EFFECTS OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION ON STAFF PRODUCTIVITY IN LOCAL MEDIUM-SIZED COMMERCIAL BANKS IN KENYA

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university or institution of higher learning.

Signed: _______________________________________ Date: ___________________

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The thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Signed: _______________________________________ Date: ___________________

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my beloved wife Caroline Eunice and our son Adriel Kimani for their enormous support in my two years' journey in pursuit of this noble accomplishment.

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ABSTRACT

Leadership communication is requisite for staff productivity. The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of leadership communication on staff productivity in three medium-sized banks based in Nairobi, Kenya. The study sought to identify the forms and content of leadership communication and to determine its effects on staff productivity. To achieve this purpose, the study employed a descriptive research design, incorporating qualitative and quantitative techniques. The target population for this study are employees in medium-sized local commercial banks operating in Nairobi, Kenya. Out of the 86 respondents identified through proportional sampling technique to participate in the study, 60 successfully completed the data collection questionnaire administered, resulting in a 70% response rate. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to analyze data through Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) program version 24.0 (SPSS 22.0). The study findings established that emails, telephone calls, face-to-face conversations, one-on-one meetings and team meetings were the most common forms of leadership communication used. The findings also revealed that leaders in these banks issued content ranging from instructions, policy directives, supportive guidance, participative guidance, orders and commendations. Based on these findings, this study's conclusion is that leadership communication has effects on staff productivity in medium-sized banks; specifically, on general financial performance, company profitability, competitiveness in the industry, credibility, operations and efficiency. Leadership communication also impacts on staff retention and staff efficiency at work.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC -African Banking Corporation

CBK - Central Bank of Kenya

NBK - National Bank of Kenya

KBA - Kenya Bankers Association

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Leadership: the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal.

Central Bank of Kenya: a public institution established under Article 231 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 whose main purpose is to facilitate and regulate the banking industry.

Communication: transmission of meaning from one person to another, whether verbally or non-verbally.

Communication styles: broad ways adopted by people when communicating with others.

Leadership communication: controlled, purposeful transfer of meaning by which leaders influence a single person, a group, an organization or a community by using a full range of communication skills and resources to overcome interferences and to create and deliver messages that guide, direct, motivate, or inspire others to action.

Forms of leadership communication: means through which a message is transmitted such as verbal, nonverbal, written, formal, informal and visual ways of communicating.

Content of leadership communication: this refers to the subject matter of the information sent to staff from leaders for instance policies, directives or instructions.

Organizational performance: actual results of an organization, measured against intended objectives.

Medium-sized commercial bank: a bank that facilitates entrepreneurial fulfilment by giving small and medium-sized enterprises finances and advice. These banks have a market share of more than 25% and account for 26.31% of the total banking turnover in the country. These banks have a workforce of around 15,000 employees.

Staff motivation: level of energy, commitment, and creativity that a company's workers bring to their jobs.

Staff productivity: assessment of the efficiency of a worker or group of workers in relation to company expectations.

Trust-based organizations: this refers to organizations that promote and strengthen relationships that are based on trust. Banks are an example of trust-based organizations. These organizations establish such relationships through leadership communication among various stakeholders including the management, employees, and customers. Effective leadership communication boosts customer confidence by promoting trust.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter presents the background, states the problem and outlines the objectives, purpose, significance, scope, assumptions and the conceptual framework to the study on the effects of leadership communication on staff productivity in medium sized local commercial banks in Kenya.

Background of the Study

Leadership communication is an important component in the success and profitability of any business organization (Barrett, 2014). It refers to the practice through which leaders provide direction to the team and the means by which they coordinate staff. Therefore, communication is an essential leadership duty that also influences the overall success of an organization. In addition, as a key element for organizational success, leadership communication is particularly essential in business organizations such as commercial banks. Through communication, leaders in commercial banks influence productivity, whose performance is evident in shareholder value (Hancott, 2014).

Leadership communication refers to controlled, purposeful transfer of meaning by leaders in order to influence staff action. This involves use of a wide range of communication skills and resources to overcome interferences; in a manner that creates and delivers messages that guide, direct, motivate or inspire staff to be productive (Barrett, 2014). Shrestha, Parajuli & Paudel (2019) state that existing literature demonstrates that there is some link between leadership communication and staff productivity. However, no research has been conducted in our context to find out how leadership communication between the leaders of an organization and staff in trust-based organisations such as banks may affect staff productivity. This gap in research exists despite the observation by Hancott

(2014) that productivity by staff in commercial banks directly translates to good performance; which is assessed based on increase of net assets, decrease of nonperforming loans, gradual increase in liquidity, profit and income and subsequent increase in shareholder dividends. In summary, a bank's good performance is the soundness of its capital adequacy, asset quality, management quality, earnings and liquidity.

Leadership communication comprises of the message, also referred to as content; and the form or means of passing the message (Barrett, 2014). The content can be a directive, an instruction or an appraisal. In their mandate to coordinate staff and provide direction to the team, leaders have a responsibility to ensure that appropriate content and suitable forms of communication are applied (Barrett, 2014). Communication is therefore a key responsibility for any leader since it is assumed to have a direct effect on staff productivity.

Njuguna (2005) states that communication is the life-blood of an organization. It is the premise upon which individuals within an organization understand their roles and work toward achieving wider organizational goals and objectives. The communication is either internal – between the members of an organization, or external – between the members of an organization and the outside world (Njuguna, 2005). According to Argenti (2016) the communication is categorised as downward, upward, or horizontal depending on the flow of the information within the organization. Communication is also categorised as formal or informal. The leaders adopt broad ways of communicating with other stakeholders to promote the achievement of organizational goals. Leaders use these different communication styles and employ different forms or means to pass a message of varying content within the organization (Barrett, 2014).

Akinyi (2019) also notes that different communication styles are employed by organizational leaders as part of internal communication strategies. Internal communication is primarily the flow of information among individuals within the organization, that is, internal stakeholders like the management, supervisors, and employees. Through different communication styles, internal communication in an organization involves the use of formal properly managed channels and informal communication. Communication styles are basically the means utilized to improve end-to-end flow of communication or interactions. Of interest to this study, therefore, is the downward formal communication from leaders to other members of medium-sized local commercial banks.

According to the Central Bank of Kenya 2017 Annual Report, there are 40 commercial banks in Kenya. Of these, eleven are medium sized; with five of these being establishments of international investors and seven by local entrepreneurs. Local medium sized banks are registered in Kenya as financial institutions under the Kenyan law, while the international banks operate as foreign investors. The ranking of banks as large, medium or small size is determined by the market-share the bank has in the industry (Central Bank of Kenya, 2017). In Kenya, medium-sized banks have a market share of between 1% and 5%. In the 2017 financial year, medium-sized local commercial banks had a cumulative market share of 26.1% (Central Bank of Kenya, 2017).

The history of commercial banks in Kenya is linked to that of the Central Bank of Kenya; which was established by an Act of Parliament on March 24, 1966 (Central Bank of Kenya, 2017). The mandate of the Central Bank of Kenya is to formulate and implement monetary policies, promote price stability and regulate the banking sector. All local medium sized banks are therefore, ranked and facilitated to conduct business within the provisions of the Kenyan banking laws and are regulated by the Central Bank of Kenya (Central Bank of Kenya, 2017). The seven-medium sized local commercial banks in Kenya are the National Bank of Kenya, African Banking Corporation, Family Bank Limited, Diamond Trust Bank, Imperial Bank Kenya, NCBA Bank of Kenya, and Prime Bank

(Central Bank of Kenya, 2017). To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher conducted an empirical investigation to identify the correlation between leadership communication and staff productivity in three of these seven medium-sized local commercial banks based in Kenya namely National Bank of Kenya, Family Bank Limited and African Banking Corporation.

Statement of the Problem

Leadership communication is a key element in any organization especially so for trust-based organizations such as banks. With complexities presented by organisational context and culture, leaders are faced with the challenge of effectively communicating in order to promote and inspire staff productivity. Taking into account that local medium sized commercial banks have over 25% of Kenya's market share, it is worth noting that they present significant opportunities for economic development (Central Bank of Kenya, 2017). In view of the role of leadership communication in staff productivity and the related profitability among other factors, it is important to establish its effects on the performance of the local medium-sized commercial banks.

This study therefore set out to establish how effective leadership communication in local medium-sized banks in Kenya is in terms of improving staff productivity. Focus is on the communication between the management and the employees. The assumption is that leadership communication in these medium-sized banks should enhance employee behaviour in the banking system as well as improve management of facilities that are core in banking services. The staff productivity should in turn contribute to improved organizational effectiveness. While the link between leadership communication and staff productivity is established in existing literature, there is no literature on the effect of leadership communication in Kenya's banking industry and its effect on employee productivity. What literature is available is on the leadership styles in the banking industry.

According to Akinyi (2019), organizational leaders in Kenya banks are increasingly utilizing different communication styles as part of robust internal communication strategies. Commercial banks across the country have adopted robust internal communication strategies in efforts to enhance their competitiveness in the ever-changing banking sector. Odhiambo, Ouko and Muhoho (2020) suggest that the adoption of different communication styles and establishment of robust internal communication in banks is attributable to the role of communication as a driver of project performance in Kenyan commercial banks. However, there is limited literature on the nature of internal communication in these banks, the applications of the communication, and the impact of leadership communication on staff productivity. Muchiri and Hazel (2017) contend that existing studies on employee productivity in commercial banks in Kenya focus on the impact of leadership styles and not on the communication. Most of the existing literature primarily focuses on the impact of leadership styles on employee productivity in commercial banks in Kenya. This implies that the impact of leadership communication on staff productivity in Kenyan banks remains under-studied and relatively unknown. This is the niche this study set out to fill.

Existing literature also indicates that commercial banks in Kenya are yet to embrace the fact that leadership communication is an essential tool in their management functions and firm performance. This is a pointer to limited knowledge regarding the effects of leadership communication on staff productivity in Kenya’s commercial banks hence this study, which investigates how the local commercial banks in Kenya utilize leadership communication.

Lack of a study on this subject compounded by the scanty information on leadership communication in banks is an indication that there may be unexplored opportunities yet to be harnessed. Investigating the impact of leadership communication on staff productivity could thus yield positive findings that lead to increased productivity, which is a critical factor in the growth of any financial institution. To the contrary, lack of awareness of the effectiveness of leadership communication can also have negative impacts which can result in loss of value capital and impede the growth possibility for local medium-sized commercial banks. Lack of information on how these effects play out on staff productivity in medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya is therefore undesirable hence the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to determine the effect of leadership communication on staff productivity in medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study were:

i. To identify the effect of forms of leadership communication on staff productivity in medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya.

ii. To determine the effect of the content of leadership communication on staff productivity in local medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya.

iii. To determine the impact of leadership communication styles on staff productivity in local medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya.

Research Questions

i. What is the effect of forms of leadership communication on staff productivity in local medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya?

ii. What is the effect of the content of leadership communication on staff productivity in local medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya?

iii. What are the effects of leadership communication styles on staff productivity in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya?

Assumptions of the Study

This study assumed the existence of leadership communication forms, content and styles in medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya and that the staff in these banks understand the various forms, content and styles to a level they can successfully participate in the study. It was also assumed that the staff at the banks are organized into various cadres and across the branch network; and that leadership communication forms, content and styles potentially have effects on their productivity. The study assumed that employees in these bank understand that leadership communication styles have impacts on their levels of productivity. It was assumed that the participants' responses to questionnaire items were accurate descriptions of their experiences of the issue under investigation.

Justification of the Study

According to O'Rourke (2010), the efficiency and effectiveness of leadership depend on the proficiency of communication between the various internal and external parties. This implies that there is potentially a relationship between leadership communication and the significant growth experienced by commercial banks both locally and internationally; which creates a need for more information on the subject particularly by leaders of indigenous banks. The rationale for this study was that with updated and researched information on the effects of leadership communication on staff productivity, leaders in banks can be in a position to optimize opportunities available in using communication to boost their performance. On the other hand, leaders would also have an opportunity to determine forms and content of the communication that result in efficient delivery of messages to staff to enable them adopt practices that lead to increased productivity. In summary this study was intended to positively influence the performance in banks in relation to organizational leadership, organizational communication, and organizational commitment.

Significance of the Study

A study on leadership communication is significant to leaders in any organization as this provides for the flow of crucial information necessary for an organisation's growth and success (Dahiya, 2015). It is therefore expected that the findings of the study may be beneficial to the boards, management and staff in medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya. The findings can also be a reference resource in formulating communication policies and guidelines for teams in financial institutions. In addition, stakeholders of medium-sized banks such as the Central Bank of Kenya, Kenya Bankers Association and the National Treasury may use the findings of this study as a resource in formulating leadership communication models for the banking industry. This study is a source of new knowledge to the academia on the subject of leadership communication particularly in the banking sector. The findings also lay a basis for further research in leadership communication as this relates to staff productivity in banks and other financial institutions in general. The study's findings could also help improve organizational leadership, organizational communication, and organizational commitment in banks. Improvements in these key areas will help enhance the performance of banks since improved leadership, commitment, and communication has been proved to enhance workplace productivity.

Scope of Study

The study was limited to three local medium-sized banks in Kenya: National Bank of Kenya, Family Bank Limited and African Banking Corporation. The study was limited to these three banks because of the researcher's interest in staff productivity and the intuition that it is driven by communication, having worked in the banking industry for some years. The focus on three banks was also determined by time and resource-limitations. In addition, these three banks were selected because of the researcher's ease in identifying employees to include in the study. The researcher has contacts in his professional network who helped him access the three banks for the identification of the study sample. The respondents were randomly sampled from each of the banks in the following ranks: senior level leadership, middle-level leadership, operational level leadership and the operational level employees.

Limitations of the Study

A major limitation to the study was the inability of the researcher to engage all staff in the local medium-sized commercial banks as respondents. To address this limitation, the researcher employed sampling technique on the various cadres of staff so as to generate a representative sample. In addition, this study was limited by the sensitive nature of data, whereby potentially, the respondents were at risk of victimization if their leaders disagreed with their responses. To mitigate this limitation, the researcher required anonymity from the participants as a means of upholding confidentiality and to protect their identity.

Chapter Summary

Chapter One presents the background information to the study, the problem statement in detail and outlines the research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, the importance of the study and the limitations of the study. Chapter Two presents a review of literature on leadership communication and staff productivity.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature on leadership communication and staff productivity as a contextual background to this study. The literature review is based on various literal works on the subject of leadership communication in organizations, forms of communication, communication content and staff productivity in relation to leadership communication. Chapter Two also explains the theoretical framework, presents the conceptual framework and shows the relationship between the research variables.

Leadership in Organizations

Leadership in an organisation is critical to its success. According to Cavazotte et al. (2012), most organizations adopt a transformational leadership style to obtain higher employee motivation, confidence and commitment. Transformational leadership is attained through the leaders' ability to inspire the followers for change. Among other factors, transformational leadership is primarily built though leadership communication. Foster and Roche (2014), underscore this understanding by stating that scholars have the opinion that transformational leadership promotes superior organizational performance.

Abasilim (2014) explains that, for an organization to be successful, there is dependence on an employee's obligation, job contentment and performance in terms of achieving the organization's goals, customer approval and maximization of proceeds. In the current global business environment, organizations increasingly face challenges of effective leadership. ElKordy (2013) observes that there is a necessity for competitive and dynamic business environments. This requires an increased focus on leadership and leadership communication as a critical organizational element as we have done in this study.

Globally, commercial banks are led on stringent regulatory laws (Elena, 2015). They also have to overcome the constantly changing socio-economic factors ranging from natural calamities, globalization, economic depression, war, climate change, disease, technology among others. Raluca-Elena (2015) states that increased competition in the banking sector has resulted in heavy follow-on through new regulatory structures. In addition, international integrations and changes in client demands have prompted the use of leadership that encourages adapting to these changes. Locally, Mazer and Rowan (2016) indicate that Kenya's financial services sector has changed significantly. These changes have been fuelled by various factors especially the growth of the mobile financial services, which has partly enhanced competition between banks.

Specifically, local medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya face serious competition from foreign banks and other financial institutions (Hancott, 2014). The medium-sized banks compete for market share with the large banks, small banks, microfinances, table banking and mobile banking. According to Muriithi and Louw (2017), the Kenyan banking industry has experienced major financial upheavals in recent decades. Medium-sized banks across the country have been mostly affected by these upheavals given their relatively smaller economies of scale in comparison to large commercial banks. Some of the challenges associated with the financial upheavals affecting these medium-sized banks include non-performing loans, poor governance, poor leadership, and weak internal control mechanisms. As a result of these financial upheavals, some medium-sized banks in the country have collapsed while others have been in and out of receivership (Muriithi & Louw, 2017). To survive, the leaders of these banks have a duty to manage their teams and resources for growth and profitability (Hancott, 2014). This is so because, despite the obstacles the medium-sized banks face; there are numerous opportunities for banking locally and regionally owing to political stability, a developing economy and a trained workforce in Kenya. One factor that could spur this growth is leadership communication. To this end therefore, leadership communication is of paramount importance.

Leadership Communication

Leadership communication is a comparatively innovative idea that has been acknowledged as an educational field integrated into the program of business schools (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). Leadership communication studies imply that in an organization, there is more than just the aptitude of the leader to be a good communicator and to have good interpersonal communication skills (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008; Barret, 2014; Luthre & Dahiya, 2015). Leadership communication expands skills from core strategy development, effective writing and eloquent speaking to the use of these skills in more complex organizational situations such as encouraging productivity (Barret, 2014).

The need for good communication between leaders and staff is of great importance towards achieving positive results. This means that communication is one key aspect any leader at any organisation, including a bank, has to get right. Hamilton (2011), states that communication is the process of transferring ideas from one person to the other. Communication is the progression of exchanging information between two or more people through various forms or means whether verbal or non-verbal. In as much as the verbal communication is preferred, non-verbal communication is equally effective in most organizations as it takes into account actions which people can respond to more efficiently (Tims, Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2011). The leadership content or message necessitates minimizing of all interruptions and interferences by understanding the receivers and developing a communication strategy that facilitates effective transmission of messages (Barrett, 2014).

The types of communication include horizontal communication where information flows between people in the same level in an organization; downward communication where information moves from the top to the bottom, that is from the leadership to the workforce; and upward communication where information flows from the lower cadre staff to their superiors (Argenti, 2016). Leadership communication, which is the focus of this study, is thus by definition a downward communication type. This communication type uses a full range of communication skills and resources to overcome intrusion while creating and delivering messages that instantly inspire workers to action (Barrett, 2014).

Forms of Leadership Communication

Leadership communication, as an art of inspiring through a methodical and significant allocation of information using outstanding communication skills, takes different forms that begin by developing a plan, writing accurately and speaking efficiently to manage situations (Luthre & Dahiya, 2015). According to Arsovski and Nikevic (2016) leadership communication is attained through a full range of communication skills and resources by creating and delivering messages that are easily understood, motivating and that stir the recipients to action. In order to prevent miscommunication, it is therefore important to effectively and clearly pass on instructions to employees as well as get feedback on what is to be done.

Leadership communication within an organization as Barrett (2014) explains, is bound to face interruptions in the broadcast of the message. To mitigate this Barrett (2014) recommends that a leader need to appreciate the context, recognize the audience, select the right medium and craft messages the intended recipients identify with and react to. Leadership communication is, therefore, complex in that it involves more than the exchange of information through various forms. Leaders have the onus to know the context, analyse the system and discern the purpose of the organization in order to give a team the autonomy and support it needs (Lumsden, 2010). This means that in addition to having content for a message, the leader has to determine the most appropriate form of communicating that message in order to attain the desired results.

According to Omukule (2009), Kenyan banks are increasingly adopting different communication channels due to the convergence between telecommunication and ICT. The convergence of these communication strategies has contributed to the development and use of the various forms of communication for improved organizational performance and productivity. Of the forms of communication available for use by leaders, the ones that dominate internal communication across sectors include telephone, fax, letter, memo, email, social media posts, face-to-face conversation, one on one meeting, team meetings, facial expression, hand gestures and body posture (Lumsden, 2010). These forms of communication are therefore featured in this study since they are the most commonly employed for interactions in organizations and the intention was to find out if this also applies to the medium-sized local commercial banks in Kenya.

Akinyi (2019) additionally contends that various forms of communication are employed in banks and that banks also formulate internal communication strategies. As part of the internal communication strategies, the various forms of communication play a critical role in the establishment of proper internal communication structures. Through a proper communication strategy, a bank or financial institution enhances its competitive advantage resulting in better positioning in the finance sector. In addition, the various forms of communication are critical in promoting cross-functional communication in banks. For instance, face to face conversation is a form of communication that is carried out in the presence of both parties whereas one-on-one involves direct communication that could be carried out when the parties are not physically present (Akinyi, 2019).

According to Omukule (2009), leadership communication in local commercial banks in Kenya increasingly use information communication technologies (ICT) tools. ICT tools continue to dominate organizational communication including leadership communication in banking institutions across the country. Based on the case study of Equity Bank, computer mediated communication channels like emails and the Intranet dominate leadership communication in banks. These computer-mediated communication channels are dominant in leadership communication in banks since they enable one-way and two-way communication flow with ease. Kenyan banks are also leveraging ICT tools to facilitate employee communication even when they are not physically in the office or in the workplace. Kamau (2015) opines that the significance of ICT tools in leadership communication in banks is linked to their role in transforming banking services and the financial services sector. As ICT tools are adopted to enhance business processes in banks, they are increasingly employed in leadership communication strategies and framework. Therefore, ICT tools are not only used for product development and improved service delivery, but they are also used for leadership communication.

In concurrence, Nduku, Mwenda and Wachira (2015) state that social networking communication channels have been found to improve employee performance. Social media offers a platform for sustained communication between employees and management as well as employee-to-employee communication. Nduku, Mwenda and Wachira (2015) further contend that online meetings like video conferencing are new forms of communication that have been found to increase efficiency and performance.

Akinyi (2019) provides a different perspective of forms or leadership communication employed in large Kenyan commercial banks by arguing that these financial services institutions adopt internal communication strategies. These internal communication strategies that target staff productivity and organizational performance include education and training, quality standards and reward systems, and internal customer image. These forms of internal communication employed by bank leaders in Kenya have been found to increase external client base and loyalty since the key internal stakeholder has been taken care of. This study thus focused on the medium-sized banks seeking to establish whether the effect of the leadership communication using these forms of communication also leads to staff productivity.

Existing literature provides empirical evidence on the impact of the various forms of communication on employee productivity in banks. According to Akinyi (2019), social media represents a new form of communication in the Kenyan banking industry and it is a modern communication technology. Social media has been found to enhance employee productivity in the Kenyan banking sector as it improves the communication process. Through social media, organizational leaders can easily and conveniently connect with their employees resulting in improved productivity (Nduku, Mwenda & Wachira, 2015). Written forms of communication such as letters, memo, emails, and fax are used for formal communication though fax is regarded as an outdated means of communication. Muriungi (2012) notes that these written forms of communication are used for formal communication and pass information to employees, customers, or other stakeholders. In a study on the effectiveness of communication based on the case of KCB, Muriungi (2012) found that letters, emails, and memo are used to pass information to employees in banks. They are used to communicate personalized information that is easy to understand. However, emails are the most commonly used forms of communication though they are not associated with instant response or feedback. It is estimated that nearly 87.6% of leadership communication in Kenyan banks is a carried out through emails (Muriungi, 2012).

Akinyi (2019)) suggests that face to face, one-on-one, and interdepartmental team meetings are also commonly employed in Kenyan banks or financial institutions. This researcher contends that these forms of communication are used between departments and help in generating timely response to the issues being discussed. They are commonly used by banks across the country since they help to pass information and receive feedback in a professional manner and without delay. In addition, these forms of communication are employed by banks to establish service standards, which in turn become the premise for employee activity and work processes. In essence, face to face conversation, one-on-one, and interdepartmental team meetings are mostly used to establish performance standards and communication relevant information regarding to work processes. In some cases, these forms of communication are used for staff training to help them meet the established performance standards.

Gikonyo (2005) notes that letters, emails, and meetings are important form of communication for an organization regardless of its size. Letters and emails serve an important function in internal communication as they offer organizational leaders the opportunity to communicate to employees. As forms of written communication, letters and emails are direct and individualized communication tools that promote accuracy of information in leadership communication. On the other hand, meetings serve the purpose of bringing an organization’s workforce together and offer opportunities for them to speak and listen. Fridah (2011) suggests that managers traditionally spend a lot of time using various forms of communication such as face-to-face discussions, letters, memos, meetings, emails, and reports. However, recent technological advancements have provided ways for organizational leaders to integrate modern communication technologies into the conventional forms of communication.

Facial expressions, body language, and gestures are some of the forms of non-verbal communication, which constitutes75% of all communication (Rubler, 2017). As non-verbal communication forms, face expressions, gestures, and body language contribute to the information people send when communicating. Therefore, these forms of communication are as important as verbal communication, particularly in workplace relationships (Rubler, 2017). Gacheri (2012) notes that non-verbal communication should be utilized to support verbal and written communication as part of efforts to enhance constructive communication in the workplace. When non-verbal communication is used for constructive communication, it actively supports oral communication and reinforces the message. In such situations, non-verbal communication forms like face to face, one-on-one, and gestures help to enhance organizational commitment among employees resulting in improved workplace productivity (Gacheri, 2012).

Mutuku and Mathooko (2014) note that non-verbal communication influences employee productivity in the workplace by affecting employee motivation. They argue that for enhanced employee motivation that results in better productivity, non-verbal communication should be used to reinforce oral communication. Proper communication channels through which non-verbal communication reinforces oral messages contribute to shared vision, openness, goals, and trust within the organization. Mutuku and Mathooko (2014) further contend that when non-verbal communication reinforces verbal communication, higher levels of employee morale and motivation are realized resulting in improved productivity. Additionally, employees are more motivated if communication channels in the workplace are open and consistent in terms of the messages they communicate.

Content of Leadership Communication

Content of leadership communication refers to the message transmitted, which is categorised based on the nature of the message (Deloitte, 2015). The categories include orders, directives, instructions, policy directives, commendations and reprimands. Orders refer to non-negotiable information given by the leader on what is expected. Directives may be on how to carry out duty, what to accomplish or the plan to be followed. Instructions refer to guidelines on what to do, while policy directives refer to shared standards to be followed. Commendations and reprimands are leaders' responses to the behaviour or results of actions by a staff. Akinyi (2019) also explains that policy refers to the overall intention or guidelines for carrying out work processes whereas orders are detailed guidelines of what to do. On the other hand, instructions are specific steps on work processes.

In addition, Deloitte (2015) indicates that the leadership communication content can be supportive guidance and participative guidance. In supportive communication, a leader addresses the social-emotional needs especially where duties and relationships are demanding or where a staff needs encouragement as they face challenging situations. On the other hand, participative guidance provides an avenue for leaders to consult with the group to prepare adequately for decision making on matters that affect them.

According to Irving (2014), a leader is at all times communicating some content with words and with the nonverbal cues. Both verbal and nonverbal communication matter to staff and can influence their particular actions. For example, when one is in a meeting with an individual who frequently looks at their wristwatch or looks out through the window without paying much thought to the discussion, the nonverbal cues communicate strongly that they are not interested or that they are detached.

Sometimes, communication content could be planned or unplanned on the part of the leader (Irving, 2014). Saying the things that one desires to say, in the method they wish to say and at the moment so desired forms one way of describing planned communication content. However, leaders are not able to always achieve this level of planned communication. Occasionally, leaders coincidentally say inappropriate and incorrect things to the wrong audience. They sometimes send contradictory messages by saying one thing with their words, which are not matched with their actions or non-verbally (Irving, 2014).

The genuine challenge to leaders is when content is communicated involuntarily (Irving, 2014). It requires deliberate actions to rectify such a problem which may take the form of appealing to others to scrutinize and present criticism. As such, involuntary communication may be seen as hindrances to leadership goals (Irving, 2014).

It is the responsibility of a leader to ensure that the message transmitted is clear (Cheney et al, 2011). Barrett (2014) furthers this perception by stating that leadership communication necessitates minimizing interruptions and interferences by understanding the audience and mounting a communication plan to facilitate the effective transmission of messages. Therefore, it is the sole responsibility of the leaders in an organization to ensure that the messages transmitted are clearly captured for desired interpretation. In addition, transfer of sense by persons of influence either to a single person, a group of people or an organization by using the full range of their communication abilities and resources, helps them to attach positively with their audience, conquer interferences and deliver messages that direct, motivate and inspire them to action (Cheney et al, 2011).

Other times, leaders communicate both empirically and effectively (Kouzes & Posner, 2010) in a way that appeals to both the head and the heart levels. Circumstances occur when leaders communicate at one level even as the group requires a different one. This dissimilarity relates to the scope of scholarly inspiration and moving enthusiasm inside the transformational leadership hypothesis. At times, the group could need effective, heart-oriented and moving incentives from their leader. Problems happen when leaders communicate in a conflicting way – by communicating at the cognitive, head-oriented, and scholarly level when the group is expecting heart-oriented and moving incentives. Leaders, therefore, have to focus on the need to have knowledge of how the group and the managerial team want to hear the message (Kouzes & Posner, 2010). In this study therefore, one of the things we set out to establish is the content that the employees want to hear from the leadership.

Barrett (2014), observes that with the intention of establishing effective leadership communication, there is the aptitude to expect some possible interruptions in the transmitting of the message, appreciating the situation, considering the audience, choosing the right medium and crafting messages that give room for the meaning to arrive at the specific recipient as planned. He continues to state that, one objective of mastering all aspects of leadership communication should be to get us closer to the ideal of meaningful message transfer. Flavin (2016) also explains that effective leadership communication entails trust, transparency, fairness, objectivity, respect, leading by example, effective listening and providing proper information.

Ruben and Gigliotti (2016) show that, the correlation between communication and leadership is important. Leadership communication is used in many different ways in an organization. Since leaders recognize that communication has consequences, they have a duty to establish a clear purpose for each communication activity. As Barrett, (2014) further expounds that since the goals of leadership communication encompass information, influence, instruction and engagement, the leader then needs to establish the purpose, message, media and the audience. He adds that leaders should strive to match their nonverbal cues to their words because when they do so then they become credible. Leaders lead teams, create trust and the necessary understanding to encourage others to follow through leadership communication (Arsovski & Nikevic, 2016). In summary, leadership communication can take different forms or have different content but it is vital to the effectiveness of a leader and the productivity of staff.

Leadership Communication styles

Cherfan (2016) states that communication styles differ across cultures given the differences in preferences, lifestyle, and cultural factors. In the African setting, leadership communication styles are usually attentive, friendly, and leaving. Attentive and friendly communication styles are commonly employed in the African workplace setting including in Kenya because they are associated with higher levels of employee motivation, productivity, and performance. In addition, organizational leaders in the African workplace setting use the leaving communication style, which involves leading by example. This implies that the leader attempts to create an image that can be followed by workers. Friendly communication styles in this setting entail being supportive to employees as they carry out their work activities. This implies that supportive guidance is part of the friendly communication style adopted by organizational leaders in the African corporate sector. When communicating using this approach, organizational leaders encourage employees and address issues that affect them directly. A friendly leadership communication style is also intrinsically participative since the management provides support to employees as they carry out their various work activities and complete tasks. In this regard, organizational leaders show care, provide guidance and support, are relaxed, and demonstrate willingness to listen as they communicate positive messages like encouragement (Cherfan, 2016).

Obi (2018) suggests that leadership communication styles include respectful communication, listening, two-way communication, charismatic communication, and providing feedback to employees. Respectful communication incorporates the adoption of an attentive approach even when issuing instructions, orders, and reprimands. In this regard, leaders pay attention to their employees even when giving instructions, orders, and reprimands relating to various work processes and activities (Cherfan, 2016). Respectful communication that includes instructions, policy directives, orders, and reprimands has been found to enhance employee motivation since it involves showing value to employees. Respectful communication helps improve employee motivation by safeguarding the dignity of the employees regardless of whether the messages comprise positive or negative content. On the other hand, commendations are part of friendly communication styles in which organizational leaders acknowledge employees for their contributions to workplace productivity and overall organizational performance (Cherfan, 2016).

Staff Productivity

Organisations depend on staff productivity for growth. They are constantly looking for methods to distinguish themselves from the competition through operational strategies, managerial administration and human capital running (Al- Alawi, Al- Marzooqi & Mohammed, 2007). Logical incentive arrangement is very important for organizations to protect the skill and ability of their teams, consequently enabling employees to capitulate highest profits (Al- Alawi, Al- Marzooqi & Mohammed, 2007). Parsons and Broadbridge (2006) add that an organizational incentive system unswervingly influences workers' competence, drive and job fulfilment; which in turn influence organizational performance.

For staff to be productive, leaders must set very clear goals, communicate these goals and guide the entire process of implementation (Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi & Mohammed, 2007). In addition, the environment in which the staff operate changes constantly and it is the leaders' responsibility to provide clear instructions to generate appropriate team response to emerging situations (Parson & Broadbridge, 2006). The leaders and erstwhile elder professionals of the 21st Century put more weight on the business nitty-gritty's as Luthra and Dahiya (2015) indicate. They emphasize that a leader with good communication skills is more likely to be considered for a job in an interview than one without such skills. Luthra and Dahiya (2015) further state that for a leader to be efficient, it is mandatory for him to ascertain influence, accountability and intentional association that provides a structure to support incentives to one's teams. To this observation, Barrett (2014) adds that it is useless to communicate with a person within or outside an organization, without developing a plan based on an analysis of the audience.

Linking communication to business policy remains a key challenge for communication professionals around the globe (Argenti, 2016). This means that leaders must work towards overcoming this challenge in order to post better results. According to McNamara et al. (2005), the critical communication of top executives covers the following: structuring reputation and brands; acquiring contemplation leadership; preventing crisis; thought-provoking sales; and worker motivation. Pallas and Svensson (2016) posit that communication is a cross-sectional task whose purpose is to realize organizational goals. Parsons and Broadbridge (2006) looked into the function of work distinctiveness and communication, in relation to work motivation and approval among UK Aid organization shop managers. The findings of their study were that managers show low approval in regard to payment, work rating, and operational environment. It is, therefore, essential to comprehend the worth created by leadership communication within organizations as well as its contribution to organizational goals as this study set out to do.

When staff productivity is high, the performance of the organisation is also high; and vice versa. Performance is a review of the overall status of an organization and its policies (Sarah & Tricia, 2015). In the banking industry, performance has both financial and non-financial aspects (Sarah & Tricia, 2015). The two also place organizational performance as a measure for efficiency, which is depicted in financial and non-financial parameters. The three key factors pointed out by Yang et al. (2010) as business performance measures include: financial performance (return on investment, pay per share, etc.); operational performance (market split, produce superiority, etc.); and organizational efficiency (employee's confidence, employment setting, etc.). Nkomo and Ngambi (2009) have identified six major determinants of organizational performance. They include increase in revenue, profitability, income per staff, return on assets, standard yearly profitability for each worker and amount of business possessions per worker. The ability and the skill to grow the organizational performance depends on various factors that serve as the utmost end. One of these factors is leadership communication, which is the focus of this study.

Odhiambo, Ouko and Muhoho (2020) note that Kenyan commercial banks employ a wide range of communication strategies since communication is the life-blood of an organization. The use of different communication strategies and styles of leadership communication is also influenced by the fact that commercial banks across the country are undergoing continuous improvements in efforts to enhance the level of customer satisfaction. To achieve optimal and effective communication, organizational leaders in the Kenyan banking sector are increasingly using different styles of leadership communication. Moreover, increased competition in this industry has forced organizational leaders to increasingly look for measures to enhance their productivity and performance, which has resulted in the use of different styles of leadership communication. Internal communication in an organization according to Gikonyo (2005) is designed to facilitate employee communication, which is essential for workplace productivity and overall organizational performance.

Leadership Communication and Staff Productivity

According to Graen (2013), the leader's message influences the efficiency in these ways: it improves the workers' confidence, it is a source of inspiration, it forms the beginning for teamwork, it divides the job as per the capability, it provides the essential leadership and it creates efficient messages. Eze, Thambiah, Santhapparaj, and Arumugam (2011) explain that the leadership's communication is very significant to the endurance and efficiency of an organization's performance. As organizations develop and prospect about their performance, the command for good leadership communication tends to increase (Eze et al., 2011). From the foregoing, there seems to be a direct link between leadership communication and the performance of workers in an organization. The specific focus on communication in an organization in this study is important in the quest to understand the effect of leadership communication on staff productivity.

Leadership communication affects how staff respond to the mission of an organisation. According to a study by Tucker, Cheryl and Salmonowicz (2005) in the USA, effective communication with employees on a regular basis, both formally and informally informs employees of institutional goals, policies and personal progress so that the work of the organization is accomplished (Boyle, Bott, Hansen, Woods, & Taunton, 1999; Hogan, Moxham, & Dywer, 2007). Employees, who are treated with respect and are kept informed and have positive two-way communication with the leadership team display improved productivity, and increased job satisfaction which in turn translates to staff retention (Boyle, Bott, Hansen, Woods, & Taunton, 1999; Hogan, Moxham, & Dywer, 2007).

The ability of a leader to communicate can affect the team performance positively or negatively. Essentially, staff depend on the communication by their leaders to know what the goals are and to understand the operational policies and guidelines and it is the primary duty of a leader to provide both. Luthra and Dahiya (2015) carried out a study whose finding shows that when hiring a manager, good communication skills are considered as the most imperative for a manager to have. They add that, every day a manager spends 70 to 90 percent of their time communicating with their teams and others at the workplace and this can be an advantage to the organization if the leaders have great skills in effective communication. A special emphasis is shown too on the problem in communication which arises from the disturbances in the transmission, either by the leader or by the receiver. It is assumed that effective communication with the leaders stimulates employees to stay engaged and to perform their duties efficiently (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010).

Leadership communication is subject to the changes in the business environment. A leader has to keep in step with factors that can affect the goals in order to provide direction to the team on the best approach. This calls for proactivity by the leader to generate feedback from the teams and to have in place mechanisms of profitably responding to such feedback. Tims, Bakker and Xanthopoulou, (2011) hold the thought that leadership communication is neither static, nor does it originate from a single source in the organization context. Instead, it is often fluid and dynamically shared among group members, depending on the linguistics that evolve. When such distributed leadership communication arises, outcomes strongly diverge from groups where more directive leadership talk dominates (Walker & Aritz, 2014). The abilities of leaders to motivate and empower employees through participative decision-making and open communication have been argued as important in enhancing work engagement.

Hopp (2016) observes that organizations are attracting more sophisticated and fast versed employees with great communication skills. As a result, it is essential to have leaders with all the necessary characteristics that include good communication attributes. Besides management knowledge, leaders are expected to have the ability to communicate ideas to the workers about the projected performance in the organization (Hopp, 2016). Hopp (2016) additionally argues that the ability to communicate opens business opportunities around the world. The more the leaders are able to talk, the clearer the organizational goals become. The purpose of leadership communication, therefore, is to shape a business by stating the goals clearly, so that workers team up to achieve the set objectives. Deloitte (2015), hypothesized that clarity in communication is very important to creating an occupied labour force that will function optimally in the organization. The organizational leaders should thus adjust their communication behaviour to the staff so that the staff are inspired to excel at their goals.

Kouzes and Posner (2010) bring out the main concern of “modelling the way” by showing positive achievements when communicating a preferred leadership message. On the flipside, actions by leaders are messages to the people they lead. For example, when leaders, avoid sorting unprincipled performance in a team, the inaction communicates an unconstructive message to other team members who might be looking for strong and collaborated team performance.

Odhiambo, Ouko and Muhoho (2020) state that communication is a major driver of organizational performance in Kenyan commercial banks. Projects carried out by local commercial banks in Kenya are driven by communication. These researchers contend that leaders play an important role in ensuring optimal communication and avoiding oversharing information during project execution and management. During project execution, Odhiambo, Ouko & Muhoho (2020) contend that optimal communication helps to ensure effective project management in banks. However, oversharing information could contribute to poor communication because of the limited availability of employee feedback. As a result, Odhiambo, Ouko & Muhoho (2020) conclude that it’s the manager’s responsibility to ensure quality/optimal communication in banks. This study set out to find out if mangers have taken up the responsibility of optimal communication in the medium-sized local commercial banks in Kenya.

Muthaura (2012) postulates that leadership communication strategies in banks are founded on employee involvement and change acceptance. However, there is no clear common communication strategy in the Kenyan banking industry. This is reflected in the fact that most Kenyan commercial banks have not crystalized their own leadership communication strategies and methods. Muthaura (2012) suggests that this trend is an indicator of lack of knowledge and understanding of how leadership communication affects staff productivity in banks. Muchimuti (2011) contends that Kenyan banks are yet to fully embrace the idea that internal organizational communication is an essential tool in management functions. Therefore, Kenyan commercial banks are yet to embrace leadership communication as an essential tool for organizational performance, which should be prioritized and taken seriously. This is despite existing literature that shows a strong link between internal organizational communication and improved organizational performance.

According to Odero (2016), while communication is viewed as necessary to all stakeholders in the bank, Kenyan commercial banks are yet to embrace leadership communication strategies and styles that enhance their performance. Leadership communication strategies in banks do no usually empower employees, promote shared communication, or encourage freedom of expression.

Nduku, Mwenda and Wachira (2015) state that the effect of leadership communication on staff productivity is influenced by physical conditions in the workplace. These researchers seemingly suggest that while the form of communication is essential, the effectiveness of these communication strategies and styles are mediated by the physical conditions in banks. These physical conditions affect the extent to which employees interpret and understand the content of leadership communication. Therefore, leaders in banks should put more emphasis on ensuring favourable working conditions and focusing on physical conditions. Through this, bank leaders enhance the effectiveness of their communication on staff productivity. In essence, the greatest effect of leadership communication on staff productivity in banks is realized when supportive working or physical conditions are in place. This study however, did not investigate the impact of physical conditions since they were not within what was scoped.

Theoretical Framework

This study has employed an eclectic approach. The study utilized the Path-Goal Theory (Northouse, 2013) to determine the effects of leadership communication on staff productivity by assessing whether indeed guiding staff in medium sized banks in Kenya helps them realise goals. Path-Goal Theory is a process where leaders depict explicit behaviour that best suits employees' needs and working environment so that they can guide the employees through their path(s) in realizing their goals and obligations (Northouse, 2013). Whereas the original idea as exemplified by the Path-Goal Theory was posited by Evans (1970) in his article *The Effects of Supervisory Behaviour on the Path-goal Relationship*, the theory was crystallized by House (1971) in his article on "A Path-Goal Theory of Leader Effectiveness" which was later reviewed by House and Mitchell in 1974 and then by Northouse in 2013.

The Path-Goal Theory generally follows three basic steps, namely: determination of employee and environmental characteristics; selection of a leadership style and focus on the motivational factors that promote employee success (Irving, 2014). This study focused on motivation factors that help employees to succeed, specifically, communication whose objective is to augment workers' enthusiasm, empowerment and fulfilment to help them become industrious workers. The theory advocates for leaders to inspire employees for productivity through systems best suited for both the workers and the work environment taking into account the known point of performance. Through skilled communication by leaders, worker incentive, empowerment and contentment are realized such that the workers turn out to be productive members of the organization (Northouse, 2013; House & Mitchell, 1974). This study applied the Path-Goal Theory to the relationship between leadership communication and staff motivation in the sampled medium-sized local commercial banks in Kenya. Specifically, the theory addresses the effect of the bank leaders' communication on staff performance and how the leaders by defining goals, giving direction, removing obstacles and providing support through communication, influence the behaviour of their staff to achieve the desired results.

Additionally, the study used DeVito's (2019) Interpersonal Communication theory that incorporates principles of verbal and non-verbal messages and the impact of these communication in terms of personal and professional benefits. In this theory, DeVito (2019) states that interpersonal communication is an ever-changing, circular process as well as a mutually interactive process. Some of the principles of interpersonal communication espoused in this theory include the fact such communication exists on a continuum, incorporates interdependent individuals, is a transactional process, serves various purposes, is inherently relational, and may be symmetrical or complementary. In addition, the theory proposes various principles of verbal messages including the fact that they are packed, are denotative and connotative, can be anonymous or onymous, can deceive, and differ in assertiveness, politeness, and abstraction. The principles of non-verbal communication include the fact that messages interact with verbal messages, help develop relationships, structure conversation, manage impressions, and can influence and deceive.

The Interpersonal Communication theory was utilized in this study since it reflects the forms, content, and style of interpersonal communication. The forms, content, and style of communication portrayed in the theory reflect those in leadership communication. DeVito's interpersonal communication theory represents the forms of leadership communication examined in this study in terms of incorporating verbal and nonverbal messages. DeVito (2019) notes that interpersonal communication takes place in different forms ranging from e-mailing to social media posts to face-to-face conversations. This represents the forms of leadership communication discussed in the study and demonstrates the suitability of the theory in this research. Moreover, the theory postulates that interpersonal communication entails the use of different communication channels such as face-to-face contact, telephone, email, and instant messaging. These communication channels espoused in the theory reflect the forms of leadership communication discussed in this research.

The Interpersonal Communication theory also demonstrates the content of leadership communication through discussing the various kinds of interpersonal messages, which could be verbal or non-verbal. Verbal and non-verbal messages are communicated in different ways and associated with different meanings that affect the overall effectiveness of the communication process. For this study, interpersonal messages discussed in DeVito's Interpersonal Communication theory are used to examine and discuss the content of leadership communication. Interpersonal messages portrayed in the theory are used in the study to examine content of leadership communication and its impact on staff productivity. Therefore, this theory is essential for the study in terms of understanding the content of leadership communication and their effect on the level of staff productivity. Additionally, the theory is essential in enhancing understanding of the nature of the content of leadership communication.

The third aspect of the Interpersonal Communication theory that is incorporated in this study relates to the principles of verbal and non-verbal messages. These principles essentially reflect how messages are delivered in interpersonal communication. The delivery of the messages as shown in the principle represent leadership communication styles discussed in the study. In essence, the principles of verbal and non-verbal messages were used to enhance understanding of the styles of leadership communication. For this study, the styles of leadership communication are examined in relation to the principles of verbal and non-verbal messages in DeVito's theory.

The principles of interpersonal communication discussed by DeVito (2019) provides the context for examining the impact of leadership communication on staff productivity in medium-sized banks in Kenya. When examining the impact on staff productivity, this study essentially demonstrates how leadership communication exists on a continuum, is relational, transactional, serves particular objectives, and ambiguous. The forms, content and style of leadership communication are examined based on these principles of interpersonal communication to determine how they impact staff productivity. This implies that the outcomes of leadership communication in terms of staff productivity are determined in relation to the principles of interpersonal communication.

Apart from the principles of interpersonal communication, the impact of leadership communication on staff productivity is examined in the context of the personal and professional benefits discussed by DeVito (2019) in his Interpersonal Communication theory. DeVito (2019) contends that personal benefits of interpersonal communication include close relationships. On the other hand, the professional benefits of interpersonal communication include building relationships, success in the workplace, and organizational productivity.

The two theories thus inform the data collection and analyses. Using principles of the Path-Goal Theory (Northouse, 2013) and the Interpersonal Communication theory (DeVito, 2019), this study therefore investigates the content, form and style of communication be leaders in local medium-sized commercial banks. Principles of the two theories have also been used in the analysed of the data that was collected from the sampled banks.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 2.1 outlines the dependent and independent variables thus:

Independent variable

Leadership Communication

- Forms
- Content
- Style

Dependent variable(s)

Staff Productivity

- Financial performance (return on investment, pay per share, etc.);
  - Income increases
  - Standard yearly profitability for each worker
- Operational performance (market split, produce superiority, etc.);
  - Profitability
  - Amount of business possessions per worker
- Organizational efficiency (employee's confidence, employment setting, etc.);
  - Income per staff
  - Return on assets

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

The independent variable in the study is leadership communication, which is expressed in different forms and integrate different content. The study hypothesis is that the forms and content of leadership communication have an influence on staff productivity. The way leaders communicate and what they communicate influences staff productivity. Staff productivity is the dependent variable in this model.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of some of the previous general and empirical studies conducted on the effect of leadership communication on employee productivity. As shown in the literature review, there is a relationship between leadership communication and staff productivity. The review of literature also describes the forms of leadership communication, the content categories and provides the context and a conceptual framework for this study. The review of literature demonstrates a strong link between leadership communication and staff productivity. However, leaders in Kenyan commercial banks employ different communication strategies and styles because of lack of a common communication strategy in this industry. The lack of a common communication strategy used in this industry has contributed to ineffective leadership communication. This implies that leaders of Kenyan commercial banks do not understand the effect of leadership communication on staff productivity. This study thus sought to address this gap. This chapter also presented the two theories that inform the data collection and analyses. The findings presented in Chapter Four could help validate the establishment of effective leadership communication strategies and styles in local commercial banks in Kenya. The next chapter discusses the research methodology utilized in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter Three describes the research methodology used in this study. Research methodology is described as a plan of action, process or strategy utilized by a researcher to obtain the desired outcomes (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). As part of describing the research methodology, this section discusses the research design, study population, sampling and sampling techniques, data collection, validity, reliability, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the set of beliefs regarding the nature of the reality under investigation (Chege & Otieno, 2020). The choice of research philosophy applied in a study is usually dependent on the knowledge under investigation. This study adopted an interpretivist /constructivist research philosophy. This research philosophy was adopted for the research because the study sought to obtain knowledge on the effect of leadership communication on staff productivity through abstract descriptions of meanings or formed human experiences. In this case, the study relied on descriptions or experiences of participants to explore and understand the link between leadership communication and staff productivity. By using an interpretivist/constructivist research philosophy, the study adopted a phenomenological research paradigm. The researcher relied on the participants' experiences and descriptions to answer the research questions.

Research Design

A research design is the overall plan for the research activity, which involves use of techniques and procedures for collecting and analysing data (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). This study adopted a descriptive research design incorporating both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The descriptive research design was ideal for this study since it describes characteristics of the variables of interest (Kothari, 2009), which in this case include leadership communication forms, content and staff productivity. According to Chandran (2004), descriptive research is not limited to fact findings as it entails formulation of solutions to major problems. For this study, the researcher used descriptive research for fact finding on the effects of leadership communication on staff productivity in medium-sized local commercial banks in Kenya.

Study Population

A study population is a whole set of individuals, cases, and objects with ordinary visible distinctiveness (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). In this study, the target population used to obtain insights regarding the impact of leadership communication on staff productivity in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya was the staff working in different levels and with varying responsibilities. The target population in the seven local medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya is approximately 15,000 employees.

Sampling and Sampling Techniques

The study adopted a sample size of three out of seven local medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya, which comprised 42.8% of the population. This sample is thus above the recommended threshold of 30% of the target sample size (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008). The staff members were first segmented into four categories in line with their responsibilities as follows: senior level management, middle-level management, operational level management, and operational level employees. The respondents of interest were then randomly identified from each of the targeted banks. Proportional sampling technique was employed to ensure that an equal number of respondents were selected from each of the three banks as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: - Sampling

Population of Banks	30% of the population	Staff category	Sample proportion per bank	Aggregate sample size
7	3	Senior level management	1	3
		Middle level management	3	9
		Operational level supervisors	5	15
		Operational level staff	20	60
Total sample size				86

Data Collection

This research utilized a questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions as the main tool to collect primary data. The questionnaire was created based on insights generated from existing literature on this topic. A draft questionnaire was first created and shared with the professor for the researcher to obtain input. Feedback from the professor was used to modify the questionnaire and create the final draft that was used for data collection. A Likert scale was used for the questionnaire items. The use of this scale was influenced by the fact that it provides a unidimensional way of data collection that is easily understandable by the study respondents. The researcher used his professional network to submit printed copies of the questionnaires to the target audience in these banks. The printed copies were submitted to the receptionist of the three banks, that is, National Bank of Kenya, African Banking Corporation, and Family Bank Limited. A total of 86 questionnaires were submitted and 72 respondents completed and returned the questionnaires.

The questionnaire comprised of four sections, namely: demographics of the respondent; forms of leadership communication; content of leadership communication;

leadership communication styles; and effect of the leadership communication on staff productivity. Secondary data on the performance of the target banks was collected from the literature and publications of the sampled banks.

Validity

The validity of the instruments used in this study was determined by pre-testing the data collection tool through piloting. In the pilot study, the instrument was distributed to five respondents who did not participate in the main study. The researcher then considered the comments and suggestions from the pilot respondents in order to increase the validity of the research instrument.

Reliability

To test for reliability, this study adopted the split half technique described by Mugenda and Mugenda (2008). The two variables for this study were divided into two halves and scored separately for each respondent. The Statistical Package for Social Scientists computer program Version 24 was utilized to generate the correlation coefficient for the data on forms of leadership communication. A high correlation between the two variables indicated that the study findings are reliable.

Data Analysis

As previously indicated, a total of 86 questionnaires were sent out to study respondents out of which 72 were completed and returned. The data collected has been analysed using principles of the Path-Goal Theory (Northouse, 2013) and the Interpersonal Communication theory (DeVito, 2019). Data on the forms and content of leadership communication was analysed using quantitative techniques (Howe, 1998). It was then tabulated using figures and tables which provided information such as frequencies, percentages, proportions and correlations. Data on effects of content and forms of communication was analysed using qualitative techniques. Prose answers to questions were presented via methodical use of a predefined set of measures to respond to the questions, gather proof and create results (Howe, 1988). The qualitative and quantitative data provided culturally precise information about standards, opinions, behaviour and communal contexts of medium-sized banks.

The qualitative and quantitative data collected using the questionnaire were coded and entered into the SPSS computer program Version 24. Both the descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data and respond to the research questions. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, means and standard deviations were used to profile the characteristics of the respondents, while correlation statistics were used to draw conclusions. To satisfy the type of correlation coefficient utilized in a study, the data for this research is ordinal since ratings, in a scale of 1-10, were utilized to illustrate the level of the effects of leadership communication aspects on staff productivity. The test was conducted at 95% confidence level (Collins & Jackson, 2015).

Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained approval from Pan Africa Christian University to carry out the study. Similarly, permission was also sought from the National Commission for Science and Technological Innovations (NACOSTI). Upon receipt of the authorization, the researcher sought audience with the Human Resource departments of the sampled banks to discuss the modalities of accessing the staff for purposes of the study and in particular for data collection.

Upon clearance by the Human Resource office, the researcher proceeded to the respective departments and staff as per the sampling frame. The sampled staff were briefed about the intended purpose of the study for them to make informed decisions regarding their participation which was then captured in the consent form. Further, the researcher assured the respondents of confidentiality by expressly indicating that the collected data would be used exclusively for the purposes of this study and would remain anonymous.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided details on the research methodology and design employed in this study. It also captured details regarding the study population, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection, validity, reliability and data analysis. The chapter further shows the researcher's commitment to research ethics throughout the process of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

Chapter Four highlights data analysis, presentation and interpretation based on responses obtained from the study respondents. The presentation and analysis of data in this chapter incorporate descriptive and inferential statistics. Data are presented in the form of tables, figures and charts with analysis and interpretation of findings summarised in prose for each aspect.

Presentation, Analysis and Interpretations

The study targeted a total of 86 respondents hence a total of 86 questionnaires were administered to the targeted respondents. Out of the 86 questionnaires that were administered to the target population, 72 questionnaires were completed and returned. However, only 60 questionnaires were duly completed and returned; constituting 70% response rate, which is within the recommended threshold for survey research involving questionnaires by NACOSTI (National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, 2019).

The researcher utilized the Path-Goal Theory (Northouse, 2013) and the Interpersonal Communication theory (DeVito, 2019) in the data analysis process. Using the Path-Goal Theory(Northouse, 2013), the data analysis process entailed examining whether the leadership communication to staff in the sampled medium-sized banks in Kenya helped them to achieve the desired goals. The Path-Goal Theory provided the premise for understanding the role and significance of guidance by organizational leaders in the achievement of desired organizational goals. In this context, leadership communication was viewed from the perspective of providing guidance and examined to determine its impact on employee productivity.

Using the Interpersonal Communication Theory (DeVito, 2019), the data analysis process entailed examining the outcome of leadership communication on the productivity of employees in the sampled medium-sized banks in Kenya in terms of personal and professional benefits. Personal and professional benefits of interpersonal communication were used as the premise for examining how leadership communication affects the levels of staff productivity. This process also involved examining the effect of leadership communication on staff productivity based on the principles of interpersonal communication relating to verbal messages and non-verbal messages. DeVito's (2019) theory thus provides the premise for understanding the impact of the different forms, content and styles of communication on employee productivity in relation leadership communication.

Demographic Characteristics

The study sought to find out the extent to which leadership communication affects staff productivity in medium-sized local commercial banks in Kenya. There were a total of 60 respondents from three banks, that is, ABC Bank, National Bank and Family Bank.

Gender of the Respondents

As shown in Table 4.1, 51.7% (31) of the respondents were male whereas 48.3% (29) were female.

Table 4.1: Gender of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	31	51.7	51.7	51.7
	Female	29	48.3	48.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Age Group of the Respondents

Table 4.2 shows that 41.7% of the respondents were aged between 30-39 years while those aged 40-49 years account for 25% followed by those aged 20-29 years at 21.7% and those between 50-59 years at 11.7%.

Table 4.2: Age Group of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-29 years	13	21.7	21.7	21.7
	30-39 years	25	41.7	41.7	63.3
	40-49 years	15	25.0	25.0	88.3
	50-59 years	7	11.7	11.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Respondents' Educational Attainment

As shown in Table 4.3, 53.3% of the respondents had a Bachelor's Degree whereas 36.7% had attained a Master's Degree and 6.7% had a Diploma. Only 3.3% of these respondents had a Post-graduate Diploma and none had attained a PhD.

Table 4.3 Respondents' Educational Attainment

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Diploma	4	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Bachelor's Degree	32	53.3	53.3	60.0
	Post-graduate Diploma	2	3.3	3.3	63.3
	Master's Degree	22	36.7	36.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Respondents' Working Experience in a Bank

Table 4.4 shows that 36.7% of the respondents had worked in a bank for 1-5 years and 28.3% for a period of between 11-15 years. On the other hand, 18.3% had worked for 16 years or more and 16.7% for between 6-10 years. Additionally, Table 4.5 shows a standard deviation of 1.151, which implies that the average range of banking experience or working in a bank among these respondents is between 1-5 years. However, with a mean of 3.28, the average banking experience for this group of 60 respondents is 3 years.

Table 4.4: Respondents' Working Experience in a Bank

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-5 years	22	36.7	36.7	36.7
	6-10 years	10	16.7	16.7	53.3
	11-15 years	17	28.3	28.3	81.7
	16 years & above	11	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Average Banking Experience

Employment in a Bank (Statistics)		
N	Valid	60
	Missing	0
Mean		3.28
Std. Deviation		1.151

Respondents' Working Experience in a Bank

Table 4.6 shows that 56.7% of respondents had between 1-5 years' experience in their current job groups or position. On the other hand, 21.7% had worked in their current levels or job groups for less than a year 20% for a period of 6-10 years. While 1.7% of the respondents had been in their current job group/position for between 11-15 years, none had worked in the same position or group for 16 years or more.

Table 4.6: Respondents' Work Experience in Current Job Position/Group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than a year	13	21.7	21.7	21.7
	1-5 years	34	56.7	56.7	78.3
	6-10 years	12	20.0	20.0	98.3
	11-15 years	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.7: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents' Work Experience in Current Position

Current Position (Statistics)		
N	Valid	60
	Missing	0
Mean		2.02
Std. Deviation		.701

As shown in Table 4.7 above, the average working experience of the respondents in the job group by the time of study was 2 years.

Forms of Leadership Communication Employed

The forms of leadership communication investigated in this study are telephone, fax, letter, memos, emails, social media posts, face to face conversation, one on one meeting, team meetings, facial expression, hand gestures, and body posture. In relation to DeVito (2019) Interpersonal Communication Theory, these forms of communication reflect face-to-face and computer-aided communication. Moreover, these forms of communication reflect verbal and nonverbal messages, which are the premise of interpersonal communication in various societal contexts. As noted by Fridah (2011), these forms of communication with minimal distractions and barriers are deemed informative and effective. They help in the achievement of the desired goals, which is a critical component of employee productivity as suggested in the Path-Goal Theory (Northouse, 2013).

To determine the most commonly employed forms of leadership communication in banks, the researcher calculated the frequencies of participants' responses and ranked them based on total frequencies. Figure 4.1 below shows that emails are the most commonly used form of leadership communication in the sampled banks. Telephone calls are the second most commonly used forms followed by face-to-face conversations, one on one meetings and team meetings, in that order. On the other hand, letters and social media posts are among the least employed forms of communication.

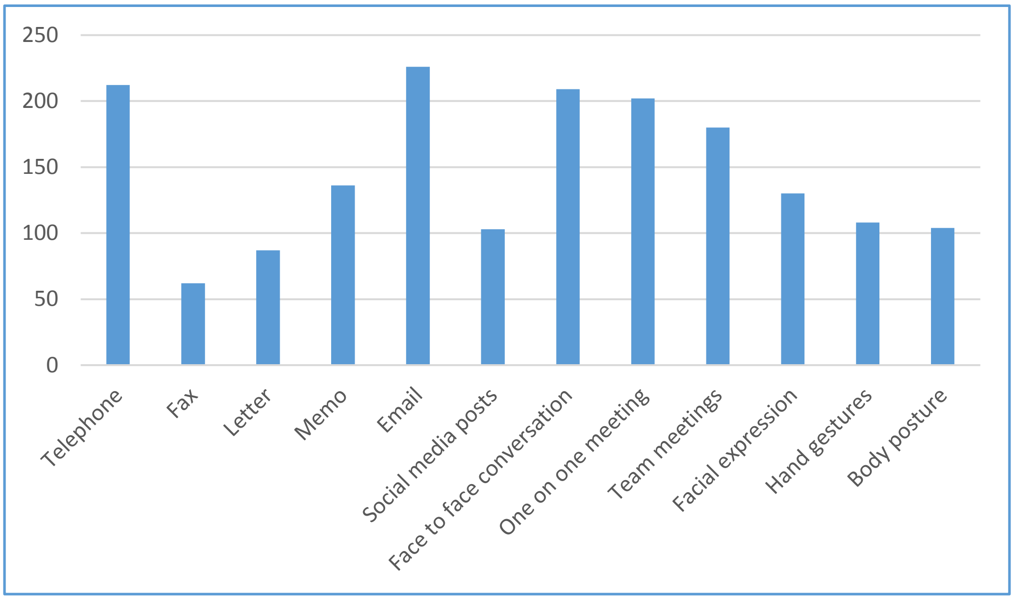

Figure 4.1: Forms of Leadership Communication Employed

The researcher used a similar approach to determine the extent to which these different forms of communication empower staff productivity. As shown in Figure 4.2 below, the respondents demonstrated that emails are associated with the highest levels of staff productivity followed by face to face conversations, one on one meetings, telephone calls and team meetings. On the other hand, fax, hand gestures, body postures and social media posts were ranked as having the least impact on staff productivity.

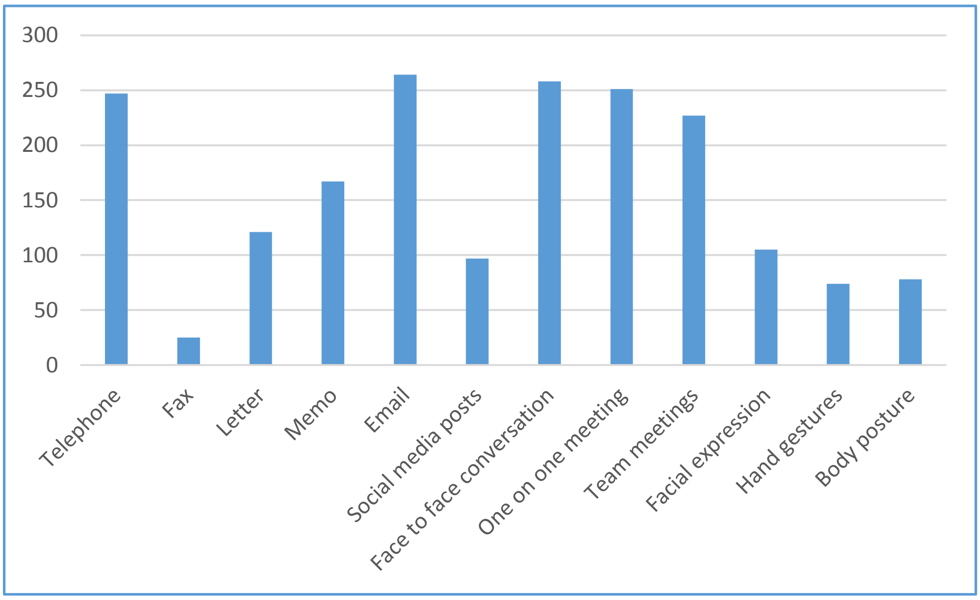

Figure 4.2: Forms of Communication and Staff Productivity

Qualitatively, the data from the respondents show that emails, telephone calls, face-to-face conversations, one on one meetings and team meetings result into high levels of productivity through enhancing clarity of messages, inspiring confidence, improving motivation and encouraging prompt feedback/response. Additionally, these forms of communication provide a framework for tracking communication between leaders and their subordinates. As a result of these factors, these communication forms encourage staff to carry out their respective duties and tasks in an efficient and effective manner resulting in higher productivity levels.

On the other hand, fax, hand gestures, body postures and social media posts are linked to lower levels of staff productivity because of their negative impact on the overall communication process. Faxes are considered outdated and associated with negative perceptions on overall organizational communication. On the other hand, social media posts are considered informal and not suitable for workplace communication. Hand gestures and body postures affect communication through enhancing the likelihood of misinterpretation though they are critical components of non-verbal communication. Misinterpretation of messages through these forms of communication contributes to miscommunication, which in turn affects employee productivity.

Content of Leadership Communication

The content of leadership communication investigated in this study included the following: orders, instructions, policy directives, commendations, reprimands, supportive guidance, and participative guidance. The content of leadership communication primarily relates to the extent to which the message is informative to employees, which in turn influences whether it guides staff to realize established goals. To determine the effect of the content of leadership communication, the researcher calculated the frequencies of the responses for each type of content and ranked them based on their overall totals. As shown in Figure 4.3, instructions, participative guidance, supportive guidance, and policy directives dominate the content of leadership communication in banks. On the other hand, reprimands and other forms of leadership communication rarely characterize messages transmitted through the various forms of communication.

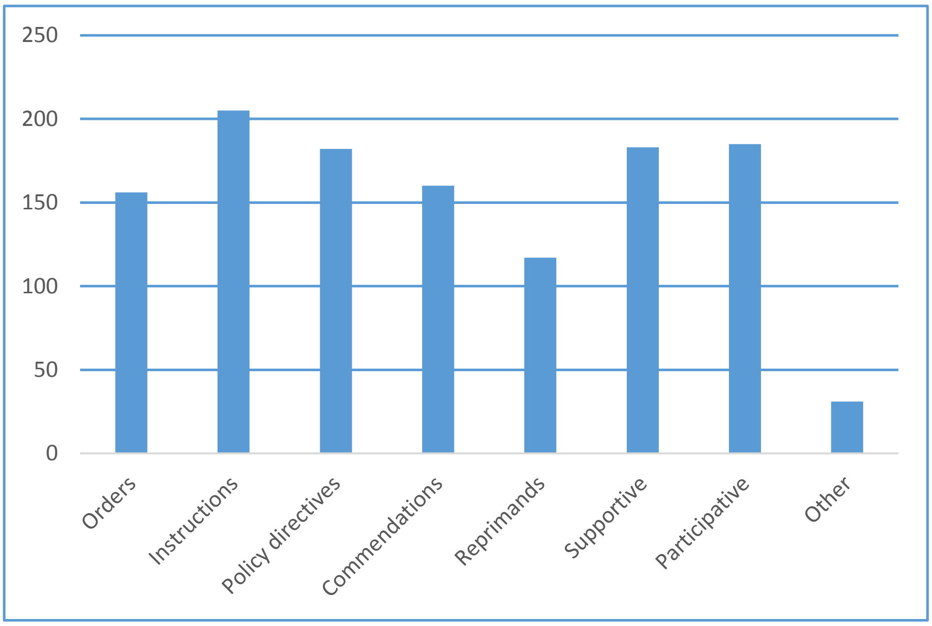

Figure 4.3: Content of Leadership Communication

The researcher examined the extent to which each of these contents of leadership communication are associated with staff productivity. The frequencies of participants' response to the content of leadership communication and corresponding level of productivity were tallied, summed up, and ranked. The finding is that commendations are regarded the most productive content of leadership communication followed by supportive guidance, policy directives and participative guidance. In contrast, the least productive content of communication is reprimands, orders, and instructions as shown in the Figure 4.4.

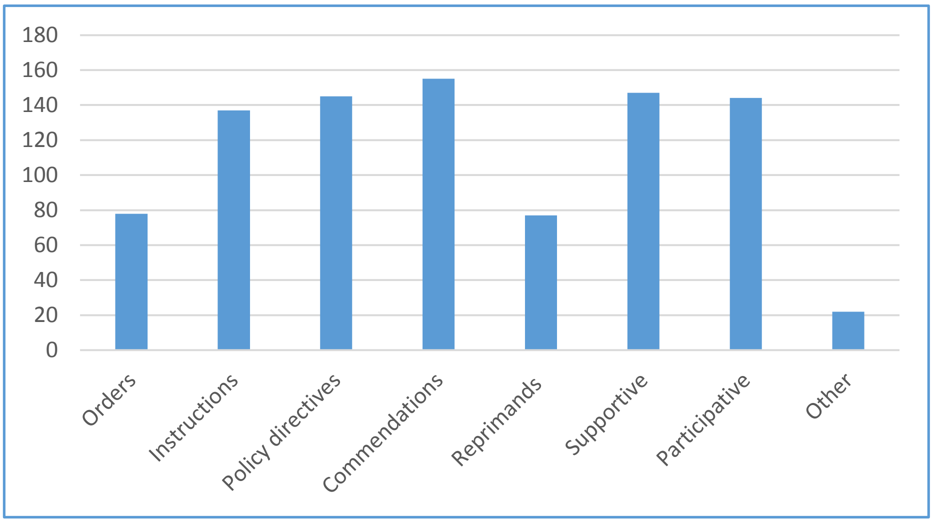

Figure 4.4: Content of Leadership Communication and Staff Productivity

Leadership Communication Style

The style of leadership communication in terms of the kind of work it makes staff to produce was also analysed. Positive content of the message, how clear the message is, messages completeness and messages practicability make respondents produce excellent or good work. A polite tone of the messages is linked to average kind of work among staff as shown in Figure 4.5 below. On the other hand, a negative tone of the messages, negative content of the messages, and body language are associated with very poor kind of work by staff. This implies that the link between the content of the message and staff productivity goes beyond what is being communicated and incorporates how the messages are communicated.

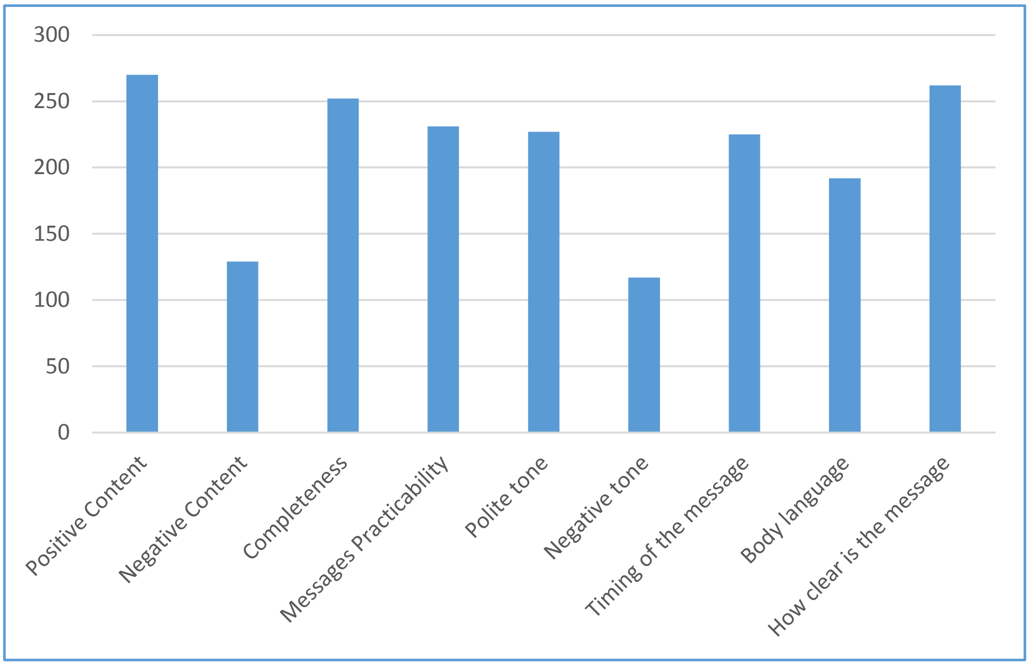

Figure 4.5: Leadership Communication Style and Type of Work it produces

Effect of Leadership Communication on Productivity

To determine the extent to which leadership communication in the bank affects productivity, different indicators of productivity were identified. Responses to these different aspects were coded as follows: Most Productive (5), Productive (4), Average (3) Least Productive (2) and Not Productive (1). The coding was used to calculate frequencies to these different indicators, which was then totalled and ranked. As shown in Figure 4.6, the highest impact of leadership communication on indicators of productivity in the bank occurred in financial general performance and company credibility. Most of the respondents stated that leadership communication significantly impacts the general financial performance and company credibility. This is followed by company operations and efficiency and staff efficiency as well as company competitiveness in the industry.

On the contrary, leadership communication has minimal impact on yearly profitability by each staff, amount of business possession by each staff and company profitability. However, average impacts of leadership communication occur in staff retention aspects of the banks productivity.

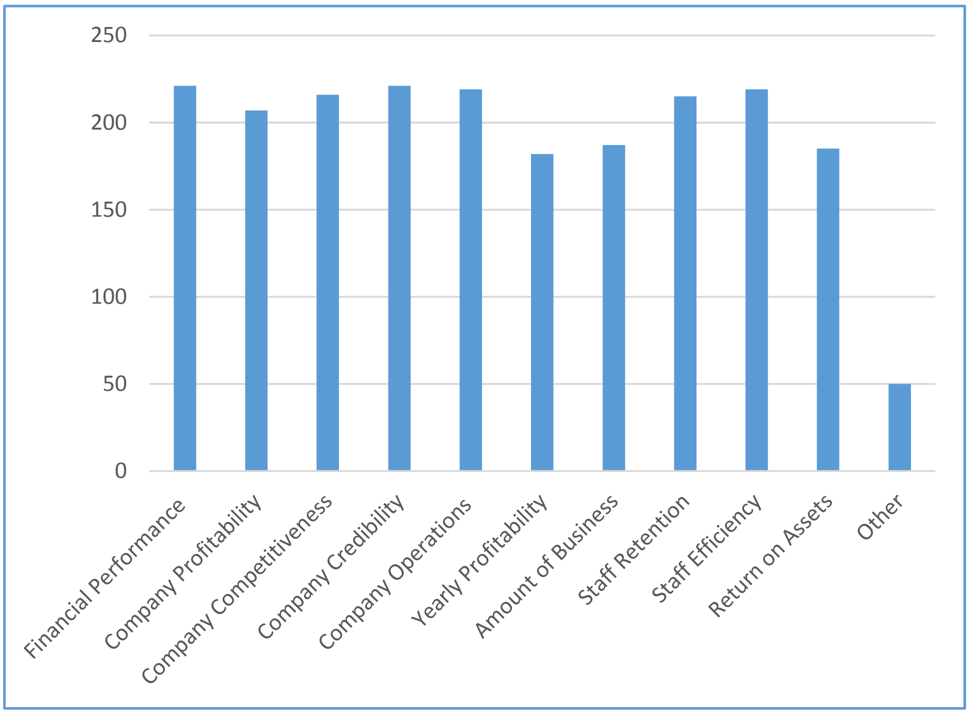

Figure 4.6: Effect of Leadership Communication on Productivity Indicators

To establish the link between these 11 aspects of staff productivity and leadership communication, the researcher used correlation statistics. To this end, these aspects of staff productivity were correlated with leadership communication based on their ranking by study respondents. As presented in Table 4.8 below, the study found a strong correlation R of 0.575 between these variables with a significance level of 0.065, which is more than the statistical significance level of $p > 0.05$.

Table 4.8: Aspects of Productivity

		Aspects of Productivity	Rank
Aspect of Productivity	Pearson Correlation	1	.575
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.065
	N	11	11
Rank	Pearson Correlation	.575	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.065	
	N	11	11

Summary of Key Findings

The main objective of the current study was to determine the effect of leadership communication on staff productivity in medium sized commercial banks in Kenya. The researcher collected data from a sample of respondents from three banks, that is, ABC Bank, Family Bank and National Bank. The data were analysed and six key findings are presented as per the Path-Goal Theory (Northouse, 2013) and DeVito (2019) interpersonal communication theory.

First, the study found that emails, telephone calls, face-to-face conversations, one on one meetings and team meetings are the most commonly used forms of leadership communication in medium-sized banks in Kenya. Emails are utilized in 13% of leadership communication in banks followed by telephone calls (12%) and face-to-conversations (12%). One on one meetings and team meeting characterize 11% and 10% leadership communication respectively. On the other hand, fax is the least commonly utilized form of leadership communication as it accounts for only 4% of communication in banks. It is followed by letters (5%), followed by social media posts (6%), hand gestures (6%) and body posture (6%), facial expression (7%), and memo (8%). The respondents apportioned different meanings to the forms of leadership communication depending on the unique impacts on the overall communication process.

Second, the productivity levels of leadership communication in medium sized banks in Kenya were determined based on the participants' responses. The form of communication with the highest score from the responses was regarded the most productive while the one with the lowest score was deemed least productive. In this case, this research found that emails are the most productive form of leadership communication in banks with an average score of 14%. Study respondents contend that emails are more effective in enhancing productivity as they provide a means for tracking communication and are formal means of communication. The recipients can easily refer back to the messages for clarity and respond. Consequently, emails enable proper dissemination of information and prompt execution of work. Telephone calls (13%), face-to-face conversations (13%), one on one meetings (13%) and team meetings (12%) are also ranked as having a positive impact on productivity. Emails were commended for providing a premise of instant feedback, sharing of work ideas and improving teamwork; a preferred means for staff to execute their duties with more confidence and a sense of control. Emails also enhance sharing of work ideas, ease tension, enhance motivation, clarify expectations, and improve accountability. Memos (9%), letters (6%), social media posts (5%), and facial expressions (5%) are of medium productivity as per the average scores. On the other hand, fax (1%), hand gestures (4%), and body posture (4%) are least productive since they are linked to lack of clarity and high chances of misinterpretation.

Third, the study found that the content of the leadership communication is varied in different messages. Leadership communication incorporates different content ranging from orders, to instructions, commendations and to policy directives. The respondents indicated that 17% of the content of leadership communication in banks is instructions followed by supportive guidance, participative guidance and policy directives at 15% each. Orders and commendations are also commonly issued in leadership communication in banks at 13% each. Reprimands and other types of content are the least used at 3% and 10%, respectively.

Fourth, the different contents of leadership communication produce different levels of productivity among staff. Study respondents view commendations as the most productive content of leadership communication at 17% followed by policy directives (16%), supportive guidance (16%) and participative guidance (16%). Instructions generate relatively average levels of staff productivity at 15%. However, other types of content (2%), orders (9%) and reprimands (9%) are the least productive based on the respondents' overall scores.

Fifth, leadership communication affects staff productivity in terms of how the message is delivered. Positive content of the message and its clarity, plays a critical role in shaping staff productivity at 14% each. Respondents also stated that completeness of the message (13%); message practicability (12%); polite tone of the message at (12%); and timing of the message at (12%), also affect productivity. However, messages with negative tone and content (6%) as well as body language (10%) have minimal positive impacts on productivity.

Finally, the study found that there is a strong correlation between leadership communication and productivity indicators in medium-sized banks in Kenya. With a statistical significance level that is more than $p>0.05$, the study established a strong correlation between leadership communication and staff productivity. The research findings presented in this chapter demonstrate that leadership communication has different impacts on indicators of staff productivity. The differences are evident in productivity indicators like financial performance (10%), company profitability (9.6%), company competitiveness in the industry (9.7%), company credibility (10%), company operations and efficiency (9.8%), staff retention (9.7%) and staff efficiency at work (9.8%). Yearly profitability by each staff (8.7%), amount of business possession by each staff (8.9%), return on assets (8.7%), and others (2%) also show the varying impacts of leadership communication on indicators of staff productivity.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Four provides the analyses and interpretation of data obtained through the questionnaire. In the data analyses, descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized. Quantitative and qualitative data were analysed based on the research questions, and the conceptual framework of the research. The analyses have identified six key findings from the study relating the effect of leadership communication to staff productivity in medium-sized banks in Kenya. A discussion of the findings, conclusions drawn from the findings and the recommendations are presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter Five is a discussion of the key findings of this study as per the analyses in Chapter Four. The discussions answer the research questions within the Path-Goal Theory (Northouse, 2013) and DeVito (2019) Interpersonal Communication Theory, which guided this study. Insights obtained from the discussion section in this Chapter are used to draw conclusions through which the purpose and objectives of the study are realized. This Chapter also suggests possible areas for future research on leadership communication based on the findings of this study.

Discussion of Key Findings

This research was conducted to achieve the following objectives: to identify the forms of leadership communication employed in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya; to determine the content of leadership communication to staff in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya; and to determine the effect of leadership communication styles on staff productivity in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya. To achieve these objectives, the study sought to answer three research questions: what is the effect of forms of leadership communication on staff productivity in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya? What is the effect of the content of leadership communication in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya? What are the effects of leadership communication styles on staff productivity in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya?

The first objective of the study sought to identify the effect of forms of leadership communication on staff productivity in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya. The forms of leadership communication examined in this study are telephone, fax, letter, memos, emails, social media posts, face to face conversation, one on one meeting, team meetings, facial expression, hand gestures, and body posture. This study found emails, telephone calls, face-to-face conversations, one-on-one meetings and team meetings to be the most commonly used forms of communication in the sampled medium-sized local commercial banks. As evident in the results of the data analysis, effective organizational communication is regarded as a critical factor for staff productivity in medium sized banks in Kenya. The study findings demonstrate that banks are increasingly utilizing various forms of communication in the workplace to help enhance organizational productivity and success. The use of these different forms of communication is influenced by the need to ensure effective downward communication and upward communication as suggested by Argenti (2016). Banks use these different forms of communication as avenues for creating and delivering messages in a manner that overcomes intrusion while inspiring staff to action (Barrett, 2014). For leaders in local medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya, effective and clear transmission of messages and getting feedback in order to prevent miscommunication, influences the use of various forms of communication.

The different forms of leadership communication used in local medium sized commercial banks were found to have diverse impact on the level of employee engagement. In this study, the form of leadership communication affected employee engagement based on how the communication channel is viewed and accepted by staff. Emails were found to improve employee engagement as they are formal, clear and promote proper dissemination of messages. On the other hand, telephones, face-to-face conversations, one-on-one meetings and team meetings provide avenues for instant feedback and ensure clarity of messages. When these forms of communication are employed, staff can easily ask questions and share their views. This implies that these forms of communication are favourable and acceptable to staff as they increase their engagement and stimulate prompt execution of work. In contrast, fax, hand gestures and body postures are rarely utilized because of their negative impact on employee engagement levels. These forms of communication are viewed as negative resulting to decreased employee engagement which in turn reduces the level of productivity based on the indicators identified in this study (Hart, 2016). According to Barhite (2017) the level of employee engagement has positive or negative impacts on their productivity as it affects overall job commitment and satisfaction. Therefore, the study reinforces the indication of a strong link between leadership communication and employee engagement or motivation in the workplace (Barhite, 2017; Hart, 2016; Obi, 2018).

The second objective of this study sought to determine the effect of the content of leadership communication on staff productivity in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya. From the key findings, the study found that leadership communication affects staff productivity in terms of the content of the message and how it is communicated. Generally, content of leadership communication incorporates the message and its nature (Deloitte, 2015). As evident in the responses, leaders usually communicating some content verbally or non-verbally (Irving, 2014). The study established that leadership communication in banks incorporates different types of content including orders, instructions, policy directives, commendations, and reprimands, supportive guidance and participative guidance. However, the extent to which the content characterized leadership communication in the bank varied. Instructions are the highest ranked type of content in leadership communication followed by policy directives, supportive and participative guidance. Leaders in these banks issue instructions that are geared toward enhancing employees' execution of their respective duties and responsibilities. Instructions and policy directives are part of planned communication content utilized by leaders to enhance employee engagement and commitment (Irving, 2014). Supportive guidance and participative guidance are ranked among the most common content of leadership communication in banks since they focus on creating a suitable work environment for staff to execute their work. Orders and commendations are also frequently utilized as planned communication content. Instructions, policy directives, supportive guidance and participative guidance provide clarity and ensure staff understand what is required of them.

The study found that instructions and policy directives are among the most common content of leadership communication in banks. While instructions and policy directives are ranked among the highest communication content, this study found that commendations generate highest levels of productivity among staff. The respondents indicated that commendations help improve the confidence and motivation resulting in higher productivity in comparison to other planned and unplanned communication content. Despite being the most productive communication content, the study found that commendations are not commonly used in leadership communication in comparison to instructions and policy directives. This implies that leaders in the sampled local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya prefer using planned communication content over unplanned communication content. Planned communication content is most preferred because of its role in enhancing implementation of strategy and ensuring prompt execution of work (Olaka, 2016). Orders and reprimands were found to be the least productive because they result in poor employee motivation and do not inspire confidence. Such communication content is sometimes deemed threatening if utilized incorrectly (Bell & Ramdass, 2010).

The third objective of the study was to determine the impact of leadership communication styles on staff productivity in local medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya. In addition to the content of the message, message delivery is a key component of communication content that significantly affects staff productivity. The delivery of the message impacts communication as much as the content of the message itself (Deloitte, 2015). This study found that messages that improve staff productivity are those with a polite tone; those that are clear, complete, and practical; and those that are delivered at the right time. These are critical factors to consider when creating and disseminating messages. These factors are linked to better productivity due to their positive impact on employee motivation and morale that results in efficient and effective execution of work. On the other hand, messages with a negative tone, negative content and delivered with bad body language are least productive because they negatively impact employee motivation and morale. Such communication content and style result in least productivity as they fail to deliver the desired effect (Barrett, 2014). In essence, such content and style make it difficult for leaders to achieve the ideal of meaningful message transfer.

This study's conceptual framework was based on the assumption that leadership communication in its various forms, content and styles affects staff productivity. This study found that leadership communication has impact on financial performance, operational performance and organizational efficiency in the sampled banks.

This study found that leadership communication affects general financial performance. Effective leadership communication is linked to strong financial performance in the market and vice-versa. Financial performance is one of the dimensions of organizational performance, which relates to financial results, organizational income and return on investments (Samaitan, 2014). When financial indices are incorporated in the analysis of the impact of leadership communication, a strong link between such communication and financial performance is observed as shown in this study. Improved financial performance occurs when leadership communication generates positive impacts on staff productivity through improved morale, motivation and prompt execution of work.

The findings of this study reveal that there is a link between leadership communication and staff productivity. The study indicates that leadership communication affects company profitability, company competitiveness in the industry and company credibility. Effective leadership communication produces organizational superiority in the market and influences market share. According to Samaitan (2014), operational performance is the second dimension with which the effect of leadership communication on staff productivity is examined and determined. It incorporates different aspects relating to the profitability and market share of an organization in the industry. Leadership communication has effects on staff productivity with respect to operational performance since the staff depend on it to understand operational guidelines and policies. The operational policies and guidelines are then implemented to enhance operational performance (Luthra & Dahiya, 2015). Moreover, effective leadership communication enhances operational performance by stimulating employees to stay committed and engaged in performing their duties in an effective and efficient manner (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010).

This study found that leadership communication has significant impacts on company operations, staff efficiency and staff retention. As leaders employ effective models of communication in these organizations, they create a suitable working environment that enhances staff efficiency and retention as well as company operations and efficiency. There is a strong link between leadership communication and employee performance, which in turn influences company operations and efficiency (Kagwiria, 2016). Operational efficiency is an important concept of human resources, which is one of the key dimensions of organizational productivity affected by leadership communication. While the study found strong links between leadership communication and company operations, staff efficiency and staff retention, such links do not exist in return on assets and yearly profitability by each staff or income per staff. This implies that leadership communication generates minimal impacts on return on assets and yearly profitability by each staff as per the findings of this study.

Conclusion

Based on the summary of findings of this study, the conclusion is that leadership communication has effects on staff productivity. These effects can be divided into three broad categories. First, leadership communication impacts on general financial performance. The impact of leadership communication on an organization's financial indices is linked to the type of working environment it creates and the impact on individual employees. Effective leadership communication improves employee motivation, morale and work input while creating a suitable working environment that enhances overall financial performance of medium sized commercial banks in Kenya.

Second, leadership communication has significant impacts on operational performance, which primarily affects the market share and position of medium sized commercial banks in the banking and financial sector industry. While the link between leadership communication and the amount of business possession per staff is minimal, leadership communication is strongly linked to company profitability. Effective leadership communication has positive impacts on factors that affect operational performance.

Third, the study findings have shown that leadership communication affects staff productivity by influencing the level of organizational efficiency. Leadership communication affects the overall working environment in local medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya. The nature of overall work environment in turn influences the degree to which staff commit to work or processes and execute their duties. This in turn affects company operations, staff efficiency and staff retention. These factors combine to shape the level of organizational efficiency and performance. However, there are minimal impacts of leadership communication on return on assets in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya.

Finally, as per the findings of this study, the conclusion is that the effect of leadership communication on staff productivity in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya is influenced by the forms, content and style of leadership communication. Different forms of leadership communication are associated with different impacts on staff productivity. Effective leadership communication enhances staff productivity through providing a premise for message clarity, instant feedback, proper dissemination of information, and promoting teamwork. On the other hand, planned and unplanned leadership communication content affects staff productivity. The impact relates to the nature of the message itself and how it is delivered to staff. Some of the forms of leadership communication employed in banks such as memo, social media posts, letters; facial expression, hand gestures, and body posture are not necessarily linked to the high levels of staff productivity.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the researcher provides some recommendations relating to the effect of leadership communication on staff productivity in local medium-sized commercial banks in Kenya. First, the researcher recommends the increased use of face-to-face conversations and one on one meetings in banks. Currently, emails are the most used form of communication followed by telephone calls. However, the findings from the study show that face-to-face conversations and one-on-one meetings were found to be more productive. Therefore, increased use of face-to-face conversations and one on one meeting is recommended as they promote instant feedback, enhance message clarity and create a sense of teamwork that results in improved employee motivation and morale.

Secondly, the study recommends increased use of commendations as planned and unplanned communication content. While other content of communication like policy directives, supportive guidance, participative guidance, and instructions help to enhance staff productivity, use of commendations is ranked the highest. In this regard, leaders in local medium sized commercial banks in Kenya need to find ways to increasingly acknowledge, recognize and reward employees for their input. Increased use of commendations would create a working environment where staff feel valued and appreciated. As a result, staff enhance their input in work processes and tasks resulting in improved productivity.

The third recommendation of this study is that leaders in these banks should establish communication channels and use communication styles that promote open and honest communication with employees. Such communication styles help to ensure employees are constantly informed about organizational processes and strategies. Open and honest communication is critical even when messages that are perceived to have a negative tone are to be delivered. By maintaining open and honest communication, bank leaders can still keep their employees informed even when things go wrong. They can still solicit feedback from employees in such occasions through open and honest communication.

Finally, this study recommends different ways of improving leadership communication in organizations such as involving staff in drafting policies, promoting teamwork, increasing staff recognition and commendations and documentation of communication. Additionally, prompt communication, practical solutions, transparency and honesty, emotional intelligence, performance feedback, motivation by management, breaking silos by bosses, mentorship of junior staff and bottom-up communication would improve leadership communication in banks.

Areas for Further Research

The findings of this study show that leadership communication has significant positive and negative impact on staff productivity in local commercial banks in Kenya. The effect of leadership communication on staff productivity is dependent on the form of communication employed and the content of the message, that is, the nature of the message and how it is delivered. This study has identified different aspects of staff productivity that are affected by leadership communication. Further research could thus focus on examining what form/content of communication impacts what aspect of staff productivity. In this case, future research should attempt to link the various aspects of staff productivity to specific forms and content of communication. Further research could also focus on the correlation between the leadership communication and the physical conditions in which the communication with staff takes place because this too could influence the impact of the communication on productivity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

This questionnaire is for the purpose of academic research on the *Effect of Leadership Communication on Staff Productivity in Medium sized Commercial Banks in Kenya*. You are requested to voluntarily complete this questionnaire indicating your response by putting a tick (✓) against your answer and filling in the blank spaces. The information you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and you are requested not to indicate your name. Please respond to all questions.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please tick off your Gender
   [ ] Male [ ] Female

2. Please tick off your age in Years
   [ ] 20-29 [ ] 30-39 [ ] 40-49 [ ] 50-59 [ ] Over 60

3. What is your highest level of education?
   [ ] O-level [ ] Diploma [ ] Bachelor's degree
   [ ] Post Graduate Diploma [ ] Master's Degree [ ] Ph.D.

4. For how long have you been employed in a bank?
   [ ] Less than a year [ ] 1-5 years [ ] 6-10 Years
   [ ] 11-15 Years [ ] 16 Years and above

5. For how long have you worked at your current position or job group?
   [ ] Less than a year [ ] 1-5 years [ ] 6-10 Years
   [ ] 11-15 Years [ ] 16 Years and above

6. How many people do you supervise?
   a. State the number___________________
   b. State the ranks ___________________
   c. How many ranks of leadership are above your rank at the organization?
      ____

7. Have you had a change of the CEO (or MD) at your organization in the last 10 years?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

   If yes, how many times
   1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 and above ☐

SECTION B: FORMS OF COMMUNICATION EMPLOYED

8. To what extent do the supervisors above your rank adopt the following forms of communication when communicating to you? Put a tick in the appropriate space.

Frequency / Form	VERY FREQUENT	FREQUENT	RARE	VERY RARE
Telephone				
Fax				
Letter				
Memo				
Email				
Social media posts				
Face to face conversation				
One on one meeting				
Team meetings				
Facial expression				
Hand gestures				
Body posture				

9. In a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the least and 5 being the highest, to what extent do the following types of communication from your leader empower your productivity at work: Put a tick in the appropriate space.

Frequency / Form	1	2	3	4	5	Not applicable
Telephone						
Fax						
Letter						
Memo						
Email						
Social media posts						
Face to face conversation						
One on one meeting						
Team meetings						
Facial expression						
Hand gestures						
Body posture						

If you have ticked any item in 9 above as 5 - highest, briefly explain why it affects your productivity:

i. ____

____

____

ii. ____

____

____

iii. ____

____

____

If you have ticked any item in 9 above as 1 - lowest, briefly explain why it affects your productivity:

i. ____

____

____

ii. ____

____

____

iii. ____

____

____

SECTION C: CONTENT AND STYLE OF THE LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

10. How often do the supervisors above your rank send you content that communicates the following? Put a tick in the appropriate space.

Frequency / Content	VERY FREQUENT	FREQUENT	RARE	VERY RARE
Orders				
Instructions				
Policy directives				
Commendations				

Reprimands				
Supportive Guidance				
Participative Guidance				
Other				

11. Please rank the content type of the leader's communication to the rate of productivity by putting a tick in the appropriate space.

Rate of productivity / Content	LEAST PRODUCTIVE	PRODUCTIVE	MOST PRODUCTIVE
Orders			
Instructions			
Policy directives			
Commendations			
Reprimands			
Supportive Guidance			
Participative Guidance			
Other			

12. Please rank the leadership communication style in terms of what kind of work it makes you produce. Put a tick in the appropriate space.

	Very poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent
Positive content of the message					
Negative content of the message					
Completeness of the messages					
Messages practicability					
Polite tone of the messages					
Negative tone of the message					
Timing of the message					
Body language of the leader in face to face communication					
How clear the message is					

SECTION D: EFFECT OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION ON STAFF PRODUCTIVITY

13. In a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the least and 5 being the highest, to what extent does leadership communication at your bank affect the following aspects of staff productivity? Put a tick in the appropriate space.

Frequency / Form	1	2	3	4	5
Financial general performance					
Company profitability					
Company competitiveness in the industry					
Company credibility					
Company operations and efficiency					
Yearly profitability by each staff					
Amount of business possession by each staff					
Staff retention					
Staff efficiency at work					
Return on assets					
Other					

14. Please list five ways you think leadership communication could be improved in your organization.

a) ______________________________

____

b) ______________________________

____

c) ______________________________

____

d) ______________________________

____

e) ______________________________

____

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Appendix II: Letter of Introduction

Pan Africa Christian University
P.O. Box 56875 - 00200
Nairobi, Kenya
Lumumba Drive, Roysambu
off Kamiti Rd, off Thika Rd
Tell: 0734 400694/0721 932050
Email: enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke
Website: www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

6th March 2019

The Human Resource Manager
<each bank>,
P.O Box <for each bank>
Nairobi

Dear Sir/Madam:

RE: REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH

I am a Masters student at the Pan African University in the Department of Leadership. I am carrying out a research on *the Effect of Leadership Communication on Staff Productivity in Medium Sized Commercial Banks in Kenya*.

The study is being carried out as part of the requirements towards the degree award. I therefore request you to provide authorization for your staff to respond to the questions attached as part of the study. The information will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used for the purposes of the academic award only.

Yours Faithfully,

Nathan Kimani.

Appendix III: Research Authorization Letter

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No. NACOSTI/P/20/35617/21093

Date: 5th October, 2020

Kimani Nathan Muya
Pan Africa Christian University
P.O. Box 56875 – 00200
NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"Effects of Leadership Communication on Staff Productivity in Local Medium-sized Commercial Banks in Kenya,"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to carry out the study in Nairobi County for the period ending 5th October, 2021.

You are hereby advised to report to the Vice Chancellors of selected Universities, the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County before embarking on the research project.

Please note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a copy of the final research report to the Commission within one year of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Appendix IV: NACOSTI Permit

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **617456**

Date of Issue: **12/December/2019**

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Mr.. Nathan Kimani of Pan African Christian University College, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi on the topic: EFFECT OF LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION ON STAFF PRODUCTIVITY IN A MEDIUM SIZED COMMERCIAL BANK for the period ending : 12/December/2020.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/19/3078**

617456

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

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