effectiveness.

Kiruja and Mukulu (2013) conducted a study in Kenya on ‘the effect of motivation on employee performance in public middle level technical training institutions in Kenya.’ The study sought to establish the effect of motivation on employee performance in the
Public Middle Level Technical Training Institutions in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The sample size was 315 targeting administrators, heads of department, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. A structured questionnaire with Likert scale questions was used to collect data from the respondents. An interview was also conducted with the administrators and heads of department. The findings indicate that there is a direct relationship between motivation and employee performance. When motivation increases, employee performance increases and therefore motivation is an important predictor of employee performance in public middle level technical institutions in Kenya. The study agrees that employee performance in institutions results in a more motivated work force that has the drive for higher productivity, quality, quantity, commitment and drive. Analysis of variance test was used to establish whether there were statistically significant differences in motivation items between employees in different groups/job categories.

Were, Gakure, Kiraithe and Waititu (2012) did a study in Kenya on `influence of motivation on performance in the public security sector with a focus to the police force in Nairobi. The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of motivation on performance in the public security sector. The study used a mixed research design of exploratory, descriptive and quantitative designs. Data collected was analyzed using both the descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that there is a strong influence on performance of the regular police officers attributable to units of change in motivation. The study recommended that government and other concerned stakeholders should adequately motivate the police for improved performance/service delivery.
Research objective

To examine the effect of the group leaders’ motivation skills on performance of the women groups

METHODOLOGY

This study used explanatory research design because it explains or answers the question why something occurs. It identifies the cause and effect of a specific event or series of events. It is a cause and effect type of research (Nachmias and Nachmias, 2002). It attempts to uncover the relationships between the reasons for something and its chain effects. It typically seeks to identify a type of behavior occurring in a current market environment. It could be done through using questionnaires, group discussions, interviews; random sampling among other tools (Nachmias and Nachmias, 2002). The target population in the study are women groups funded by WEF from Kiambu County from six constituencies. The six constituencies have been selected based on their default rate as a measure for performance. Based on the Godden (2004) formula, the researcher selected a sample of 307 members from the target population of 1,525.

To get the sample size in every constituency, simple random sampling was used excluding the officials namely the chairlady, the secretary and the treasurer. Primary data was collected by using the questionnaire as the main research instrument. The statistical techniques of mlogit and correlation were used. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to effectively process the data collected. The
relationship in the research questions was determined using the following regression model. $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_2 X_1 + \mu$

Where $Y$, the dependent variable, is the performance of the women groups, $\beta$ is the regression coefficient, $\beta_0$ is the intercept- the value of $Y$ when $X$ values are zero and $X_1$, is the motivation skills.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The study sought to establish the effect of motivational skills on performance of women groups funded by Women Enterprise Fund in Kenya. The motivational skills included the leader involving members in group discussions, recognizing members’ efforts, supporting members in group activities and being fair on member’s welfare issues. Results indicate that few (47.02%) of the respondents agreed that involving members in group discussions by their group leader had an effect on achievement of group goals. However, majority (98.98%) of the respondents agreed that involving members in group discussions by their group leader had an effect on achievement of group goals. Most of them asserted that involving members in group discussions encourages members to give their ideas freely as the leader wants everyone to participate. Others indicated that it motivates the members to participate all the time and it discourages few members from controlling the meetings. The study established that few of leaders (48.40 %) involved them above 50% of the time while majority (51.60 %) involved them less than 50% of the time.
The study findings on a leader motivating members by involving them in group discussions concur with those of Belle (2007) in Mauritius. The study revealed that a participatory leadership style that involves members in group discussions may help build morale and encourage teamwork, collegiality as well as professional development and growth.

The results indicated that few of the respondents (48.1%) agreed that recognizing members' efforts by their leader had had an effect on participation in group activities. Majority (98.21%) of the respondents agreed that recognizing members' efforts would contribute to the achievement of goals. Most of them asserted that recognizing members' efforts makes members feel appreciated and want to do more, it leads to them being more committed to the group goals and it contributes to good relationships in the group. It was established that few of their leaders (47.64%) recognized members' efforts above 50% of the time. These findings are supported by Sturman and Ford (2011) who found out that non-financial rewards like recognition and praise reinforce employee behaviors that support and sustain an organization's mission. The results further indicated that few of the leaders (45.44%) supported members above 50% of the time. Majority (97.38%) of the respondents however agreed that supporting members in group activities would contribute to the achievement of goals. Most of the respondents asserted that supporting members in group activities makes the members happy as they feel they have not been left alone. The members also feel that their leader cares about what is happening in the group and the group continues to grow stronger as the morale of the members is lifted. In concurrence with the findings of Vadell and Ewing (2011) titled 'intrinsic motivation and servant leadership' in America, the scholar found
out that by creating an autonomy-supporting environment in the workplace, employees will be more likely to develop the type of intrinsic motivation necessary to become self-motivated servant leaders in their own time.

Lastly, it was established that few (46.3%) of the respondents indicated that the group leader was fair on member’s welfare issues above 50% of the time. Majority (98.8%) of the respondents however agreed that the leader’s fairness in group activities would contribute to low turnover of group members. Most of the respondents acknowledged that leader fairness makes the members see that all of them are being treated equally and so don’t leave the group. Others indicated that some of the members do not see like they are being discriminated so remain in the group while others were of the view that the members respect the leader more so they become more committed to the success of the group. These findings are also consistent with Sathye (2004) study that agrees that fair and efficient academic management involves practicing openness and transparency in workloads.

The correlation analysis results indicated that motivational skills and the performance of the women groups was positive and significantly related. The results indicate that they are positive ($r = .315$) and significant ($p=0.00$) which is less than the conventional (0.05) related though the relationship is found to be weak as the correlation coefficient is less than 0.7. This revealed that any positive change in motivational skills led to increased Women Enterprise groups’ performance.

Further, the multinominal regression results also indicated that the log odds of a unit increase in motivational skills of the group multiplies the odds of the Women Enterprise
group’s performance being high than being of average performance by 7.23 as indicated by the exponential beta results (Exp(B) = 7.23).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that good motivational skills could improve an organisation or group. It is worth noting that motivating is the work which managers perform to inspire, encourage and impel people to take action.

Firstly, the results of this study concluded that majority of the leaders do not involve members adequately in group discussions. However, the results of this study concluded that involving members in group discussions by the group leader has an effect on achievement of group goals. WEF should advocate for member involvement in order to motivate members which leads to more commitment and resourcefulness. It should encourage leadership styles that are participatory.

Secondly, it can be concluded from the results of this study that few of the leaders recognized members’ efforts in the group. However, the results of this study also concluded that recognizing members in group activities had an effect on participation in group activities. Recognition is a non-financial reward that leads to follower engagement and productivity. Therefore, WEF should seek to sensitize leaders on the importance of member motivation by the leader through simple measures like use of praise.
Thirdly, it can be concluded from this study that WEF should pay attention to the issue of the leader supporting members in group activities since only few leaders supported members' efforts. The fund should focus on this skill in leaders as it has a bearing on achievement of group goals.

Lastly, it can be concluded from this study that the leader's fairness in group activities can contribute to low turnover of group members. The results of this study concluded that leader fairness was low in most groups. WEF should establish strict measures and monitoring where group rules are strictly followed to discourage unequal treatment of members by leaders.

It can therefore be concluded from this study that there exists a positive and significant relationship between group leaders' motivation skills and performance of the women groups.
REFERENCES


