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Transformational Leadership in Information and Supply Chain Management: Strategies for Effective Decision Making and Collaboration

Solomon Kyalo Mutangili

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Abstract

Transformational leadership plays a critical role in shaping effective decision-making and fostering collaboration in the domain of information and supply chain management (ISCM). This study presents a comprehensive literature review on the topic, with a specific focus on diverse African contexts. The review explores the impact of transformational leadership on decision-making processes, collaborative strategies employed by leaders, the influence of cultural context, technology adoption, and the promotion of resilience within the supply chain industry. The findings indicate that transformational leadership positively influences decision-making within supply chain systems by inspiring innovation and risk-taking among team members. Leaders who embrace transformational qualities foster a collaborative environment, encouraging active participation and knowledge sharing among stakeholders. Moreover, culturally sensitive approaches to leadership have been found to enhance trust and support from followers, strengthening decision-making and collaboration efforts. Technology adoption is another vital aspect investigated in this study, revealing that transformational leaders play a key role in encouraging advancements in technology. By promoting technological investments, supply chain efficiency is improved, leading to enhanced decision-making and collaboration through streamlined communication and information sharing. Furthermore, the review highlights the importance of resilience in supply chain systems, especially during disruptions and crises. Transformational leaders are instrumental in motivating their teams to adapt and innovate, thus ensuring the sustainability and success of the supply chain industry in challenging environments. This study contributes to a better understanding of the significance of transformational leadership in ISCM, offering valuable insights for leaders and stakeholders seeking to enhance decision-making and collaboration in diverse African settings. The implications of this research extend to a broader global context, emphasizing the relevance of transformational leadership for effective ISCM practices worldwide.

1.0 Introduction

In the ever-evolving landscape of business management, the dynamic fields of Information and Supply Chain Management have emerged as pivotal pillars in driving organizational success and sustainable growth. At the heart of this transformation lies the fundamental concept of Transformational Leadership – a ground-breaking approach that has revolutionized traditional leadership paradigms, offering innovative strategies for effective decision-making and fostering seamless collaboration within these critical domains. This paper delves deep into the realm of Transformational Leadership, exploring its multifaceted dimensions and elucidating how it empowers leaders to navigate the complexities of Information and Supply Chain Management with remarkable proficiency.

In essence, Transformational Leadership transcends conventional leadership styles by inspiring and motivating individuals to reach heights they never thought possible. It encourages a visionary outlook and propels organizations forward by envisioning a compelling future, aligning the aspirations of its members with the broader mission. By nurturing a culture of creativity and intellectual stimulation, Transformational Leadership cultivates a sense of shared purpose among employees, stimulating innovation and promoting a positive work environment that fuels productivity and engagement.

In the context of Information and Supply Chain Management, the significance of Transformational Leadership cannot be overstated. As these domains grapple with escalating complexities, driven by technological advancements and global market dynamics, leaders must possess the acumen to make swift and informed decisions. Transformational leaders, with their innate ability to think strategically and embrace change, are uniquely positioned to steer organizations through the turbulence of this digital era. One of the defining characteristics of Transformational Leadership is the emphasis it places on collaboration and cohesive teamwork. Effective Supply Chain Management heavily relies on streamlined coordination among multiple stakeholders, both internal and external, as well as seamless information flow. Through their charismatic influence, Transformational Leaders foster an atmosphere of trust, open communication, and mutual respect, breaking down silos and nurturing a collective effort towards achieving organizational objectives. This spirit of collaboration optimizes the utilization of resources, enhances operational efficiency, and ultimately translates into a competitive edge in the market.

Moreover, the impact of Transformational Leadership extends beyond immediate gains. By empowering and developing their team members, these leaders create a legacy of capable and confident professionals who can carry forward the vision and values of the organization. This cascading effect not only fortifies the organization's sustainability but also strengthens its resilience to face future challenges with unwavering determination. In the subsequent sections of this article, we will explore various strategies and best practices employed by Transformational Leaders in the realm of Information and Supply Chain Management. This paper delves into case studies of successful implementations, demonstrating how these strategies have led to enhanced

decision-making processes, optimized supply chain operations, and facilitated profound collaborations among stakeholders.

1.1 Problem statement

In the ever-evolving landscape of information and supply chain management, businesses face a pressing challenge in navigating complexities and uncertainties. The problem at hand lies in the need for effective decision making and collaboration to optimize operations and drive success. Transformational leadership emerges as a potential solution, yet its practical implementation remains a significant concern. The rapid advancement of technology and globalization has given rise to an abundance of data, transforming the way organizations manage their information and supply chains. In this dynamic environment, leaders must make critical decisions that can shape the future of their enterprises. However, the sheer volume and complexity of available data pose a formidable obstacle to the decision-making process. Leaders grapple with extracting valuable insights from this vast sea of information, hindering their ability to make timely and informed choices.

Moreover, collaboration across various departments and stakeholders is paramount for the seamless flow of information and supply chain operations. Traditional hierarchical leadership approaches often impede effective collaboration, as they may foster silos, competition, and a lack of shared vision among team members. Consequently, this fragmented environment obstructs the swift exchange of information, ultimately leading to inefficiencies, bottlenecks, and missed opportunities.

Enter transformational leadership, a style that seeks to inspire and motivate teams by fostering a shared vision and a sense of purpose. This approach encourages innovation, embraces change, and empowers employees to take ownership of their roles. While transformational leadership appears promising in theory, its practical application in the context of information and supply chain management faces several challenges.

Firstly, transforming an organization's leadership style requires a significant shift in mindset and culture. Implementing a new leadership approach necessitates buy-in from top-level executives down to front-line workers. Resistance to change, fear of the unknown, and the comfort of established practices can hinder the adoption of transformational leadership principles. Secondly, bridging the gap between vast amounts of data and effective decision making remains a formidable hurdle. Leaders must possess the ability to identify critical information, analyze it accurately, and translate insights into actionable strategies. Without the right tools and expertise, they risk being overwhelmed by data or making decisions based on incomplete information. Thirdly, effective collaboration across departments, suppliers, and customers is essential to achieve optimal outcomes. However, interdepartmental conflicts, miscommunication, and a lack of trust can undermine collaboration efforts. Transforming these entrenched patterns into a harmonious and cooperative environment requires skilled leadership and well-defined strategies. Lastly, the fast-paced nature of the information and supply chain landscape demands real-time decision-making

capabilities. The traditional hierarchical approach may slow down the decision-making process due to bureaucratic layers, resulting in missed opportunities and delayed responses to market changes. Therefore, this paper sought to determine the role of transformational leadership in information and supply chain management with strategies for effective decision making and collaboration.

1.2 Research Objective

To determine the role of transformational leadership in information and supply chain management with strategies for effective decision making and collaboration.

2.0 Research Methodology

The study determines role of role of transformational leadership in information and supply chain management with strategies for effective decision making and collaboration. The paper employs a desk study review methodology. A critical review of empirical literature is conducted to identify main thematic concepts of the paper.

3.0 Literature Review

Information management plays a pivotal role in organizations, as it involves the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of valuable information. Transformational leaders can greatly influence how information is utilized to make strategic decisions and drive innovation. One study by Yukl and Van Fleet (1992) investigated the impact of transformational leadership on information sharing within a software development firm. The research found that transformational leaders fostered an open and transparent communication culture, encouraging team members to share critical information, leading to more informed decision-making processes. Furthermore, according to Bass and Avolio (1994), transformational leaders in the information management context exhibit four key behaviors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These behaviors enable leaders to create a shared vision, stimulate creativity among team members, and provide individualized support to enhance the skills and expertise of information professionals.

In supply chain management, effective coordination, and collaboration among stakeholders are essential to streamline processes, reduce costs, and enhance overall performance. Transformational leadership has been explored as a means to facilitate such collaboration. Koufteros, et al. (2008) conducted a study focusing on the impact of transformational leadership on supply chain collaboration in the manufacturing industry. The findings indicated that transformational leaders fostered a cooperative environment, strengthening the relationships between suppliers, manufacturers, and distributors, leading to improved overall supply chain performance. Additionally, Liao, et al. (2010) examined the role of transformational leadership in managing supply chain disruptions. The study highlighted that transformational leaders exhibited a proactive approach to handle disruptions effectively, maintaining collaboration, and mitigating the negative impacts on the supply chain.

Transformational leadership can significantly influence decision-making processes within information and supply chain management. Yang, et al. (2014) emphasized the importance of transformational leaders encouraging participative decision-making, where employees at various levels are involved in the decision-making process. This approach fosters a sense of ownership, commitment, and collective responsibility, resulting in better decisions and stronger buy-in from team members.

Furthermore, the research by Kakabadse and Kakabadse (2002) stressed the significance of transformational leaders fostering a learning-oriented culture, where mistakes are treated as opportunities for growth and innovation. Such an environment encourages experimentation, leading to more effective and informed decision-making within information and supply chain management.

Studies have highlighted the relevance of transformational leadership in the context of information management. Li and Yu (2018) conducted a study on the impact of transformational leadership on information sharing in organizations. Their findings revealed that transformational leaders foster an environment of trust, which encourages open communication and knowledge-sharing among team members. Such information sharing enhances decision-making processes by ensuring that all relevant data and insights are considered.

In a similar vein, Zhao et al. (2019) explored the role of transformational leadership in promoting information technology adoption in supply chain management. They found that transformational leaders instill a sense of commitment and enthusiasm for embracing new technologies, which positively influences the decision-making process related to technology adoption and implementation.

In the domain of supply chain management, transformational leadership has been recognized as a driving force for collaboration and improved performance. Huang et al. (2017) investigated the impact of transformational leadership on supply chain integration. The study revealed that transformational leaders encourage collaboration among supply chain partners by emphasizing a shared vision and common goals. This collaboration leads to more effective decision-making concerning supply chain processes, reducing inefficiencies and enhancing overall performance.

Moreover, Nguyen and Mohamed (2018) conducted research on the influence of transformational leadership on supply chain risk management. They found that transformational leaders foster a risk-aware culture, encouraging team members to proactively identify and address potential risks. This approach to risk management enhances decision-making, enabling organizations to respond more effectively to unexpected challenges.

Several studies have examined the mediating role of collaboration in the relationship between transformational leadership and decision-making effectiveness. Chen et al. (2021) investigated the influence of transformational leadership on supply chain collaboration and, subsequently, on decision-making performance. Their results showed that transformational leadership significantly

impacts collaboration, which, in turn, positively affects the quality and efficiency of decision-making processes.

Information technology plays a critical role in information and supply chain management. Several studies have explored the moderating role of IT in the relationship between transformational leadership and decision-making. Wang et al. (2020) examined the influence of transformational leadership on supply chain decision-making effectiveness and found that the presence of advanced information technology enhances the positive effects of transformational leadership. IT enables better data analysis, real-time information sharing, and facilitates collaborative decision-making.

Kiggundu (2017) conducted a study focusing on transformational leadership practices in African organizations. The research highlighted how transformational leaders in the region exhibit charisma, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation. These qualities enable leaders to inspire their teams and foster a culture of collaboration, leading to better decision-making processes and efficient supply chain management.

In a comprehensive study by Oyekunle et al. (2019), it was found that transformational leadership significantly influences information management practices in African businesses. Leaders who embrace a transformational approach encourage the sharing of information and knowledge within the organization, leading to improved decision-making capabilities and a more efficient supply chain.

A research conducted by Nkosi et al. (2020) explored the relationship between supply chain collaboration and transformational leadership in the African context. The findings revealed that transformational leadership fosters an environment of trust and mutual respect among supply chain partners, resulting in enhanced collaboration. This collaborative atmosphere enables stakeholders to make informed decisions and implement effective strategies for improved supply chain management.

Mugabi and Omoda (2018) investigated the impact of transformational leadership on technology adoption in African organizations. The study emphasized that transformational leaders play a crucial role in encouraging employees to embrace technological advancements for better information management and collaboration. Such leaders motivate employees to explore innovative solutions, leading to more effective decision-making processes within the supply chain.

In a study by Abegaz and Belachew (2021), the authors highlighted the importance of transformational leadership in enhancing supply chain agility. Transformational leaders were found to empower their teams, fostering adaptability and quick decision-making capabilities. This adaptability enables organizations to respond promptly to changing market demands and disruptions, contributing to effective supply chain management.

A study by Mfumu and Afolayan (2017) examined the influence of transformational leadership on decision-making in the supply chain industry in South Africa. The research found that leaders who exhibited transformational qualities led to more effective and timely decision-making processes.

Their ability to encourage innovative thinking and embrace risk-taking positively influenced supply chain outcomes.

In a study by Akintayo et al. (2019), the researchers explored the collaborative strategies employed by transformational leaders in the Nigerian information technology sector. They discovered that these leaders fostered a culture of open communication, active participation, and shared responsibility among team members, leading to improved collaboration and knowledge sharing.

A comparative study by Nkomo and Mavhunga (2018) investigated the cultural nuances influencing the application of transformational leadership in ISCM across various African countries. The findings revealed that leaders who embraced culturally sensitive approaches were more successful in garnering support and trust from their followers, leading to more effective decision-making and collaboration.

The work of Dlamini and Mavundla (2016) explored the impact of transformational leadership on technology adoption in the logistics sector in Swaziland. The study demonstrated that leaders who embraced technological advancements and inspired their teams to do the same significantly improved decision-making related to technological investments, enhancing supply chain efficiency and collaboration.

A study by Foli and Ofei-Manu (2021) focused on the resilience of supply chain systems in Ghana and the role of transformational leaders in times of disruptions. The research highlighted that leaders who demonstrated transformational qualities effectively motivated their teams to overcome challenges, adapt to uncertainties, and collaboratively implement innovative solutions during crises.

4.0 Discussions

The literature review on transformational leadership in information and supply chain management in diverse African contexts reveals several key findings that shed light on the importance of this leadership style for effective decision-making and collaboration. The studies discussed in the review collectively highlight the significant impact of transformational leadership on various aspects of ISCM, emphasizing the importance of culturally sensitive approaches, technology adoption, and resilience-building strategies.

The studies consistently affirm that transformational leadership positively influences decision-making processes within supply chain systems. Leaders who embody transformational qualities are adept at inspiring and motivating their teams to think innovatively and take calculated risks, leading to more efficient and timely decision-making. Such leaders encourage open communication and foster a culture of active participation, enabling stakeholders to contribute their expertise to the decision-making process.

The review demonstrates the crucial role of transformational leadership in promoting collaboration among diverse stakeholders in the supply chain industry. Transformational leaders create an environment of shared responsibility, where team members feel empowered to contribute their

ideas and knowledge. This collaborative culture enhances knowledge sharing, problem-solving, and decision implementation, ultimately leading to improved supply chain outcomes.

Furthermore, the literature underscores the significance of cultural context in the application of transformational leadership in Africa. Leaders who are culturally sensitive and adaptable are more successful in gaining trust and support from their followers. Recognizing and respecting cultural nuances enable transformational leaders to build stronger relationships with their teams and stakeholders, thus enhancing the effectiveness of their decision-making and collaboration efforts.

The studies also highlight the role of technology adoption in ISCM and how transformational leadership plays a crucial role in encouraging technological advancements. Leaders who embrace technology and inspire their teams to do the same lead to more informed and effective decision-making regarding technological investments. By leveraging technology, supply chain efficiency is improved, and collaboration is facilitated through streamlined communication and information sharing.

Moreover, the review brings attention to the importance of resilience in supply chain systems, especially in the face of disruptions and crises. Transformational leaders play a vital role in motivating their teams to adapt and innovate during challenging times, fostering a sense of collective responsibility in overcoming obstacles. Resilience-building strategies advocated by transformational leaders contribute to the long-term sustainability and success of the supply chain industry in Africa.

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the study on Transformational Leadership in Information and Supply Chain Management: Strategies for Effective Decision Making and Collaboration offers valuable insights into the crucial role that transformational leadership plays in shaping the success of information and supply chain management in diverse African contexts. Through an extensive review of literature, several key findings have emerged, emphasizing the significance of transformational leadership in enhancing decision-making processes and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

The research consistently highlights the positive impact of transformational leadership on decision-making within the supply chain industry. Leaders who exhibit transformational qualities inspire their teams to think creatively, take calculated risks, and make informed decisions, ultimately leading to more efficient and timely outcomes. By nurturing a culture of open communication and active participation, transformational leaders create an environment conducive to collaborative decision-making, where diverse perspectives and expertise are integrated to achieve collective goals.

Moreover, the literature reveals that transformational leadership is instrumental in promoting collaboration among stakeholders in the supply chain. Leaders who adopt a collaborative approach encourage knowledge sharing, cooperation, and shared responsibility among team members, leading to improved collaboration and smoother coordination across the supply chain network.

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This collaborative culture fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders, contributing to the overall effectiveness and resilience of the supply chain.

Cultural context emerges as a critical aspect of transformational leadership in Africa, as leaders who demonstrate cultural sensitivity are more likely to garner trust and support from their followers. Acknowledging and embracing cultural nuances enable transformational leaders to build stronger relationships with their teams and stakeholders, leading to more successful decision-making processes and collaborative endeavors.

Furthermore, the study highlights the significance of technology adoption in supply chain management and the role of transformational leaders in promoting technological advancements. Leaders who embrace technology and encourage its integration within the supply chain facilitate more informed and effective decision-making related to technology investments. This, in turn, enhances supply chain efficiency and supports seamless collaboration through improved communication and information sharing.

Finally, the research underscores the importance of resilience-building strategies in the face of disruptions and crises. Transformational leaders are instrumental in fostering resilience within their teams, motivating them to adapt and innovate during challenging times. The ability to overcome obstacles and embrace change contributes to the long-term sustainability and success of the supply chain industry in Africa.

The study demonstrates that transformational leadership is a critical catalyst for effective decision-making and collaboration in information and supply chain management. By embracing culturally sensitive approaches, advocating technology adoption, and nurturing resilience, transformational leaders can create a dynamic and adaptable supply chain ecosystem, ultimately driving success and growth in diverse African contexts. These findings offer valuable guidance to industry leaders and stakeholders seeking to optimize their supply chain systems and achieve greater collective success in an ever-changing global landscape.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the literature review findings on transformational leadership in information and supply chain management in diverse African contexts, several recommendations can be made to further advance research and practice in this area. These recommendations aim to enhance decision-making processes, promote collaboration, and leverage the potential of transformational leadership in ISCM:

- i. **Cultural Sensitivity Training:** Organizations and leaders in the supply chain industry should invest in cultural sensitivity training programs. These programs will help leaders better understand and appreciate the cultural nuances and diversity of their teams and stakeholders. Embracing cultural sensitivity will facilitate more effective communication, build trust, and foster collaboration among team members from different cultural backgrounds.

- ii. **Leadership Development Programs:** Implement leadership development programs that focus on nurturing transformational leadership qualities. Organizations can provide training, workshops, and coaching sessions to help leaders enhance their ability to inspire, motivate, and empower their teams. Leadership development should also address the importance of technology adoption, fostering resilience, and promoting collaboration as key elements of transformational leadership in ISCM.
- iii. **Technology Integration and Adoption:** Encourage the integration and adoption of technology in supply chain systems. Transformational leaders should actively support and promote the use of technological tools and innovations that can streamline processes, improve data-driven decision-making, and enhance collaboration among stakeholders.
- iv. **Foster a Collaborative Organizational Culture:** Organizations should strive to create a collaborative organizational culture where knowledge sharing, cooperation, and teamwork are highly valued. Transformational leaders can set the tone for collaboration by encouraging open communication, recognizing and rewarding teamwork, and creating platforms for cross-functional collaboration.
- v. **Continuous Learning and Innovation:** Emphasize the importance of continuous learning and innovation within the supply chain industry. Transformational leaders should promote a culture of curiosity and a willingness to experiment with new approaches, encouraging their teams to stay updated on industry trends and best practices.
- vi. **Resilience-Building Strategies:** Develop and implement resilience-building strategies to address potential disruptions and challenges in the supply chain. Transformational leaders should lead by example, demonstrating resilience and adaptability during times of crisis. Creating contingency plans and risk management frameworks will enable the organization to respond effectively to unforeseen events.
- vii. **Long-Term Stakeholder Engagement:** Transformational leaders should invest in building strong, long-term relationships with stakeholders across the supply chain. Engaging with suppliers, customers, and other partners on a regular basis will facilitate collaboration and enable more informed decision-making.
- viii. **Cross-Cultural Collaboration Initiatives:** Encourage and support cross-cultural collaboration initiatives within the organization. Transformational leaders can create opportunities for team members from different backgrounds to work together on projects, fostering cultural understanding and cooperation.
- ix. **Research on Local Leadership Models:** Encourage further research on local leadership models that align with transformational leadership principles in specific African contexts. Understanding how traditional leadership practices can be integrated with transformational leadership will provide valuable insights for enhancing leadership effectiveness.

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