

## Influence of Directing Style of Situational Leadership on Employee Performance in Public Universities in Kenya

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### Abstract

In Kenya, higher education faces numerous challenges that include quality assurance issues amidst rampant changes in policies and the regulatory framework with the Ministry of Education regularly decrying the quality-of-service delivery in public universities. Employee performance is a key metric in determining the level of service outcomes. Leadership is also a critical component in this dynamic as leaders influence workers towards increasing productivity through decision making, provision of resources and giving direction. This study investigated the influence of directing leadership style on employee performance in public universities in Kenya. Anchored on the Situational Leadership Theory, a positivist philosophy and a descriptive correlational research design, sampled heads of departments and administrators used self-administered questionnaires to provide the data that was subjected to statistical analysis with the aid of SPSS version 30. High agreement among respondents ( $\mu > 3$ ), significant correlation results ( $p < .05$ ), and  $R^2 = 21.1\%$  demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between directing leadership style and employee performance. The study, aiming to inform policy in regards to quality of service delivery in public universities, recommends that public universities institutionalize directing leadership style practices to improve employee performance and subsequent organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: Directing Leadership Style; Employee Performance; Public Universities; Kenya

## INTRODUCTION

Ineffective leadership can significantly undermine organization effectiveness and performance (Baker & Murphy, 2022). An organization's success depends on having adaptable, competent leaders who can have a beneficial impact on employees. Leadership is not static as recognized by the situational leadership style approach that focuses on leadership in situations, premising that different situations demand different types of leadership (Blanchard, 1985). Leaders assess

employee performance based on how well they meet the demands of their position as Ibrahim (2021) posits that performance is an individual's actual accomplishments at work.

The Kenyan public higher education has seen advancements and developments, among them reforms aimed at raising the bar and standard of higher education (Maobe & Peng, 2020). Public universities in Kenya continue to face a myriad of challenges that negatively impact the relevance and quality of higher education. Mbithi et al. (2021) outlines a number of these challenges, attributing them, in part, to an existing leadership deficit within these institutions. The governance and leadership structures and institutional policies in these institutions are weak, unreliable or ineffective, or both, negatively affecting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on quality education (Abugre, 2018). Therefore, this research aimed to investigate a possible influence of directing leadership style in addressing this leadership deficit and its contribution to employee performance.

Based on the background conducted for this study, there is little research focus on leadership, specifically in public universities in Kenya. Previous global and regional research on leadership and employee performance such as that of Cortes (2023), Mustofa (2021), Manyuchi and Sukdeo (2021), Tubagus, Hary, Elok and Amrun (2021), has focused on different industries. Locally Ndiritu, Ouma and Okanda (2024), Odhiambo (2024) and Njoroge, Ouma and Nyambegera (2023) focused on other industries such as airports and non-governmental organizations. The purpose of this study was to investigate how the directing leadership style of situational leadership influences employee performance in Kenyan public universities, aiming to fill contextual gaps because of the paucity of literature noted in this area.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Northouse (2016) posits that directing leadership style of situational leadership approach is where

the leader gives followers detailed task instructions, clear rules and regulations and the expected performance standards and it is more appropriate when tasks are ambiguous or complex, and the leader has strong formal authority. Directing leadership style is one of the styles of the situational leadership approach. Blanchard (2000) stipulates that directing involves planning, orienting, teaching by showing and telling followers how to do tasks while constantly checking and monitoring progress and giving relevant feedback. According to Lonati (2020), directing leadership style comprises providing employees with clear instructions as well as outlining policies, rules, and procedures in order to structure their work and set expectations for their compliance. Directive leaders assist subordinates adjust to difficult and challenging tasks by making decisions centrally, which minimizes the possibility of time and effort being wasted in group decision-making (Sanchez-Manzanares, Rico, Antino & Uitdewilligen, 2020).

Afifah, Istikhori, Rima, Rizki, & Babullah (2024) posit that directing leadership is the style of leadership where leaders provide clear instructions and regularly check performance for the less capable team members. This style of leadership entails offering precise guidance, instructions, and expectations to team members to efficiently accomplish specific objectives (Nurdin, Yamin & Insan, 2022). The directing leadership style emphasizes prompt decision-making in situations

where tasks are clearly defined, mandating a leader to formally communicate responsibilities to prevent any ambiguity (Adnan, Shobri&Muslihah, 2024).

A directing leadership style approach comprises various key elements necessary for influencing the behavior of followers and improving the overall performance of the organization. A leader's directing style has a large impact on how well their team members perform on the job through a variety of methods, such as motivation and job satisfaction (Lama, Aryal & Shrestha, 2024). Studies demonstrate that this approach considerably improves performance, particularly in learning environments, by offering the required structure and support (Fahmi, 2020). Effective leadership can result in better employee interactions, which raises performance levels throughout the organization (Jiang & Ali, 2024). The directive aspects of clear guidelines, task instructions and achievement levels were examined to reflect and expound the directing leadership style.

Since employees are the organization's most important and valuable resource, their performance matters (Blanchard et al., 1985). According to Kadiyono et al. (2020), employee performance, is the outcome of the quality and quantity of work that an employee accomplishes to fulfil obligations in line with the assigned tasks. Raharjo, Praditya, and Marhalinda (2022) posit that performance is an outcome or accomplishment that is impacted by the operational activities of an organization when utilizing its resources while Joseph-Armstrong (2023) indicates that employee performance is the extent to which an organization's employees accomplish responsibilities in the workplace. An organization's potential can only be driven and maximized by its human resources, as Ariyanto, Yulianah, and Ariawan (2022) assert that an organization's human resources, as demonstrated by the components of its employees, are the key to its success.

Shokhsanam and Ahn (2021) state that service performance refers to an employee's actions when offering customer service. Besides customer satisfaction, job satisfaction and self-efficacy are key indicators of good employee performance. Job satisfaction is contentment in carrying out one's duties. According to Gu, Li Tan, Amin, Mostafiz, and Yeoh (2022), job satisfaction is a desirable emotional or enjoyable state that arises from carrying out one's responsibilities that contributes to better organizational performance through higher employee output. Self-efficacy is confidence in one's ability to complete tasks. Research has pointed to the crucial role that self-efficacy plays in improving employee performance. According to Khaery, Maberur, and Solahudin (2024), employees who are confident in their capacity to finish tasks are more likely to set difficult goals, stick to a plan even in the face of setbacks, and exert more effort and commitment, all of which result in improved performance.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Philosophy and Design**

This study adopted the Positivist research philosophy. This design was suitable because the study adopted quantitative techniques, and hypothesis was tested to establish a causal relationship between directing leadership style and employee performance, which the philosophy supports. The philosophy has been adopted by other researchers that include Nyaberi (2020), Maretha

(2023), and Wanjala (2022). Additionally, the findings of the research will be easily generalized to other public institutions besides public universities since causal relationships can produce findings that can be easily generalized. Descriptive correlational research design was adopted where quantitative data was collected to explore the degree of relationship between directing leadership style and employee performance without manipulating either of them. Ochieng et al. (2023), Nyutu, Cobern & Pleasants (2021) and Anggarista & Wahyudin (2022) adopted this research design in their studies. Additionally, as posited by Creswell (2022), correlation design is ideal in predicting outcomes from one or two predictors, and in this research, directing leadership style and employee performance were tested to ascertain if they are correlated and the extent of correlation.

### **Study Location**

The study area was within 47 counties in Kenya where 27 public universities, where data was collected, are located.

### **Population and Sampling**

The sampling frame for this study was data from the Commission for University Education (CUE) on the general staff statistics in public universities in Kenya. The specific data for the strata of interest, heads of departments and administrators, was acquired directly from the universities that participated in the study. The target population for this study was drawn from 27 listed public universities in Kenya with a total of 1,688 administrators and heads of departments forming the population from which a sample was obtained. Both simple random sampling and stratified random sampling methods were adopted for sampling purposes. Since the population was divided into two strata, stratified random sampling was adopted to ensure that all target items were represented and that the sample reflected the population. Yamane (1967) sample size formula was used to determine the sample size of 323 respondents. After stratification, simple random sampling was used to select participants from each stratum, ensuring that each participant had an equal and independent chance of being selected. Table 1 shows the sample distribution.

**Table 1**

Cross-tabulation of Respondents by Functional University Division and Staff Category (N = 323)

Functional University Division	Heads of Department (n)	HODs (%)	Administrators (n)	Administrators (%)	Total (n)	Total (%)
Academic Affairs Division	139	70.9	57	29.1	196	60.7
Administration & Finance Division	65	57.5	48	42.5	113	35.0
Research & Extension Division	10	71.4	4	28.6	14	4.3

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Total	214	66.3	109	33.7	323	100.0
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Note. Percentages under the Heads of Department and Administrators columns represent the proportion within each functional university division. Percentages in the Total (%) column represent the proportion of the overall sample ( $N = 323$ ).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The data collection instrument for this study was questionnaires that were self-administered by the respondents. The questions were closed-ended. Five-point Likert scales were used as a tool to help draw responses from the respondents including the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statements in the questionnaire. Data was collected primarily through a self-administered questionnaire, in three formats: physical copy, soft copy and as an online survey. Out of the target sample of 323 respondents, 250 responses were received, resulting in a 77% response rate which is acceptable as Khrisat and Alqadi (2022) indicate that a response rate of 60% is acceptable while a rate higher than 70% is considered good.

### **Research Procedures**

A pilot test of 10% of the calculated sample was randomly selected for participation in the study in line with Bryman and Bell (2022) recommendation that 5-10% of the target population is adequate. Thirty-two (32) participants comprising of 16 heads of department and 16 administrators, randomly drawn from the participating institutions, took part in the pilot study. Reliability of the instrument was tested where a Cronbach's Alpha value of  $0.806 > 0.7$  was attained for directing leadership style, indicating strong reliability. The validity of the research instrument was also thoroughly examined and certified as satisfactory. Content validity was ascertained by including a sufficient and representative selection of fifty (50) items in the questionnaire to tap the concept. Construct validity of the instrument was achieved through pilot testing the instrument and making necessary adjustments before data collection commenced. Additionally, the study adopted the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) of sampling adequacy to examine construct validity where a KMO value of 0.914 (close to 1.0) was obtained for directing leadership style.

The researcher used three fully trained research assistants to undertake data collection, while being available for clarification on all matters pertaining to the research. Each questionnaire was accompanied by permits to conduct the research both from the USIU Institutional Ethics Review Committee (IERC) and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) as well as the authorization to conduct the research from the individual institutions.

Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 30 was used to code and analyze the data. After the process of data collection was complete, each questionnaire was assigned a unique identifier in consideration of each of the study variables and a platform for data analysis created. Normality and multicollinearity diagnostic tests were used for data preparation. Mean and standard deviation were used to determine the extent of agreement or disagreement with the provided statements presented in the questionnaire. Pearson correlation coefficient was used where correlations were considered positive and significant at  $p <$

.05threshold level for directing leadership style of situational leadership. Chi Square tests were conducted to test the nature and significance of the relationship between the variables of directing leadership style and employee performance. One-way ANOVA tests were done to check the difference between the means for the independent variables of directing leadership style and employee performance. Ordinal logistic regression analysis was conducted to predict the relationship of directing leadership style with employee performance.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Permission was sought from the relevant authorities to conduct the research including the USIU Institutional Ethics Review Committee, the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) for a research permit, in compliance with Science and Technology Act, Chapter 250, Laws of Kenya. An authorization letter from each of the universities from which data was collected was sought. Ethical considerations adhered to in regard to respondents included giving information on the research procedure, the purpose of the research, assuring the respondents of confidentiality and protection from any potential harm or risks, the benefits to accrue to their participation in the study, and an opportunity to ask questions or withdraw from the research for whatever reason if they so wished. The data collected was used for academic purposes only, and will be destroyed within six months once the research is completed.

## **RESULTS**

### **Demographic Information**

The study examined the demographic characteristics of respondents who included the divisions in which respondents are based, their job category, length of service and highest academic qualification. This information was analyzed using frequency distributions and percentages and presented as narrative percentages. In terms of category division, 48% of the respondents were in the academic affairs division, 44% in administration and finance, 5% in research and extension, and 3% from others. For job category, 68% were administrative staff, 24% were academic, 7% were clerical and 1% were from other categories. In terms of length of service, a minority had served less than one year at 4%, 15% had served for more than a year but below five years, 18% had served for more than five years but below ten years while the majority had served beyond ten years at 63%. These statistics are an indicator that majority of public university employees are long-serving with a majority 82% having served beyond five years. This group is highly relevant for informed opinions, having understood the organization better, and they help to enrich and give credibility to the views expressed in this study. For the demographic of highest academic qualification, a minority of 6% were Diploma holders, 33% held a bachelor's degree, the majority were master's degree holders at 43% and 18% held a doctorate degree. These results indicate that academic achievements are important in a university setting with 94% of the respondents having attained a bachelor's degree or higher.

### **Descriptive Analysis for Directing Leadership Style and Employee Performance**

There were three sets of questions focused on clear guidelines, clear task instructions and clear achievement levels, with their bearing on employee performance metrics of job satisfaction, self-efficacy and customer satisfaction. Means and standard deviations statistical analyses were conducted with the results indicating mean scores ranging from 2.67 to 3.81 and standard deviations greater than 1 (1.14 - 1.52), though within the same range. Generally, the data strongly indicated that clear leadership directions had a positive effect on all aspects of employee performance and task accomplishment with slight differences in the intensity of effect and agreement (M=3.81, SD=1.14). There is less agreement on performance deterioration due to lack of clarity with the statement "When my leader does not provide clear achievement levels, my overall performance deteriorates" receiving the lowest mean rating (M=2.67, SD=1.30). Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations for directing leadership style.

**Table 2**

Means and Standard Deviations for Directing Leadership Style

	Mean	SD
I complete tasks more efficiently when my leader gives clear guidelines for my tasks, creating contentment in my role.	3.8120	1.13747
Clear guidelines help me avoid mistakes or errors in my work.	3.4440	1.41665
I perform better when my leader provides specific and measurable achievement levels because I feel satisfied in my role.	3.3000	1.46238
I become more productive when my leader clearly communicates performance expectations	3.2160	1.46215
Clear instructions help me meet deadlines and complete my tasks in time and this makes me confident of my ability to succeed in my role.	3.4080	1.43169
When work guidelines are clear, I meet or exceed work performance expectations because it makes me believe in myself.	3.4920	1.36873
The quality of my work improves when I get clear instructions from my leader, making my customers satisfied.	3.2480	1.46803
I feel more confident in my task performance when my leader gives clear instructions	3.0320	1.52324
When my leader does not provide clear achievement levels, my overall performance declines and my customer service decline	2.6680	1.29479

**Inferential Analysis**

***Correlation between Directing leadership Style and Employee Performance***

From Table 3, all correlations were significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level (2-tailed).  $p$ -value ( $< 0.05$ ) means a statistically significant correlation, (N = 250)

**Table 3**

Pearson Correlations between Directing Style and Employee Performance

Directing Leadership Style Variable	Employee Performance	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Clear work guidelines	.546	< .001
Clear task instructions	.589	< .001

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Clear achievement levels	.591	< .001
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**Chi Square Test on Directing Leadership Style and Employee Performance**

A Chi Square Test was conducted to examine if there exists a relationship between directing leadership style and employee performance. As table 4 indicates, there is a highly significant relationship between the two variables as evidenced by the small p-value (< .001) ( $\chi^2 = 276.763$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

**Table 4**

Chi Square Test for Directing Style and Employee Performance

	Value	df	Asymptotic <i>p</i> (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	276.763 <sup>a</sup>	16	<.001
Likelihood Ratio	196.889	16	<.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	90.277	1	<.001
N of Valid Cases	250		

**One-Way ANOVA Test for Directing Leadership Style and Demographic Variables**

One-way ANOVA test was conducted to determine if there were significant differences between the means of directing leadership style and the demographic variables of job category, length of service and highest academic qualification in public universities. Table 5 displays results that indicated that the statistical differences in means were not significant ( $p > .05$ ), job category ( $F=1.150$ ,  $p= .334$ ) length of service ( $F=.948$ ,  $p= .437$ ) and highest academic qualification ( $F=.342$ ,  $p= .849$ ).

**Table 5**

One-Way ANOVA Test for Directing Leadership Style

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Job Category	Between Groups	2.304	4	.576	1.150	.334
	Within Groups	122.752	245	.501		
	Total	125.056	249			
Length of service	Between Groups	2.875	4	.719	.948	.437
	Within Groups	185.689	245	.758		
	Total	188.564	249			
Highest Academic Qualification	Between Groups	.945	4	.236	.342	.849
	Within Groups	169.155	245	.690		
	Total	170.100	249			

**Regression Analysis for Directing Leadership Style and Employee Performance**

Ordinal Logistic Regression model was adopted in this study to test whether directing leadership style of situational leadership predicted employee performance in public universities in Kenya. Before the Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis was conducted, the fitness of the model was

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determined, confirming that the scaling was ordinal in nature. The multicollinearity test conducted to determine if directing leadership style and employee performance had multicollinearity produced a no multicollinearity result with a Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value below 10 as seen in table 6 below.

**Table 6**

Test for Multicollinearity for Directing Leadership Style and Employee Performance

Variable	VFI Values between:	Comments
Directing Leadership Style	1.218 – 2.560	No multicollinearity

***Hypothesis Testing for Directing Leadership Style and Employee Performance***

To test the hypothesis Goodness-of-fit and Model Fitting Information Test were conducted. The hypothesis and the tests were:

H<sub>01</sub>: Directing leadership style does not significantly influence employee performance in public universities in Kenya.

Goodness-of-fit criteria: Reject if  $p \geq .05$ , Fail to reject if  $p < .05$

***Goodness-of-fit for Directing Leadership Style on Employee Performance***

The results displayed in Table 7 below show a non-significant  $p$  value of 0.47, denoting that the data is consistent with the predicted values and the model's overall fit is acceptable.

**Table 7**

Goodness of Fit for Directing Leadership Style and Employee Performance

	Chi-Square	df	$p$
Pearson	542.620	541	.472
Deviance	406.497	541	1.000

***Model Fitting for Directing Leadership Style on Employee Performance***

Table 8 displays statistically significant results. The final model with predictors fit the data significantly better than the intercept-only model, an indicator that the included variables contribute a meaningful explanation of the outcome, demonstrating that the model was appropriate for predicting directing leadership style and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Table 8**

Model Fitting for Directing Leadership Style and Employee Performance

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Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	p
Intercept Only	523.937			
Final	468.760	55.176	7	<.001

***Pseudo R-Square for Directing Leadership Style on Employee Performance***

Table 9 demonstrates the Nagelkerke value as 0.211 which is moderate, denoting that directing leadership style explains 21.1% of the variance in employee performance indicating a good model fit.

**Table 9**

Pseudo R-Square for Directing Leadership Style and Employee Performance

<b>Pseudo R-Square</b>	
Cox and Snell	.198
Nagelkerke	.211
McFadden	.078

## DISCUSSION

While investigating the influence of directing leadership style on employee performance in public universities in Kenya, Pearson correlation analysis found all correlations positive and significant, demonstrating that directing leadership style had a positive and significant relationship with employee performance. These results were agreeable with those of Adani et al. (2025) who investigated the application of situational leadership at the Women's Correctional Facility Bandung, and found directing style of leadership to be quite effective in influencing prison outcomes. These results were supported by Curral et al. (2023) who investigated the effect of directing leadership style on firefighters' well-being during an emergency. The findings showed that directing leadership style had a significantly positive contribution to reducing stress levels among firefighters, leading to better performance. However, contrary results, were obtained by Ndiritu et al. (2024) whose study of leadership at Kenya airports found that employee's perceived telling leadership as a negative force within the organization, contributing to low performance and employee dissatisfaction.

Mean scores were high at above 3 on a 5-point Likert scale, indicating high agreement with the statements under investigation and strongly supporting the relationship of employee performance metrics with the aspects of clear work guidelines, clear task instructions and clear achievement levels. In direct support of these findings was Salleh et al. (2022) who studied the role of leaders in enhancing performance using twelve small groups from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Malaysia and concluded that leaders who weren't clear on instructions were found to cause confusion amongst the group members but those who were clear were found to have efficient discussions, highlighting the critical need for clear guidelines, characteristic of directing leadership style, in enhancing team performance. Contrary results to those of this study were

Biaka (2020) who conducted a study on leadership styles and employee performance at St. Veronica Medical Centre in Cameroon to investigate the role of leadership styles on employee performance and directing leadership style was found to have the least impact on employee performance. Also negating the results of this study were Pahi et al. (2022), who while investigating leadership style and employee commitment to service quality among frontline employees in hotels in Pakistan's big cities of Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, found that directing leadership style had a negative relationship with commitment to employee service quality.

The chi square results indicated a statistically significant relationship between directing leadership style and employee performance congruent with those of Fahmi (2020) whose study investigating the application of situational leadership in education using questionnaires with 46 teachers demonstrated that directing leadership approach considerably improved performance, particularly in learning environments, by offering the required structure and support. Also in support were Jiang and Ali (2024) who conducted a thorough analysis and case studies investigating the effect of various leadership styles on employee performance and found that effective directing leadership style could result in better employee interactions, raising performance levels throughout the organization. Further, Junaedi and Ali (2025) further support the results of this study through their study of situational leadership and employee performance in Jakarta's Islamic banking sector, indicating that adjusting leadership style to the unique context was shown to increase employee productivity. Pasaribu et al. (2022) also found congruent results in the study of SME employees in Banten, Indonesia, finding that the directing leadership style of situational leadership had a significant impact on performance of employees, especially in settings where employees were low in competence but high in commitment. However, contrary results to those of this study were reported by Kim and Beehr (2021) who studied empowering and directing leadership style from multiple organizations located in South Korea and found negative correlation between directing leadership style and employee predisposition to taking charge. Additional dissent from the results of this study was Mustofa (2021) who studied situational leadership, satisfaction at work and Islamic organizational citizenship behaviors and found that situational leadership had no effect on worker performance.

The ordinal logistic regression (Nagelkerke Pseudo R-Square) results of this study explained a high percentage of variance on the influence of directing leadership style on employee performance. In harmony with these findings were the study results by Irbani et al. (2025), who showed that partially variables of the situational leadership style had a significant effect on employee performance, at the Bangkalan Primary Tax Service. Additional support for the study was survey research conducted by Cheng & Osman (2023) in Malaysia's stone-mining and quarrying industries demonstrating the direct impact of the relationship between leadership styles and task performance besides discovering that a directing leadership style was successful in addressing task and role ambiguity within the team, as well as in increasing employee performance and core task performance. The results of this study demonstrated how crucial it is to effectively and situationally adopt suitable leadership styles in order to improve employee task performance habits. However, Ridlwani et al. (2021) did not agree with these results as the study findings examining the effect of situational leadership on employee performance with job satisfaction as an intervening variable in the fire rescue context in Jakarta, indicated no positive

effect of situational leadership variables on employee performance. Other contrary results to those of this study was by Sunarni et al. (2023) with 60 employees of UD Ony, Indonesia that unveiled an interesting finding that situational leadership, when examined independently, did not directly impact employee performance. Additionally, Firdaus et al. (2020) in a census of teachers at an Islamic school in the Southern city of Tangerang, Indonesia also found contrary results to those of this study, finding that directing leadership style's autocratic nature had little influence on employee commitment and subsequent performance.

## **CONCLUSION**

Kenyan public universities, reminiscent of public entities, are prone to hierarchical, bureaucratic structures and ambiguity of employee roles. As such, directing leadership style was found to anchor well within this kind of governance structure. Based on the study findings, generally, clear leadership directions and instructions with definite and quantifiable levels of accomplishment, all had a positive effect on all aspects of employee performance and task accomplishment with some slight differences in the intensity of effect and agreement based on particular domains. Less agreement on performance deterioration due to unclear clarity could mean that certain individuals could be more versatile or creative even without expressed achievement goals. Deviations in the expressed views reveal that individual experiences and perceptions exist regarding leadership and the dimensions of clarity of instructions, guidelines and achievement levels. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis that directing leadership style does not significantly influence employee performance in public universities in Kenya.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study established that directing leadership style of situational leadership significantly influences employee performance in public universities in Kenya. Therefore, the recommendation is that the university management should uphold the tenets of directing leadership style that comprise of giving detailed task instructions, clear rules and regulations and the expected performance standards. To achieve this, they should clearly outline policies, rules, and procedures so as to facilitate employees to structure their work and set expectations for their compliance.

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### **Declaration of Competing Interests**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The corresponding author will, upon reasonable request provide the data supporting the findings of this study.

### **Author Contributions**

Dorcus Watitu Mugo: Conceptualization, Writing, Editing, Data collection and Analysis  
Jeremiah Koshal & Maureen Kangu: Guidance, Review and Validation

### **Ethical Approval**

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from United States University- Africa Institutions Ethics Review Committee (IERC), Ref/No: USIU-A/IERC/US427-2025.

### **Licensing Statement**

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