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Mentorship as an Antecedent of High Performance Workplace in Selected Water Boards in Kenya

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Abstract
This study was aimed at investigating mentorship as antecedent of high performance workplace. The objective of the study was to determine the effect of mentorship on high performance workplace and it was informed by system theory where the entire organizations were observed to be interrelated and interdependent of each other. The target population was 977 with a sample size of 276 respondents. Explanatory survey design was used. First, the study utilized census for the five companies under study followed by Stratified sampling in obtaining respondents from departments and lastly simple random technique was used to select individual respondents from a sample. Structural equation modeling in conjunction with analysis of moment structures was used to analyze data. Results indicated that mentorship was not a significant predictor of high performance workplace (β=0.05, CR=0.325, $p<0.001$) and its results revealed that mentorship has not been conceptualized well by management and employees. The study further advances new strategies for proper mentoring procedures and methods that towards development of a successful high performance workplace.
Keywords: Mentorship, Determinant, High, Performance, Workplace

1. Introduction

High performance workplace is a contemporary issue in the modern management. This is because organizations are geared towards realization of effective and efficient performance management. High performance workplace is therefore achieved through mentorship programs for employees. Mentoring has been used as a way of helping younger protégés to advance. Harris *et al.,* (2001) argue that workplace mentoring is the most critical factor in worksite learning. Today, mentoring is commonly used in professional and managerial learning, but is relatively new as a means of supporting low-paid trainees and apprentices doing certificate-level qualifications. Hipes and Marinoni (2005) define mentoring as a planned early intervention designed to provide timely instruction to mentees throughout their apprenticeship, to shorten the learning curve, reinforce positive work ethics and attitudes and provide mentees with role models. Mentoring is a learning partnership between employees for purposes of sharing technical information, institutional knowledge and insight with respect to a particular occupation, profession, organization or endeavor (Kram, 2007). Informal mentoring relationships develop in the work setting when a more seasoned employee takes a new employee under his/her wing. While formal mentoring programs allow organizations to create and nurture relationships by matching more experienced employees (mentors) with less experienced employees (mentees) to meet specific agency objectives while helping those individuals in the mentoring relationship to identify and develop their own talents (Ragins & Kram, 2007).

Workplace mentoring theory originated with the experience of white male professionals (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007). Darwin (2000) seeks to expose unequal and often exploitative power relations between mentors and mentees in the workforce. She observes that mentoring relationship has been framed in a language of paternalism and dependency and stems from power-dependent, hierarchical relationships, aimed at maintaining the status quo. Darwin (2000) further observes that power and control of knowledge are barriers to open communication. He states that the notion of mentoring as an exclusive activity undertaken predominantly by older males for younger males is no longer appropriate. Modern day workplace mentors tend to develop the same kind of relationships with mentees. They tend to work with less powerful individuals in terms of organizational status and income in order to help them fit into the norms and values of the workplace and to develop their formal and informal learning (Ragins & Verbos, 2006).

Higgins *et al.,* (2007) introduce the concept of developmental networks which are groups of people who take an interest in and act to advance the careers of particular individuals and they are identified by the protégé. They commented that individuals receive help from multiple dyadic relationships and from individuals whose help spans organizational boundaries as well as hierarchical lines of authority. There are arguments in the literature that mentoring benefits trainees, mentors and organizations. Dougherty and Dreher (2007) identify paths that mentoring facilitates for trainees. The first is the human capital path which provides job-related knowledge, skills and abilities that ultimately enhances performance on the job and in turn contributes to career benefits such as increased salary and advancement. The second path identified is the movement capital path which provides information about available opportunities in the workplace and labour market, but may not enhance performance on the job. This path is linked to formal, off-site learning and national qualifications. Taylor *et al.,* (2007) assert

that learning engagement in both formal and informal learning is likely to be stronger when formal learning is linked and acts as a catalyst for informal learning activities in the workplace. In supporting trainees to develop their skills and abilities, the mentor has a pivotal role in linking workplace learning to institutional course-based learning.

The benefits of mentorship are deliberate systematic knowledge transfer methods of providing a job specific knowledge and insight for those positions requiring experience, judgment, discretion and soft skills in order to be effective, means to create and reinforce a positive organizational culture, opportunities to shape the workforce of the future in an intentional, deliberate way to meet the agency's strategic goals and objectives (Eby, 2007). He further provided Structured learning for employees assuming new or expanded responsibilities and identification of talent and development of organizational leadership, personal and professional growth, acquisition of new technical, interpersonal and/or leadership skills, One-on-one opportunities to know and understand the agency from the inside out, expanded relationships within a profession and/or an agency and opportunity to mentor other employees in the future. Mentoring has different skill sets and many workplace mentors report that they struggle with the role. Billett (2003) asserts that the factors assisting strategy use are training and practice, support from other workers, experience in using strategies observing and understanding learner's many organizations have developed formally structured mentoring programmes in an attempt to capture the perceived benefits resulting from informal relationships within the workplace. However, Boud *et al.,* (2009) warn of the danger of formalizing learning opportunities in the workplace as a strategy that improves learning outcomes. Workers who enjoy experience of governing their learning through informal learning connections can shift to a sense that they are being governed by others and are under surveillance, when the relationship is formalized. Despite reported issues with formalization of informal learning connections, evidence remains that mentoring, formal or informal benefits the trainees incorporation into the organizational culture and encourages leadership development among mentors (Dougherty & Dreher, 2007). Other researches indicate that mentoring is a powerful tool which accelerates the development of talent, improvement of staff retention and creating a high performance culture that offers a real competitive advantage (Clutterbuck & Lane, 2004; Ragins & Kram, 2007; Connor & Pakora, 2007; Blake-Beard *et al.,* 2007).

Literature identifies mentoring as a potentially powerful agent of organizational socialization where relationships develop between newcomers and organizational members who help to adjust learning (Chao, 2007). Socialization outcomes include; job satisfaction and organizational commitment which enhances high performance workplace. Darwin (2000) posits that knowledge needs to be viewed as an active process in which curiosity is encouraged and learning becomes a dynamic, reciprocal and participatory process and that exclusive power-dependent mentoring practices cannot continue in work settings while Keesing-Styles (2006) argues that active engagement is critical to learning and learning must engage the learner fully.

2. Materials and Methods

Explanatory survey design was used because it gathers information on a population at a single point in time. The target population was 977. The study utilized census for the five companies under study. Stratified sampling was then used to obtain respondents from departments and lastly simple random technique was used to select individual respondents from a sample of 276. The study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data with a questionnaire tool in form a Likert scale.

3. Results and Discussions

In order to measure mentorship, a total of 12 items was adapted from studies that measured perceived value of mentoring instructors (Hoffman *et al*., 1986). In a study, Hoffman *et al.,* (1986) proposed and tested mentorship scales and its internal consistency reliability was .76 while in a study by Young and Perrewe (2004) the construct validity was .88. The items to measure mentorship impacts on high performance workplace can be categorized into four different sub-dimensions: intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, leadership initiative and idealized influence. The four mentorship sub-dimensions of mentorship impacts were measured. Items that were used to measure each sub-dimension were summated, and summated scales were used to assess mentorship impact on high performance workplace. As shown in figure 1, four items were used to measure intellectual stimulation, three items for inspirational motivation, three items for leadership initiative and two items for idealized influence. A five point Likert scale (strongly disagree equals one and strongly agree equals five) was again used to elicit responses to these items.

Intellectual Stimulation

C1. I am confident that mentorship has facilitated continuity of organizational performance
C2. I am fully prepared for future managerial position
C3. I am sure that mentorship defines professional behavior for new employees
C4. I am aware that mentorship enables new employees settle into the organization

Inspirational Motivation
C5. I know employees are self-directed learners in our organization
C6. I am confident that Mentorship helps employees plan their careers in our organization
C7. I have a feeling that mentorship has assisted us in modeling our behaviors
Leadership Initiative
C8. We have established that mentorship has provided interchange/ exchange of information between employees
C9. I know mentorship aids in acquisition of specified expertise C10. I am fully aware that employees learn through other members
Idealized Influence
C11. I am not aware that mentorship prepares employees for promotion
C12. I am aware that mentorship does not help employees in planning their careers

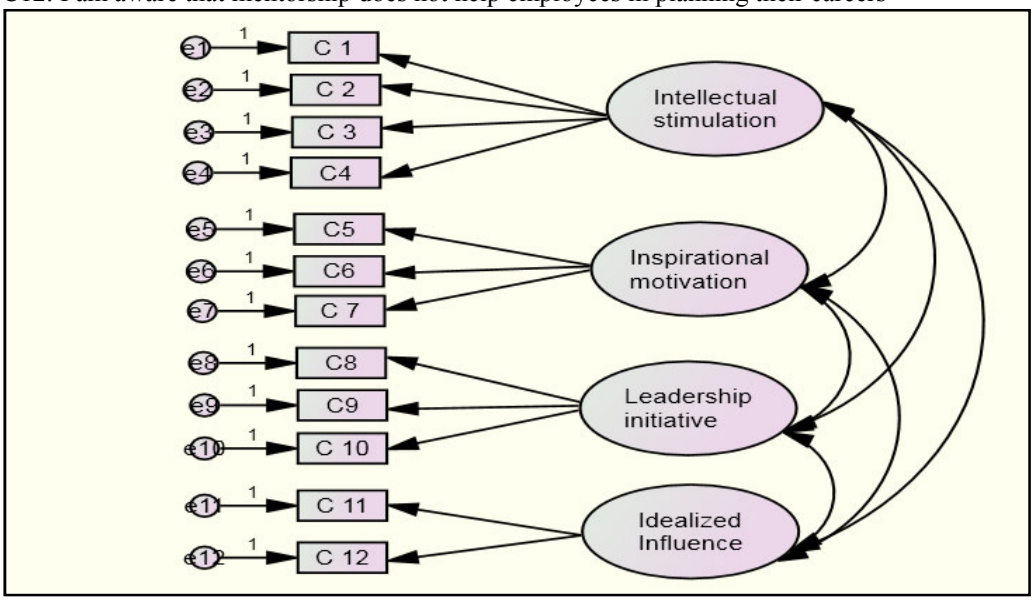

Figure 1: Hypothesized Measurement Model for Mentorship
Source: **Researchers own compilation, (2014).**
3.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis for Mentorship
Exploratory factor analysis extracted four factors for the mentorship measurement scale. Two of the factors were however non-positive definitive and were deleted from further analysis. The study therefore postulated a two-factor measurement model as being a good fit to the data and that the two factors of intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation were significantly correlated. The overall fit of the hypothesized measurement model of the mentorship construct was χ^2 (8) = 35.783 (p=0.000); GFI = 0.953; AGFI = 0.878; CFI = 0.988; and RMSEA = 0.122. These fit indices indicated that the proposed measurement model for mentorship was not quite acceptable (see figure 2).

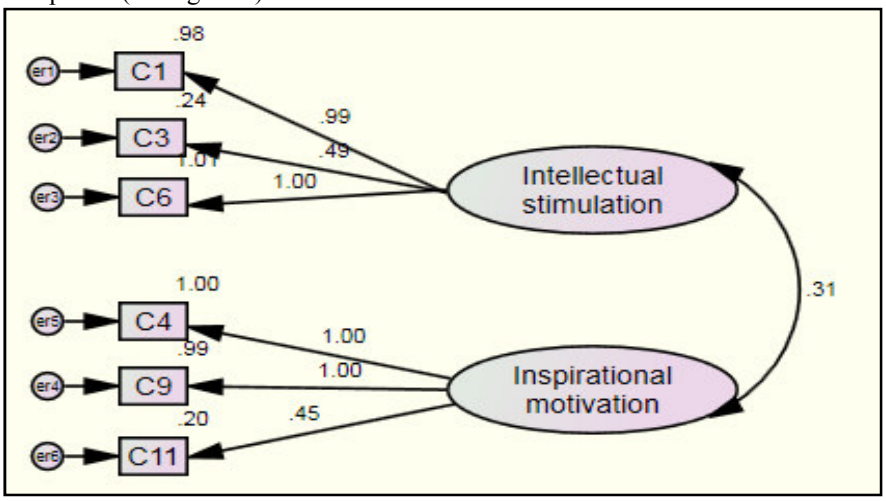

Figure 2: Proposed Measurement Model for Mentorship
Source: Survey Data, (2014)
Post-hoc modifications were indicated from the analysis suggesting correlating some error terms as well as

nesting others. The mentorship measurement model was therefore modified by correlating error terms of items C3 and C4, and C3 and C9. Item C3 was added as an indicator for inspiration motivation while C11 was added as an indicator of intellectual stimulation. The overall fit of this modified measurements model of the mentorship construct was χ^2 (4) = 4.683 (p=0.321); X/df = 1/171; GFI = 0.993; AGFI = 0.966; CFI = 1.000; and RMSEA = 0.027. These fit indices were well within the acceptable fit levels. The modified measurement model for mentorship (see fig. 3) was therefore adjudged to fit the data.

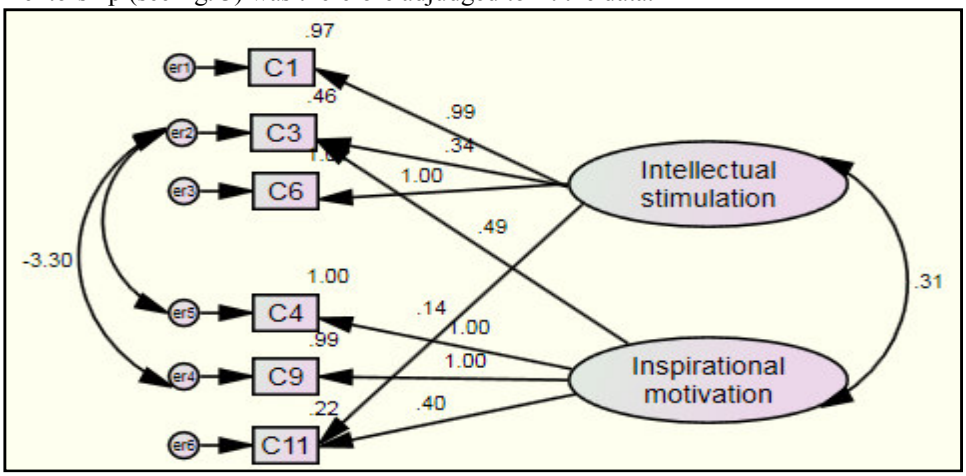

Figure 3: Modified Model for Mentorship
Source: Survey Data, (2014)

The standardized residual covariance presented in Table 1 further confirmed that the modified model was a good fit of the data since none of the values exceeded the cut-point of 2.58, with the highest being -0.250. The final measurement model for mentorship construct as shown in Table 1 had six observed variables with factor loadings ranging from 0.34 to 1.00. In addition, the reliability of the observed variables ranged from 0.22 to 1.00 indicating that in some instances the measurement scale was highly reliable.

Table 1: Standardized Residual Covariance (Final Model for Mentorship)

	C9	C11	C4	C3	C6	C1
C9	.000					
C11	.107	.000				
C4	.000	.056	.000			
C3	-.070	.111	-.037	-.105		
C6	-.221	.008	-.122	-.191	.000	
C1	-.250	.023	-.150	-.188	.000	.000

Source: Survey Data, (2014)

Table 2: CFA for Mentorship

Constructs and indicators	**Standardized loadings**	**Reliability**	**Error variance**
Intellectual stimulation		**0.90***	**0.81****
C1. I am confident that mentorship has facilitated continuity of organizational performance	0.99	0.97	0.03
C3. I am sure that mentorship defines professional behaviour for new employees.	0.34	0.46	0.54
C6. I am confident that mentorship helps employees plan that careers in our organization.	1.00	1.00	0.00
Inspirational motivation		**0.88***	**0.74****
C4. I am aware that mentorship enables new employees to settle into the organization.	1.00	1.00	1.00
C9. I know mentorship aids in acquisition of specified expertise.	1.00	0.99	0.01
C11. I am not aware that mentorship prepares employees for promotion	0.40	0.22	0.78

*Composite Reliability
**Variance extracted
Source: Survey Data, (2014)

Multi-collinearity was further assessed using variance inflation factors (VIF). Hair *et al*., (1998) recommend a common threshold value of 10 and for mentorship it was 2.004 which were within acceptable limits.

3.2 Testing the Effect of Mentorship on High Performance Workplace

Hypothesis Ho1 postulated that mentorship for the employee has no effect on high performance workplace. The standardized path coefficient of 0.05 and the C.R of 0.325, were not significant (p=0.775). This implies that the hypothesis was supported. Consequently, the researcher concluded that there was sufficient evidence at the 0.01 level to suggest that mentorship has no direct effect on high performance workplace. Ho1 There is no significant effect of mentorship on high performance workplace was supported.

4. Conclusion

The Effects of Mentorship on High Performance Workplace

It was hypothesized that mentorship has no significant effect on high performance workplace. The results of the SEM indicated that mentorship was not a significant predictor of high performance workplace (β=0.05, CR=0.325, $p<0.001$). These findings are surprising considering that when the respondents were asked their perceptions of mentorship, they overwhelmingly underscored the critical role played by mentorship in fostering interchange/exchange of ideas as well as in facilitating organizational continuity. Besides, the findings are not consistent with systems theory expectations or with previous studies such as Darwin (2000) who concurred that mentorship is presently at the fore front of strategies to improve workplace learning, and Harris *et al*., (2001) who argued that workplace mentoring is the most critical factor in work site learning.

These findings are perhaps contributed by the fact that mentoring is relatively new as a means of supporting trainees and apprentices. Besides, as suggested by Fletcher and Ragins (2007), workplace mentoring theory originated with the experience of white male professionals, and reflects the dominant identity which may be shunned by employees. This school of thought is further expounded by Darwin (2000) in seeking to expose unequal and often exploitative power relations between mentors and mentees in the workplace. Darwin further, observed that 'the mentorship relationship has been framed in a language of paternalism and dependency and stems from power-dependent, linear-cyclical relationships, aimed at maintaining the status quo' Darwin (2000). She further asserts that power and control of knowledge can become barriers to open communication, and states that the notion of mentoring as an exclusive activity undertaken predominantly by older males for younger males is no longer appropriate. The study therefore contributes to the previous studies through the development of a mentorship model and it was realized that there is no direct relationship between mentorship and high performance workplace that formed the gap under study.

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