The Negative Impact of Telling Leadership Style on the Performance of Employees at the Kenya's International Airports

John MWANGI NDIRITU[1], Caren AKOMO OUMA[1], and Paul MICHAEL OKANDA[1]

1. Chandaria School of Business, United States International University-Africa

Correspondence: ndiritumwangi@gmail.com, ndiritumwangi@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Due to the low employee performance, the four international airports in Kenya are currently experiencing unhurried processing of arriving, transiting and departing air passengers leading to incessant customer complaints. So far, no empirical study has been done to determine the cause of the slow employee performance at the Kenya's international airports. The objective of the study was to establish the impact of telling leadership style on the employee output at the four international airports in Kenya and its contribution to the poor employee performance. The philosophy preferred for this study was positivism. The study targeted the employees who process air passengers at the international airports in Kenya who are segregated into 3 cadres as follows: senior level, middle level and shop floor managers. The target population was composed of the five classes of employees who are involved in the processing of air passengers. The study undertook a census of the entire 694 employees. The data was gathered by means of structured questionnaires using the drop and pick method. Both inferential and descriptive statistics were used to tally and analyze the data. Telling leadership style had a correlation coefficient of .700a indicating a strong positive association between telling by the leadership and employee performance. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.490 indicates that approximately 49% of the variability observed in employee performance within International Airports in Kenya can be attributed to telling leadership as one aspect of situational leadership. From the Linear regression, the value of p was determined as $p<.05$ (p value of 0.00 and =0.474) and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected indicating that telling leadership has a great impact on employee performance. From the study it was determined that telling leadership has a serious negative implication on employee performance as well as high employee turnover. It was further confirmed that telling leadership creates a tense working environment coupled with low annual profits. The study shunned the use of telling leadership style in the Kenya's international airports and encouraged leaders to use other facets of situational leadership style as they are more supportive to the employee performance.

Keywords: *Nature of Leadership, Telling Leadership, Employee Retention and Employee Performance*

INTRODUCTION

The viability of any organization globally in the 21st century heavily depends on forward looking leadership and vibrant employee output. Employee performance is very important to the growth and competitiveness of a business. For the employees to be efficient and motivated, a supportive leadership is required to offer the necessary backup required for the employees to optimize productivity. The combination of the two factors determines not only the market share of an organization but also the profitability of a firm. Good leadership determines a conducive and appropriate working environment, which in turn creates a motivated and efficient workforce (Abbas & Khalid, 2019).

In a study carried in Indonesia among hospital staff to determine the impact of risk and workload on employee performance, 53% of the respondents agreed that support and a listening leadership is all what they needed to maintain a high performance. Many firms that are facing bankruptcy today simply failed to manage the leadership and employee performance dynamics (Rusmiati, Harjadi & Fitriani, 2021). Telling leadership style has been observed in several sectors of the world economies. Telling leadership refers to the art of giving instructions and orders to the subordinates in an organization with the sole intention of ensuring that the employees undertake the required tasks correctly and in a timely manner. Telling leadership involves allocating chores as well as providing guidelines to the employees on how to carry out each task without giving them an opportunity to give their inputs. Telling leadership ensures that the goods and services are delivered to the customers on time and that the quality is not compromised (Ugoani, 2020).

A telling leader issues instructions on the activities and actions to be taken by the employees without giving them an opportunity to make their contribution or opinion on how the tasks should be undertaken (Ridlwan *et al.*, 2021). This style is recommended where the staff are poorly skilled but highly committed. This occurs especially with new employees who have passed the aptitude test, have just joined the company, have not assimilated the company policies and culture and are just in the induction stage. This requires the supervisor to take the role of a platoon commander whereby they issue instructions and oversee closely the activities of the subordinates until they acquire the requisite skills to work without supervision (Arif *et al.*, 2020).

According to the Blanchard (1985) model, employees go through four stages of development before optimizing their performance. He describes the lowest level of performance as D1 where the employees have the minimum level of competence though they are willing to learn and work as well. At the D1 level, employees require clear instructions and close supervision to be productive and acquire the requisite working skills as time and experience progresses (Northouse, 2017). Henkel and Bourdeau (2018), discouraged the use of the telling style as it tended to violate the rights of employees and is normally characterized by high staff turnover as well as frequent industrial action. They noted that while low skilled employees required a lot of supervision, they encouraged the leaders to invest more in training and skilling of employees to empower them to work with minimum supervision instead of continued use of the telling style which has severe and negative long term effects on employees.

In their study on the employee wellbeing as a result of the leader's concern on the worker's welfare in Germany, Pinck & Sonnentag (2018), carried out a study to determine if welfare programs in an organization had an effect on employee retention and performance. They carried out the study that involved 7 companies engaged in hotel and restaurant businesses. The study used a sample size of 150 employees in the 4 lowest grades in the 7 companies. The response rate was 55%. From the study, 56% of the respondents agreed that where the employees believed that the leader was genuine and sincere in their concern for the employees, the retention of workers was high, committed and willing to go an extra mile to serve the organization even if the leader did not offer bonuses or rewards. They further noted that employee retention was not as a result of how much the leader was able to offer but instead it was as a result of how much empathy that the leader was able to demonstrate to the employees. They concluded that leadership style adopted by the leaders of a firm is of great significance to the employee retention (Pinck & Sonnentag, 2018).

In their study on the leading causes of employee turn-over among the 10 leading manufacturing firms in Malaysia, Al-Suraihi et al. (2021), carried out a survey to determine the leading causes among the seven main reasons cited by employees during their exit interviews as follows; job stress, job satisfaction, job security, work environment, motivation, wages, and rewards. The survey used secondary data sourced from the human resource departments of the 10 firms using 225 exit interview reports from the human resource departments of the 10 firms. Over 70% of the reports indicated that the course of the exit from the firm was unfair and unreasonable leadership as compared to all the other 6 factors that accounted for the other 30%. It was also established that the persistent turnover affected the efficiency of the firms negatively as the affected organizations had to keep on hiring and training new employees all the time (Al-Suraihi *et al.*, 2021).

Due to the low employee performance, the four international airports in Kenya (Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Eldoret International Airport, Moi International Airport and Kisumu International Airport) are currently experiencing unhurried processing of arriving, transiting and departing air passengers. It was further noted that outbound air passengers take over one hour from the time they reach the airport to the time they arrive at the boarding gate against a global average of 23 minutes for air passengers departing to domestic airports and 33 minutes for air passengers departing to international destinations. Likewise, arriving passengers from domestic airports take an average of 38 minutes from the time of unlading to the time of reaching the arrival hall exit point against a global average of 22 minutes. It was also observed that passengers arriving from international airports take an average of 44 minutes to reach the exit gate against a global average of 31 minutes (Mulwa & Mwikya, 2018). Aparicio & Kapelko (2019), noted that majority of the air passengers are cooperative and keenly follow the airport procedures at the Jomo Kenyatta International airport as they are eager to proceed to their next destinations but unfortunately, they get delayed by the slow processing and hence the problem is not from the behavior of the passengers but instead, the problem originates from the low employee performance. They, recommended further studies to determine the most suitable leadership style that would improve the performance of employees within the four international airports in Kenya.

Following the study by Mulwa & Mwikya (2018), as well as the study by Aparicio and Kapelko (2019), a solution needs to be sought to eliminate the persistent dawdling of departing, arriving and transiting air passenger processing experienced within the four international airports in Kenya. Airlines have incessantly complained about the lengthy turnaround time occasioned by the slow passenger handling process. The unpleasant encounters have made Jomo Kenyatta and Moi International airport lose over 30% of the business of transiting international air passengers to Bole International airport in Ethiopia while Kisumu International and Eldoret International Airports have lost over 40% of the business of arriving and departing tourists from East Africa to Kilimanjaro and Zanzibar International Airports in Tanzania.

So far, no study has been carried out to establish the cause of the poor employee performance in four Kenya's international airports. The objective of this study was to establish the contribution of telling leadership style to the slow processing of air passengers in the four international airports in Kenya and the best leadership strategy that would turn around the situation. The study targeted the first line, middle and senior level managers of the five departments involved in the processing of air passengers within the four international airports in the Republic of Kenya namely; airport security employees, port health and quarantine service employees, passenger airlines employees, immigration and border control employees and finally the customs services employees. The study targeted respondents based at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Moi International Airport, Eldoret International Airport and the Kisumu International Airport. The study was quantitative and restricted to the effects of the situational leadership style on the performance of employees based at the four international airports in Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

The data was collected from the 694 employees who process air passengers at the four international airports in Kenya using a census method. Structured questionnaires were used to gather data using the drop and pick method. Any information received from the respondents was treated with utmost confidentiality. Positivism research philosophy was preferred in this study because it allows for multiple tests to be done on the same target population with same outcomes. The data was cleaned before coding. The raw data was further coded, organized and finally analyzed using SPSS version 27. Inferential and descriptive statistics were used to process and analyze the data.

RESULT

Response Rate

Out of the 694 respondents targeted in the study, a total of 461 questionnaires were received back which is equal to 77.6% response rate as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1:

Response Rate from the Four International Airports in Kenya

Airport	Total (n)	Total (%)
JKIA	210	45.55%
Eldoret International Airport	91	19.74%
Moi International Airport	83	18%
Kisumu International Airport	77	16.71
Total	**461**	**100%**

Factor Analysis for Telling Leadership Style

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) conducted on telling leadership utilized the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) as the extraction method. The purpose of the EFA was to assess the adequacy of the sample, understand the variance explained in the extraction and generate a pattern matrix illustrating the questions associated with each construct in the study. Any questions that did not align with the matrix were eliminated. The outcome of the EFA yielded three tables: The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test, the total variance explained and the pattern matrix. The KMO and Bartlett's test provided insights into the sampling adequacy and chi-square results. In Table 2, the KMO test indicated a sampling adequacy of 0.770, while the significant Bartlett's test of Sphericity yielded a chi-square result of $X2$ (45) = 1571.496, p<.05. These results demonstrate that telling leadership, as the independent variable in the study, was suitable for extraction, given that the KMO measure exceeded 0.6 and the Bartlett's test was significant (p<.05).

Table 2:

KMO and Bartlett's Test for Telling Leadership

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.770
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1571.496
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

The total variance explained highlights the components extracted through the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), determined by eigenvalues greater than 1 and the extraction sums of the square loading. As depicted in Table 3, three components with eigenvalues exceeding 1 were extracted. The first component accounted for a variance of 28.371%, followed by the second component with a variance of 26.357% and the final component with a variance of 18.179%. The cumulative variance percentage, totaling 72.907% was deemed sufficient as it surpassed 50% of the three extracted components indicating a comprehensive representation of the data.

Table 3:

Total Variance Explained

Component	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.240	42.397	42.397	2.837	28.371	28.371
2	1.731	17.312	59.709	2.636	26.357	54.728
3	1.320	13.198	72.907	1.818	18.179	72.907

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

The pattern matrix provides a comprehensive overview of the questions included in each component extracted during the factor analysis, based on the number of components determined by the total variance explained in Table 3. In this analysis, Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization was employed, given the expectation of correlations among the scale-based questions. In Table 4, three distinct components are presented, each representing different aspects of telling leadership within the organization. The factor loadings for each question, indicates the strength of the relationship between the question and the component displayed. A factor loading of >.50 suggests a significant association between the question and the component. All the ten questions were included in the analysis due to their high factor loadings, indicating their relevance

to the components identified. Furthermore, all retained questions exhibited strong factor loadings (>.60), indicating a robust relationship with their respective components. The lowest loading observed was 0.686, while the highest loading was 0.926, underscoring the overall strength of the questions' association with the three components of telling leadership.

Table 4:

Component Matrix for Telling Leadership

Statement	Component		
	1	2	3
In my organization, the Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) are never honored by the management.	.900		
In my organization the management does not entertain suggestions from employees.	.894		
In my organization the employee's rights are frequently violated by the management.	.760		
In my organization the employees are not allowed to join unions.	.707		
In my organization there is high employee turnover.		.827	
In my organization there is low employee performance.		.802	
In my organization the employees receive frequent intimidation from the management.		.692	
In my organization there are dysfunctional teams.		.686	
In my organization the employees are not allowed to join professional bodies.			.926
In my organization the employees are not allowed to establish welfare groups at work.			.916

a. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
b. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
c. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Validity and Reliability Tests for Telling Leadership

The study employed Cronbach's Alpha method in assessing reliability of the survey instrument. This method was preferred because it provides a measure of internal consistency, which is essential for determining the extent to which the items in a scale consistently measure the same underlying construct. Cronbach's Alpha calculates the average correlation among all possible combinations of items in a scale, with higher values indicating greater internal consistency. This method was preferred because it offers a comprehensive assessment of reliability that accounts for the interrelatedness of items within a scale, ensuring that the scale is dependable and consistent in measuring the intended construct.

The study measured validity using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. This method was preferred because it evaluates the extent to which the items in a scale reflect the variance captured by the underlying construct relative to the variance due to measurement error. The AVE value assesses convergent validity by comparing the amount of variance shared among the items of a scale with the amount of variance unique to each item. A higher AVE value indicates that a greater proportion of the variance in the items is attributable to the underlying construct rather than measurement error. This approach was found to be the best because it offers a robust indication of the extent to which a scale measures the intended construct, ensuring that the items are sufficiently related to each other and reflect the construct of interest accurately.

To assess the reliability and validity of the data collected for factor analysis on telling leadership, composite reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were calculated based on the factor loadings of the components. In Table 5, telling leadership, the independent variable of the study, exhibited composite reliability values of .836, surpassing the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7.

This indicates excellent reliability of the data, suggesting that the measured constructs are consistent and stable across multiple observations. The validity of the data was assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which yielded a value of .514, exceeding the threshold of .5. This indicates satisfactory content validity, suggesting that the variables measured in the factor analysis adequately represent the constructs of interest. The data collected for factor analysis on telling leadership demonstrated excellent reliability, with composite reliability values exceeding .7, and satisfactory validity, as indicated by AVE values surpassing .5. These findings validate the robustness and consistency of the measurement instrument used in the study, affirming the reliability and validity of the data for subsequent analysis and interpretation.
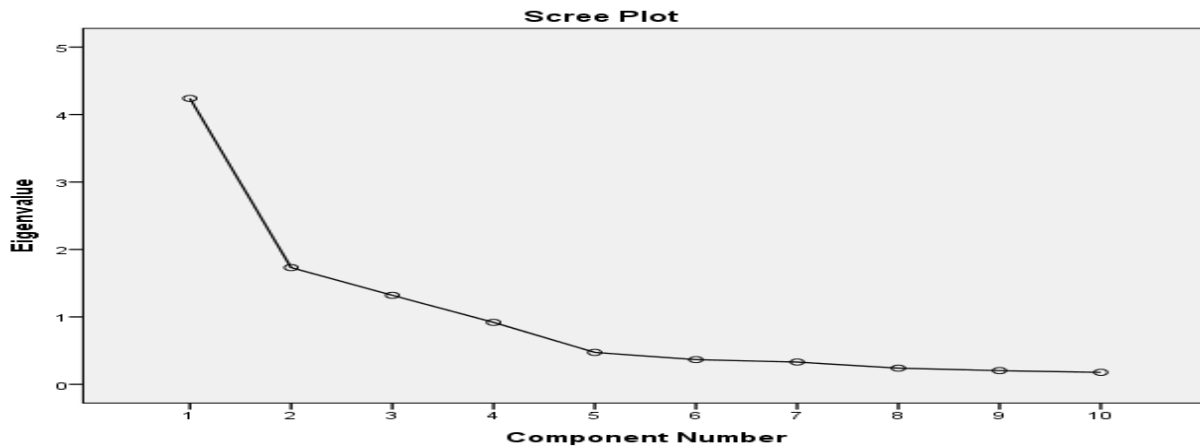
Table 5:
Validity and Reliability for Telling Leadership

Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	N of Items
.836	.514	10

Test of Outliers

The outlier test was conducted to ensure the data regarding telling leadership which is one of the independent variables in the study, was free from any anomalies or irregularities. This step is crucial to maintain the integrity and reliability of the data before proceeding with further inferential statistical analyses. Figure 1 illustrates the results of the outlier test, indicating that telling leadership as the independent variable underwent a cleaning process before conducting additional inferential statistics. By visually inspecting the data, researchers can identify any potential outliers or extreme values that may distort the analysis and take appropriate measures to address them. The inclusion of all questions related to telling leadership in the final computation underscores the comprehensive nature of the analysis. Each question contributes valuable information to the overall assessment of telling leadership within the study, ensuring a thorough examination of the construct from multiple perspectives. The outlier test serves as an essential quality control measure, helping researchers verify the cleanliness and reliability of the data related to telling leadership before conducting subsequent statistical analyses. This ensures the validity and accuracy of the study findings and enhances confidence in the interpretation of results.

Figure 1:
Results of the Outlier Test on Telling Leadership

The model summary, depicted in Table 6, indicates the extent to which telling leadership impacts employee performance within International Airports in Kenya. The analysis reveals that telling leadership significantly influences employee performance within the context of International Airports in Kenya. This suggests that a leadership style characterized by clear instructions and direction has a notable effect on how employees perform their duties. The adjusted R-square value of 0.490 indicates that approximately 49% of the variability observed in employee performance within International Airports in Kenya can be attributed to telling leadership as one aspect of situational leadership. This implies that telling leadership explains almost half of the variation in employee performance, suggesting its substantial impact. The findings underscore the significance of telling leadership in shaping employee performance within International Airports in Kenya, highlighting its considerable role in explaining the variability observed in performance outcomes.

Table 6:
Model Summary of Telling leadership and Performance of Employees

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.700[a]	.490	.474	.63209

Table 7 below provides the analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the findings regarding to telling leadership and performance of employees. The findings suggest that telling leadership has a significant impact on employee performance, as indicated by the low p-value (Sig. < .000) in the regression model.

Table 7:
ANOVA Table for Telling leadership and Performance of Employees

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.671	10	4.367	6.899	.000[b]
	Residual	179.766	284	.633		
	Total	223.437	294			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance.
b. Predictors: (Constant), Telling leadership

Table 8 provides the results of chi-square tests examining the association between telling leadership and the performance of employees. In this analysis, the Pearson Chi-Square value is 36.728 with 12 degrees of freedom, and the p-value is .000. This indicates a significant association between telling leadership and employee performance. The Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square value is 38.577 with 12 degrees of freedom, and the p-value is .000. Similar to the Pearson Chi-Square test, this suggests a significant association between telling leadership and employee performance. The Linear-by-Linear Association Chi-Square value is 18.737 with 1 degree of freedom, and the p-value is .000. This indicates a significant linear association between telling leadership and employee performance. The results from these chi-square tests collectively suggest a significant association between telling leadership and employee performance within the context under study.

Table 8:

Chi-Square Table for Telling leadership and Performance of Employees

Category	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.728[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	38.577	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.737	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	295		

a. 6 cells (30.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .37.

Levene's Homogeneity of Variance Test for Telling Leadership

Table 9 presents the results of the homogeneity of variance test. Homogeneity of variance test is an assessment carried out to determine if the value of the error term changes significantly as the value of the independent variable changes in a regression analysis. If the error term varies significantly (p-value greater than 0.05) with change in the value of the predictor variable, the accuracy of the null hypothesis becomes low and hence the need for the homogeneity of variance test.

Table 9:

Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances for Telling Leadership

Measures	Levene's Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	2.499	4	290	.043
Based on Media	2.740	4	290	.029
Based on Median with adjusted df	2.740	4	271.042	.029
Based on Trimmed Mean	2.502	4	290	.043

DISCUSSION

The overall findings suggest that employees perceive telling leadership as a negative force within the organization, contributing to high turnover, low performance and dissatisfaction. The top-down nature of this leadership style, combined with limited employee involvement in decision making and perceived rights violations, appears to foster disengagement and alienation of employees.

Conclusion

From the study, it was established that telling leadership style was preferential among the five departments that process air passengers in the four international airports in Kenya and therefore a major contributor to the low employee performance. From the findings, it was clearly demonstrated that deploying of telling leadership style in an organization is disastrous and has no place in the modern organizational stewardship. It was further noted that a telling leader concentrates on amassing power to control the employees while paying little or no attention to their health and welfare.

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