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Influence of Transformational Leadership on Millennial Workforce Engagement in Compliant International NGOs in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) wield significant influence in shaping global governance and policies through advocacy, research, and international engagement. However, INGO managers face challenges stemming from low workforce engagement, impacting operational efficiency and program delivery. The present study delved into the leadership dynamics of engaging the Millennial Workforce within Kenya's INGO sector. It aimed to investigate the challenge of Millennial Workforce engagement within Kenya's INGO sector as a leadership issue by exploring both the collective and individual contribution of each transformational leadership dimension to their engagement. Using a correlational research design aligned with the positivist paradigm, the study focused on Millennial employees in Nairobi-based NGOs, particularly those with international scope. Targeting 251 registered INGOs, a sample of 32 was selected, with 384 Millennials surveyed using purposive sampling, resulting in 230 respondents. Data collection involved the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Hypotheses were tested by way of regression analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. While inspirational motivation emerged as the highest-rated leadership practice, it exhibited the lowest explanatory power for Millennial Workforce engagement. Conversely, individualized consideration, despite its lower rating, demonstrated the second-highest explanatory power after intellectual stimulation which topped the rank. Although transformational leadership overall significantly predicted engagement, the effect sizes of individual dimensions were not statistically significant. This underscores the importance of recognizing the collective impact of various leadership dimensions rather than focusing solely on individual aspects. It suggests that the combined effect of transformational leadership behaviors is crucial in influencing Millennial Workforce engagement, despite certain dimensions appearing more salient.

Transformational leadership is a dynamic approach to leading that focuses on inspiring, motivating, and engaging individuals intellectually (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Northouse (2018) describes it as a leadership model where leaders rally their followers to prioritize the collective organizational good over personal interests. This style emphasizes creating a forward-thinking vision, encouraging intellectual involvement, and providing personalized attention to empower followers and foster their growth. According to Bass and Riggio (2018), transformational leaders ignite inspiration and motivation in their followers, pushing them to achieve remarkable feats and realize their full potential. Central to this leadership style is the cultivation of a shared vision, ethical leadership, and a supportive environment conducive to innovation and progress. Avolio and Yammarino (2018) argue that transformational leadership is about driving significant change through inspiring and empowering followers. This involves articulating a compelling vision, embodying desired behaviors, and offering tailored support to facilitate follower growth and excellence.

Conceptually, transformational leadership is a comprehensive idea encompassing four fundamental components: inspirational motivation, idealized influence, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. Inspirational motivation involves leaders articulating a compelling vision of the future, and providing direction and purpose to their followers (Barbosa, 2021). By effectively communicating goals in an appealing manner, leaders garner support and commitment from their teams (Edmondson, 2018). Moreover, they enhance employee competence through coaching, fostering an environment of idea appreciation and autonomy (Messmann et al., 2022). Idealized influence revolves around attracting followership through role-modeling and exhibiting admirable personal values and ethics (Puni et al., 2018). Transformational leaders shape organizational beliefs and values, nurturing a shared mindset geared towards achieving objectives (Brown, 2018). Individualized consideration involves personalized attention to each follower's needs, fostering strong bonds, and earning trust and loyalty (Suyanto et al., 2019). This tailored approach, through mentoring and coaching, enables employees to realize their full potential. Lastly, intellectual stimulation entails challenging the status quo, encouraging employees to question assumptions, and promoting continuous learning and growth (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2018). Transformational leaders emphasize managing organizations as interconnected systems, facilitating information flow and innovation (Sinek, 2019), and ultimately translating ideas into tangible products or services (Suyanto et al., 2019).

The rationale for embracing transformational leadership for millennial workforce engagement lies in its capacity to generate favorable organizational outcomes by instigating positive changes in the workers' lives, thereby fostering trust and collective efficacy crucial for success (Hemby, 2017). Trust among leaders and colleagues enhances team engagement and cooperative behaviors (Lusiana, 2021). Studies indicate that transformational leaders can significantly influence worker motivation, satisfaction, and performance. Through inspiring a shared vision, cultivating trust and loyalty, addressing individual needs, and fostering continuous learning and innovation, transformational leaders contribute to organizational success and efficiency (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2018; Sinek, 2019; Suyanto et al., 2019).

Engagement of the Millennial Workforce pertains to the active participation, drive, and dedication of individuals born between 1980 and 2000 within the professional environment (Smith & Nichols, 2015). Referred to as Millennials owing to their birth proximity to the turn of the millennium, this generation shares common values and outlooks shaped by similar social

and economic circumstances (Kovic & Hänsli, 2018). Recognizing Millennials' dynamics in the workplace is paramount as they seek to be regarded as valued team members, an aspect underscored by Blanchard (2016). To grasp the importance of this description, it's essential to initially establish the parameters defining a generation.

A generation is delineated by a variety of factors including birth year, age, geographical location, and pivotal historical events that influence collective personality traits (Smith & Nichols, 2015). For instance, the baby boomer generation, born between 1943 and 1960, emerged due to a significant increase in childbirths following World War II (Smith & Nichols, 2015). Furthermore, a generation can be distinguished by shared sociocultural experiences within a particular timeframe (Pyoria et al., 2017). Baby boomers, often recognized for their institutional memory and strong work ethic, for a long time, represented the largest cohort of active workers (Gilbert, 2011). However, as baby boomers gradually retire, Millennials are assuming a dominant role in the workforce (Kurian, 2017; Smith & Nichols, 2015).

The disparities among generations, particularly Millennials, Generation X, and Baby Boomers transcend mere chronological differences and encompass varied approaches to work, preferences, and priorities (Pyoria et al., 2017). Millennials, having come of age in the digital era, demonstrate distinct technological adeptness and prioritize achieving a work-life balance and adhering to personal ethics in their career paths (Clifton, 2016; Deloitte, 2021). These intergenerational contrasts can lead to conflicts and disengagement within the workplace, as highlighted by Holmberg-Wright et al. (2017). Managers are confronted with the task of harmonizing the leadership requirements of different generations, with as many as 44% of Millennials basing their career decisions on personal values (Deloitte, 2021).

Existing studies indicate that the expense incurred from failing to engage Millennials is estimated at \$30 billion in the United States alone (Barbosa, 2021). This is attributed to issues such as low retention rates, high recruitment costs, and the economic ramifications of inadequate engagement (Morrell & Abston, 2018; Nassar et al., 2022). In Kenya, Millennials constitute the largest segment of the employed population (Katumpe & Kyongo, 2023). Engaging Millennial employees in Kenya's International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) poses a significant challenge for leadership and human resource management professionals (Mburu, 2019). Despite the increasing presence of Millennials in the workforce, organizations struggle to comprehend and effectively involve them due to their distinct work preferences and values (Meola, 2016). Existing literature suggests that Millennials prioritize social responsibility, teamwork, and meaningful work experiences, which differ from those of previous generations (Afif, 2019; Cattermole, 2018; Clifton, 2016). Furthermore, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the efficacy of current leadership practices and HRM strategies in motivating and retaining the Millennial Workforce within the INGO sector in Nairobi, Kenya (Kimotho, 2018; Musinya, 2021).

While prior research has delved into the impact of leadership on organizational effectiveness, there exists a gap in comprehending how transformational leadership and soft human resource management practices influence the engagement of the Millennial Workforce, particularly within Kenya's INGO sub-sector. Previous studies have not adequately addressed the interplay between leadership styles, HRM approaches, and Millennial Workforce engagement in this specific context (Wawira, 2022). Hence, there is a pressing need for research that examines the connection between transformational leadership, soft HRM practices, and Millennial

Workforce engagement within INGOs in Nairobi, Kenya, with the aim of devising evidence-based strategies to enhance their engagement and retention (Farhan, 2021; Njoroge et al., 2021). International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) play a crucial role in host countries, exerting influence on global governance and policies via advocacy, research, and involvement in international arenas (Tortajada, 2016). A significant hurdle for INGO managers is the issue of low workforce engagement, which results in increased operational costs and consequently affects program delivery (Jayathilaka, 2021). Against this backdrop, the current study aimed to investigate the challenge of Millennial Workforce engagement within Kenya's INGO sector as a leadership issue by exploring both the collective and individual contribution of each transformational leadership dimension to their engagement.

Review of Literature

Transformational leadership is a process of influence aimed at inspiring and motivating followers to attain elevated levels of organizational performance and personal development (VanDyk & Frederickson, 2018). As a result, existing literature categorizes transformational leadership into four interrelated dimensions (Ahmad et al., 2014): individualized consideration, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. This section focuses on related conceptual and empirical literature.

Individualized Consideration and Millennial Workforce Engagement

A key element of transformational leadership is individualized consideration, as highlighted by Anthony (2017), wherein leaders employ coaching techniques to identify the needs and motivations of followers and chart a course to support their development. Leaders bolster employees' skills through coaching, as suggested by Messmann et al. (2022), by valuing their ideas, fostering a supportive atmosphere, and encouraging a sense of autonomy in decision-making and task selection. Moreover, Sahai (2020) posits that coaching enhances motivation and productivity, fosters self-confidence, and engenders a sense of value in one's work, thereby promoting self-awareness among Millennials.

Research suggests that implementing practices such as coaching and mentoring can notably enhance the development of leadership effectiveness, particularly in contexts where there exists a high level of trust between the mentor and mentee (Comte & McClelland, 2017). Moreover, Stephens (2021) remarks that coaching serves as an efficacious approach for enhancing engagement among Millennial employees and facilitates improved communication between them and older generations in the workplace. Barbosa (2021) highlights that Millennials prefer leaders who provide personalized attention and assist them in aligning their personal objectives with those of the organization.

Armstrong and Taylor (2014) propose that coaching entails guiding others through feedback, encouragement, and support to acquire specific desired skills in the workplace. In this context, a coach, as described by Al Hilali et al. (2020), assumes the primary responsibility of enhancing capabilities and skills to enable the coachee to reach their full potential in areas requiring improvement. Coaching, therefore, assists employees in identifying and surmounting obstacles, developing and applying new skills, and learning from their mistakes. A prime example of learning and development is coaching, as described by Dessler (2013), which serves as a form of on-the-job training or mentorship where an experienced staff member or supervisor trains a

new or inexperienced employee within a company. This often involves acquiring skills through observation or the experienced staff member demonstrating the procedures to the trainee.

Empirical literature by Mansor et al. (2017), Mostafa (2019), Rafia et al. (2020), Srichaipanya et al. (2020), and Ogola et al. (2017) collectively explore the influence of individualized consideration on employee engagement across various contexts and industries. While Mansor et al. (2017) and Rafia et al. (2020) focus on the relationship between individualized consideration and employee engagement among specific workforces in Malaysia and Indonesia respectively, Mostafa (2019) delves into this relationship among restaurant employees in the UK. Similarly, Srichaipanya et al. (2020) examine this relationship within a sugar factory in Asia, while Ogola et al. (2017) concentrate on small and medium-sized enterprises in Kenya. Despite differences in contexts and methodologies, all studies underscore the significance of individualized consideration in fostering employee engagement, albeit with variations in the explanatory power and mediating factors such as social connections, transformational leadership dimensions, and organizational performance outcomes. Notably, the studies leave methodological and contextual gaps, including the absence of investigation into specific sectors like NGOs and the lack of focus on the Millennial workforce, which the present study sought to address by examining the relationship between individualized consideration and employee engagement within INGOs in Kenya. The present study proceeded to test the following null hypothesis:

H₀₁: *Individualised consideration has no statistically significant effect on Millennial Workforce engagement in international non-governmental organizations in Nairobi, Kenya.*

Idealized Influence and Millennial Workforce Engagement

Idealized influence is a pivotal component of transformational leadership, embodying the charismatic facets of a leader's conduct, whereby they serve as role models for their followers (Avolio et al., 2018). The term "charisma," as elucidated by Caldwell et al. (2014), originates from Greek and is associated with the notion of an unearned favor or gift of grace. It stems not from formal authority but from the perception held by followers of the leader's exceptional abilities. According to Mittal (2015), charismatic leaders evoke enthusiasm and dedication in their followers and are capable of articulating a compelling vision that instills confidence in achieving that vision. Furthermore, Awamleh (2022) observes that charismatic leaders redefine the standards of their followers while utilizing influential traits to channel thoughts and fears in a constructive direction. It is this capacity to sway others through appeal that diminishes resistance during organizational change processes.

Ivancevich et al. (2014) suggest that visionary charismatic leaders assist their followers in aligning their needs and objectives with those of the organization, reflecting a strong inclination toward forward-thinking. Moreover, it is deemed challenging to motivate employees to focus on the future goals of an organization when they are grappling with present circumstances. According to Supratman et al. (2021), charismatic leaders exhibit confidence in their demeanor and communication, fostering trust easily, and thereby enhancing employee commitment and performance. This perspective is echoed by Novitasari et al. (2021), who emphasize that charismatic leaders articulate optimistic visions for future achievements while instilling positive ideals associated with desired outcomes.

Leaders who demonstrate idealized influence bring about valuable and positive transformations in the lives of their followers. As highlighted by Hemby (2017), this occurs through the establishment of trust in leadership and a sense of collective efficacy. Trust, in this context, extends to both the leader and among colleagues and has been demonstrated to enhance team engagement and foster cooperative behaviors (Maxwell, 2019). According to Hogue (2015), transformational leadership emphasizes boosting employee morale and is firmly rooted in ethical principles. Furthermore, idealized influence leaders serve as role models set high expectations, and communicate effectively, thereby fostering encouragement among their followers (Karaca et al., 2021).

Idealized influence occurs when leaders are perceived as ethical (Hedges, 2017). Ethics involves standards that delineate what behavior is considered good or bad, or right and wrong, while morality examines the effects of actions on individuals. As outlined by Alshammari et al. (2015), in this context, ethical leaders guide employees toward accomplishing organizational objectives by establishing principles, beliefs, and values as the cornerstones of behavior. Furthermore, according to Alshammari et al. (2015), ethical leadership entails a process of influencing employees through values, principles, and beliefs that align with accepted norms within an organizational culture. From this viewpoint, ethical conduct is delineated within the framework of values, culture, and beliefs held by both the organization and individuals.

To underscore the connection between idealized influence and ethics within organizations, Johnson (2018) suggests that transformational leaders engage in advanced moral reasoning, exhibit integrity, and promote the cultivation of ethical climates. Johnson (2018) further states that responsible leadership enhances an organization's ethical climate by fostering trust among employees. According to Engelbrecht et al. (2014), an employee is inclined to trust a leader if the leader demonstrates traits such as honesty, generosity, kindness, and acceptance. Highlighting the importance of such leadership attributes, findings from Deloitte (2019) reveal that Millennials are willing to sever ties with an employer if they disagree with the company's practices or organizational values. Hence, it is understandable why Zhao et al. (2021) argue that Millennials working under charismatic leaders tend to exhibit greater innovative potential and higher productivity.

Numerous studies (Bader et al., 2023; Chebon et al., 2019; Datche & Gachunga, 2015; Otieno et al., 2019; Paulos, 2019) explore the impact of idealized influence on employee engagement across various organizational contexts. While Bader et al. (2023) and Paulos (2019) delve into this relationship in Germany and Ethiopia respectively, Datche and Gachunga (2015) focus on state corporations in Kenya, and Chebon et al. (2019) examine a Kenyan referral hospital. Similarly, Otieno et al. (2019) investigate this relationship in Kenyan parastatals. Despite differences in contexts and methodologies, all studies underscore the significant role of idealized influence in fostering employee engagement, albeit with variations in findings such as the directionality of the relationship and the strength of correlation. Notably, these studies reveal contextual gaps, including the absence of investigation into specific sectors like NGOs and the lack of focus on the Millennial workforce. The present study aimed to address these gaps by examining the relationship between idealized influence and Millennial workforce engagement within INGOs in Kenya, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of this relationship in diverse organizational settings. The second null hypothesis was developed thus:

H02: *Idealised influence has no statistically significant effect on Millennial Workforce engagement in international non-governmental organizations in Nairobi, Kenya*

Inspirational Motivation and Millennial Workforce Engagement

Inspirational motivation involves leaders' ability to influence the fundamental attitudes and beliefs of the organization's members, fostering a collective mindset aimed at achieving established goals (Edmondson, 2018). Kouzes and Posner (2013) further assert that in order to establish a shared mission, a leader must first clarify the values they adhere to and affirm their commitment to shared values. Bass and Riggio (2006) concur with this definition, adding that transformational leadership entails inspiring followers to embrace a shared vision and goals while encouraging them to be innovative problem-solvers. As noted by Njoroge et al. (2022), transformational leaders elevate their followers' level of interest and respect for the group's mission while fostering a sense of pride.

According to Northouse (2016), inspirational motivation involves a leader engaging with others to establish a connection that boosts their morale and motivation. Such leaders encourage employees to exert extra effort and achieve exceptional results by enhancing their self-esteem and fostering teamwork. Luthans et L. (2006) provide the rationale behind this perspective, defining psychological capital as the ability to assess a situation based on the likelihood of success stemming from effort and determination. Research by Nguyen and Pham (2020) indicates a positive correlation between transformational leadership and psychological capital, resulting in more efficient and successful work due to increased optimism. Huo et al. (2020) note that higher levels of optimism and confidence in employees' abilities lead to increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Moreover, transformational leaders enhance staff confidence by maintaining a positive outlook and providing guidance on how to effectively achieve their goals. Additionally, Njoroge et al. (2022) suggest that leaders who foster happiness in the workplace instill confidence in their followers, resulting in successful goal attainment. The leadership style determines the psychological engagement of employees and inspires them to achieve results despite encountered challenges.

Clifton (2016) suggests that Millennials prioritize leveraging their strengths rather than focusing on weaknesses, indicating a preference for coaches over traditional authoritative figures who command and control. Furthermore, Edmondson (2018) proposes that inspiring leaders approach organizational management as a system, emphasizing the flow of information and knowledge, particularly in knowledge-driven economies. In line with the Millennial discourse, Cerf (2017) indicates that this generation is accustomed to working collaboratively and possesses a strong sense of optimism.

As observed by Rezvani and Monahan (2017), Generation Y tends to be idealistic and enthusiastic, often discussing their passions, happiness, and sense of fulfillment. Such observations contribute to what Blanchard (2016) suggests is a significant challenge for today's managers, given that as of 2016, Millennials accounted for approximately 36% of the workforce. This is projected to rise to about 46% by the year 2020. Consequently, if some managers, as noted by Smith and Nichols (2015), persist in viewing Millennials as lazy, self-centered, impatient, and insistent on having their own way, it presents a substantial challenge in the workplace. However, it is important to acknowledge that Millennials are ambitious and possess a strong desire to contribute positively to society. This is underscored by Clifton (2016),

who notes that Millennials are motivated not solely by monetary rewards but by a sense of mission and purpose, reflecting their aspiration to bring hope to society.

Studies conducted by Fantahun et al. (2023), Hasija et al. (2019), Lang (2019), Maina et al. (2021), and Mon et al. (2021) all explore the relationship between inspirational motivation and workforce engagement across various organizational contexts. While Lang (2019) investigates this relationship within colleges in the United States, Mon et al. (2021) focus on the civil service in Indonesia, and Hasija et al. (2019) examine Spanish organizations. Fantahun et al. (2023) evaluate factors associated with organizational commitment among health workers in Ethiopia, and Maina et al. (2021) explore the influence of inspirational motivation within public universities in Kenya. Contextual and methodological disparities notwithstanding, all studies highlight the significance of inspirational motivation in fostering workforce engagement, albeit with varying correlational strengths, signaling the inconclusiveness of the studies. These studies also evince the limitation of qualitative studies in estimating effect sizes, which provided the impetus for the present article. The current study sought to test the following null hypothesis:

H₀₃: *Inspirational motivation has no statistically significant effect on Millennial Workforce engagement in international non-governmental organizations in Nairobi, Kenya*

Intellectual Stimulation and Millennial Workforce Engagement

One of the tenets of transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation, where leaders encourage employees to explore novel approaches, challenge their own beliefs, and implement innovation in their actions (Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2018). When individuals are motivated to collaborate in teams, particularly in addressing challenging tasks through innovation, overall performance is bolstered as team members are able to collectively contribute value. Additionally, leaders should foster an environment that promotes employees to share new ideas, provide suggestions, and question each other's assumptions. In any case, organizations operate within dynamic environments, and as suggested by Shafi et al. (2020), creativity and innovation in products and services are imperative to maintain relevance.

Gilbert (2011) observes that Millennials excel in digital communication and have been raised in an era characterized by immediate access to information. While they possess a desire for creativity, they particularly enjoy tackling challenging problems that necessitate innovative solutions, especially given the ready availability of answers on platforms like Google and Wikipedia. Interestingly, Kurian (2017) reports that Millennials prefer to understand the rationale behind tasks before embarking on them and appreciate knowing the significance of their efforts upfront. This suggests that they are reluctant to invest time and energy in endeavors that may prove futile. Moreover, fueled by their curiosity, they quickly yearn for new challenges, leading to a tendency to change jobs every two to three years. However, research by Njoroge et al. (2022) indicates that through intellectual stimulation, leaders can significantly enhance Millennial employees' enthusiasm and commitment to their work.

Supporting the aforementioned observation, Suyanto et al. (2019) propose that transformational leadership is well-suited for organizations operating in dynamic environments that necessitate high levels of innovation and creativity. Managers who foster a culture of risk-taking and idea generation stimulate creativity within both individuals and teams. Farhan (2021) asserts that recognizing Millennials' communication and technological skills is crucial for

implementing participative and shared leadership, as it enhances engagement. Aligning with this perspective, Njoroge et al. (2022) highlight that studies conducted in Kenya reveal a clear preference for leadership approaches that treat Millennials as individuals, acknowledge their strengths, and employ unconventional problem-solving methods to spur innovation and creativity.

Pyoria et al. (2017) note that Millennials prioritize innovation in the workplace, but interestingly, they also place greater importance on family life and leisure than they do on traditional salaried employment. Nevertheless, other scholars propose that Millennials prioritize meaningful work and often seek personal fulfillment in their jobs. Gilbert (2011) suggests that Generation Y employees are inclined to excel and are motivated by a desire to make a positive impact, appreciating civic engagement as significant to them.

Multiple researchers (Akey-Torku & Dai, 2020; Ojeleye & Bakare, 2020; Otieno et al., 2019b; Setiono et al., 2019) investigated the relationship between intellectual stimulation, a dimension of transformational leadership, and workforce engagement across various organizational contexts. While Setiono et al. (2019) examine this relationship among Generation Y workers in Jakarta, Indonesia, Ojeleye and Bakare (2020) focus on a sweet factory in Nigeria, and Akey-Torku and Dai (2020) conduct their research among hospital employees in Ghana. Otieno et al. (2019b) explored this relationship within Kenya's energy sector parastatals. All studies emphasize the positive and statistically significant impact of intellectual stimulation on workforce engagement, albeit with variations in findings regarding the strength of the relationship. A notable contextual gap in these studies was the need for research among specific demographic groups such as Millennials, which the present study sought to fill. This led to the development of the fourth null hypothesis:

H₀₄: *Intellectual stimulation has no statistically significant effect on Millennial Workforce engagement in international non-governmental organizations in Nairobi, Kenya*

Method

Sample

The study adopted a correlational research design in keeping with the positivist research paradigm. This research focused on Millennial employees working for NGOs located in Nairobi, Kenya, particularly those with an international scope and registered as INGOs. The study targeted the Millennial workforce employed in 251 INGOs registered with the NGO Board. The registered INGOs served as the unit of analysis, while the Millennial workforce, whose views on leadership were solicited, constituted the unit of observation. A sample of 32 INGOs was selected from the total population of 251 registered INGOs. The sample of Millennials selected was determined using a formula applicable to unknown populations as proposed by Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) thus:

$$n = z^2(p)(q)/d^2$$

Where:

n: The sample size to be selected.

Z: The *z*-value at the required confidence level (e.g. at 0.05, *z* = + 1.96)

P : The fraction within the target population that is approximated to possess the qualities under observation. This was estimated at $p = .05$.

$q = 1 - p$

d : statistical significance (in this case 0.05).

Thus, the sample selected was calculated below:

$$n = 1.96^2(0.5)(1 - 0.5)/0.05^2$$

$$n = 384$$

Accordingly, the sample size for this study consisted of 384 Millennials selected from the 32 INGOs located in Nairobi County, Kenya.

The researchers employed the purposive sampling method, which involves intentionally selecting specific individuals, cases, or elements from a population based on predefined criteria or characteristics relevant to the research question (Creswell, 2014). The aim is to gather a sample that represents a particular subgroup or possesses specific qualities (Njie & Asimiran, 2014). Researchers use their discretion to choose participants who can offer valuable insights into the research topic (Terrell, 2022). In this study, purposive sampling was chosen because the researchers aimed to collect data from the Millennial Workforce rather than from every employee working in the INGOs. Given that the term "Millennial" for this purpose, refers to individuals aged between 23 and 43 years, purposive sampling was deemed the most suitable method to recruit workers within this age group from each INGO.

Materials

Data collection utilized the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to gauge transformational leadership, a survey instrument initially developed to assess Avolio and Bass's leadership model, as highlighted by Batista-Foguet et al. (2021). Alban-Metcalf and Alimo-Metcalf (2000) emphasize that the MLQ effectively captures key transformational elements such as charismatic and inspirational leadership, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. To suit the context of the study, the questionnaire was adapted. Previous studies, including Otieno and Njoroge (2019), have successfully adjusted the instrument for similar research endeavors in Kenya. According to Gagne (2019), the questionnaire also included a 9-item *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES) developed by William Khan and Michael Leiter to evaluate Millennial Workforce engagement. The reliability analysis produced Cronbach's alpha scores of .94 for transformational leadership and .76 for Millennial Workforce engagement. These results indicate a very high level of internal consistency among the items assessing each construct as reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Reliability Statistics

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	N of items
Transformational Leadership	.94	45
Millennial Workforce Engagement	.76	9

Regression analysis was employed for this purpose, which was crucial for establishing generalizability at the conclusion of data analysis. As noted by Sekaran (2003), such tests contribute to making research findings more applicable across various organizations. In this

study, the first four hypotheses were tested using the following regression model, with null hypotheses rejected at $p < .05$:

$$\text{MWE} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \text{IC} + \beta_2 \times \text{IN} + \beta_3 \times \text{IM} + \beta_4 \times \text{IS} + \varepsilon$$

Where;

MWE = Millennial Workforce engagement

β_0 = Intercept for MWE

$\beta_{1, 2, 3, 4}$ = Regression coefficients

IC = Individualized consideration (H₀₁)

IN = Idealised Influence (H₀₂)

IM = Inspirational motivation (H₀₃)

IS = Intellectual Stimulation (H₀₄)

ε = Error term

Results

The study received a satisfactory number of responses, with 230 Millennials participating out of the targeted 384, representing a 60% response rate. The demographic characteristics revealed that male respondents constituted 59.6% of the sample, whereas females accounted for 40.4%. Regarding age distribution, 36.1% of respondents fell within the 22-29 age bracket, 43.0% were aged between 30 and 39, and 20.9% were aged 40-43. In terms of tenure, 20.4% of respondents had tenure of less than a year, 39.6% had worked for 1 to 5 years, 23.5% had worked for 6 to 10 years, and 16.5% had tenure exceeding 10 years. The majority of respondents belonged to Development and Health INGOs, comprising 35.4% and 35.1%, respectively, indicating a substantial presence of organizations focused on broader societal development and health improvement. This was followed by Relief and Humanitarian (28%), Education (26.2%), Advocacy (19.1%), Environmental INGOs (13.8%), Human Rights INGOs (10.2%), and finally, Women and Gender-based INGOs (8.9%).

A simple linear regression of Millennial Workforce Engagement on each dimension of transformational leadership revealed a hierarchy of explanatory power as ranked in [Table 2](#). [Table 2](#) presents a summary of the quantitative analysis by presenting both the mean rating of each transformational leadership practice and corresponding explanatory powers.

Table 2

Transformational Leadership Explanatory Power Ranking

Transformational Leadership Dimension	Practice Rating	Explanatory Power
Intellectual stimulation	$\bar{x}=3.79$	21.0%
Individualized consideration	$\bar{x}=3.60$	20.8%
Idealised influence	$\bar{x}=3.79$	19.2%
Inspirational motivation	$\bar{x}=3.99$	18.6%

Among the four dimensions analyzed in [Table 2](#), intellectual stimulation emerges as a prominent factor, with a mean rating of 3.79 and contributing to 21.0% of the explanatory power. This dimension underscores the importance of fostering creativity, innovation, and critical thinking among followers, indicating its significant role in engaging millennials. Similarly, individualized consideration, with a mean rating of 3.60 and contributing to 20.8% of the explanatory power, emphasizes the necessity for leaders to demonstrate care and concern

for the unique needs and development of each employee. Idealized influence, characterized by leaders serving as role models and earning the admiration of their followers, also holds substantial importance, as indicated by its mean rating of 3.79 and contribution of 19.2% to the explanatory power. While inspirational motivation, with a mean rating of 3.99 and contributing 18.6% to the explanatory power, remains vital in communicating a compelling vision and setting high expectations, it appears to have slightly less impact compared to the other dimensions.

In order to establish the contribution of each transformational leadership dimension to millennial workforce engagement while holding all other dimensions constant, multiple linear regression analysis was performed and the output is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Regression of Millennial Workforce Engagement on Transformational Leadership

Model Summary						
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.49 ^a	.24	.22	.60		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Intellectual Stimulation Composite Score, Inspirational Motivation Composite Score, Individualised Consideration Composite Score, Idealised Influence Composite Score

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
1	Regression	25.29	4	6.32	17.16	.000 ^b
	Residual	79.59	226	.36		
	Total	104.89	230			

a. Dependent Variable: Millennial Workforce Engagement Composite Score
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intellectual Stimulation Composite Score, Inspirational Motivation Composite Score, Individualised Consideration Composite Score, Idealized Influence Composite Score

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	β	t	p
1	(Constant)	2.27	.20		10.97	.000
	Individualised Consideration	0.14	.08	.18	1.82	.070
	Idealised Influence	0.03	.10	.03	0.33	.740
	Inspirational Motivation	0.08	.08	.10	0.97	.332
	Intellectual Stimulation	0.16	.08	.20	1.90	.059

a. Dependent Variable: Millennial Workforce Engagement Composite Score

The model summary and ANOVA output in Table 3 reveals that transformational leadership dimensions collectively accounted for 24.1% of the variability in Millennial Workforce Engagement, $R^2 = .24$, $F(4) = 17.16$, $p = .01$. Thus, the prediction power of transformational leadership on Millennial Workforce engagement was statistically significant. This implies that organizations or leaders who exhibit transformational leadership behaviors are likely to have a positive impact on engaging millennial employees. However, what is also implied in the data is that as much as 75.9% of the variability in Millennial Workforce engagement remained unaccounted for. This indicates that other factors beyond the transformational leadership dimensions included in the model contribute to millennial engagement. Therefore, while transformational leadership is significant, it is only part of the picture. Organizations should consider a broader range of factors when aiming to improve engagement among their millennial employees.

Furthermore, examination of the coefficients yields even more interesting insight: whereas the collective explanatory power of transformational leadership dimensions was statistically significant, the effect sizes of each dimension in isolation were not. This suggests that while transformational leadership, when viewed as a whole, plays a role in explaining variability in

millennial workforce engagement, the specific contribution of each dimension on its own is not statistically significant. In other words, the individual dimensions of transformational leadership might not independently influence millennial engagement in a meaningful way without the interaction with other dimensions.

Discussions

The transformational leadership explanatory power ranking enriches our understanding of transformational leadership by unveiling a hierarchical order among its dimensions in terms of their explanatory power on Millennial Workforce engagement. This advancement enhances comprehension regarding how various dimensions of transformational leadership can impact employee outcomes in the INGO sector. Although inspirational motivation scored the highest in terms of leadership practice, it exhibited the lowest explanatory power on Millennial Workforce engagement. Conversely, individualized consideration, despite being rated lower in leadership practice, ranked second after intellectual stimulation in terms of its explanatory power on Millennial Workforce engagement. This ranking bears implications for directing leadership development efforts within the INGO sector, as intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration are prioritized over idealized influence and inspirational motivation. The ranking underscores the need for organizations and leaders to consider their particular leadership practices and acknowledge that certain practices may yield different effects on employee engagement than initially assumed.

The findings highlight the value of evaluating each dimension of transformational leadership separately. Merely assuming that high ratings in overall leadership practices will uniformly result in strong explanatory power for Millennial Workforce engagement is insufficient. It is worth noting that the high ratings in inspirational motivation might be influenced by what Millennials perceive as the prevailing leadership style in their organizations. Consequently, INGOs might find it advantageous to tailor their leadership development initiatives to address specific dimensions that have a more pronounced impact on Millennial Workforce engagement without disregarding the rest.

The focus on intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration may resonate with the values and expectations of the Millennial Workforce. This discovery, particularly regarding the high explanatory power of intellectual stimulation, could also shed light on why Millennials tend to move between roles or organizations frequently. Millennials often prioritize aspects such as finding meaning, personal growth, and receiving individualized attention in their work environments. Organizations that prioritize these dimensions of transformational leadership may witness enhanced engagement and satisfaction among Millennial employees. This perspective is supported by self-determination theory, as outlined by Gagne (2019) and Niemiec (2014), which suggests that involving Millennial employees in decision-making processes can foster a sense of ownership and autonomy, thereby contributing to their motivation, engagement, and overall satisfaction at work. Overall, the study appreciates the merits of considering the collective influence of multiple leadership dimensions rather than focusing solely on individual aspects. It implies that the synergy or combined effect of various transformational leadership behaviors is what matters in impacting millennial workforce engagement, in as much as some dimensions may take salience.

The findings also highlight the significance of transformational leadership behaviors in influencing millennial workforce engagement within organizations. This suggests that organizations and leaders who exhibit transformational leadership traits are likely to foster higher levels of engagement among millennial employees. However, it is essential for organizations to recognize that transformational leadership is only one piece of the engagement puzzle. To maximize millennial engagement, organizations should adopt a holistic approach that considers a broader array of factors, such as organizational culture, communication practices, and job design. By addressing these multifaceted elements, organizations can create environments that nurture and sustain millennial engagement over the long term.

Conclusion

The findings regarding the positive relationship between transformational leadership and Millennial Workforce engagement carry significant policy implications for the management of INGOs. Firstly, the results underscore the importance of implementing leadership training programs aimed at developing and strengthening the four dimensions of transformational leadership competencies: individualized consideration, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation skills among leaders. This recommendation aligns with Rao's (2016) perspective, which emphasizes the pivotal role of such skills in effectively managing the emotions and sentiments of the workforce, a core aspect of transformational leadership that also resonates with a soft HR approach.

The study underscores the significance of each dimension in enhancing workforce engagement, highlighting the need for tailored leadership approaches that cater to the unique values and preferences of the Millennial Workforce. Recognizing and addressing these preferences is essential for the efficacy of leadership strategies within INGOs. By integrating aspects of transformational leadership that appeal to Millennials, organizations can cultivate a workplace culture conducive to engagement, collaboration, and the pursuit of both individual and organizational objectives.

Incorporating transformational leadership principles into leadership policies and guidelines can be instrumental in driving positive outcomes for both employees and organizations within the INGO sector. This approach emphasizes the importance of fostering a supportive and inspiring leadership environment that fosters employee engagement and contributes to organizational success.

The significant explanatory power demonstrated by individualized consideration concerning Millennial Workforce engagement positions this facet of transformational leadership as a focal point in INGO management policy. This aligns with Stephens (2021) observation that individualized consideration practices effectively enhance Millennial employee engagement and facilitate improved communication with older generations in the workplace. The study findings underscore the importance of policies that recognize and embrace the diversity within the Millennial Workforce. Acknowledging individual variances, strengths, and aspirations when assigning tasks or roles can contribute to heightened levels of engagement. It emphasizes the integration of ethical leadership principles into INGO policies, highlighting the necessity for leaders to establish ethical standards and serve as moral exemplars for effective management and Millennial Workforce engagement. The study supports the implementation of policies that

emphasize the significance of leaders instilling purpose and influence within the organization, encouraging positive team motivation and community impact.

Given the established positive correlation between transformational leadership and Millennial workforce engagement, it is imperative for Human Resource Development in INGOs to invest in leadership development initiatives aimed at enhancing transformational leadership skills. This can be accomplished through various methods such as mentorship, coaching, and experiential learning opportunities tailored for leaders.

Practical measures could include the implementation of training programs specifically designed to enhance role-modeling skills among leaders. This may entail providing leaders with tools and techniques to effectively demonstrate desired ethical behavior and commitment to their teams. Furthermore, these programs should incorporate initiatives to promote intellectual stimulation. This could involve formalizing the integration of global learning forums, offering stretch assignments, and encouraging cross-functional collaboration as integral components of the organizational culture.

Moreover, leadership within INGOs should undergo training to cultivate intellectual stimulation within their teams. This may involve leadership development programs that emphasize the importance of fostering creative thinking, challenging assumptions, and promoting innovation among team members.

The results reinforce and enrich current transformational leadership theories, inviting researchers to delve deeper into refining these models. It highlights the necessity of contextualizing leadership theories within generational frameworks, urging future investigations to consider how theories like transformational leadership can be tailored to suit the distinctive attributes of the Millennial Workforce across various cultural contexts.

While the findings provide valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the study. One notable limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias or social desirability effects. Additionally, the study's focus on transformational leadership dimensions may overlook other potentially influential factors contributing to millennial engagement. Future research efforts should aim to address these limitations by employing diverse methodologies, incorporating objective measures of engagement, and ensuring representative samples to enhance the validity and robustness of the findings. Accordingly, there are several promising avenues for future research in this domain. Investigating potential moderators or mediators, such as organizational climate or individual characteristics, could provide deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms driving these relationships. Furthermore, comparative studies across different generational cohorts could help elucidate unique preferences and needs among millennials and inform tailored leadership approaches. By addressing these research gaps, future studies can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of leadership dynamics and their implications for millennial engagement in the workplace.

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