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Integrating Individualized Consideration on Academic Performance of Selected Universities in Kenya

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Abstract:

The contribution of university education to sustainable development of society has become one of the most important activities of universities in Kenya. Universities in Kenya have expanded from one institution in 1974 to over 74 universities in 2020. Despite the rapid growth in university education in Kenya, there are serious concerns about quality and relevance of services from the higher education sector. While highly valued and acclaimed by all, University education currently faces great challenges with a potential impact on the sector's contribution to the country's development. This has necessitated the need for the higher education sector to consider individualized consideration practices between the leaders and their followers so as to enhance performance. This study therefore sought to establish the effect of individualized consideration on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The study was anchored on transformational leadership theory. Positivism research philosophy was adopted where explanatory and descriptive research designs were used for guiding the collection and analysis of data. Primary data was collected from deans of schools and chairmen of departments in the selected universities. The study established a significant positive effect of individualized consideration on academic performance of universities at $p < 0.05$; $t = 6.749$ and hence concluded that inspirational motivation positively affects university academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The study recommends that deans of schools and chairpersons of department should make an effort to practice the attributes of individualized consideration in universities in Kenya as this was found to positively impact on academic performance.

Keywords: Individualized consideration, university academic performance

1. Introduction

The performance of an organization must be calculated not only based on marketplace share, return on investment and the profitability, but there is a need to encompass both the qualitative and quantitative restrictions of measurement (Markiewicz, 2015). Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) indicate that organizational performance entails accomplishment of goals that result to change of inputs to outputs. This therefore, means that performance of any organization is based on financial and non-financial aspects.

Organizational performance translates to the actual results of an organization as measured against the intended objectives (Will, 2015). It is therefore crucial for managers of an organization to understand performance metrics for their organization so as to know when to incorporate any changes. Gustafson *et al.*, (2016) argue that if managers fail to understand organizational performance, they may not know when to incorporate changes and which ones to incorporate or not.

Angle and Perry (2015) indicate that every organization works towards achieving better results. Efficiency is related to an organization's ability to come up with an exceptional way of implementing business opportunities through exchange associations and it is therefore an important way in which the organization interacts with its environment to generate a sustainable growth. Guajardo (2015) argues that for any organization to achieve effectiveness, managers need to focus on people's relationships and how to manage them in addition to aligning the organizational structure, capabilities and culture to the strategy.

Various researchers agree that leadership plays a key role in improving organizational outcomes and hence cannot be overlooked. For instance, Gusmão, Christiananta and Ellitan (2018) state that leadership entails the act of directing and collaborating with other parties. On the other hand, Rahman, Othman, Yajid, Rahman, Yaakob, Masri and Ibrahim (2018) opine that leadership plays a significant role in determining an organization's ability to achieve its set goals successfully.

Transformational leaders foster collaboration and dedication by expounding the organization's motives and foster willpower amongst staff members (Renjith, Renu& George, 2015). Barth-Farkas and Vera (2014) argue that such leaders perform role modelling to their followers who imitate their actions. Specifically, transformational leadership style has four elements which include idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation (Tharnpas& Boon-itt, 2015; Devi & Narayanamma, 2016). Each of the attributes of transformational leadership style results to follower development and hence a firm basis for management practices (Caillier, 2014).

Individualized consideration involves development of followers through coaching and mentorship and engagement on a one-one basis for goal achievement. Individualized consideration behaviour also involves counselling and personalized attention to employees towards improving their productivity (Guay, 2013; Joo& Lim, 2013). A transformational leader who possesses characteristics of individualized consideration behaviour, coaches and mentors follows to accomplish the overall organization's goals.

The Kenya Vision 2030 supports higher education in its social pillar. Various mechanisms have been put in place to help transform the higher education sector which includes establishment of key regulatory bodies and a specific ministry to deal with H.E issues (KNBS, 2016). Despite these efforts, various challenges affect academic performance of universities like duplication of programmes and varying methods of delivery in addition to a mismatch between skills offered by HE and those required by industry (OECD, 2016; UNESCO, 2017). CUE, (2017) report documented key issues affecting academic performance of universities in Kenya in terms of declining quality and relevance of teaching, low research uptake due to lack of innovation, publications and dissemination and few community outreach activities. From empirical studies reviewed, methodological, conceptual and contextual gaps have also been identified.

2. Empirical Literature Review

2.1. Individualized Consideration

In Kenya, Ondari, Were and Rotich (2018) investigated how individualized consideration could affect the performance of state corporations and revealed a notable relationship between individualized consideration and performance of state corporations. Individualized consideration significantly affected performance of state corporations. It was recommended that Cabinet Secretaries who were the majority involved in appointing leaders of State corporations should embrace the critical role of transformational leadership in state corporations. Despite this, the study revealed a methodological gap as it is not clear whether computation of a composite index was done.

Khalil and Sahibzadah (2017) sought to investigate how individualized consideration affected organizational job satisfaction in private universities. A total of 25 to 40 personnel in each university were surveyed leading to a sample of 330 selected through a non-probability or convenience sampling method. Individualized consideration was found to significantly influence job satisfaction. The study however posed a methodological gap as it used a non-probability sampling method.

Kimeto, K'Aol and Njenga (2017) conducted a study in commercial banks in Kenya to find out how idealized influence and individualized consideration influenced commitment. Idealized influence was found to significantly predict organizational commitment and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected; individualized consideration significantly predicted organizational commitment and that organizational culture influenced the relationship. The study however posed a methodological gap as there was a high variability of responses of above 50% suggesting that the sample mean was an unreliable estimator.

A study by Kirui, Iravo and Kanali (2015) sought to establish how intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration affected performance in state-owned banks in Kenya. A regression analysis test resulted to an R^2 value of 0.6374 which could be interpreted that 63% of variations in performance were brought about by variations in individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. Despite this, the study did not subject the research instrument to validity and reliability tests thereby posing a methodological gap.

From the empirical review so far undertaken, several gaps were identified. To start with, there were methodological gaps from some of the identified studies (Kirui, Iravo&Kanali, 2015; Khalil & Sahibzadah, 2017; Kimeto, K'Aol&Njenga, 2017; Ondari, Were & Rotich, 2018). Similarly, a study by Khalil and Sahibzadah (2017) posed a contextual gap as it was undertaken in a developed economy and hence the results cannot be generalized in other economies and the studies also tested individualized consideration in different contexts from the current study, (Kirui, Iravo&Kanali, 2015; Kimeto, K'Aol&Njenga, 2017; Khalil & Sahibzadah, 2017; Ondari, Were & Rotich, 2018).

2.2. University Academic Performance

There have been diverse views by researchers regarding the definition of organization performance. For instance, Scheschener (2017) views performance of organization as the effectiveness in fulfilling its purpose while Luo, Gnyawali and Bu (2016) argue that performance is used to describe evidence of previous decisions and behaviours, current strategic behaviours engaged in decisions and behaviours that intentionally target the advancement of capabilities of the organization in the future. Organizations must therefore suggest the appropriate means of achieving targeted performance levels as well as performance assessment measures that match the goals and objectives of an organization (Parmenter, 2015). Performance metrics have been suggested to play an important task that impact on the overall organizational performance (Lonial& Carter, 2015).

Cho and Dansereau (2010), define organizational performance as ways in which a company effectively achieves its targets. In addition, other researchers term it as the tangible outcomes of an organization versus the projected outputs (Tomal& Jones, 2015). Mastrangelo, Eddy and Lorenzet (2014) are of the view that an organization's performance also

depends on its employees who works towards achieving the set goals. Ondoro (2015) argues that continuous performance is key to any organization as it can be used to determine an organization's growth and progress.

From a strategic management point of view, the balanced scorecard model has been developed to determine performance of organizations over the last two decades (Kaplan & Norton 1992; Kaplan & Norton 2008). Many organizations have adopted the BSC since its inception (Kaplan & Norton 2004). Researchers such as Pietrzak, Paliszkiewicz and Klepacki (2015) argue that given the increased competition in various sectors, there is a growing interest in quality improvement, crafting and putting into practice some of the organizational performance measurement systems and hence the introduction of the BSC in most organizations to help measure performance.

Extant research has conceptualized academic performance of universities differently. Wambua, Ofafa, Otor and Ngonzo (2014) measured performance of universities in terms of teaching workload, administrative work and community service. Mutahi and Busienei (2015) measured performance of universities in terms of research output, web-ranking, student enrolment, completion rates of students and number of graduates. Kilika, K'Obonyo, Ogutu and Munyoki (2016) grouped performance of universities into objective and specific measures. Mbithi, K'Obonyo and Munyoki (2016) operationalized university performance by bringing in both financial and non-financial measures that include consumer service, internal processes and innovative learning.

Muraguri, Kimencu and Thuo (2017) operationalized university performance in terms of effectiveness of learning represented through student enrolment levels, number of new academic programmes, teaching resources; research measures represented through amount of research grants won, knowledge creation, innovation, university ranking and knowledge dissemination; community outreach represented through university reputation, community service and linkages and public private partnerships. This study borrowed from the previous researchers and operationalized the academic performance of universities in terms of quality and relevance of teaching depicted through curriculum review and academic audits; research uptake such as innovations, publications, dissemination, web ranking and community outreach in terms of university-industry collaborations, corporate social responsibility and civic engagement.

2.3. Conceptualization and Hypotheses

Based on the preceding review of literature, the conceptual framework in Figure 1 shows how the variables relate.

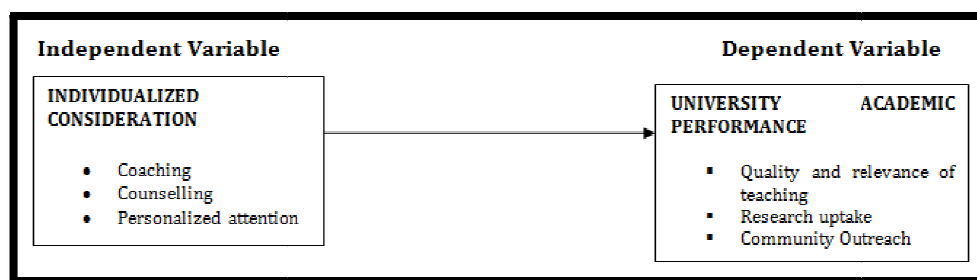


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Arising From Reviewed Literature and Resulting Conceptual Framework It Is Hypothesised That:

H₀₁: Coaching Has No Significant Effect on Academic Performance of Selected Universities in Kenya

H₀₂: Counseling Has No Significant Effect on Academic Performance of Selected Universities in Kenya

H₀₃: Personalized Attention Has No Significant Effect on Academic Performance of Selected Universities in Kenya

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a positivism philosophy as the literature upon which the study is built on is characterized by hypotheses testing from existing theories using data originally collected (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). An explanatory and descriptive research design was used as it leads to establishment of underlying relationships between variables (Saunders *et al*, 2007).

This study sought to establish how individualized consideration affects academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The study's population comprised 74 Universities in Kenya which include Public, Private and those with a Letter of Interim Authority. A multi-stage sampling technique was applied in this study to identify 370 respondents who provided the primary data for this study. A semi-structured questionnaire was used for collection of primary data through drop-and-pick later method. Primary data was collected from deans of schools and chairmen of departments in the selected universities.

Construct and content validity tests were carried out on the research instruments while test for equivalence and internal consistency test were carried out in order to test reliability of the research instrument. Reliability was tested by the value of Cronbach's Alpha (α) which is required to achieve a level of greater than 0.7 for the items of the variables to be accepted as reliable and otherwise, the value of α is accepted (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Hair, Black, Balin & Anderson, 2012). The results were as shown in Table 1.

Variable	No of Items		
		Pilot	Remarks
Coaching	4	.987	Reliable
Counselling	3	.938	Reliable
Personalized attention	5	.899	Reliable
Overall	12	.941	Reliable

Table 1: Reliability Coefficients

Source: Survey Data, (2020)

From the Results shown in Table 1, it was observed that individualized consideration and university academic performance had their Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient greater than 0.7 with the aggregate coefficient being 0.941 a confirmation that the two constructs were reliable for the study.

4. Findings

4.1. Respondents' Characteristics

The findings reported are drawn from the part of the questionnaire which sought to obtain the respondent's demographic information. The demographic characteristics findings were reported through frequency tables. The study aimed at obtaining information relating to respondents' gender, number of years worked in the university, position held in the university, number of years one has served in the current position, previous administrative appointments and any other administrative responsibilities held. Additionally, respondents were required to indicate the number of faculty members reporting to the respondent, highest academic qualification, area of specialization for Bachelors, Masters and PhD degree, number of workshops/seminars attended and their ranking of the university in terms of academic performance.

Category	Narrative	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	170	68.0
	Female	80	32.0
Years of service	3years and below	68	27.2
	4-7 years	58	23.2
	8-11 years	71	28.4
	12 years and above	53	21.2
Highest Academic Qualification	Masters	54	21.6
	PhD	181	72.4
	Postdoctoral	15	6.0
Position held in the University	Dean	99	39.6
	Chairman	151	60.4
Years in current Position	Less than 2 years	96	38.4
	Between 2-5 years	103	41.2
	More than 5 years	51	20.4
Previous administrative positions	Examination coordinator	129	51.6
	Director	48	19.2
	Chairman	38	15.2
	None of the above	35	14.0

Table 2: Respondents' Characteristics

Source: Survey Data, (2020)

4.2. Descriptive Results

The study aimed at determining the extent to which each indicator of inspirational motivation and university academic performance were adopted in the selected universities in Kenya.

4.2.1. Individualized Consideration

Individualized consideration was the independent variable for the study and it involves developing followers through coaching and mentoring where followers are engaged individually for goal achievement. The variable was adopted in the study as it provides an understanding of some of the characteristics of a transformational leader which depict behaviour of coaching and mentorship by leaders to their followers to realize the overall organization's projected goals.

The variable was operationalized using indicators such as coaching and mentoring to improve work performance, individualized treatment for each team member, personalized attention to each team member, creation of learning opportunities to staff members, building and developing followers' strength understanding team members' needs, team members uniqueness to empathize, understanding each team members background, acknowledge team members' talent,

engagement of team member for goal achievement and coaching team members to handle assignment. Table 3 presents the sample mean scores of the responses of each attribute of individualized consideration and their respective standard deviation.

Variable	Statements on Individualized Consideration	n	Min	Max.	Mean	SD
Coaching	Coaching to improve work performance	250	1.00	5.00	3.43	1.13
	Mentoring to improve work performance	250	1.00	5.00	3.36	1.21
	Creating learning opportunities to staff members	250	1.00	5.00	3.51	1.20
	Coaching team members to handle assignment	250	1.00	5.00	3.58	1.04
Counselling	Building and developing follower's strength	250	1.00	5.00	3.25	1.16
	Acknowledging team members' talent	250	1.00	5.00	3.69	1.04
	Engaging team members for goal achievement	250	1.00	5.00	3.58	1.11
Personalized attention	Treating each team member individually	250	1.00	5.00	3.50	1.19
	Personalized attention to each team member	250	1.00	5.00	3.39	1.21
	Understanding team members needs	250	1.00	5.00	3.33	1.21
	Appreciating team member's uniqueness to empathize	250	1.00	5.00	3.18	1.21
	Understanding each team member's background	250	1.00	5.00	3.39	1.13
	Aggregate Score	250			3.43	1.15

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Individualized Consideration

From Table 3, and as far as coaching is concerned, the respondents agreed to a moderate extent that they ensured that team members underwent coaching to improve work performance (Mean= 3.43; SD=1.13). They also agreed that they mentored team members so as to improve work performance to a moderate extent (Mean=3.36; SD=1.21). Additionally, most of the respondents affirmed that they endeavoured to create learning opportunities to the staff members to moderate extent (Mean= 3.51; SD=1.20). The study found out that the respondents coached team members to handle assignment to a moderate extent (Mean= 3.58; SD=1.04).

Under counselling, the respondents ensured they had built and developed follower's strength to a moderate extent (Mean=3.25; SD=1.16). Further, the respondents agreed that they acknowledged team member talent to a moderate extent (Mean=3.69; SD=1.04). In addition, they were in agreement that they ensured engagement of team members for goal achievement to a moderate extent (Mean=3.58; SD=1.11).

On offering personalized attention, most respondents agreed that they gave personalized attention to each team member to a moderate extent (Mean=3.39; SD=1.21). The respondents inculcated that they aspired to give individualized treatment of each member of their team to a moderate extent (Mean=3.50; SD=1.19). Additionally, the respondents affirmed that they sought to understand each team member's background to a moderate extent (Mean=3.39; SD=1.13). Further, the respondents encouraged team members' uniqueness empathy to a moderate extent (Mean=3.18; SD=1.21) and sought to understand every team member needs to a moderate extent (Mean= 3.33; SD=1.21). On aggregate, individualized consideration had a mean score of 3.43 and a standard deviation of 1.15 an indication that individualized consideration was emphasized and practiced at a moderate level by school level managers at the selected universities in Kenya.

4.2.2. University Academic Performance

University academic performance was adopted as the study's dependent variable and it represents the ways in which a university effectively achieves its targets. The indicators to operationalize university academic performance were borrowed from the previous researchers (Wambua, Ofafa, Otor&Ngonzo, 2014; Mutahi&Busienei, 2015; Kilika, K'Obonyo, Ogotu & Munyoki, 2016; Mbithi, K'Obonyo& Munyoki, 2016; Muraguri, Kimencu&Thuo, 2017).

University academic performance was operationalized in terms of number of new academic programmes developed, curriculum reviews undertaken, research conference papers presented, peer reviewed journal articles, community outreach programmes initiated and implemented, active MoUs signed with external stakeholders, research grant proposals, self-sponsored students for Bachelor, Masters and PhD programmes, consultancy projects undertaken by staff, collaborations initiated and books and book chapters written by members of staff. The five-point Likert scale for this

variable was represented as 1= not at all, 2= less than 5, 3= between 5 and 10, 4= between 10-15, 5= above 15. Table 4 presents the mean scores of the responses of each attribute of university academic performance and their respective standard deviation.

Variable	No. of Items	n	Sample Mean Score	Sample Standard Deviation
Quality and relevance of teaching	Number of new academic programmes developed	250	3.16	1.05
	Number of curriculum reviews undertaken	250	3.62	1.20
	Number of self-sponsored students admitted for Bachelor, Masters and PhD programmes	250	3.50	1.23
Research uptake	Number of research conference papers presented by members	250	3.51	1.27
	Number of peer reviewed journal articles published	250	3.40	1.10
	Number of research grant proposals written	250	3.41	1.21
	Number of consultancy projects undertaken by staff	250	3.48	1.18
	Number of collaborations initiated	250	3.63	1.21
	Number of books and book chapters written by members of staff	250	3.73	1.11
Community Outreach	Number of active MOUs signed with external stakeholders	250	3.48	1.18
	Number of collaborations initiated	250	3.63	1.21

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on University Academic Performance

Based on university academic performance, the respondents agreed that the number of new academic programmes developed measures their academic performance to a moderate extent (Mean=3.16; SD=1.05). It was also noted that the number of curriculum reviews undertaken across the universities was to a moderate extent (Mean=3.62; SD=1.20) meaning that majority undertook between 5-10 curriculum reviews. Moreover, the respondents agreed to a moderate extent that the number of research conference papers presented by team members measured academic performance (Mean=3.51; SD=1.27) implying that there were at least between 5-10 research conference papers. Additionally, the respondents agreed that the number of peer reviewed journal articles published measured performance to a moderate extent (Mean=3.40; SD=1.10) a confirmation that the respondents committed to having between 5 and 10 peer reviewed journal articles. It was noted that most of the respondents agreed that the number of community outreach programs initiated and implemented measured academic performance to a moderate extent (Mean=3.12; SD=1.21) as they ensured to initiate at least 5-10 community outreach programs.

Further, the respondents agreed that the number of active MOUs signed with external stakeholders measured academic performance to a moderate extent (Mean=3.50; SD=1.18) a confirmation that majority of the universities had between 5 and 10 active MOUs signed with external stakeholders. The number of research grant proposals written measured academic performance to a moderate extent (Mean=3.41; SD=1.21) implying that the universities had at least between 5 and 10 research grant proposals written and the number of self-sponsored students admitted for Bachelor, Masters and PhD programmes measured academic performance to a moderate extent (Mean=3.50; SD=1.23). When asked about the number of consultancy projects undertaken by staff, the respondents agreed that these measured academic performance to a moderate extent (Mean=3.48; SD=1.18) implying that the number of consultancy projects undertaken by staff ranged between 5 and 10. The study also found out that most of the respondents agreed that the number of collaborations initiated was between 5 and 10 and measured academic performance to a moderate extent (Mean=3.63; SD=1.21). Finally, the respondents agreed that the number of books and book chapters written by members of staff was between 5 and 10 and that it measured academic performance to a moderate extent (Mean=3.73; SD=1.11). The aggregate results showed a mean score of 3.46 and a standard deviation of 1.18. It was noted that performance was relatively the same from the respondents across the universities and this may be due to the fact that all the universities are regulated by the same bodies such as Ministry of Education and Commission for University Education and hence they have to meet requirements of these regulatory bodies for them to continue being relevant.

4.3. Test of Hypotheses

4.3.1. Test of Direct Relationship

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.394	.155	.152	.32352	.155	45.544	1	248	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), VAR00003									
ANOVA									
Model	Sum of Squares		df		Mean Square		F		Sig.
1	Regression		4.7671		4.767		45.544		.000
	Residual		25.957		.105				
	Total		30.724						
a. Dependent Variable: University Academic Performance									
b. Predictors: (Constant), Individualized Consideration									
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients		t		Sig.
	β								
1	(Constant)		2.254	.180			12.550		.000
	Individualized consideration		.351	.052	.394		6.749		.000

Table 5: Regressing Composite Index of Individualized Consideration on University Academic Performance

Objective one of the studies sought to evaluate the effect of individualized consideration on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. Its null hypothesis (H_{01}) was that individualized consideration has no significant effect on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The regression results for hypothesis one indicated that the $\beta = 0.394$ with a P-value of 0.000. This means increasing individualized consideration by one-unit results to an increase of 0.394 units in academic performance of universities. Therefore, at $P < 0.05$ significance level, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected implying that individualized consideration has a positive statistical and significant effect on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya.

4.3.2. Test of Hypotheses One to Three

Model		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
						R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1		0.433	0.187	0.178	0.31856	0.187	18.917	0
ANOVA								
Model		Sum of Squares		df		Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.759		3		1.92	18.917	0
	Residual	24.965		246		0.101		
	Total	30.724		249				
a. Dependent Variable: University Academic Performance								
b. Predictors: (Constant), Coaching, Counselling, Personalized Attention								
Coefficients								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
			β	Std. Error			Beta	Tolerance
1	(Constant)	2.22	0.178		12.485	0		
	Coaching	0.038	0.031	0.071	1.224	0.222	0.973	1.028
	Counselling	0.145	0.029	0.29	4.973	0	0.971	1.03
	Personalized attention	0.178	0.04	0.26	4.442	0	0.967	1.034
a. Dependent Variable: University Academic Performance								

Table 6: Regressing components of Individualized Consideration on University Academic Performance

Source: Survey Data (2020)

The first objective of this study was to examine the effect of coaching on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The corresponding null hypothesis (H_{01}) was that coaching has no significant effect on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The study established a significant positive effect of coaching on academic performance at $p < 0.000$; $t = 4.973$, as a result the study rejected the null hypothesis. Further, the regression results for this hypothesis indicated that the $\beta = 0.145$ with a P-value of 0.000 which means that a unit increase in coaching would result to 0.145 unit increase in academic performance. Therefore, at $p < 0.05$ level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected implying that coaching has a positive statistical and significant effect on academic performance of universities in Kenya.

The second objective of this study was to examine the effect of counselling on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The corresponding null hypothesis (H_{02}) was that counselling has no significant effect on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The study established a significant positive effect of counselling on academic performance at $p < 0.000$; $t = 4.973$, as a result the study rejected the null hypothesis. Further, the regression results for this hypothesis indicated that the $\beta = 0.145$ with a P-value of 0.000 which means that a unit increase in counselling would result to 0.145 unit increase in academic performance. Therefore, at $p < 0.05$ level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected implying that counselling has a positive statistical and significant effect on academic performance of universities in Kenya.

The third objective of this study was to examine the effect of personalized attention on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The corresponding null hypothesis (H_{03}) was that personalized attention has no significant effect on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The study established a significant positive effect of personalized attention on academic performance at $p < 0.000$; $t = 4.442$, as a result the study rejected the null hypothesis. Further, the regression results for this hypothesis indicated that the $\beta = 0.178$ with a P-value of 0.000 which means that a unit increase in personalized attention would result to 0.178 unit increase in academic performance. Therefore, at $p < 0.05$ level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) was rejected implying that personalized attention has a positive statistical and significant effect on academic performance of universities in Kenya.

The conclusion on the findings reported from this hypothesis test is explained using the descriptive characteristics of the variable, theoretical literature and the previous empirical studies. The first basis of explanation is the descriptive characteristics of the variable. Individualized consideration had an aggregate (Mean=3.43; SD=1.15) implying that generally, the variable recorded results at a moderate extent. Despite this, five items which are important aspects of a leader (individualized treatment, creation of learning opportunities, acknowledgement of team members, engagement of team members and coaching team members to handle assignment) recorded results showing they are practiced to a high extent. These attributes are relevant if a leader is to develop followers through coaching and mentoring for goal achievement. Thus, it is a clear indication that individualized consideration attributes developed by the various university leaders contributed to a positive academic performance. Even though the real-life practice of strategic management in organizations assigns the strategic management practices associated with transformational leadership to the top management of an organization.

Pearce and Robinson (2012) lay emphasis on the importance of the three levels of strategy which include corporate, business and functional level for the purpose of permeating leadership at all levels of the organization. Across these three-tier decision-making levels of hierarchy found in most organizations the strategy remains the same in an organization while the focus changes according to the level. In the case of universities, both deans of schools and chairmen of departments work towards implementing the decisions of the top management and they have to formulate their section's decisions in line with those of the top management of the university. In addition, Pasmore (2014) opines that how the management team handles the tasks of strategizing the long-term direction through leadership determines the overall organization's performance. The fact that hypotheses one to three (H_{01} to H_{03}) are supported provided evidence that Deans and Chairpersons have worked in tandem with the university management in the implementation of the strategic goals.

Secondly, based on the respondents' prior administrative experiences, the study observed that in terms of years of service, positions held in the university and the average number of years serving in the current position, majority of the respondents were chairmen of departments, they had served the university for a period of more than 8 years and above and also served as members of university senate, a body mandated to make crucial decisions regarding academic performance of university. This is in line with the structural responsibility of Deans and Chairmen who are mandated to achieve the overall university's goal at their levels. Muthimi and Kilika (2018) in a theoretical paper cited the role of the prior experience in developing a leadership strategy by focusing on the quality of leaders and their leadership capabilities. Thus, based on these prior experiences, the study leans on the results obtained on the universities efforts undertaken to prepare the Deans and Chairmen to explain the significant positive effect of individualized consideration on university academic performance.

Thirdly the study relied on transformational leadership theory to explain the conclusion of hypotheses one to three (H_{01} to H_{03}). The theory provides a rational approach where leaders need to decide on values acceptable by followers and choose acceptable behaviour and action styles for their followers. Further, it is noted that individualized consideration entails the development of followers through coaching and mentoring where followers are engaged on an individual basis for goal achievement and that it also involves counselling and providing personal attention to employees towards enhancing their performance (Guay, 2013; Joo & Lim, 2013). From the descriptive characteristics of the variable, it emerged that majority of the respondents practised acceptable behaviours to their followers thus leading to an understanding why individualized consideration significantly influences the academic performance of selected universities in Kenya.

A number of previous studies have been on the construct of individualized consideration (Kirui, Iravo&Kanali, 2015; Khalil &Sahibzadah, 2017; Kimeto, K'Aol&Njenga, 2017; Ondari, Were &Rotich, 2018). The studies were done in parastatals, private universities and commercial banks. The studies measured the relationship between individualized consideration and organizational performance, employees' job satisfaction and firm commitment. Generally, the studies found out that individualized consideration has a positive effect on organizational performance. The current study used the components of individualized consideration drawn from the postulates of transformational leadership theory and measured against performance in a knowledge intensive sector specifically the higher education in Kenya using the indicators that are specific to the measurement of performance of the work in a university.

Based on the findings reported and explanations given by the study, the findings of hypotheses one to three (H_{01} to H_{03}) contribute to enhancement of knowledge in strategic management and strategic leadership studies in three dimensions. To start with is the role of the leaders' prior administrative experience which in this case influenced them towards goal achievement. Secondly, is the role of the dimensions of leadership strategy and finally, the extent of practice of the attributes of individualized consideration which in this case were practised at a moderate extent. Thus, the study provides more insights on how organizations can apply the attributes of individualized consideration to drive performance.

4.4. Discussions and Implications for Theory and Practice

The conclusions from this hypothesis test are supported using the descriptive characteristics of the variable, biographic data, theoretical literature and the previous empirical studies. The first basis of explanation is the descriptive characteristics of the variable. Individualized consideration recorded an aggregate mean score of 3.43 and standard deviation of 1.15 implying that generally, the variable recorded results at a moderate extent. Despite this, five items which are important aspects of a leader (individualized treatment, creation of learning opportunities, acknowledgement of team members, engagement of team members and coaching team members to handle assignment) recorded results showing they are practiced to a high extent. These attributes are relevant if a leader is to develop followers through coaching and mentoring for goal achievement. Thus, it is a clear indication that individualized consideration attributes developed by the various university leaders contributed to a positive academic performance.

Pearce and Robinson (2012) lay emphasis on the importance corporate, business and functional levels in strategy for the purpose of permeating leadership at all levels of the organization. Across these three-tier decision-making levels of hierarchy found in most organizations the strategy remains the same in an organization while the focus changes according to the level. In the case of universities, both deans of schools and chairmen of departments work towards implementing the decisions of the top management and they have to formulate their section's decisions in line with those of the top management of the university. In addition, Pasmore (2014) argues that how management team handles strategic roles in an organization determines how to achieve the overall performance. Supporting the findings of H_{02} provided evidence that Deans and Chairpersons have worked in tandem with the university management in the implementation of the strategic goals.

Secondly, based on the respondents' prior administrative experiences, majority of the respondents were chairmen of departments having served the university for a period of more than 8 years and above and also served as members of university senate, a body mandated to make crucial decisions regarding academic performance of university. This is in line with the structural responsibility of Deans and Chairmen who are mandated to achieve the overall university's goal at their levels. Muthimi and Kilika (2018) in a theoretical paper cited the role of the prior experience in developing a leadership strategy by focusing on the quality of leaders and their leadership capabilities. Thus, based on these prior experiences, the study leans on the results obtained on the universities efforts undertaken to prepare the Deans and Chairmen to explain the significant positive effect of individualized consideration on university academic performance.

Thirdly the study relied on transformational leadership theory to explain the conclusion of hypothesis one (H_{01}). The theory provides a rational approach where leaders need to decide on values acceptable by followers and choose acceptable behaviour and action styles for their followers. Further, it is noted that individualized consideration is about developing followers through coaching and mentoring for goal achievement and that it also involves counselling and individually attending to employees' needs towards improving their performance (Guay, 2013; Joo& Lim, 2013). From the descriptive characteristics of the variable, it emerged that majority of the respondents practiced acceptable behaviours to their followers thus leading to an understanding why individualized consideration significantly influences the academic performance of selected universities in Kenya.

Previous studies have been on the construct of individualized consideration (Kirui, Iravo&Kanali, 2015; Khalil &Sahibzadah, 2017; Kimeto, K'Aol&Njenga, 2017; Ondari, Were &Rotich, 2018). The studies were done in parastatals, private universities and commercial banks. The studies measured how individualized consideration relates to organizational performance, employees' job satisfaction and firm commitment. Generally, the studies concluded that individualized consideration positively affects organizational performance. The current study used the components of individualized consideration drawn from the postulates of transformational leadership theory and measured against performance in a knowledge intensive sector specifically the higher education in Kenya using the indicators that are specific to the measurement of performance of the work in a university.

From the findings reported and explanations given by the study, the conclusions of hypothesis two (H_{02}) contribute to enhancement of knowledge in strategic management and strategic leadership studies in three dimensions. To start with is the role of the leaders' prior administrative experience which in this case influenced them towards goal achievement. Secondly, is the significance of the various attributes of leadership and finally, the extent of practice of the attributes of individualized consideration which in this case were practiced at a moderate extent. Thus, the study provides

more insights on how organizations can apply the attributes of individualized consideration to drive organizational outcome.

4.5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The objective of the study was to examine the effect of individualized consideration on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The study hypothesized that individualized consideration has no significant effect on academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The results of objective two indicated that individualized consideration had a significantly effect on the academic performance of selected universities in Kenya. The study supported the conclusions through the use of descriptive statistics from the indicators of individualized consideration, postulates of the transformational leadership theory and previous researchers. From the descriptive analysis of individualized consideration, the study confirmed that universities in Kenya were committed to ensuring that the leaders exercise key attributes of individualized consideration.

From the demographic characteristics of the respondents, it was observed that the most of them were chairmen of departments and also served as members of the university senate, a body mandated to make crucial decisions regarding the academic performance of the university. Thus, given this kind of experience in doing planning and executing strategic management practices for survival in the same environment justifies the significant effect of individualized consideration on the academic performance of selected universities in Kenya.

The reported findings on the hypothesis implied that in terms of the role of the leaders' prior administrative experience which in this case influenced them in goal achievement, the role of attributes of leadership strategy and finally the extent of the practice of the attributes of individualized consideration which in this case were practiced at a moderate extent. This thus led to the conclusion that leaders' prior administrative experience, the role of attributes of leadership strategy and the extent of its application affects the academic performance of universities in Kenya.

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