



Leadership Practices, Employee Competence and Performance of the Betting Companies in Kenya: A Case of Sportpesa Betting Company

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Abstract

The general objective of the study was to determine effect of leadership practices and employee competence on performance of the betting companies in Kenya. Despite of the betting companies recording super normal profit, due to tremendous growth of the industry, they have been accused of their ignorant on the welfare of the general citizen. In this regard, this study sought to investigate the effects leadership and employee competence would have on performance of betting companies in Kenya. The study was anchored on stewardship theory which informed on the study variables. Empirical studies on the relationship between leadership, employee competence and performance of the company was reviewed. Descriptive research design was used and the study targeted 457 employees at Sportpesa betting company. Stratified random sampling technique was used as the population was heterogeneous and the sample size of 138 employees was selected from each stratum. Pilot study was carried out to 46 employees. Collected data was analyzed using both descriptive statistics (percentage, mean and standard deviations) and inferential statistics including correlation and regression determined the relationship between variables. Validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts and reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's coefficient alpha calculate and obtained at 0.872 for leadership and 0.78 for employee competence. There was a relationship between the leadership practices and the performance of the betting company (0.562, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05) and employee competence and the performance of the betting company (0.519, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05). The study concluded that leadership is the key determinant in performance of the betting companies followed by the employee competence. The study recommended that there is a need for the leadership of betting companies to ensure that policies are in place which regulates the accessibility of the betting services as well as running of the betting companies for the benefit of the economy.

Key Terms: Performance, betting companies, leadership, employee competence

1.1 Introduction

The total value of the global sport betting market is difficult to estimate because of the lack of consistency in how it is regulated in some parts of the world. Betting makes up about 30 to 40 percent of the global gambling market, which also includes lotteries, casinos, poker and other gaming (Rusuli, 2017). The government revenue base from the betting companies has been reported to increase tremendously over the past years. The African lottery has posted explosive growth in recent years with a growth rate of 3.4 per cent in 2015 and recorded a growth rate of 26.3 per cent in 2016 to become region with fastest market growth for the betting companies (Betting Regulator report, 2017). The combined size of the gambling industry in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa is projected to be worth \$37 billion in 2018. In Nigeria, 60 million people between the ages of 18 and 40 years spend up to 2 billion naira (\$6.2 million) on sports betting daily (Rusuli, 2017). Sports betting are one that has taken the better part of the industry and has the largest share of the participants. As gambling, and especially sports betting, becomes pervasive in Kenya—and Africa at large—its adverse effects continue to get acute (Rusuli, 2017). Researchers warn about the compulsive nature of gambling and lack of proper safeguards to thwart underage gambling (Mwangi & Moshi, 2016).

Leadership in an organization indicates the level of steward which is defined as someone who protects and takes care of the needs of the company and the customers both internal and external (Wambua, 2015). The organizational stewardship aims at creating and maintaining a successful company and always makes decisions on behalf of the shareholders in order to ensure their prosperity. Companies which realize their goals embrace the stewardship and hold their companies' CEO responsible for the success of the organization. Companies' leadership will comprise of the in-house members to ensure intimate sharing of the companies' knowledge in terms of its operations and hence deep commitment to the organization performance. However, Wambua, (2015) noted that this has not been the case in most of the betting companies in Kenya. Most of the companies allows political interference in the operations which leaves them straining to make ends meet thus they lose customer focus.

Employee motivation can be determined by the ability of the employees to meet their expectations from their leaders. However, studies indicate that dysfunctional leadership in most Kenya companies coupled by dissatisfaction within the workplace in terms of the training offered to the employees has led to poor motivation of the employees and hence non comital aspects (Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2013). Leaders of most of the companies have not been able to employ processes that are able to address the employee needs and expectations concerns such as team skills development, employee incentives, communication channels and corporate culture awareness hence the employee are not able to fully utilize their competence in enhancing the performance of the companies.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Performance of any organization should consider the welfare of not only the organization but also customer (both internal and external) satisfaction. However, the betting companies have been accused of ignoring the welfare of the citizen where they have allowed even minors to access their services. Additionally, they have been accused to create no awareness on the dangers

of over engaging the betting. Studies have shown that Betting create a habit which lead to some behavioural disorders, a condition that creates strong economical disorders pertaining to an individual putting himself into bankruptcy or life of crime (Mbithi, 2015). It has been argued that a person who uses such services has mood swings and they secretively run behind gambling without the thought that they are actually getting into more problems. Such people have quest for gains and would even borrow more money and take secret loans to bet for money. Such people will continue betting despite the losses they make. The company is accused of having an art of squeezing billions of shillings from Kenyans through application of some strategies (Business Today, 25 July, 2019). Therefore, the researcher found a need to carry out a study to determine effects of leadership practices and employee competence on performance of the betting companies in Kenya.

1.3 Research Objectives

- i) To establish the effects of leadership practices on performance of the betting companies in Kenya
- ii) To establish the effects of employee competence on performance of the betting companies in Kenya

2. 0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Stewardship theory by Merrian-Webster (1999) also informed this study. The theory was developed as a new way of understanding the existing relationship between the ownership and the management of a given company. Leadership in an organization indicates the level of steward which is defined as someone who protects and takes care of the needs of the company and the customers both internal and external. The organizational stewardship aims at creating and maintaining a successful company and always makes decisions on behalf of the shareholders in order to ensure their prosperity. Companies which realize their goals embrace the stewardship and hold their companies CEO responsible for the success of the organization. Companies' leadership will comprise of the in-house members to ensure intimate sharing of the companies' knowledge in terms of its operations and hence deep commitment to the organization performance. The theory helps to define carefully the responsibility of the management of a given organization and the type of leadership and employee competence needed to undertake in order to safeguard anything entrusted to them by the owner (Hynes, 2012).

Leadership of given company are in charge of the assets and should be responsible in control of the assets. The theory assumes that when a manager is given a choice to between serving himself and serving the organization, the stewardship will put more emphasize in serving the interest of the organization. According to the theory, the goal of stewardship is to protect the interest of the owners of the organization and make the decisions about the organization on behalf of the owner. Many studies have used the steward theory to explain the quality or performance of the company. For instance, Dick and Ott (2012) conducted an empirical study on the effects of the leadership style on the quality of service delivery in hospitals. The study concluded that proper stewardship on the hospital assets determine the quality of the service

delivery as more equipment and resources will be available to enhance better services. The study found that there was a strong positive correlation between the stewardship of the assets entrusted and quality of services delivery. This theory is relevant to this study as it informs on the choice of the variable leadership and the explain how leadership can relate to the performance of the betting companies. It is assumed that once there is a good leadership skill and with the embracement of the resources such as human resources (employee competence)-, then the betting companies would realize their performance.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Performance of the Betting Companies

In most developed continent such as USA, gambling activities face a lot of opposition from religious and almost no legalization of gambling on sporting events have been approved. In addition, in State like Britain, gambling company must obtain personal, remote and software licenses before they are fully license (Light, 2016). The legislation question in Africa remains vague, non-adaptive and stagnant (Ahaibwe, Lakuma, Katunze & Mawejje, 2016). Uganda for example, there are many facets of the law which relate to lottery and gaming which have become obsolete and are no longer sensitive to the new modes of gambling and the unprecedented growth of the betting companies.

The situation in Kenya is not different. Betting companies are regulated and registered by Betting and Licensing Control Board (BCLB), which is mandated to supervise the betting companies and ensure that some forms of gambling are prohibited or the opportunities are limited for the benefit of general citizen (Gemba, 2017). However, Betting companies are exponentially increasing in number. Users are never protected in terms of ensuring that the games are fair or in addressing any limitation of the activity. In addition, the operators are not obliged by any law to properly utilize proper safeguards or installation of the necessary systems to prevent money laundering.

2.2.2 Leadership Practices and Performance of the Betting Companies

Each organization is unique in its undertaking, operations, product, service and the cadre of employees. Recognition of the right organizational leadership is a determinant of the success of any company (Owuor, 2018). It's the work of the management to ensure there is the best leadership strategy which ensures better performance of an organisation. Good leadership ensures company's policies and practices are enforced and are effective. They define the extent to which an organization operates responsibility in relations to the needs of the shareholders, employees' customers and the wider community. Kandula (2016) stated that an average employee can perform better and achieve more results when the leadership styles applied cultivates motivation to the worker. He added that when negative culture is cultivated, employees are demoralized hence leading to underperforming and no achievements.

Proper management of the management competences crate high quality impact on worker activity delights (Orute et al., 2015). According to Omondi (2014), potential of any organizations

employees in terms of communication ability better motivate expertise and information of duties and assist to create ability to perform duties as per their expectations requirements hence improving their ability to manage time and assets allocated to them better. A competence leader assists to align workers competence with the company's vision, missions and values to enhance the performance. A committed leader will bring about an positive organizational culture which look at strategic part of the organization and hence effective institutional overall performance (Ng'ang'a & Nyongesa, 2012).

Betting companies have strategies to employ transformative leadership to revolutionize the industry and remain competitive. Despite the region, the industry is employing leaders with qualities such as: product leaders who provide new innovation in new betting product that appeal to all new and existing customers by offering differentiated and entertainment devices solution experts who are able to utilize big and smart data technologies that will improve transformational and data feeds as well as improving insights into the sector; medium innovators who are able to harness the power of mobile and digital technologies to deliver the consumer experience and services and technology enablers who lead the firms that are investing in or offering break-through technology solutions in their business areas (Mau, 2017). This brings about distinctive competencies of the leadership which relate to the individuals characteristic which are viewed as complex in nature and being able to steer the sector to high level of performance.

2.2.3 Employee Competence and Performance of the Betting Companies

Competency has been seen as efficiency and entails a set of characteristics of knowledge, attitudes, skills, intellect and how one view their own interests to carry out their duties effectively (Boyatzis, 2018). On the other hand, Boyatzis (2018) indicated that the individual's capability or the ability is referred to as competency. Additionally, competency has been viewed as basic personal traits that determine how successful they will be in their jobs or in a given situation (Rusuli, 2017). From the management perspective, competencies are defined by two main streams: personal and organizational. Personal competencies are a characteristics trait of a person that is related to superior performance and a demonstration of particular talents in practice and application of knowledge and skills required to perform the duty (Boyatzis, 2018). He added that personal traits can determine the managerial competence of a person which is underlying characteristics of a person that could be a motivator, trait, skill, aspect of one's self-image, social role or a body of knowledge which he or she uses. The characteristics of the competent employee are revealed and observed in identifiable and observable patterns of behavior and include the skills, abilities, experience and the knowledge related to the job performance. From these definitions this study operationalized the phrase employee competence as being able to perform a work role to a defined standard with reference to real working environments in betting companies.

According to Spencer and Spencer (2013), the five main types of competency characteristics include the traits, self-concept, motives, knowledge and skills. They added that there is a strong positive correlation between the listed characteristics and performance of the organization. In a high performing organization, it has been reported that their employees have the skills, and

competencies which are relevant to the organization goals and their employees are able to express their ideas to the customers (Antwi, 2015). Such conditions are highly applicable in betting companies where the clients have to be convinced to take the service. Rusuli (2017) indicated that the organizational performance to the fullest depends on the working environment as well as the competency of the employees.

Employees with can gain suitable knowledge, attitude and skills if they are given the training hence improves their performance through being effective and are able to execute their current and future jobs better (Wright & Geroy, 2011). Additionally, they indicated that if employees have improved skills and knowledge thorough training, then they are able to give superiors services to the clients which lead to improved organizational performance. For employees to create an organizational culture of being engaged in the job recognition of employees and enhancement of their competence is very important (Boyatzis, 2018).

Qiao and Wang's (2009) study on effects of certain competencies on individual job performance indicated that team building, coordination, communication continual learning and execution are the critical competencies for the success of an organization. Organizations should always ensure that their employees have the adequate skills, knowledge and attitude which match their goals, objectives and values. Proper training programs need to be developed by the organization which aims at ensuring that their employees have the right competencies (Bently, 2010). For an organization to succeed in the long run, knowledge is a key factor (Boyatzis, 2018). For a competitive advantage and to ensure the sustainable development for the society and organization, leveraging on the knowledge resources would be vital. However, generally there is less empirical evidences which show the relationship between the competencies of employees and organizational performance (Pereara and Gomez, 2012). Additionally, there has been some confusion and skepticism about the relationship between competencies and performance of the organization mainly because of the difficulties faced in assessing the competencies and the complex, lengthy processes needed in identification of the appropriate competency performance. Thus this study therefore considered employee competence as one factor which would affect the performance of the betting companies in Kenya.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework refers to a diagrammatical or a network of the interlinked of the concepts that enables a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon or the study carried out. For this study the conceptual framework gives the relationship which exists between leadership practices, employee competence and the performance of the betting companies.

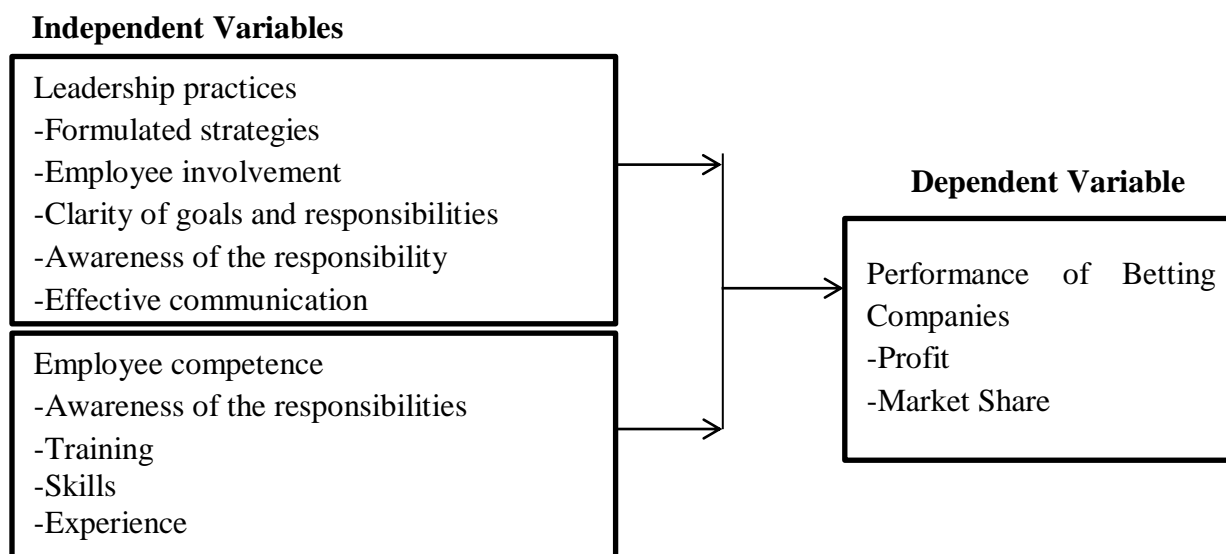


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework
 Source: Author (2019)

3.1 Research Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive research design to seek out the employees' perception on the performance of the betting company. The study targeted population of 457 employees at Sportpesa betting company. The respondents were the top managers, supervisors and support staff. A sample size of 30 percent (138) formed the potential respondents.

Table 1: Reliability Test for Variables

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Comments
Leadership practices	0.872	Reliable
Employee Competence	0.798	Reliable
Performance	0.891	Reliable

4. 0 Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

4.1.1 Leadership practices and Performance

Majority of the respondents (39.36%) strongly agreed that the company formulate strategies used in the operations, followed by 38.72% who agreed with the statement, and 12.20% and 7.56% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. Some respondents (2.16%) were neutral on the statement. This indicate that the management role in the company to offer the direction by coming up with strategies is adhered to in the betting companies. Majority of the respondents (36.12%) disagreed that the employees are given a chance to air their views in the decision making process in the company, followed by 88.40% who agreed with the statement,

and 23.54% and 10.69% strongly disagreed and strongly agreed with the statement respectively. Since the opinion is skewed towards disagreement with the statement, it indicates that most of the employees' decisions are rarely incorporated on key decisions.

The study also found that majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that leaders explain the strategic goals to the staff, indicated that 48.21% for strongly disagreed and 31.09% for disagreement on the statement respectively. This is to mean that most of the employees are not aware of the strategic goal of the company which would affect the strategy alignment to the goals. Majority of the respondents (49.02% for strongly agreement and 28.00% for agreement with the statement) are aware of their responsibility at the company while 21.97% disagreed with the statement that they are aware of their responsibility on the company. The results indicate that staff knows their duties hence they can execute them comfortably without overlapping and with accountability. The results indicated that majority of the respondents are with disagreement with the statement that senior management communicate about the effectiveness in the operations in the company, indicated at 39.05% and 28.76% who disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Few of the respondents 13.43% and 10.33% agreed and strongly agreed with the statement respectively. In regard to the statement that professionalism is highly appreciated in the company, 40.54% agreed, 30.98% disagree, 11.34% strongly agreed and 7.38% strongly disagreed. The average score for the mean indicated that a mean of 3.77 shows that most of the respondents agreed on the statements given in relation to the leadership at the betting companies. The high levels of the means indicate that the respondents perceived leadership variable as very important in explaining the situations in the betting companies. The low values of the standard deviations on the various statements explaining the leadership as well as the mean score of the same (1.275) indicate that respondents' opinion did not depict high variations.

4.1.2 Employee Competence and Performance

Majority of the respondents (45.98%) agreed with the statement that they are aware of their responsibility within the company, while 28.98% strongly agreed with the statement, 14.87% disagreed and only 2.89% strongly disagreed with the statement. This can indicate that generally the employees working in Sportpesa betting company are aware of their responsibility. Majority of the respondents disagreed that staff training needs are identified before it is offered, recorded at 44.76%, followed by 30.47% who agree with the statement, then 16.98% who strongly disagreed and finally 6.92% who strongly agreed with the statement. Additionally, majority of the respondents indicated that staffs are never trained as per their needs, indicated at 42.99% and 26.59% who disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. This shows that although the training could have been to the employee at the company, their needs are never identified which could lead to training which may not add as much value as intended.

With regard to the statement that on-the-job training is provided to the employee to add their competence, majority 42.67% agreed and 33.54% strongly agreed. Only 14.23% and 6.64% disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. This means that trainings are offered to employee of betting companies to add their competence and hence able to be tactical in coming up with strategies which could increase the sales of the services. Majority of the respondents (52.09%) agreed with the statement that employees at betting company have

required skills to work, followed by 22.84% who strongly agreed then 19.37% disagreed and only 4.61% strongly disagreed. This means employees are able to work as instructed and hence explaining why the performance would be high. In relation to the statement that staff at betting companies have the required experience for the job given, majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement indicated at 39.01% followed by 29.07% who strongly disagreed and 22.97% who agreed and finally 7.84% who strongly disagreed. When asked for how long they had worked, majority had indicated less than 3 years. This could indicate that the more the employees earn experiential competence; the company may even have better performance.

The average score for the mean indicated that a mean of 3.39 shows that most of the respondents agreed on the statements given in relation to the employee competence at the betting companies. The high levels of the means indicate that the respondents perceived employee competence variable as very important in explaining the situations in the betting companies. The low values of the standard deviations on the various statements explaining the employee competence as well as the mean score of the same (1.264) indicate that respondents' opinion did not depict high variations.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The association between study variables including the leadership, employee competence and performance of the betting were shown using the correlation analysis.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

Correlations		Leadership	Employee Competence	Company Performance
Leadership practices	Pearson	1.000		
	Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)			
Employee Competence	Pearson	0.467**	1.000	
	Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	
Company Performance	Pearson	0.562**	0.519**	1.000
	Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	

The results in the table 2 revealed that there are a strong positive association between the leadership practices and the performance of the betting company (0.562, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05). The study also established there is a strong and positive association between the employee competence and the performance of the betting company (0.519, p-value = 0.000 < 0.05). These indicate that the study independent variables are positively associated to the performance of the betting companies.

4.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to estimate the relationship between the study variables.

Table 3: Regression Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.816a	0.665	0.621	0.2184

A Predictors: (Constant), Leadership practices, Employee Experience

The study findings indicated that 66.5% of the variation in the performance of the betting companies can be explained by the variations in leadership and employee competence. The other percentage 33.5% can be explained by other variables not considered in this study.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sun of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.821	5	6.564	89.86	.000b
	Residual	21.769	298	0.073		
	Total	54.59	303			

a Dependent Variable: Company Performance

b Predictors: (Constant), Leadership practices, Employee Competence

Table 4 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results which gives the significant of the study model. The F value ($F = 89.86$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$) calculated is greater than the F Critical (3.84), thus the model is significant in explaining the relationship between the hypothesized determinants of the performance of the betting companies which are the leadership practices and employee competence.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

Coefficients a Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.432	0.149		9.611	0.000
	Leadership practices	0.121	0.034	0.251	3.559	0.000
	Employee Competence	0.122	0.050	0.189	2.440	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Company Performance

The regression of coefficient results in table 5 indicates that leadership practices was positively and significantly related to the performance of the betting companies in Kenya ($\beta = 0.121$, $p = 0.000$). Employee competence was positively and significantly related to the performance of the betting companies in Kenya ($\beta = 0.122$, $p = 0.000$).

5.1 Conclusion

It can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between leadership practices, employee competence and performance of the betting companies in Kenya. The determinants of the performance of betting companies used in this study can explain 66.5% of the variations in the performance. Leadership practices which are specifically influencing the performance of betting companies include the ability to formulate the strategies which are in line with the strategic goals of the company and giving directive to the staff on how to implement the same to improve the performance. The leadership have communication channels and commit the necessary resources needed to implement the strategies to either enable increase in profit by building a pool of the users us the betting services.

The study concluded that employee at the betting companies understand their roles and responsibilities through the trainings given to them while on-the-job. However, it can be concluded that the companies do not consider the employees need when designing the trainings to be offered to the employee. This lead to deficit in exposure for all round knowhow on best business practices which not only look at the benefits of the company but also the welfare of the citizens. The employee competence in this case was shown to entail the skills, knowledge and the experience that the employees had which enhanced the performance of the betting company.

6.1 Recommendations

The study recommends that the leadership of the betting company should consider the best practices which are sustainable. They need to come up with the strategies which would make betting company perform better without exploiting the users. Additionally, leadership of the betting company need to offer the relevant trainings to their employees by first checking on the need and then design customized trainings which will add competence in running the business.

Since the competence of the employees of any company is paramount towards ensuring the better performance, the betting company employees need to aim at making sure they have the required skills which make them accountable for the job they are doing. They need to not only understand the company products and the marketing strategies but also be conscious to be responsible for the welfare of the users. It is recommended that staff need to have enough experience in the betting industry so as to serve the interest of the company in a sustainable manner. The study recommends further study to be done in related area but using other betting companies for comparative of the findings and generalization.

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