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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN PARASTATALS IN KENYA: A CASE OF KENYA MEDICAL SUPPLIES AUTHORITY

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ABSTRACT :

This study examined the influence of transformational leadership on employee productivity at the Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (KEMSA). Specifically, the study examined the influence of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration on employee productivity. The study was guided by Transformational Leadership Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Self-Determination Theory and Path-Goal Theory. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted. The target population comprised 604 KEMSA employees drawn from eleven departments, from which a sample of 241 respondents was selected; 218 usable questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 90.5%. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis involved frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, while Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to establish the relationships between transformational leadership dimensions and employee productivity. The findings showed that transformational leadership dimensions were positively associated with employee productivity. Idealized influence had a significant positive relationship with employee productivity ($r = .682$, $p < .01$), while inspirational motivation recorded a strong positive relationship ($r = .714$, $p < .01$). Intellectual stimulation was also positively related to employee productivity ($r = .641$, $p < .01$), as was individualized consideration ($r = .696$, $p < .01$). The multiple regression model was statistically significant, $F(4, 213) = 128.64$, $p < .001$, with transformational leadership dimensions explaining 64.2% of the variation in employee productivity ($R^2 = .642$). All four dimensions made statistically significant positive contributions to employee productivity. Inspirational motivation recorded the largest standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = .318$), followed by individualized consideration ($\beta = .259$), idealized influence ($\beta = .201$) and intellectual stimulation ($\beta = .177$). The study concludes that transformational leadership is significantly associated with employee productivity at KEMSA. The study recommends strengthening transformational leadership through effective communication of organizational vision, employee recognition, coaching and mentoring, ethical leadership, continuous learning and opportunities for innovation. The findings contribute empirical evidence on transformational leadership and employee productivity and provide useful insights for leadership practice, human resource management and future research in Kenyan parastatals.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Employee Productivity, Parastatals, Employee Motivation, Organizational Performance, Public Sector Management, Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (KEMSA).

1. Introduction

Organizations across the world operate in an increasingly dynamic environment characterized by globalization, digital transformation, technological advancement and changing workforce expectations. These developments have intensified competition and increased the need for organizations to improve efficiency, innovation and service delivery. Leadership has therefore become one of the most important organizational resources because it shapes employee attitudes, organizational culture and overall performance (Northouse, 2022; Yukl, 2023). Among contemporary leadership approaches, transformational leadership has received widespread scholarly attention because of its ability to inspire employees, promote innovation, facilitate organizational change and improve employee productivity.

Burns (1978) described transformational leadership as a process through which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Bass (1985) extended this view by describing transformational leaders as those who motivate followers to perform beyond expected levels by activating higher-order needs and fostering trust, admiration and respect. Bass and Riggio (2022) identify four dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, where leaders serve as ethical role models; inspirational motivation, where leaders communicate a compelling organizational vision;

intellectual stimulation, where leaders encourage creativity and innovative problem-solving; and individualized consideration, where leaders coach and mentor employees according to their individual needs. Employee productivity, in turn, refers to the extent to which employees efficiently utilize organizational resources to produce quality outputs on time while achieving organizational objectives. Recent studies suggest that transformational leadership enhances employee productivity by strengthening employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and innovative work behavior (Xia & Jang, 2024; Yukl, 2023).

In Kenya, state corporations play a central role in implementing government policy and delivering essential public services. Performance evaluations have, however, identified persistent challenges in many state corporations, including employee disengagement, ineffective communication, bureaucratic decision-making, limited innovation and operational inefficiencies (Public Service Commission, 2023). The Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (KEMSA), established under the Kenya Medical Supplies Authority Act of 2013, is mandated to procure, warehouse and distribute essential medicines, vaccines and other health products to public health facilities across the country. As the principal public health commodities agency, KEMSA supports the attainment of Universal Health Coverage, and its ongoing reforms emphasize improved procurement systems, stronger governance, digital technology adoption and supply chain efficiency (Kenya Medical Supplies Authority, 2024). Because the timely procurement, efficient inventory management and effective distribution of health commodities depend heavily on motivated and productive employees, KEMSA provides an appropriate setting for examining how transformational leadership influences employee productivity.

2. Statement of the Problem

Employee productivity is a critical determinant of organizational performance because it influences service quality, operational efficiency, customer satisfaction and the attainment of strategic objectives. Public institutions in Kenya have progressively adopted transformational leadership approaches to motivate employees, encourage innovation and strengthen organizational commitment. Empirical evidence generally shows that transformational leadership has a positive influence on employee productivity, engagement and commitment. However, the existing literature presents conceptual, empirical and contextual gaps. Conceptually, many studies treat transformational leadership as a composite construct, giving insufficient attention to the separate effects of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Empirically, much of the evidence is derived from private sector organizations or developed economies whose institutional environments differ from those of public institutions in developing countries (Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, & Wu, 2021). Contextually, Kenyan studies have focused on universities, county governments, commercial banks, public hospitals and state corporations generally, with limited attention to strategic public health supply chain institutions.

Although KEMSA has implemented reforms to strengthen governance, accountability and supply chain operations, published empirical evidence on how transformational leadership practices influence employee productivity in the Authority remains scarce. This gap limits the evidence available to policymakers and public sector managers for designing leadership development interventions suited to healthcare supply chain institutions. This study therefore examined how idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration influence employee productivity at KEMSA.

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to examine the influence of transformational leadership on employee productivity in parastatals in Kenya, with specific reference to KEMSA. The specific objectives were: (i) to determine the influence of idealized influence on employee productivity at KEMSA; (ii) to examine the influence of inspirational motivation on employee productivity at KEMSA; (iii) to assess the influence of intellectual stimulation on employee productivity at KEMSA; and (iv) to establish the influence of individualized consideration on employee productivity at KEMSA.

4. Literature Review

4.1 Theoretical Review

Transformational Leadership Theory was the anchor theory for the study. Bass and Avolio (1994) postulate that transformational leaders influence employees through four fundamental dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Leaders who act as ethical role models earn employees' trust and respect; leaders who articulate a compelling vision keep employees committed to organizational objectives; leaders who stimulate employees intellectually encourage creative problem-solving; and leaders who provide individualized support promote personal growth and improved job performance. The theory directly explains how each of the four dimensions examined in this study may contribute to employee productivity at KEMSA. Critics, however, note that the theory assumes transformational leadership is universally effective, whereas organizational culture, employee characteristics and institutional constraints may moderate its effects (Yukl, 2020).

Three supporting theories explain the mechanisms through which transformational leadership influences productivity. Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) proposes that employees who perceive fair treatment, support and recognition from their leaders reciprocate through loyalty, commitment and better performance; it was linked to individualized consideration in this study. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) holds that individuals become highly motivated when their needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness are met; it was linked to inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, since inspirational leaders create meaningful goals and intellectually stimulating leaders encourage employees to develop new solutions and skills. Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971) proposes that leaders improve performance by clarifying goals, removing obstacles and providing support; it was particularly relevant to inspirational motivation, because leaders who communicate a clear vision help employees understand how their individual efforts contribute to organizational success.

4.2 Empirical Review

Idealized influence refers to the extent to which leaders serve as role models by exhibiting ethical conduct, integrity, accountability and commitment to organizational values. Khan and Fatima (2021), in a study of 312 employees in Pakistan's public organizations, found that idealized influence significantly improved employee productivity by strengthening trust in leadership, organizational commitment and engagement. Nguyen and Luu (2022) reported a similar positive effect among 286 employees of Vietnamese state corporations. In Kenya, Wambui and Kihoro (2023) found that idealized influence was among the strongest predictors of employee commitment and work performance in selected state corporations, while Ouma and Mwangi (2025) reported that idealized influence positively affected employee productivity in Kenyan government agencies through trust and organizational commitment. However, these studies either examined non-Kenyan contexts, treated transformational leadership as a composite construct, or aggregated data across several public agencies without focusing on KEMSA.

Inspirational motivation refers to a leader's ability to articulate a compelling vision, communicate high expectations, encourage teamwork and inspire employees to commit to organizational objectives. Ahmed, Malik and Hassan (2021) found that inspirational motivation positively influenced employee productivity in public healthcare institutions, while Mutua and Njoroge (2023) reported a positive and significant influence of inspirational motivation on employee performance in Kenyan county governments. These findings suggest that employees who understand the organizational vision and believe their contributions matter demonstrate greater engagement and initiative, although the contexts studied differ from that of a national health supply agency.

Intellectual stimulation refers to leadership behaviors that encourage creativity, critical thinking, innovation and the questioning of established assumptions. Choi and Lee (2022) found that intellectual stimulation improved employee performance in South Korean public institutions through innovation and continuous learning. Kiprono and Cheruiyot (2023) reported that intellectual stimulation improved employee performance among Kenyan state corporations, although the study treated transformational leadership largely as a composite construct.

Individualized consideration refers to the degree to which leaders recognize the unique needs, capabilities and development requirements of individual

employees through coaching, mentoring, constructive feedback and career support. Rahman, Ismail and Yusuf (2021) found that individualized consideration improved employee engagement in Indonesia's public sector, while Karanja and Wanjiru (2023) reported that individualized consideration enhanced employee performance in Kenyan state corporations. Taken together, the reviewed studies consistently show that the four dimensions of transformational leadership are positively associated with employee outcomes. Nevertheless, few studies have examined the independent contribution of each dimension, and none has focused specifically on KEMSA, whose responsibility for national health commodity supply creates a distinctive operating environment.

4.3 Conceptual Framework

The study conceptualized the four dimensions of transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration) as the independent variables and employee productivity as the dependent variable. Employee productivity was operationalized through efficiency, quality of work, timeliness, resource utilization and commitment to organizational objectives. Leaders who demonstrate ethical behavior, communicate a compelling vision, encourage innovation and provide individualized support were expected to improve employee productivity.

5. Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive correlational research design, which enabled the researcher to describe the study variables as they existed and to establish the nature and strength of the relationships between the transformational leadership dimensions and employee productivity. The target population comprised 604 employees drawn from eleven departments at KEMSA head office in Nairobi. Using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 5% margin of error, a sample of 241 respondents was determined. Stratified random sampling with proportionate allocation was used to ensure that every department was fairly represented, and respondents within each department were selected using computer-generated random numbers.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through the drop-and-pick-later method in September 2026. Section A captured demographic information, while Section B contained five items for each transformational leadership dimension and ten items for employee productivity, all measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). A pilot study involving 24 employees of a public organization with characteristics similar to KEMSA was used to refine the instrument. Content validity was established through expert review, and reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients of .84 for idealized influence, .86 for inspirational motivation, .81 for intellectual stimulation, .83 for individualized consideration and .79 for employee productivity, all above the .70 threshold. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 29. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations) summarized the data, Pearson correlation established the strength and direction of relationships, and multiple linear regression determined the influence of the four dimensions on employee productivity using the model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

where Y is employee productivity, X_1 is idealized influence, X_2 is inspirational motivation, X_3 is intellectual stimulation, X_4 is individualized consideration, β_0 is the constant, β_1 to β_4 are the regression coefficients and ε is the error term. The model was tested at the 95% confidence level. Ethical requirements, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, privacy and anonymity, were observed throughout the study.

6. Research Findings

6.1 Response Rate and Respondent Profile

Of the 241 questionnaires distributed, 218 were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 90.5%, which was considered adequate for analysis. Of the respondents, 56.9% were male and 43.1% were female. Most respondents were aged between 31 and 40 years (34.9%) or 41 and 50 years (28.9%).

The majority held a bachelor's degree (47.2%) or master's degree (31.2%), and 85.8% had worked at KEMSA for at least two years. Operational staff formed the largest group (45.0%), followed by middle management (23.4%), supervisory staff (22.0%) and senior management (9.6%). The profile indicates that respondents were sufficiently educated and experienced to provide informed views on leadership practices and productivity.

6.2 Descriptive Findings

Table 1 presents the composite mean scores for the study variables. All four dimensions of transformational leadership recorded mean scores close to or above 4.00, indicating that respondents generally agreed that their supervisors demonstrated transformational leadership behaviors.

Table 1: Descriptive Summary of the Study Variables

Variable	Items	Mean	SD
Idealized Influence	5	4.04	0.86
Inspirational Motivation	5	4.05	0.84
Intellectual Stimulation	5	3.98	0.89
Individualized Consideration	5	4.02	0.87
Employee Productivity	10	4.09	0.78

Source: Researcher (2026)

For idealized influence (M = 4.04), the highest ratings were for supervisors demonstrating high ethical standards and leading by example (both M = 4.10), while employees' trust in supervisors' decisions recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.95). For inspirational motivation (M = 4.05), encouragement of teamwork recorded the highest mean (M = 4.15), followed by communication of a clear organizational vision and motivation to achieve organizational goals (both M = 4.10); recognition of employee achievements recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.95). For intellectual stimulation (M = 3.98), promotion of continuous learning was rated highest (M = 4.07), while encouraging employees to question traditional ways of doing work was rated lowest (M = 3.84). For individualized consideration (M = 4.02), respectful treatment of employees was rated highest (M = 4.15), while coaching and mentoring recorded the lowest mean (M = 3.89).

Employee productivity recorded an overall mean of 4.09. Commitment to achieving organizational objectives (M = 4.26), willingness to take responsibility for work (M = 4.22) and quality of work meeting organizational standards (M = 4.15) were rated highest, while completing tasks with minimal supervision was rated lowest (M = 4.00). Respondents also agreed that transformational leadership practices had improved their productivity (M = 4.07).

6.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was used to establish the direction and strength of the relationships between the transformational leadership dimensions and employee productivity. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Idealized Influence	1.000				
2. Inspirational Motivation	.624**	1.000			
3. Intellectual Stimulation	.571**	.638**	1.000		
4. Individualized Consideration	.603**	.655**	.617**	1.000	
5. Employee Productivity	.682**	.714**	.641**	.696**	1.000

*Note: **p < .01 (2-tailed). Source: Researcher (2026)*

All four dimensions had positive and statistically significant relationships with employee productivity. Inspirational motivation recorded the strongest relationship ($r = .714$, $p < .01$), followed by individualized consideration ($r = .696$, $p < .01$), idealized influence ($r = .682$, $p < .01$) and intellectual stimulation ($r = .641$, $p < .01$). The correlations among the independent variables ranged from .571 to .655, below the .80 threshold, suggesting that severe

multicollinearity was unlikely.

6.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

The four dimensions of transformational leadership jointly produced a multiple correlation coefficient of R = .801. The coefficient of determination (R^2 = .642) indicates that the four dimensions explained 64.2% of the variation in employee productivity at KEMSA, while the adjusted R^2 of .635 indicates that 63.5% of the variation was explained after adjusting for the number of predictors. The remaining 35.8% was attributable to factors not included in the model. The analysis of variance showed that the overall model was statistically significant, $F(4, 213) = 128.64$, $p < .001$. The regression coefficients are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	0.842	0.214	—	3.93	.000
Idealized Influence	0.184	0.051	.201	3.61	.000
Inspirational Motivation	0.287	0.054	.318	5.31	.000
Intellectual Stimulation	0.156	0.048	.177	3.25	.001
Individualized Consideration	0.231	0.052	.259	4.44	.000

Dependent variable: Employee Productivity. Source: Researcher (2026)

All four dimensions made positive and statistically significant contributions to employee productivity. Inspirational motivation had the largest standardized coefficient (β = .318, $p < .001$), followed by individualized consideration (β = .259, $p < .001$), idealized influence (β = .201, $p < .001$) and intellectual stimulation (β = .177, p = .001). The fitted regression model was:

Employee Productivity = 0.842 + 0.184(II) + 0.287(IM) + 0.156(IS) + 0.231(IC)

7. Discussion of Findings

The first objective was to determine the influence of idealized influence on employee productivity. Idealized influence had a positive and significant relationship with employee productivity (r = .682, $p < .01$; β = .201, $p < .001$). Employees generally perceived their supervisors as ethical role models who led by example. This finding is consistent with Wambui and Kihoro (2023), who identified idealized influence as one of the strongest predictors of employee commitment and work performance in Kenyan state corporations, and with Ouma and Mwangi (2025), who reported that idealized influence improved employee productivity through trust and organizational commitment. The study extends this evidence by isolating the contribution of idealized influence at KEMSA rather than treating transformational leadership only as a composite construct. The comparatively lower rating for trust in supervisors' decisions suggests that ethical conduct alone may not be sufficient without transparent decision-making.

The second objective was to examine the influence of inspirational motivation on employee productivity. Inspirational motivation recorded both the strongest correlation (r = .714, $p < .01$) and the largest standardized regression coefficient (β = .318, $p < .001$), making it the most influential dimension at KEMSA. This finding is consistent with Ahmed et al. (2021), who found that inspirational motivation improved productivity among public healthcare workers, and with Mutua and Njoroge (2023), who reported a significant influence of inspirational motivation on employee performance in Kenyan county governments. The result also supports Path-Goal Theory, which holds that leaders improve performance by clarifying goals and showing employees how their efforts contribute to organizational success. The relatively lower score for recognition of employee achievements, however, indicates that recognition practices could be strengthened.

The third objective was to assess the influence of intellectual stimulation on employee productivity. Intellectual stimulation was positively and significantly related to employee productivity (r = .641, $p < .01$; β = .177, p = .001), although it recorded the smallest coefficient among the four dimensions. This finding agrees with Choi and Lee (2022), who found that intellectual stimulation improved employee performance through innovation

and continuous learning, and with Kiprono and Cheruiyot (2023), who reported a similar relationship in Kenyan state corporations. The comparatively lower score for questioning traditional ways of doing work suggests that, within a highly regulated procurement and supply environment, employees may have limited latitude to challenge established procedures.

The fourth objective was to establish the influence of individualized consideration on employee productivity. Individualized consideration had a positive and significant relationship with employee productivity ($r = .696$, $p < .01$; $\beta = .259$, $p < .001$), the second-largest contribution in the model. This is consistent with Rahman et al. (2021), who found that individualized consideration improved employee engagement, and with Karanja and Wanjiru (2023), who reported that it enhanced employee performance in Kenyan state corporations. The finding also supports Social Exchange Theory, since employees who feel respected and supported appear to reciprocate through greater commitment and productivity. The lower score for coaching and mentoring suggests that structured mentoring is an area for improvement at KEMSA.

8. Conclusion

The study concludes that transformational leadership is significantly associated with employee productivity at KEMSA. Each of the four dimensions examined has a positive and significant influence on productivity, and together they explain 64.2% of the variation in employee productivity. Inspirational motivation makes the largest unique contribution, indicating that clear communication of vision, teamwork and employee motivation are critical drivers of productivity at the Authority. Individualized consideration and idealized influence also make substantial contributions, highlighting the importance of respectful treatment, constructive feedback, professional development, ethical leadership and role modelling. Intellectual stimulation, while significant, makes the smallest contribution, and encouraging employees to question established practices requires further attention. Similarly, recognition of employee achievements and coaching and mentoring were rated comparatively lower, indicating areas where leadership practice can be strengthened.

9. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations. First, KEMSA should strengthen ethical leadership and role modelling by incorporating idealized influence competencies into leadership policies, recruitment, promotion and performance appraisal, and senior management should ensure that supervisors consistently demonstrate integrity, accountability and transparent decision-making. Second, KEMSA should strengthen communication of the organizational vision and teamwork, and introduce a structured employee recognition framework that acknowledges exceptional performance, innovation and contribution to organizational objectives. Third, KEMSA should promote creativity, innovation and continuous learning through innovation forums, problem-solving sessions and employee suggestion mechanisms, and supervisors should be trained to encourage constructive questioning of traditional work practices. Fourth, KEMSA should establish formal coaching and mentoring arrangements, individual performance discussions, career development planning and constructive feedback mechanisms, coordinated and monitored by the Human Resource Department.

10. Implications for Theory, Policy and Practice

Theoretically, the study contributes to Transformational Leadership Theory, Social Exchange Theory, Self-Determination Theory and Path-Goal Theory by examining the four dimensions of transformational leadership independently rather than only as a composite construct, and by providing evidence from a public health supply institution in a developing economy. At the policy level, the findings provide evidence that KEMSA management, the Ministry of Health and the Public Service Commission can use to design leadership development policies, performance management frameworks, leadership competency frameworks, recognition policies and coaching and mentoring programmes. At the managerial level, the findings show that leaders in parastatals can improve employee productivity by prioritizing inspirational communication and individualized support, while also modelling ethical conduct and creating space for innovation.

11. Limitations and Areas for Further Research

The study relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may reflect respondents' perceptions rather than objectively measured productivity, and social desirability may have influenced responses, particularly when respondents evaluated their supervisors. The study was conducted at a single parastatal, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other Kenyan parastatals with different leadership structures, cultures and working environments. The cross-sectional design captured data at one point in time and therefore cannot establish how the relationship changes over time. In addition, the model left 35.8% of the variation in employee productivity unexplained. Future studies could include several parastatals for comparison, use longitudinal designs, incorporate objective productivity measures such as performance contract and appraisal records, and examine additional factors such as employee engagement, organizational culture, compensation and working conditions, including their possible mediating or moderating roles.

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