

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The performance of universities in Kenya holds paramount importance due to their significant role in driving socio-economic development. These universities have to continually teach students and prepare them adequately for the job market and economic and social development. The study sought to establish the effect of strategic leadership on organizational performance of universities in Kenya. The study was guided by strategic leadership theory.

Methodology: The research design for the study was descriptive. The population of the study was the 77 universities in Kenya, with the target population being 6 universities out of the 77, including 3 public and 3 private universities. This was a census study as the population was small and easily reachable. The study used mixed methods in data collection. Structured questionnaires were issued to the heads of departments, and interviews were conducted with the deans of students of the universities. A pilot study was conducted at Egerton University. Descriptive statistics were applied to the quantitative data, and correlation results were used to test the hypothesis. To evaluate the reliability of the data collection instruments, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated.

Results: The Pearson correlation coefficient for strategic leadership was $r=0.764^{**}$ at $p<0.000$. The results indicated a strong positive correlation between strategic leadership and organizational performance of universities in Kenya. Therefore, organizational performance significantly affects organizational performance, hence the null hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion and Recommendations: This study observed that a clear vision and direction for the organization's future and strategic planning enhances performance and contributes to effective decision-making processes that positively influence organizational outcomes. Additionally, a leadership that effectively communicates and aligns employees with the overall strategy and goals promotes an environment of adaptability and innovation. Ministry of Education, specifically the Department of Higher Education, should develop appropriate strategies and guidelines to amplify the performance of universities. The ministry, through the Commission for higher education, may enact the recommendations of the study to enhance performance of universities.

