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The Role of Emotional Intelligence, Communication Competence, Team Building, Problem Solving Skills and Culture in Selected Counties in Kenya

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ABSTRACT: Change management refers to the actions of communicating the need for change, mobilizing followers (people) and resources to support the change direction and ultimately evaluating the circumstances brought about by the change. Coping with change has become a constant challenge for contemporary leaders, communities, governments and corporations. However, as the complexity and spread of change has increased, it has become apparent that leading change initiatives requires proper exploration of the critical factors that govern realization of acceptable change management levels among some selected counties in Kenya. This paper examines and discusses the role of emotional intelligence, communication competence, team building and problem solving skills of top management level of the devolved government units- county governments, as perceived by the respondents of this survey who were middle level managers; with or without organizational culture on change management.

Keywords: *Change, Change Management.Emotional intelligence, Communication competence, Team building, Problem solving skills and Culture.*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Contemporary studies on change management in essence recognize two fundamental theories associated with it. These are the eight step theory by Kotter (2012) and the three step theory by Kurt Lewin (1951). Kotter emphasized the concept of leading change rather than managing change whereas Kurt Lewin proposed change being a product of planning hence laying emphasis on problem solving ability. In all, while Kotter insinuated in his eight step theory that leading change culminated from making efforts to establish and grow an organizational culture, Kurt Lewin on the other hand, noted his three step theory being a people drivenprocessrelevant to the need for change which is capable of addressingany underlying problems of a given society or institution.

However, given the foregoing, other views from authorities such as Quinn, et al, (2000) and Melo, et al (2014) suggest that change is not just influenced by leaders or plans but rather may be influenced by variables such as communication competence, emotional intelligence and team building capacity. This is inscribed in what is termed as the Leadership Competency Framework (Ibid.,). Government being a leader and driver of change utilizes leadership competency framework to institute change. Governments the world over are cognizant of communication competence, emotional intelligence and team building capacity of stakeholders. This said, it is not enough to merely reiterate that change is instituted, it often emerges as a result of pressure emanating from within or outside environments. Indeed the pressure of change can be seen in governments and institutions across the globe. County Governments in Kenya for example are faced by the need for change in their day-today businesses. This paper examines and discusses the role of emotional intelligence, communication competence, team building and problem solving skills of top management level of the devolved government units- county governments, as perceived by the respondents of this survey who were middle level managers;with or without organizational culture on change management.

II.   METHODOLOGY

2.1 The Study Area

The study was conducted across three counties in Kenya namely; Kakamega, Meru and Kwale.

2.2 Study Design and Sampling

The study used a cross-sectional design of positivity nature. Cross-sectional designs of positivity nature focus on an objective description and exploitation, and researchers are seen as independent. In this case, the behavior of individuals, groups or organizations under study is explained on the basis of the facts and observations generally of a quantitative nature that are gathered by the researcher. This approach is referred to as scientific, empiricist, quantitative or deductive (Veal, 2005).

2.3 The Study Population

The target population of the study comprises 1,192 middle-level management staff from selected county governments distributed as shown in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Distribution of Target Population by County

County Government	Number of Middle-Level Management staff
1. Kakamega	606
2. Meru	395
3. Kwale	191
Total`	1,192

Source: Individual County Annual County Public Service Board Reports (2017)

2.4 Data Collection, Management and Analysis

Data collection was accomplished by use of a formal questionnaire administered across all the job cadres in the county establishment. All data were scored on a Likert scale calibration of one to five (1-5) where one represented the least level of satisfaction or "a respondent being least convinced" and five (5) being the highest level thereof. Average scores for each main explanatory variable were computed by calculating the sum and mean of the composite components of the factors that constitute emotional intelligence or communication competence through to team building, problem solving skills and organizational culture. A mean score for change management constituent factors or components was also established to facilitate ease of modeling to examine the predictive power of the explanatory variables on change management.

To test the predictive power of the explanatory and intervening variables, two models were fitted; one without the intervening variables (organizational culture) and the other the other with organizational culture. The results of the two regression models are summarized in the tables below. Further, the role of each explanatory variable in estimating the influence of change management was examined through computation of the change in the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the results presented thereof.

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

The study reached out to respondents with the attributes reported below.

Table 3.1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

Characteristic	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	216	53.2
	Female	190	46.8
	Total	**406**	**100.0**
Highest level of education	Diploma	74	18.2
	Bachelor's Degree	208	51.2
	Master's Degree	113	27.8
	PhD	3	0.7
	Other	8	2.0
	Total	**406**	**100.0**
Job Group	M	236	58.1
	N	110	27.1
	P	41	10.1
	Q	19	4.7
	Total	**406**	**100.0**

Working Experience	Less than 1 year	44	10.8
	1-5 years	264	65.0
	6-10 years	59	14.5
	Over 10 years	39	9.6
	Total	**406**	**100.0**

3.2 Exploration of the descriptors of the variables

The structure of the variables was explored and the descriptive results (based on means) for stand-alone summarized below.

Table 3:2: Descriptive statistics of the explanatory and response variable scores

Variable	Mean score	Standard deviation	Stderr
Emotion intelligence	3.764	0.599	0.045
Communication competence	3.795	0.652	0.049
Team building	3.827	0.666	0.050
Problem solving	3.724	0.667	0.050
Organizational culture	3.660	0.676	0.051
Change management	2.277	0.927	0.070

The results in the table above demonstrate that on the overall change management was rated at slightly above average even as all variables were scored at above 70% of the maximum level of satisfaction or confidence. For instance, for emotional intelligence, the mean score of 3.764 out of five (5) translates to around 75% perceived level of existence or realization. Similarly, the 2.277 mean score for change management means 46% level of perceived levels of confidence that change management exists.

3.3 Testing the Predictive Power of the Explanatory Variables on Change Management

Below are the results of the forward regression procedure.

Table 3.3: Regression statistics/results for the two fitted models (without OC and with OC) for the combined (Kakamega, Meru and Kwale) Counties data

Variable	Model One (1), R^2=0.433 Main effects (without Org Cult)	Model Two (2), R^2=0.633 Factoring Org culture
Constant	0.974 (0.195)	0.239 (0.167)
Emotional intelligence	0.088 (0.089)	0.151 (0.072)**
Communication Competence	0.010 (0.096)	-0.234 (0.079)**
Team building	0.100 (0.079)	0.153 (0.064)**
Problem solving	0.513 (0.089)**	0.268 (0.074)**
Organizational culture	-	0.581 (0.044)**

**=significant at p<0.05

From the table above, model one (1) examines the influence of the postulated main effects' variables EI, CC, TB and PS on change management (CM) for Kakamegacounty. The results show that respondents perceive emotional intelligence as significant to change management. Further examination of the model fit reveals that only about 30% of the total variation is explained by the fitted model (for R2=0.29) meaning that 70% of change management is influenced by other variables not specified in the model. However considering that the study proposed organizational culture (OC) as a moderating variable it was observed that including this variable (OC) in the model improved the predictive power of the model from 30% to 71.7 or 72%. This implies that OC had an incremental and significant contribution to the predictive power on CM of up to 42% as shown in model two (2) above. The influence of the predictive power of OC is also demonstrated through improvement of the significance level of problem solving.

3.4 Exploring the Role Each Explanatory Variables on the Response Variable
The table below presents the R-square and R-square charge statistics through the model fitting procedure from the variable "emotional intelligence" through to factoring organizational change.

Table 3.4: Final forward regression procedure results

Variable	Coefficient (β)		Stderr of β	R-Square	R^2-change	Sig
Constant	0.239	0.167	-	-		NS
Emotional intelligence		0.151	0.072	0.288	0.288	**
Communication competence		-0.234	0.079	0.329	0.041	**
Team building		0.153	0.064	0.374	0.045	**
Problem solving	0.268	0.074	0.433	0.059	**	
Organizational culture		0.581	0.044	0.633	0.200	***

=significant at $p<0.05$,   *= significant at $p<0.01$

The table above summarizes the forward regression (model fitting procedure which fits the independent variables one by one in order to determine or measure its predictive power on the dependent variable) procedure results. The table presents the R-square values after including an additional independent variable as shown in the R-square column. The change in R-square value simply presents the "additivity" or how much influence emotional intelligence or communication competence has in the total change/variation that the model fit explains on change management. The table clearly shows as in the last results that fitting or including all the variables (but without organizational culture) gave an R-square value of 0.433 or 43.4% predictive power while including organizational culture improved the predictive power to 0.633 or 63.3%. This in summary means that organizational culture had the highest contribution of 20% of the total variation to change management.

3.5 Implications of the study
The results of the regression procedure without factoring organizational culture demonstrate that change management is accounted for by 43.3% while that with organizational culture accounts for change management by 63.3%. These results give an indication that in the absence of organizational culture, up to 56.7% of change management variation is unexplained. Factoring organizational culture reduces the unexplained variation by 20% to only 36.7%. These results give justification that organizational culture is an essential driver to change management. The study also suggests that there is need for further research to enable scholars to account for the 36.7% unexplained factors that have an influence on the variation of change management.

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