



BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING, LEADERSHIP STYLES, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY OF THE TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN KENYA

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Abstract

In today's world of ever increasing competition, organizations are forced to look for new ways to generate value. In the ever-increasing turbulent business environment, organizations are always searching enhanced ways of gaining competitive advantage. The purpose of this study was to assess business process outsourcing, leadership styles, strategic planning and organization productivity in telecommunication industry in Kenya. The study objectives study were to determine the effect of business process outsourcing on organization productivity; effect of leadership styles on organization productivity as well examining examine how strategic planning affect organization productivity in telecommunication industry in Kenya. The study was based on Resource based View Theory, Transaction Cost Theory and Transformational Theory of leadership. The study utilized descriptive research design. The target population comprised of 9 head of departments and 1536 staff of Safaricom, Airtel and Telkom Kenya. Stratified sampling was adopted to select 219 staff while census was used to sample all the nine head of departments. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data. To test reliability, the study applied the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequency and mean and inferential statistics like regression analysis. Data was presented using tables while qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. Respondents were assured of privacy of the data provided and privacy of the source of data as the questionnaire did not call for disclosure of identity. From the study it was established that; business process outsourcing had significant effect $p=0.000$ on organizational productivity, leadership styles had significant effect $p=0.000$ on organizational productivity and strategic planning had significant effect $p=0.000$ on organizational productivity. This study recommends that organizations should ensure that the right service providers are selected to achieve the objectives of outsourcing, organizations should focus on using the transformational and democratic leadership styles in the organizations so as to improve the organizational performance and management should establish a knowledge management culture that would facilitate faster adaptation to change.

Keywords- Business Process Outsourcing, Leadership Styles, Strategic Planning, Organization Productivity

Introduction

In today's world of ever increasing competition, organizations are forced to look for new ways to generate value. The highly turbulent business environment together with almost limitless customer demands for services and products has forced organizations to evaluate, improve and re-engineer their operations. One avenue that organizations have pursued to improve their competitive position in this new business environment has been to increase the role of outsourcing in their operations, which has been found to provide a competitive advantage and heightened performance to these firms (Carlos & Ceballos, 2014). Diminishing resources and market competitiveness have forced organizations to scrutinize their methods of producing goods and services and make changes in their processes to maximize economic returns. To survive and be profitable in current globalization era, organizations have pursued continuous improvement, leaned up production, reengineered business processes, and integrated supply chains (Su, 2013).

Majority of firms in United Kingdom outsource some services, the main motivation being cost reduction (Tayeb, 2012). American firms that have outsourced for product and process innovation have realized an increase in their profits (Un and Asakawa, 2014). Companies that have outsourced in South Korea have a greater opportunity of expanding since when organization is concentrating on their main business functions while other companies deal with other aspects, chances are that productivity will be heightened and the level of quality emanating from such a business enterprise will increase (Lin and Ma, 2015). Businesses in Ghana are gaining competitive advantage by outsourcing non core activities to a third party thereby expanding the network on different locations and even going internationally (Kwong, 2012). In Kenya, performance contracting and strategic outsourcing have been largely successful tools in improving the financial performance of public corporations like Kenya Railways, Kenya Airport Authorities and Kenya power (Mwaniki, 2014).

Krstić (2012) defined Business Process Outsourcing as the whole process of shifting specific or all organization functions like accounting or human resource to a supplier or service provider. Non-core functions like administering travel activities, management of payroll processes, accounts, human resource administration issues, and numerous call center applications are the

same across various organizations. Leadership style is viewed as a combination of different characteristics, traits and behaviors that are used by leaders for interacting with their subordinates. Leadership styles can be categorized as follows: transformational leadership style, charismatic leadership, transaction, democratic, autocratic and bureaucratic leadership (Mitonga-Monga and Coetzee, 2012). Steiner (2010) describes strategic planning as a continuing, developing, vigorous and a collaborating process to build a company to a performing level within the industry. Lawler & Boudreau (2012) defines organization productivity as the capacity of an organization, institution, or business to produce desired results with a minimum expenditure of energy, time, money, personnel, and materials.

The telecommunications industry in Kenya outsources the activities of the customer care and network services to service provider with the aim of bringing down costs and increasing organization productivity. In 2011, Safaricom Limited changed its top structure, a move it believed, would help to attain competitive advantage by ensuring the organization is efficient in its work. Telkom Kenya has changed its organization structure, its strategic focus, its employee size and composition and also its management orientation. Airtel has also changed ownership since the inception of the company. This was with an aim of improving its leadership and organization performance. It is against this background that the researcher assessed strategic outsourcing, strategic leadership and organization productivity in telecommunication industry in Kenya.

Problem Statement

In recent years, competitive markets and business environments have been volatile, turbulent, uncertain, complex, and heterogeneous. As a result, firms have implemented valuable competencies, capabilities and strategies for their business operations and activities in order to enhance business excellence, encourage competitive advantage, achieve firm performance, gain corporate survival and promote organizational sustainability in these circumstances (Hitt, Haynes & Serpa, 2010). Despite the fact that telecommunication industries in Kenya have made various strategic and leadership changes, there is still high competition in the industry as each of the companies tries to achieve the largest market share of mobile subscribers. Efforts to offer better services to attract more customers has contributed to some telecommunication industries

recording high profits while others are incurring losses. There are various studies carried out on strategic outsourcing and leadership on organization productivity. Tayeb (2012); Asakawa (2014); Lin and Ma (2013); Kwong (2012); Serfontein (2010); Mutual (2012) and Ogolla (2013). However, these studies were carried out in other industries and none of this studies focused on both strategic leadership, planning and outsourcing. The current study aimed at filling this gap by assessing the effect of strategic outsourcing, leadership styles and strategic planning on organizational productivity in telecommunication industry in Kenya.

Objectives

The study objectives were;

- i. To determine the effect of business process outsourcing on organizational productivity in the telecommunication industry in Kenya.
- ii. To establish the effect of leadership styles on organizational productivity in the telecommunication industry in Kenya.
- iii. To examine how strategic planning affects organizational productivity in the telecommunication industry in Kenya

Hypothesis

H₀₁: Business process outsourcing has no significant effect on productivity in telecommunication industry in Kenya.

H₀₂: Leadership styles has no significant effect on productivity in telecommunication industry in Kenya.

H₀₃: Strategic planning has no significant effect on productivity in telecommunication industry in Kenya.

Theoretical Review

The study was guided by the resource based view theory, transaction cost theory and transformational theory of leadership:

Resource Based View Theory

Resource based View Theory was developed Barney (1991). According to Barney (1991), an organization strategic position and growth is achieved from the unique strategies the firm is putting in place towards the performance of the overall organizational goals and objectives. RBV indicates that an organization can outsource all its entire functions not only the main organizational strengths. Valmohammadi & servati (2011) noted that, the organization is made of

resources and skills which can be restructured to provide it with competitive gain. An organization internal competences and strengths determine the strategic choice it makes. The core of resource based view is that successful organizations will be competitive on the development of unique and strategic capabilities which may be intangible, rigid or implicit in nature. In Telecommunication industry, key resources include infrastructure, technology and expertise. It is challenging to upgrade technology on old and obsolete infrastructure. Good expert knowledge is important for regular maintenance. Telecommunication success is determined by network availability and customer experience; this is made possible by regular, proactive and up to date maintenance.

Transaction Cost Theory

Transaction Cost Theory was developed by Coase (1937). The theory states that related transaction cost and production costs associated with the process and the services determines whether to outsource or not to outsource. According to Mahnke et al., (2005), the three most important dimensions of cost transactions are: how often the transactions are conducted, unpredictability of the transactions and degree of asset specificity to the firm. If all the dimensions of the transaction are found to be low and of poor quality, then the firm will resolve to outsource its business processes to a competent service provider. Kulmala (2013) indicated that outsourcing of services or production process will results to reduced production costs as compared to doing it internally due to the theory of economies of scale. But in such a case, normally the transaction cost remains high because vendors need to be managed, corrected and monitored. In Telecommunications, vendors who need to be managed include Network maintenance, ICT, Construction and customer service. The telecommunication firms are keen on reducing the cost of transactions in order to continue being competitive as well as reduce their operation costs.

Transformational Theory of Leadership

Transformational Theory of leadership was developed in the late 20th century by Burns (1978). The theory was later enhanced by Bass (1985) who argued that transformational leaders motivated their followers beyond expectations. According to Krishnan (2005), transformational leadership is the leaders' ability to motivate followers so that they can be able to accomplish more than what the followers planned to accomplish. This theory was adopted by the study to

guide and direct how powerful the type of leadership in the telecommunication industries can determine aspects of the organization like setting the strategic direction and managing resources.

Review of Empirical Literature

Business Process Outsourcing and Organizational Productivity

Various studies have been done on the relationship between business process outsourcing and organizational productivity. Sarifuzzaman (2013) conducted a study on the impact of outsourcing on company performance in local public limited company in Bangladesh. Findings established that the companies enjoyed various benefits from business process outsourcing. The benefits include downsized organization, improved system-loss, improved collection ratio, better customer satisfaction. Bredenlow (2013) conducted a study on the relationship between outsourcing practices and performance of mobile companies in the United Kingdom. Findings established that outsourcing is one of the major key strategies for a company's growth; it is no longer an operational issue but a top management requirement. A successful IT outsourcing implementation cuts costs, increase revenues increased capacity, improved quality and increased productivity, improve organizational competitiveness.

Tenkorang (2015) conducted a study to examine the effects of outsourcing on operational performance of telecom firms in Ghana. Findings established that if telecom firms outsource non-core functions, they are more likely to record an improvement in operational cost by approximately 32%. Akewushola (2013) examined the axiomatic relationship between outsourcing strategy and organizational performance in Nigeria manufacturing sector. The findings revealed that firms that outsource their IT services experience reduce average cost, increased sales turnover and profitability. Expertise improve service quality, reduce staff strength, streamline the production process, reduced administrative burden and save time for core activities. Findings also established that outsourcing has significant influence on organizational profitability because production process and concentration on core competence are the activities

in which the organizations make use of in order to increase their output and perform better competitively.

Achonjo (2014) carried out a study to determine the impact of outsourcing on the performance of parastatals in Kenya. The findings of the study was that the parastatals considered competence, cost, flexibility, right time, qualification, professionalism, experience, reputation, right quality of service and type of relationship before deciding to outsource information communication technology services. Kiptum (2014) conducted a study on effect of outsourcing on employee productivity in selected parastatals in Kenya. Findings established that security, cleaning, refuse disposal and training were the main outsourced services in parastatals. Further, outsourcing had effects on operational costs, innovation and productivity. Its effects on operational cost was through cost saving, reducing operational cost and improved resources management which was significant while its effects on innovation and productivity were found to be insignificant.

Leadership Styles and Organizational Productivity

Different scholars have researched on the relationship between leadership styles and organizational productivity in different contexts. Khan and Adnan (2014) examined the impact leadership styles on organizational performance in Pakistan. The study found that although the most suited style of leadership is transformational, in new and growing organizations transactional leadership style may be more productive, while in certain circumstances, laissez faire style may be required. Findings also established that leadership style has a significant impact on the organizational performance. Rukmani, Ramesh & Jayakrishnan (2010) study aimed at assessing the effect of transformational and transactional leadership style on organizational effectiveness in in public sector India. Findings established that the managers perceived both transformational and transactional leadership style as important in the public sector organizations, although transformational leadership was considered slightly more important in organizational effectiveness.

Ndlovu (2017) investigated the relationship between leadership styles and organisational commitment in two selected higher education institutions in South Africa. The study revealed that transformational leadership and transactional leadership styles are significantly correlated with some of the organisational commitment constructs. Findings also established that

transformational leadership style explained the variance on organisational commitment better than transactional and laissez faire. Gachingiri (2015) study aimed at identifying the leadership style(s) practiced in UNEP and to examine its effects on organisational performance. Findings illustrated that the respondents considered leadership style practised by overall management at UNEP as valid with regard to its effect on organisational performance.

Strategic Planning and Organizational Productivity

Various scholars have done studies to investigate the relationship between strategic planning and organizational productivity. Kohzadi and Hafezi (2016) carried out a study on the effect of strategic planning on organizational performance in industrial estate companies in Iran. The findings show that 70 percent of organizations surveyed have concrete plans and no significant relationship was found between the intensity of strategic planning and organizational performance. Poko (2012) conducted a study to assess the effect of strategic planning on the performance of Agricultural Development Bank (ADB) in Ghana. The results showed that employees were not involved in the bank strategic plans and they did not understand the main objectives and strategic plans in place to achieve the objectives of ADB.

Chigbo (2018) study analyzed strategic planning and productivity in small medium enterprises in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study revealed that strategic planning positively influences the productivity of the SMEs. Odongo and Datche (2015) conducted a study to determine the effects of strategic planning activities on organizational growth. The findings of the study revealed that strategic planning if well implemented in the organization is effective towards growth. Strategic planning was appropriate, suitable and reasonable and accepted to the organization. It indicated that strategic planning helped the organization evaluate its business by identifying its long term goals, objectives, organized workforce, monitor performance and allocating resources thus enhancing performance in terms of growth.

Conceptual Framework

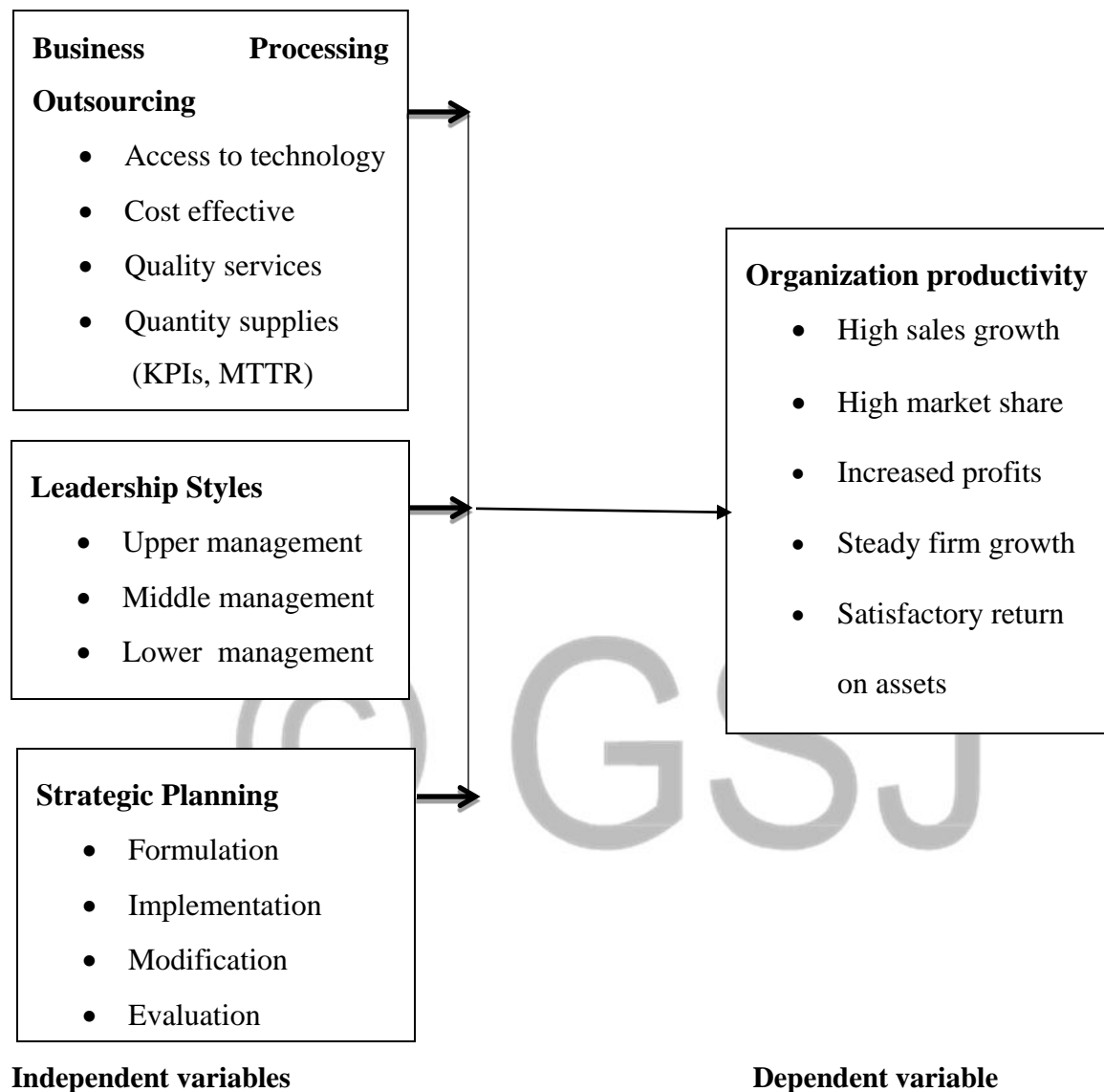


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research methodology

This study employed descriptive survey design. The target population for this study was 9 head of departments and 1536 staff of Safaricom, Airtel and Telkom Kenya from marketing, sales and technical department. In this study simple random sampling was used to sample 219 staff while

census sampling technique was used to sample all the nine the head of departments. The sampling frame is presented in Table 1 below;

Table 1: Sampling Matrix

Category	Target population	Sampling procedure	Actual Sample	Percentage (%)
Safaricom				
Top Management	3	Census	3	100.0
Staff	820	Simple random	105	12.8
Airtel				
Top Management	3	Census	3	100.0
Staff	123	Simple random	37	30.0
Telkom				
Top Management	3	Census	3	100
Staff	593	Simple random	77	13.0
Total	1545		228	-

The study used questionnaires and interview guides as the tool for data collection. While the middle level management staff responded to the questionnaire, the head of departments responded to structured interviews focusing on the main objectives of the study. The researcher employed the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient method to test Reliability of the instruments. Both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used for analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Descriptive statistics generated were frequencies, percentages and mean and presented in tables. On the other hand, qualitative data derived from open ended questions and interview guides were analyzed using content analysis technique. Inferential statistics specifically regression will be used to test the study hypothesis.

Summary of Findings

Data analysis was based on the based on the study objectives. The first objective was to determine the effect of business process outsourcing on organization productivity in telecommunication industry in Kenya. In order to assess how business processing outsourcing

affect organization productivity, residents were asked to indicate their agreement level on effect of BPO on organization productivity. Findings are presented in Table 2.

Key: 1-Strongly agree, 2- Agree, 3-Neutral, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly disagree

Table 2: Staff Level of Agreement on Effect of Business Processing Outsourcing

Statements	1		2		3		4		5		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Outsourcing enables the company to lessen the operation costs	95	61.3	46	29.7	8	5.2	6	3.9	0	0	1.52
Outsourcing enables the company to concentrate on its objectives	30	19.4	85	54.8	13	8.4	12	7.7	15	9.7	2.34
Outsourcing enables the company to access latest technological	70	45.2	30	19.4	37	23.9	8	5.2	10	6.5	2.08
Outsourcing helps the company to reduce the risk of obsolescence	93	60.0	40	25.8	13	8.4	6	3.9	3	1.9	1.62
Outsourcing increases sales turnover and profitability	79	51.0	40	25.8	14	9.0	8	5.2	14	9.0	1.95
Organizations gain access to world-class capabilities though outsourcing	75	48.4	30	19.4	19	12.3	17	11.0	14	9.0	2.13
Outsourcing helps staff to concentrate on their core activities	75	48.4	40	25.8	18	11.6	8	5.2	14	9.0	2.01
Outsourcing technology services ensures delivery of quality service	80	51.6	30	19.4	23	14.8	8	5.2	14	9.0	2.01
Outsourcing improves services	45	29.0	67	43.2	18	11.6	15	9.7	10	6.5	2.21
Outsourcing reduces infrastructure investment	80	51.6	38	24.5	15	9.7	14	9.0	8	5.2	1.92
Its more easier to manage resources after outsourcing	88	56.8	40	25.8	14	9.0	8	5.2	5	3.2	1.72

N=155

Findings in Table 4.2 show that; 61.3% of the staff strongly agreed that outsourcing enables the company to lessen the operation costs and complexity of the operations, 54.8% agreed that outsourcing enables the company to concentrate on its objectives, 60% strongly agreed that outsourcing helps the company to reduce the risk of obsolescence , 51% strongly agreed that outsourcing increases sales turnover and profitability, 51.6% strongly agreed that outsourcing

communication technology services ensures delivery of quality service, 51.6% strongly agreed that companies that outsource some services have reduced infrastructure investment and 56.8% of the staff strongly agreed that its more easier to manage resources when some company activities are outsourced. This implies that outsourcing have various benefits to the organization which helps to improve organization productivity. The findings are in line with the Transaction cost theory which shows that firms outsource in order to reduce costs, achieve cost efficiency and increase their profit margins. This finding concurs with Tenkorang (2015) study which established that if telecom firms outsource non-core functions, they are more likely to record an improvement in operational cost.

The second objective was to establish the effect of leadership styles on organization productivity in telecommunication industry in Kenya. Staff from the three telecommunication firms were also asked to tick on the level to which they agree/disagree with listed statements on effect of leadership styles on organization productivity. Findings are presented in Table 4.3.

Key: 1-Strongly agree, 2- Agree, 3-Neutral, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly disagree

Table 3: Staff Level of Agreement on Effect of Leadership Styles

Statements	1		2		3		4		5		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Charismatic behaviour of a leader enhances attainment of organizational objectives	85	54.8	33	21.3	8	5.2	15	9.7	14	9.0	1.97
Transactional leadership style promotes employee commitment	83	53.5	30	19.4	8	5.2	20	12.9	14	9.0	2.05
Managers who use autocratic leadership face poor work output	102	65.8	28	18.1	14	9.0	0	0	11	7.1	1.65
Democratic leadership enable managers to serve organizations better	93	60.0	33	21.3	15	9.7	8	5.2	6	3.9	1.72
Transformational leadership help to achieve performance	98	63.2	28	28.1	8	5.2	15	9.7	6	3.9	1.73
Leadership style determines staff willingness to work hard	133	85.8	22	14.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.14

N=155

Findings in Table 3 show that 54.8% of the staff strongly agreed that charismatic behaviour of a leader enhances the attainment of organizational objectives, 53.5% strongly agreed that transactional leadership style promotes employee commitment thus enhancing organization productivity, 65.8% strongly agreed that managers who use autocratic leadership are faced with poor work output of the staff, 60% strongly agreed that democratic leadership enable managers to serve organizations better, 63.2% strongly agreed that managers who use transformational leadership style attain effective performance and 85.8% of the staff strongly agreed that the willingness of employees to put extra efforts is determined by the style of leadership. This implies that employee performance towards achievement of organization goals and objectives highly depends on the leadership styles. The finding concurs with Gachingiri (2015) study that the leadership style practised by the entire management affects organisational performance.

The third objective was to examine how strategic planning affect organization productivity in telecommunication industry in Kenya.. Findings are presented in Table 4.

Key: 1-Strongly agree, 2- Agree, 3-Neutral, 4-Disagree, 5-Strongly disagree

Table 4: Staff Level of Agreement on Effect of Strategic Planning Practices

Statements	1		2		3		4		5		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
There are shared and explicit values in the organization	104	67.1	28	18.1	8	5.2	8	5.2	7	4.5	1.62
There is an annual process to set organization goals and budget	74	47.7	44	28.4	16	10.3	11	7.1	10	6.5	1.96
Through strategic planning, organizational goal and objectives can be achieved	133	85.8	22	14.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.14
Strategic planning ensure better decision making in the organization	115	74.2	8	5.2	14	9.0	10	6.5	8	5.2	1.63
Strategic planning ensures organizational co-operation towards a	94	60.6	28	18.1	15	9.7	10	6.5	8	5.2	1.77

common goal

N=155

Findings in Table 4 show that 67.1% of the staff strongly agreed that there are shared and explicit values which serve as the foundation on which the organization and its members do their work, , 47.7% strongly agreed that there is an annual process to set organization goals and budget, 85.8% strongly agreed that through strategic planning, organizational goal and objectives can be achieved, 74.2% strongly agreed that strategic planning can ensure better decision making in the organization and 60.6% of the staff strongly agreed that strategic planning ensures organizational co-operation towards a common goal. This shows that the telecommunication firms in Kenya have strategic plans which enable them to plan them for the future as well as how well to utilize their resources to realize more profits. The finding corresponds to the resource based view theory which encourages the firm as a whole to make strategic decisions for its products and services. The finding is in line with Odongo & Datche (2015) study that strategic planning helped the organization evaluate its business by identifying its long term goals, objectives, organized workforce, monitor performance and allocating resources thus enhancing performance in terms of growth.

The regression analysis in Table 5 show that taking all factors into account (business process outsourcing, leadership styles and strategic planning) at constant at zero, organization productivity will be 0.263. The findings reveals that assuming other variables are at zero a unit change in business process outsourcing will lead to a 0.375 change in organization productivity; a unit change in leadership styles will lead to a 0.350 change in organization productivity; a unit change in strategic planning will lead to a 0.747 change in organization productivity. From the model, Business Process Outsourcing ($p=0.000$), Leadership Styles ($p= 0.000$) and Strategic Planning ($p= 0.000$) were found to have a significant relationship with the dependent variable (Organization productivity) as their p-values were below 0.005. The study therefore rejects the null hypothesis since there is significant relationship between BPO, leadership styles and strategic planning on productivity in telecommunication industry in Kenya.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.
	Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant/Y Intercept	.263	.231		1.137	.257
Business process outsourcing	.375	.097	.289	3.867	.000
Leadership styles	.350	.082	.301	4.287	.000
Strategic planning	.747	.192	.263	3.883	.000

a Dependent variable: Organization productivity

Conclusions

It was concluded that outsourcing, leadership styles and strategic plans affect organization productivity. Outsourcing affects organization productivity by creating competitive advantages, reducing risks and increasing organizational sales turnover and profitability. Outsourcing allows the firm to concentrate its efforts on consolidating and expanding its core business activities. Efficiency is also increased as a result of activities being conducted by specialized firms and reducing the number of permanent employees.

This study reveals that organizational performance is related with the leadership style. Organization leaders should offer opportunities to staff like training, offer a sense of belonging and allowing them to participate in the decision-making. Transformational leadership is important because leaders are reliable and employees are likely to follow them. The telecommunication firms have the ability to inspire, motivate and intellectually stimulate its employees which resulting to positive effect on entire organization performance. Strategic plans enable an organization to operate strategically. This makes an organization to have a competitive advantage over the others in the same industry. An organization which is competitive aims at achieving its goals and objectives. This is made possible through strategic planning and effective implementation.

Recommendations

Organizations should ensure that the right service providers are selected to achieve the objectives of outsourcing. When the outsourced agency is unable to perform to expectation, the entire objective is negatively affected. Organisations should outsource their noncore business to outside providers that can bring great competitiveness. This is because outsourcing gives company staff more time to concentrate on core competences to produce high quality products and gain competitive advantage. Organizations should focus on using the transformational and democratic leadership styles in the organizations so as to improve the organizational performance. The study also recommends that Safaricom, Airtel and Telkom management need to establish a knowledge management culture that would facilitate faster adaptation to change since systems set in place would guide all employees on what is expected of them in good time. Through effective use of information technology, the organization should employ strategic marketing techniques that counter the activities of competing communication companies.

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