

ANALYSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP, TALENT MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION HEALTH AS PREDICTORS OF UNIVERSITY TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

Research objective: The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between sustainable leadership, talent management and organizational health as predictors of university transformation. This study went further to establish the mediation effect of organizational health as a mediating factor between the exogenous variables (sustainable leadership and talent management) and endogenous variable (university transformation).

Research technique and methodology: The study used a cross sectional survey design and the sample of respondents (N=820) was randomly chosen from six universities in which the central region of Uganda. The sample was deemed convenient for this study since the method used for data analysis was structural equation modelling that normally requires a big number of sample population. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to analyze each of the individual constructs used to attain reasonable parameters estimates. The fully fledged structural equation modelling (SEM) was used in the study to analyze the hypothesized structural model and its casual relationships plus the mediation effect between the constructs.

Main findings: The findings of the study showed that there is positive relationship between sustainable leadership, talent management and organizational health. However, the relationship between sustainable leadership and university transformation, talent management and university transformation were negatively related.

Practical implications: It was recommended to educational practitioners, lecturers and policy makers to use this model to harness university transformation. For researchers, it could be used to do further examination of university transformation on other universities both locally and internationally.

Keywords: sustainable leadership, talent management, organizational health, university transformation

Paper type: Research paper

1. Introduction

For the last many years universities are going through tremendous changes that have not only changed their education status but have moved them from the traditional known university management to modern management systems that require commodification of knowledge, internationalization, customer care and virtualization (Halász, 2007). Moreover the four (Cs) have also brought another equation that university management and leadership must think more about and forge the best ways through which these institutions must survive and thrive in the era of competition, rising costs, the changing of university customs and characteristics, and the turbulent crises (Bunoti, 2011; Mpaata, 2010; Saymeh, 2014). The forces of change mentioned above, require universities to adopt and integrate new trends of management style to facilitate sustainable leadership, human resource development and enabling working environment for both employees and customer satisfaction and attract them towards achievement of organizational goals and objectives (Bora, 2014). Furthermore, for universities to achieve transformation, Skordoulis, (2010) states that management should focus on people work management, train special people in steering management issues, streamline communication structure and have governance challenges addressed to ensure that ethics and vision are protected to enable achievement of institutional remodeling in its market strategy. Moreover, Awbrey, (2005) states that changing the management and education system of the universities is not something easy due to both diverse and inexperienced human resources without skills of coping up with proper models that universities must opt for and survive in the changing knowledge market. It is therefore from this background that the current study is designed to examine the factors that predict university transformation.

2. University transformation

University transformation is derived from the meaning of organizational transformation or change. This concept has been in place since 1970's to date. It has changed meaning and terminologies dependent on the demands of the time, and because of these changes, to fit in the new era with new demands in market twists, organizations have found themselves reshaping, rebranding, redesigning

and restructuring themselves to suit in the competitive global economy. Besides, addressing the challenges of rebranding, reshaping and restructuring a lot of meanings, theories and frameworks for the terminology have been generated to help organizations both educational and business to find means and yardsticks for guiding their style of management and administration of business. For example, due to both institutional and world agility, higher education institutions must change to fit in the technological demands to ease communication within the system itself and with the outside world. This is so since technology is the driving force of world businesses and communication strategies. Secondly due to increased quest for accessibility to education, universities must accept that reform is no longer a choice but a way to go so as to compete favorably and at the same time adopt both virtual and traditional means of knowledge deliverance and acquisition (Torraco and Hoover, 2005). Furthermore, the increased competition for ranking requires university operational systems to transform themselves from the usual ways of marketing to centers of learning that reach their customers and be able to understand the brands of output needed to compete positively with other world institutions. Lastly, accountability should be an impetus for driving all institutional affairs thus, universities must accept that there has been a lot of wastage in terms of resource management and this habit calls for reform such that staff are put to task and take responsibility for their actions and decision so as to work within the institution's framework and budgets (Sheail, 2015; Skordoulis, 2010). Through these efforts funding and all other support from the community will be accounted for in both just and reasonable business manner executed by university authorities (Chandler, 2013). Subsequently, universities are surviving in impending avalanche that requires immediate change and find solutions for stability and sustainability. Similarly, leadership should be aware that in the course of transformation, there are also reasons that normally arise to deter transformation and change strategies for instance, the culture and the nature of department, the sense of territory, the abrasion between purposeful divisions, resource allocation, the norms and values, the nature of leadership, the communication style, the power of unions and idiosyncrasies (Chandler, 2013). To avoid being an ineffective organization on the journey of transformation, there should be an integration of approaches towards prosperity and achievement of the intended goal. For example, universities need to have effective and efficient leadership with dynamism and rigor to move the organization to a higher level. This should be done in relation to close monitoring of human resource development strategy and development of scholarship through collaboration and networking without side world (Klerk and Stander, 2014; Valencia and Cázares, 2016). Furthermore, university transformation should be based on rebranding and redesigning the structure, systems, shared values, strategy, skills and style (Hasan et al., 2016; Mohammad and Ravanfar, 2015; Moyce, 2014; Pinheiro et al., 2012). It means that leadership and its subordinates

plays a very important role towards institutional change and therefore, it should be sustainable in nature to ensure that the past and present achievement continue to flourish while influencing the future goals and objectives.

H1: There is a significant relationship between sustainable leadership and university transformation

3. Sustainable leadership

Sustainable leadership is still a new concept that was introduced in 2003. It is the ability of organizational leadership to recognize that complex and intricate systems of an organization must intertwine with human values in order to promote sustainable development and change so as to meet the required standards of operation in the competitive global market (Grooms and Reid-Martinez, 2011). Meanwhile, leadership and their staff while working towards a strategy, should be based on values that range from justice, diversity, flexibility, openness, humility, conservation, community, love, creativity so as to win other staff's diligence and commitment towards work. Equally, leadership should endeavor to attain staff commitment and dedication to improve the teaching and learning environment such that customers appreciate the available means of providing quality services (Williams et al., 2014). Likewise leadership should care about the human resources such that employees are not treated like a waste. This should be one way to win their efforts and citizenship towards providing education that benefits all generation and this kind of approach will make higher education leadership look different from politician and leaders who destroy the natural resources and environment (Hargreaves, 2007). Nevertheless, leadership should ensure that the potential human resources trained are capable of understanding that staff capacity building, conservation of the past and present, diversity, consolidation, strategic leadership distribution are put into consideration while capitalizing on both short and long term objectives in relation to the available resources (Gerard et al., 2017). It is therefore imperative for higher education sustainable leadership practitioners to have self-motivation, coaching and mentoring to increase the number of potential leaders and talent that can help both the university and outside community to benefit from the available knowledge (Carr, 2014; Ghavifekr et al., 2013).

H2: There is a statistically significant relationship between sustainable leadership , talent management and university transformation.

4. Talent management

The concept talent management refers to the process through which an organization takes decisions of identifying, developing and engagement to employ

people who can put great value to institutions quality service (Mohammed, 2016). Talent management integrates several strategies and systems particularly designed to increase quality products and services and this is normally achieved through attracting people with experience and knowledge and they are developed further to stay and help an organization attain competitive advantage on the market (Eva, 2015). In a study done by Eva, (2015) in Bangladesh on talent and aligning success to an organization, it was found that to attain reasonable results from both talented and skilled personal an organization needs proper remuneration packages coupled with good working condition, collective decision making systems, streamlined and well stated strategy. Yet, to avoid proving mismatches in products towards the market, talent staff should be used to strive towards understanding the market requirements and work towards making their organization a successful one and sustain its existence (Isa and Ibrahim, 2014). Moreover, Mikdashi, Bazeih, (2016) found that Lebanon was transforming itself by shifting from the traditional human resource management style to talent management skills or identification, recruitment, development and retention, and to achieve this objective, an integration of several management style was implemented to give promise and conducive environment to workers towards quality service delivery. It therefore implies that for organizations like universities to sustain their talent development and management, need to provide quality working conditions.

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between sustainable leadership, talent management and organizational health towards university transformation

5. Organizational health

Organizational health is termed as an organizations capability and capacity to utilize the available resource and provide a conducive working environment for the employees (Xenidis and Theocharous, 2014). The essence of having efficient and effective systems is to ensure that all institutional processes coordinate towards achieving the desirable goal. This is because when these systems are not integrated normally there will be stale of work and frustration towards employee's efforts. Since universities are working towards transformation strategies, they should try their best to win their employees' commitment and ensure that they serve diligently and at the same time sustain the achieved goals so as to predict a better future (Yücel et al., 2013). Meanwhile, to cope with the changing environmental situation, institutions should endure and ensure that there is cooperation, collaboration and networking between the workers and this should be coupled with clear job description such that all staff are aware of who is supposed to do what and at what time. When this aspect is put into consideration smooth running of the university business and activities will be eased among units

and blame games among the staff will be avoided (Yüceler et al., 2013). Since universities are made of diverse population that survives through teaching and learning, university authorities should endeavor to boost morale among the staff such that stressing factors at work are tackled early enough to avoid psychological problems among staff and students (Guidetti et al., 2015; Yüceler et al., 2013). Besides, Schneider, Ehrhart, Macey, (2013) states that organizational leadership should put in place enabling culture and climate environment that enables workers to think and carry out research that can help and organization to innovate and solve challenges at hand. Equally Osibanjo and Adeniji, (2013) states that organizations should always ensure that their norms, beliefs and values are well stated to help the employees understand the environment under which they operate other than pinning them every now and then of which at the end can impinge on their efforts and frustrate their momentum of work. They should therefore have positive responses towards employee challenges and attain their willing hearts to serve diligently.

6. Statement of the problem

Ugandan universities have not been doing well on the world global ranking. This kind of situation is attributed to the unfavorable and broken systems, structures and some of the unqualified staff that occupy university positions (Asiimwe and Steyn, 2013; Bunoti, 2011; Juárez-Nàjera, 2010; Kabeba, 2010; Kasozi, 2014; Kasule, 2015; Muriisa, 2014; Nabayego and Itaaga, 2014; NCHE, 2010; Ssempebwa and Nakaiza, 2013; Tibarimbasa, 2010; Zeelen, 2012). These challenges have not only slowed down quality services but also led to disagreements among staff, political interference and strikes from both staff and students. Since the many studies done have not examined the practices but rather dwelt much on challenges, the current study sought to examine the relationship between sustainable leadership, talent management and organizational health practices towards university transformation. This was done to fill the gap in the literature since there was no study done using SEM technique of data analysis to examine these practices at the university level in Uganda. Thus this study focused on sustainable leadership, talent management and organizational health to predict university transformation.

7. Research questions

The major research question was, does sustainable leadership, talent management and organization health predict university transformation? Specifically the following research questions guided the study:

- 1) Are sustainable leadership, talent management and organisational health constructs reliable and valid measurements of university transformation?
- 2) What is the relationship between sustainable leadership, talent management, and organisational health towards university transformation?

- 3) Do the current levels of practice of sustainable leadership and talent management influence university transformation mediated by organisational health in Ugandan universities?
- 4) Does the hypothesized model of the study fit the data?

Basing on the past studies reviewed, the hypothesized model of the current study was developed in Figure 1.

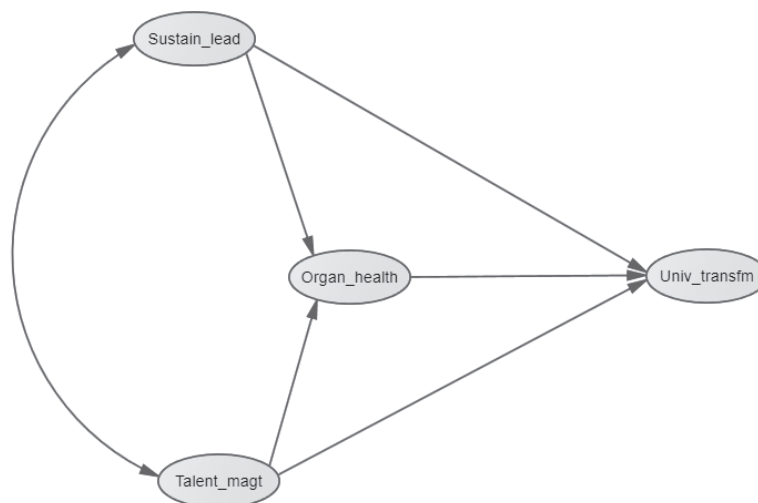


Figure 1.
Theoretically hypothesized model for predictors of university transformation

Source: owned by the study.

N:B sustainable leadership (sustain_lead), Organisational health (Organ_health), Talent management (Talent_magt), University transformation (Unive_transform).

8. Method

During the research a cross-sectional method was employed to achieve the objective of the study. Data was gathered from a randomly selected group of volunteers with an aim of addressing the objective of the study in the stipulated time frame.

8.1. Sampling technique

After using simple random sampling from SPSS version 22, to arrive at a sample from six universities out the twenty nine (29) in Central Uganda, an informed consent and permission was sought from the government authority and individual universities. The randomly chosen respondents participated in the study and their confidentiality was respected. The researcher and research assistants

gathered data from six universities using 2000 questionnaires. However, out of the 2000 that were distributed only 847 were returned of which only eight hundred twenty (N=820) emerged reasonable for further analysis of the study after data scrutiny and cleaning.

The characteristics of the sample acquired from the six universities both public and private in the central region of Uganda were gender 58% males and 42.3% females, lecturers 52% whereas administrators were 32.4% and in both positions were 16%, the education levels ranged from degree with 25%, Masters 60% and PhD 16%, the fulltime staff were 75% and part time 24%, 58.6% of volunteers were from public university where 41.1% were from privately owned institutions. From the demographic characteristics, it can be concluded that the sample deemed adequate enough and the population was well represented in the study since lecturers who are the core staff in university business were 51.6% whereas administrators were 32.4% and some shared both positions of lecturer and administrator were 16%. Further still most of the lecturers were fulltime with 75.4% and part time only covered 25%.

8.2. Measuring instruments

University transformation questionnaire and its subdimensions were derived from Mohammad and Ravanfar, (2015), Singh and Jain, (2013). The four sub constructs coined from the above studies included, structure, strategy, shared values and systems. The survey tool had 28 items using a Likert scale with a range of 1-5 indicating strongly disagree to strongly agree. The reliability for each of the four subconstructs of the study ranged between 0.82, 0.88, 0.84, except one which was near the margin of the measurement threshold required 0.71

The tool for sustainable leadership had four sub factors that include, staff capacity building, diversity, conservation and strategic leadership distribution. The items that measure the four subdimension factor were twenty-five (25). Besides that, Likert scale used ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1-5), the survey items were (Hardie, 2012). The measurement of liability scores among the subdimension ranged between 0.83, 0.71, and 0.75.

Talent management was measured with four subconstructs that include identification, development, culture, and retention. The items of the survey tool were from the literature studies carried out by (Annakis et al., 2014; Oehley, 2013). The reliability of the instruments subconstructs for the talent management construct ranged between 0.83,0.79,0.78 and its only one that appeared to be on the margin with 0.71.

The Likert scale for measuring the 25 items ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1-5). The survey tool reliability scored values that ranged between .075, 0.72, and .071.

8.3. Data analysis

The data analysis for the study was examined using SPSS version 22. And Amos version 22. Since the two support one another in the data analysis process, were used to attain the objective of the study as recommended by (Khine, 2013; Kline, 2011).

8.4. Findings of the study

To arrive at the objective of this study, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) technique was used first to test the hypothesized conceptual models for each individual variable. This was done to ascertain whether the subdimensions for each of the factors used to predict university transformation were both reliable and valid in terms of convergent and validity as recommended by (Lam and Maguire, 2012). The data used to analyze the relationship of both the observed and unobserved variables deemed appropriate and gave out good results as per the research question number one. Four models were tested and each of them contained four subdimensions as showed before, and after the analysis of the individual constructs, further analyses were based on these findings from the measurement models hence, carrying fully fledged structural equation modelling. The Table 1 indicates the fit goodness of the statistically tested measurement models.

Model	RMSEA	CFI	Df	χ^2	CMIN	P-value
University transformation model	.62	.930	113	4.126	466.279	.000
Sustainable leadership	.066	.926	62	4.551	282.137	.000
Talent management	.060	.911	183	3.975	727.483	.000
Organizational health	.044	.974	32	2.597	83.119	.000

RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, CFI= comparative Fit Index, df = degrees of freedom.

The chi-square for the four models was between 2.597 – 4.551 hence, fulfilling the requirement. The RMSEA was between the required estimates and the CFI. It therefore means that the findings of the models from data of the study were reliable and valid to be analyzed further. The standard factor loadings were between 0.05 to 0.79 and the correlation among the latent variable range between 0.02 – 0.99. It can further be concluded that the subdimensions of each of the factors used to predict university transformation were related to one another at individual construct though each of them had distinct items of measurement.

9. Analysis for the structural model

The hypothesized structural model of this study was analyzed using the results generated from the measurement model. This model used constructs namely sustainable leadership and talent management as exogenous variables, organizational health as mediator among the variables and university transformation as endogenous variable. The results from the first model as shown in the figure below were not fitting the required parameters; $\chi^2/Df = 2.423$ CFI= .878, RMSEA = .042, CMIN = 3681.171, DF= 1519, P= .000.

Since the results from figure 2 generated from the data were not meeting the objectives of the study, a re-specification was done on the model and some items were eliminated to ensure that the model fits the data as expected and from further analysis, the findings reflected in the figure below indicated -that CMIN = 2844.980, CMIN/DF= 2.271, DF = 1253, P-value= .000, RMSEA = .039, CFI = .900.

From the results of the study, it can be observed that OHEALTH àSLEAD (.597 with a P-values of .021) was statistically significant and supported by the data, OHEALTH à TMAN(.393 with a P-value .625) was not supported and statistically not significant UTRANSFOR à SLEAD (-.208 with a P-value .505) the relationship is negative and statistically not significant hence not being supported by the data. UTRANSFORà OHEALTH (1.882 with a P-value of .003) was statistically significant and supported by the data. UTRANSFORMà TMAN (-.771-.116) was statistically not significant and not supported by the data. SLEADβàTMAN (.955 with Pvalue .000) meant that the correlation between the two-exogenous variable is statistically significant and supported by the data.

Construct	Path	Construct	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result	Status
OHEALTH	←	SLEAD	.597	1.035	1.429	.021	significant	supported
OHEALTH	←	TMAN	.393	.373	.985	.625	Not Significant	Not supported
UTRANSFOR	←	SLEAD	-.208	2.553	-.173	.505	Not significant	Not supported
UTRANSFOR	←	OHEALTH	1.882	1.349	1.198	.003	Significant	supported
UTRANSFOR	←	TMAN	-.771	.584	-1.060	.116	Not significant	Not supported
SLEAD	↔	TMAN	.955	.025	6.623	***	Significant	supported

Table 1.
Results of the hypothesized relationship among the constructs of the study

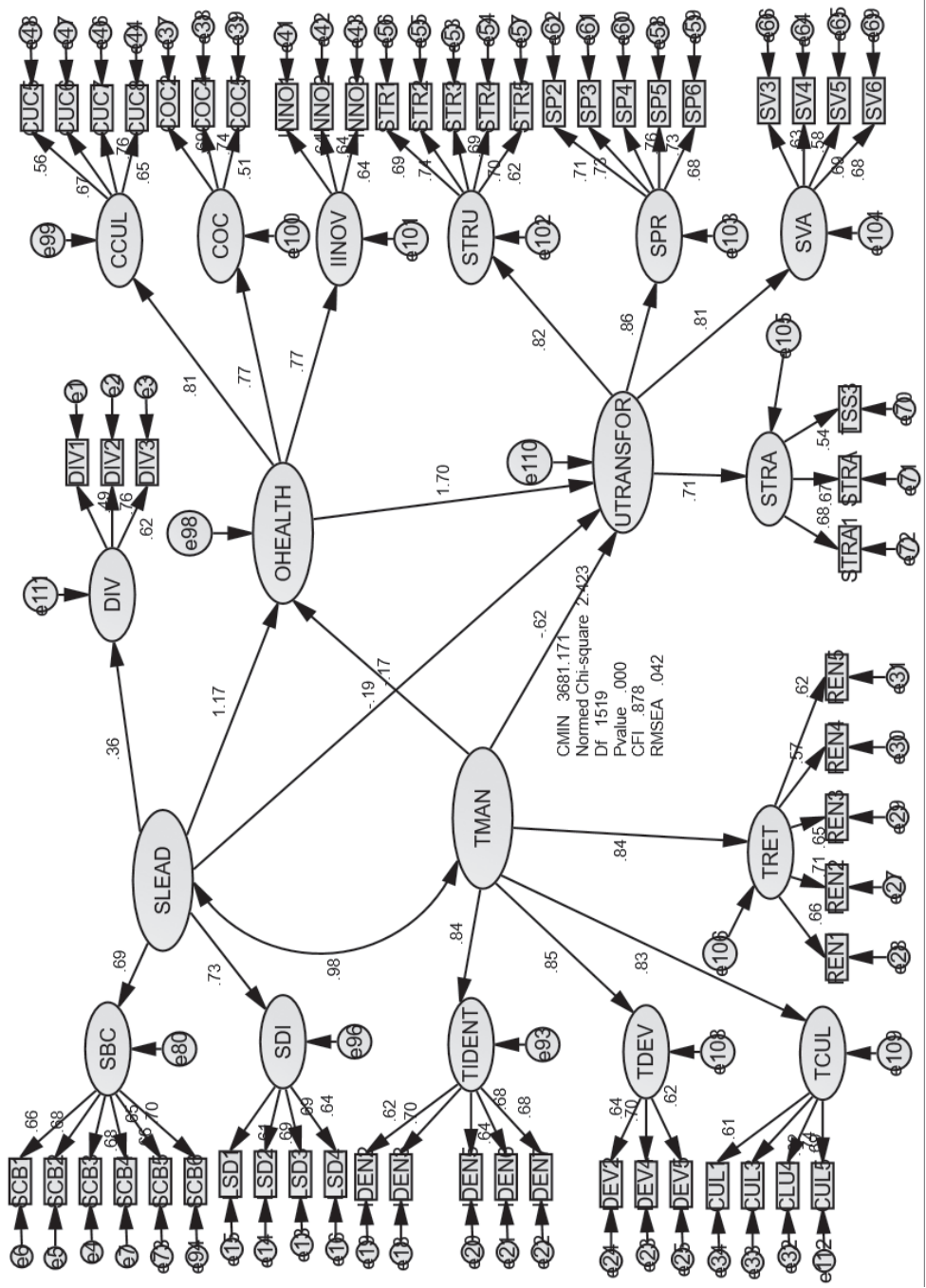


Figure 2. The hypothesized structural model with unfitting parameters
N: *B* sustainable leadership (*SLEAD*), talent management (*TMAN*), organizational health (*OHEALTH*), university transformation (*UTRANSFORM*),

9.1. Mediation effect

Table 2.
The causal indirect relationship between Sustainable leadership, talent management, organizational health, university transformation within the Ugandan universities

Hypothesis	Direct effect	Indirect effect	P- value	Results
TM→OH→UT	-.77	-0.39	.212	No mediation
SL→OH→UT	.39	1.128	.013	Partial mediation

N:B Talent management (TM), organizational health (OH), university transformation (UT), sustainable leadership (SL).

The results of the study further reflected that there is no indirect mediation relationship played by organizational health among the constructs between talent management, and university transformation. However, there is partial mediation effect influenced by organizational health among sustainable leadership and university transformation since the mediation effect is statistically significant (Awang, 2015; Ishiyaku et al., 2016).

9.2. Discussion

First of all the findings of the study reflected that sustainable leadership, talent management and organizational health are true valid and reliable measurement of university transformation. This is based on the earlier findings that state that when the parameter estimates of the structural model are good fitness, it means the data has fulfilled the requirements of using structural equation modelling technique for data analysis (Awang, 2015; Frazier et al., 2014; Hamid et al., 2011; Ishiyaku et al., 2016). Secondly, the findings reflected that the universities that have been in place for the last fifteen years are practicing strategies for transforming themselves towards winning the globalized market positions. Furthermore, the findings of the study showed that sustainable leadership and talent management are statistically and significantly correlated with one another towards university transformation. It means the two concepts strengthen one another towards achievement of organization improved both efficient and effective performance. It further implied that sustainable leaderships play a greater influence towards identification, retention, and development of skilled human resource. This is support of the earlier findings whereby some studies Cook, (2014) who emphasize that for an organization to compete favorably on the international market, there should be an alignment between the objectives and the strategy so as to achieve organizational goals. Furthermore, the same studies emphasize that leadership normally plays an influential role towards attainment of key staff in influential positions while targeting the achievement of organizational strategy. Meanwhile it can be observed that having talented staff can lead to innovation and invention, conducive working environment and this can be achieved through collaboration and networking since

most of the staff are aware of what is their docket and can able to translate and guide one another hence failing the crippling and stalling working without its completion (Oehley, 2013; Šimanskienė and Župerkienė, 2014).

From the discussion above it is important to conclude that sustainable leadership when linked with talented staff under good working condition, an institution would be able to compete favorable and also have quality services achieved and customer satisfaction be gained.

Furthermore, the findings of the study support the findings of the previous study while exhibiting that the role of sustainable leadership when linked with skilled worker under favorable working condition can yield good results towards efficiency and effective performance. However, it is not a guarantee that when sustainable leaderships and talents are available the institution will achieve its best result. There must be good working condition with well streamered systems and structured channels for rule of command and movement towards the achievement of the desired goals and objectives. Equally those organizations that have attained greater transformation levels have had positive interrelationship among staff, conducive and positive environment, well streamline channels of communication. Likewise these institutions that are growing should cope up by ensuring that leadership is developed with required skills be able to delegate responsibility and make employees accountable for their decisions and results of their actions (Aragón and Garcia, 2015; Harshita Shrimali, 2012; Lucas and Goodman, 2015; Williams et al., 2016).

10. Recommendations and conclusions

The study was not longitudinal in nature due to some constraints that ranged from time and finances. Therefore, future studies can consider doing the same study in a longitudinal manner and cover more universities in the same country and other parts of East Africa. Furthermore, the study findings cannot be generalized due to the fact that out of 29 universities its only six (6) that the current study targeted due to lack of funds, and strikes of both students and lecturers that engulfed some of the universities. The greatest contribution of this study to educationists and researchers is the usefulness of this detailed model. The model is sound and appropriate enough to be used in analyzing the operational management levels especially in higher education intuitions in the generation of change and transformation where turbulences are the order of the day. Policy makers and educational managers and leaders can employ the results generated by this study to examine and diagnose their levels of practices and strategy implementation while enhancing change and transformation in their educational organizations. In specific terms researchers can employ this model and its survey to examine efficiency and effectiveness of organizational performance coupled with transformational indicators especially at higher education levels. Furthermore,

the study brought together different frameworks and theories to establish their contribution towards transformation when integrated with one another however it did not utilize all the sub dimensions of each construct. Therefore, future studies can employ other subdimensions of each of the subconstructs not used in this study to examine the level of practice in universities in other areas of the world.

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