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## INDIVIDUALIZED CONSIDERATION'S EFFECT ON IMPROVEMENT OF PERFORMANCE AT THE NYANDARUA COUNTY ASSEMBLY IN KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

*The county assemblies in Kenya are facing challenges in successfully executing the mandate including legislation, oversight the senior officials and representation of the general public. For Nyandarua county assembly, the infighting, inability to maintain the leadership positions, and suspension of some leaders; this has caused delays in policy and legislature formulation, inability to call for public hearings and participation in representing the views of the residents and delays in submitting reports. These implied decline in performance outcomes, and hence the need to adopt transformational leadership with its dimension of considering the individual employees. This paper focused on individualized consideration and its effect on performance at the Nyandarua county assembly. The paper was informed by transformational leadership theory and balanced scorecard model. Through use of descriptive research design, the study targeted top, middle and low-level management teams who took part in the study by filling the semi-structured questionnaire. There were 73 responses from a possible 81 distributed questionnaire, making a response rate of 90.1%. The findings show that 63.4% change in performance was linked to effect of individualized consideration. Additionally, the relationship between individualized consideration and performance was significant and positive since  $r = 0.596$ . The beta coefficient revealed that individualized consideration influenced the performance at the Nyandarua County Assembly, based on  $\beta = 0.405$ ,  $t = 1.302$ , and  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Therefore, concluding that individualized consideration was effective in improving performance at the county assembly of Nyandarua. The paper recommends the assembly follows the contents of chapter six on leadership and integrity when selecting/electing its leaders. The leaders must take care of the needs, aspirations and interests of the subordinates; this will help create a good work environment and uplift performance outcomes.*

**Keywords:** Individualized consideration, Personal support, Staffs' Interests Performance

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## **INTRODUCTION**

There are several factors that dictate whether an organization is able to meet its mandate and goals or not. These include access to sufficient resources, employee capabilities, structure, culture and practices of the organization and the support and commitment of the management team (Entele, 2021). One of the signs of high-performance outcome in the organization is attaining set objectives, meeting needs of the customers and prudent use of resources (Bustamante, Liberona & Ferro, 2024). Performance is attainment of goals, better returns, customer and employee satisfaction and prudent use of resources. The one key aspect that contributes to high performance is the role handled by institutional leadership in mobilizing and allocating resources, planning and managing work assignments, empowering and supporting employees and championing for a good structure, culture and practices at organizational level (Kapange, 2021). In general, the transformational leadership approach is more effective in attaining organizational goals. Kumburu (2021) advocated for the above leadership style, while this paper considered its dimension on individualized consideration. The dimension is widely recognized as the most effective, as it fosters personal growth and development of followers, leading to better than the expected outcome (Purwanto, Purba, Bernarto & Sijabat, 2021).

Individualized consideration resulted in high-performance of local governments in Indonesia, with aspects such as citizen satisfaction rates, little processing time for services and low costs incurred. Kirana, Frinaldi and Magriasti (2024) further stated that improvement in local government performance in Indonesia is akin to economic empowerment, good governance, accountability and offering satisfactory services to general public. While assessing organizational performance in the local government of Namisindwa District in Uganda, Nelima, Haluna and Bolatito (2024) found improved administrative efficiency, better service quality and accountability of public resources. The local leadership adoption of individualized consideration, ensured the needs, aspirations and interests of employees were met; which enhanced service delivery leaving the public satisfied. Mwatsavwa (2021) shared that the success of county assemblies is pegged on capacity of its employees to handle roles such as oversight, watching for prudent use of resources and timely formulation and execution of regulations. This was made possible when the employees needs were considered and attended to by the leadership, the culture and structure in the organization.

Individualized consideration, is conceptualized as the leadership function of analyzing the abilities, needs and interests of the followers and incorporates them into the organizational objective (Tang, Stordeur, Vandenberghe & D'hoore, 2024). The leader treats each employee as an individual having different needs, aspirations and abilities. The leaders provide personalized support, coaching and mentorship in seeking to align the unique needs of employees and organization. Chebon, Aruasa and Chirchir (2019) the transformational leader is able to consider individual needs of employees, since some are motivated by money, autonomy and independence at the workplace, working in the field or office set-up, which can lead to attaining organizational goals and mandate. Therefore, the focus of this paper was assessing individualized consideration as mentorships, coaching and provision of personalized emotional and psychological support. The conceptualization of individualized consideration of employees aims at improving performance of the county assembly. The performance in Nyandarua County Assembly is measured as overseeing of the county executive, timely formation of legislation and representation of the public.

### **Research Problem**

In Kenya, the challenges faced in delivery of services to the nation from the central government, create a need for decentralization of service points. Hence, the formation of county governments and county assemblies. But there have been many challenges including corruption, misuse of resources, impartiality in overseeing the executive, posturing and delays in passing laws and approving appointments (Ouma, 2021). The Office of the Controller of Budget (OCOB) reports delays and incomplete reports which hinder execution of the mandates of the counties. Isaac (2021) reported on delays, incomplete generated reports, corruption, underdevelopment and failure to properly oversight the function of the county executives. According to Wanjiku and Anyieni

(2022) the poor performance in Nyandarua county assembly was linked to challenges in implementation of strategies.

When it comes to Nyandarua County Assembly, the leadership problems have negatively affected performance outcomes. Some examples of leadership challenges include suspension of member of county assemblies (MCAs) by the party, arbitrary sacking of county assembly workers, theft of the assembly mace, corruption and impeaching the county assembly speaker four times in 2021. Performance rating of the assembly has dropped in the last years, linked to wrangles and infighting by the leadership which caused the county to lag behind. According to Mutisya, Abonyo and Senelwa (2017) county assembly's function to oversight as part of the accountable and democratic process, were hindered by affiliations of the members. This then calls for leadership where interests and aspirations of all employees is considered in an effort to improve performance outcomes.

### **Research Objective**

The study's specific objective was to assess effect of individualized consideration on performance of Nyandarua County Assembly, Kenya

It also sought to answer this research question:

- How has individualized consideration affected the performance of Nyandarua County Assembly, Kenya?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical Literature Review**

**Transformational Leadership Theory** – developed by Downton (1973) with additional input from Burns (1978) and Bass (1995); anchored on influence of the leader over followers in seeking to meet set firm goals. Bass (1995) supported the notion and states that leaders can influence subordinates through effective communication, understanding the value of each task and setting individual interests aside to focus on overall organizational interests. From the perspective of Burns (1977) leaders that adopt transformative approaches must have these three attributes; charisma (ability to inspire the followers), individualized consideration (meeting personal needs of the followers) and thirdly intellectual stimulation (supporting innovation, creativity and problem solving). These are the dimensions that form the general concept of transformational leadership theory.

Transformational leadership also operates on the basis of aligning interests of the leader, the followers and the organization, such that the process of executing organizational mandate is based on involvement of all stakeholders (Rolfe, 2011). Leaders who use transformational approach are those who think of the future while those using transactional approach, focus on rewarding staffs (Ghasabeh, Soosay & Reaiche, 2015). They have a clear vision for the future and can inspire, influence and motivate followers to work towards it. Additionally, as the leaders act as role model, fostering trust and confidence; then the theory contends that organizational productivity will become its outcomes. The conceptualization of the theory shows how organizations can move forward through making changes, enlargement and innovativeness for higher performance outcomes (Reza, 2019). Therefore, under individualized consideration, the county assembly leaders are able to influence followers to work towards the achievement of the desired goals. The leaders in the assembly mentor, coach and offer personal support to the employees in the county assembly and through this avert challenges, resolve issue and work together to meet the mandate. In the mentorship and coaching, the leader serves as a role model to be emulated by the workers.

**The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) Model** -It was introduced by Kaplan and Norton (1992). The model is used as performance management tool by organizations to track the execution of different tasks and their contribution to the overall performance. The management team uses this performance management tool to

track, monitor and evaluate implementation of different strategies and operational activities. In most instances, the BSC model is used at organizational level to track performance outcomes, but it can also be used to measure individual employee performance outcomes. The model works by comparing goal setting, expectations and outcomes (Kaplan, 2009). In the past, most organizations measured performance using financial metrics; but it became limiting as it left out other performance measurement indicators. But the BSC model is comprehensive since it uses both financial and non-financial performance measurement metrics. The balanced scorecard model operates on the basis of these four perspectives as learning and growth, business processes, customer viewpoint, and financial, in measuring performance of organizations.

Financial perspective is largely used in business entities that are set to make profits and measurement indicators include profit margins, sales volume, earnings and market share. The customer perspective focuses on efficiency and effectiveness of services for high satisfaction rates among the customers (Khomba, 2011). Under learning and growth is based on structured and unstructured training and educational programs to enhance skills, competencies, experiences and capabilities of employees. Lastly, under internal business processes, the organization seeks to have a conducive working environment by focusing on its structure, culture and practices (Iranzadeh, Nojehdeh & Emami, 2017). These perspectives can be used at the Nyandarua county assembly to measure its performance; such as customer perspective -delivering quality services to the residents to satisfy them. This is in terms of timeliness and accuracy of reports, effectively handling of their oversight, and representation functions. The assembly leaders can improve employee skills by mentorship, coaching and training programs; under learning and growth. For internal business process, the county assembly leadership can focus on its working practices, culture and structure. These aspects create a good working environment that motivates, inspires and stimulates the employees, resulting in high performance outcomes.

### **Empirical Literature Review**

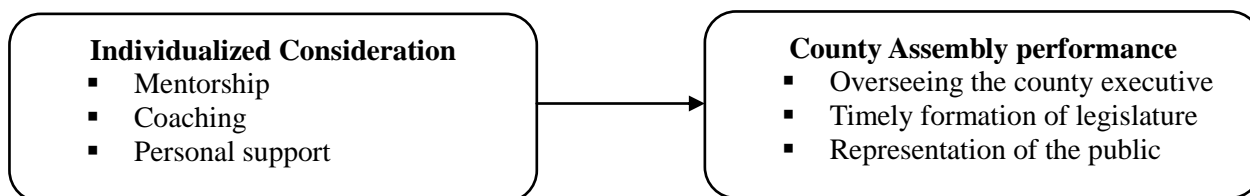
Khan, Khan and Khan (2020) carried out research on the support for individualized consideration and its association between interactional justice and performance of employees in Pakistani firms. The study found that fair execution of policies, procedures and decisions at the workplace affected the management and employees' relationship. The researchers tested the assumptions in the relationship and found that interactional justice between managers and employees improved employee satisfaction rates resulting in high-performance. The test results also showed that leadership and management who showed individualized consideration to each employee, motivated and encouraged the employee to make individual contribution towards the success of the organization. Individualized consideration by the leadership was found to inspire an individual employee to concentrate on their work assignments leading to better organizational performance. The relationship between interactional justice and employee performance was significant and positive as mediated by individualized consideration.

Kayago and Omari (2022) carried out research on individualized consideration and its influence on organizational performance for counties within the South Eastern Kenya Economic Bloc (SEKEB). Innovation was used as a moderator for the two objectives. The study was informed by the challenges that counties face emanating from the leadership type adopted, and hence focusing on individualized consideration. There was use of transformational leadership, resource-based view and stakeholder strategic leadership theories. A pragmatism philosophical and descriptive design approaches were employed. 289 county employees formed the sample size and filled the structured questionnaires. The descriptive, Pearson moment correlation and regression analyses were conducted and findings showed positive and significant influence of individualized consideration to performance of the SEKEB counties. The study concluded that when the leader listens through open communication structures, mentoring and coaching followers and appreciating and recognizing individual efforts and contribution to the overall success; these aspects led to improved performance in the counties.

Chebon, Aruasa and Chirchir (2019) study was on how employees of Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital, Eldoret, Kenya' performance was influenced by both individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation. The focus was on improving employees' performance based on efforts and attributes in the leadership. The study used descriptive design and targeted 3,739 employees in the hospital and of which 463 formed the final sample size that was stratified into top, middle and operational staffs in the hospital. The conducted descriptive and inferential statistics revealed that components of individualized consideration including recognition, teaching through coaching, and mentoring, identifying needs, capabilities and passions and respecting followers; improved performance of the employees in the hospital. Intellectual stimulation through creativity, rethinking of ideas and innovation resulted in high productivity. The study concluded that individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation improved performance of employees in the hospital.

Tang, Stordeur, Vandenberghe and D'hoore (2024) study was on individualized consideration in the leaders, team commitment and patient loyalty in the contexts of social roles and work tasks. The study was informed by the transformational leadership theory in modeling how leadership in nurse teams predicted loyalty to the patients in Quebec Canada. The study hypothesized that individualized consideration was a salient construct in caring for patients, the team affective commitment would impact in the leadership of the nurses and collaboration between nurses, physicians and hospital leadership would influence individualized consideration in the head of nursing. This was a three-wave, multi-level and source study where 654 nurses were surveyed, 1770 patients were observed across 91 hospitals. The study found that individualized consideration by the head in nursing positively influenced patient loyalty through the affective commitment of the team of nurses and collaborative networks in the hospitals. But formalization of structures and task feedback reduced individualized consideration of nurse heads, which reduced commitment and loyalty to patients. The study concluded that individualized consideration led to patient loyalty through affective commitment and organizational, social and task context reduced individualized consideration and reduced patient loyalty.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The research design provides a blueprint of all activities that the researcher carried out in seeking information that answers the research questions (Siedlecki, 2020). This study adopted descriptive research design. As stated by Tobi and Kampen (2018) descriptive research design focuses on key aspects of the phenomenon and reports findings as they are without any manipulation of data and findings.

### Target Population, Sampling and Sample Size

Study population covers a complete set of elements that can be used to explain specific aspects of the phenomenon (Sileyew, 2019). The population covered all employees of the Nyandarua County Assembly, but those targeted included county assembly leadership, committee members, members of county assembly and administrative staffs. The total number included 41 members of county assembly, 4 top-level managers, 9 middle level managers and 27 low-level managers. The sampling entailed placing them into groups as per

position under stratified sampling technique. Since, the target population is small, Tripathi, Khatri and Mamde (2020) shared that a small target group is one having less than 200 members; then a census of all targeted group formed the sample size.

**Data Instrument and Collection Procedure**

Semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect study data that produced qualitative and quantitative data. The closed ended questions adopted a five-point likert scale ranging from 1 - 5 and the open-ended questions gave respondents a chance to share their perspective and insight on the subject matter; thus, producing qualitative data. After getting authorization and introduction letter from the school and research permit from the government, the researcher distributed the questionnaire to the respondents at their place of work. The data collection was done using a drop and pick later method, where the questionnaires were left with respondents for filling and later picked for analysis.

**Data Analysis and Presentation**

The quantitative data was cleaned, coded and entered into SPSS, where descriptive and inferential statistics was conducted. Descriptive analysis produced means, frequencies, standard deviations and percentages. Inferential statistics included Pearson correlation analysis that showed the relationship between the two variables; and multiple regression analysis showed the extent of influence and direction of relationship between the variables. The regression analysis model followed this format:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y = Assembly Performance

X<sub>1</sub> = Individualized Consideration

β<sub>0</sub> = Constant

ε = Error term

The qualitative data was analysed through content analysis, where the information was grouped in themes aligning to the objective. Thereafter, presentation of findings was in the form of tables and discussions.

**FINDINGS**

**Descriptive Analysis Results**

**Table 1: Individualized Consideration**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>
The assembly leadership assesses interests of subordinates which are incorporated in the agenda	3.91	.909
The leaders treat each employee individually in recognition of differences in needs, capabilities and inspirations	3.82	.855
The leaders provide mentorship services to all subordinates	3.88	1.066
Part of the leadership role includes coaching new and junior employees at the assembly	3.74	1.014
The leaders provide personal support to all employees in seeking to attain the set mandate	3.90	1.082
<b>Aggregate Scores</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>.985</b>

**Source: Survey Data (2024)**

The average scores of M =3.85 and SD =0.985, attest and confirm what the respondents shared on concept of individualized consideration under transformational leadership. Respondents also shared that personal support

and advice, when the leaders attended to the needs of each subordinate, delegation of assignments and treating each individual with respect; created a good work environment that uplifted performance outcomes in the county assembly of Nyandarua.

**Table 2: Nyandarua Assembly Performance**

	Mean	Std. Dev
The county assembly reports timely formulation of legislature	3.53	1.068
The county assembly has been able to oversee the functions of the county executive effectively	3.41	1.152
The county assembly represents the needs of the general public	3.65	1.120
Functions handled by the county assembly have been effective and efficient in the last five years (2019 -2023).	3.39	1.210
<b>Average Scores</b>	<b>3.50</b>	<b>1.138</b>

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Basing on the scores, the performance of the Nyandarua County Assembly had improved, as the average mean score of  $M = 3.50$  and standard deviation of  $SD = 1.138$ . This indicates that the county assembly was able to meet its constitution mandate of legislation, representation and oversight of the executive.

### Pearson Moment Correlation Analysis Results

**Table 3: Correlation Results**

		Assembly Performance	Individualized Consideration
Assembly Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	73	
Individualized Consideration	Pearson Correlation	.596	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	73	73

Source: Survey Data (2024)

In adopting correlation results interpretation made by Kothari (2014) that  $r$  -values of 0-0.2 is for weak correlations, values of 0.3 – 0.4 is for moderate correlations, 0.5-0.7 as strong and 0.8 -1 as very strong correlations. Therefore,  $r$  values for individualized consideration at 0.596 imply the relationship to performance of county assembly of Nyandarua is strong.

### Multiple Regression Analysis Results

**Table 4: Multiple Regression Results**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.809 <sup>a</sup>	.654	.634	.416508	
			Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1 (Constant)	1.267	.921		1.376	.000
Individualized Consideration	.405	.311	.494	1.302	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Assembly Performance

Source: Survey Data (2024)

From the results, the adjusted R Square value is at 0.634, showing that 63.4% change in performance of the county assembly of Nyandarua was from the influence of individualized consideration. In determining the predictor effect of individualized consideration and performance, the beta coefficient analysis was done, with results showing:

$$Y = 1.267 + 0.405X_1$$

These results imply that at constant level (no influence from the variable) the performance at the Nyandarua County Assembly is at 1.267. The results also show that the unstandardized beta coefficient values imply that individualized consideration positively and significantly affected performance outcomes at Nyandarua County Assembly. The effect was based on these reported values  $\beta = 0.405$ ,  $t = 1.302$ , and  $0.000 < 0.05$ . The results echo what Kayago and Omari (2022) found that individualized consideration positively and significantly affected performance of counties with the SEKEB region. In addition, Chebon, et al., (2019) also revealed a positive influence of individualized consideration of healthcare workers and performance of Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital. Thus, it follows that organizations and leadership that focuses on individualized consideration made gains in terms of better performance outcomes.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the research reveal that individualized consideration by meeting of the needs, the aspirations and interests of the employees led to better performance. Individualized consideration had a large effect in enhancement the performance. Thus, the study concludes that individualized consideration was effective in bettering the performance at the Nyandarua County Assembly

Nyandarua County Assembly has often reported leadership wrangles, in-fighting and gaps in filling some positions; to resolve these leadership issues that have had a negative impact on performance outcomes; this paper suggested strictly application of contents of chapter six of the constitution -leadership and integrity. Additionally, the study recommends the elected and appointed leaders to consider the needs of subordinates. These leaders need to look at middle/low level managers and staffs as individuals with unique needs and factor that in decision making process. The structure and culture cultivated at the workplace should consider the feelings, aspirations and needs of all subordinate staffs when seeking to improve performance.

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