THE ROLE OF E-LEADERSHIP IN EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

By

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented in any other college or University.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19:   Corona virus disease -2019

LMX: Leader-member exchange theory

UoN: University of Nairobi

VDL: Vertical dyad linkage

VO: Virtual organizations

VTs: Virtual teams

ABSTRACT

Electronic leadership has been embraced by different organizations with the onset of corona virus to aid in executing roles remotely. Due to changing leadership styles, there has been a significant shift from the traditional leadership approaches, needing more diverse skills, changes on leadership practices, and other dynamics like leadership styles coming into play. This study was based on the paradigm shift caused by covid-19 pandemic in learning institutions leadership roles, where many institutions adopted electronic leadership to keep running, diversifying roles of administrators. The case study picked was that of University of Nairobi. The main objective was to establish the influence of electronic leadership on staff productivity. The specific e-leadership variables were e-leader communication skills, e-leader social skills and e-leader technological skills, and how they influenced staff productivity. A descriptive survey design was used to explain how the variables correlated with each other, and how electronic leadership influenced staff productivity. The study population was all administrators at the University of Nairobi, and sampling was done using Yamane scientific formula. The main tool for data collection was questionnaire. The analysis method was both descriptive and inferential analyses were done. It was established that most of the staff were satisfied with how staff were handled in getting updates on works in progress or delivery of assigned roles. The staff indicates that the regular online meetings to update staff keeps them abreast of what is happening. It was also established that e-leaders acts as a liaison, connecting the staffs and their execution of their roles. Leaders possessed supportive behavior over the electronic platforms and were willing to assist the staffs. Most leaders were able to effectively use technology to delegate tasks. Electronic leadership was equally satisfactory in delivering staff productivity, as the staff were satisfied with the work done and delivered remotely and electronically. Findings further indicate that the three independent variables of e-leader communication skills, e-leader social skills and e-leader technological skills had statistically significant correlation with staff productivity. They had positive influence on staff productivity. It was recommended that learning institutions need to invest in the electronic leadership capacities, by investing in e-communication, e-socializing and e-technology for the administrators. Investment in the three key electronic leadership roles was conceptualized to have a positive significant influence on staff productivity, which translates to improved service delivery.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Electronic leadership, here termed as e-leadership, is an extension of traditional leadership, usually associated with changes in how leaders and their followers engage with each other (Onyemaechi, Chinyere & Emmanuel, 2018). Since e-leadership represents a significant shift from the traditional leadership approaches, more skills, changes on leadership practices, and other dynamics like leadership styles come into play, affecting delivery of roles. E-leadership includes social influence as facilitated by technology to generate a shift in thinking, feelings, attitudes, behavior as well as performance among groups, individuals and organizations while directing them to achieve specific goals (Crawford-Mathis, 2009). Similarly, the aspect of socializing is important as it influences how communication, team building and change management is implemented (Van Wart et al., 2019). According to DasGupta (2011), electronic leaders (e-leaders) need to develop new skills that may include having strong social networking skills, having multi-cultural mindset, having sensitivity towards followers' opinions, and stronger written communication skills. A study by Van Wart, Roman, and Wang et al. (2019) summarized six e-leaders skillsets to perfect staff productivity, including e-communication, e-social skills, e-technology skills, e-trustworthiness, e-team building as well as e-change management. Therefore, for this study, communication skills, social and technology skills are picked to explore on how they define e-leadership and consequent staff productivity.

The study shall use two theories, the leader member exchange theory and goal setting theory to explain the interlinkages between leadership roles and staff productivity. The leader-member exchange theory (LMX) is one of the recent developments in the dyad explaining linkages between leadership and leadership effectiveness (Bauer & Erdogan, 2015). The LMX was initially termed

as vertical dyad linkage theory, as proposed by George Graen and other colleagues in 1970s (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The LMX emphasizes dyadic relationships (one-on-one) between the leader and individual subordinate as opposed to the individual traits of leaders and situational characteristics. The main focus of LMX model is the leader-subordinate relationship in the process of promoting effective outcomes. The second theory to be used in this study is goal setting theory proposed by Locke and Latham in late 1960s (Locke & Latham, 2012). The goal setting theory is mostly used by leaders when they need their followers to improve the overall staff productivity. In addition, feedback plays a key role in enhancing productivity of the staff, as well as the complexity of the task given (Lunenburg, 2011). The goal setting theory is selected as it influences how e-leaders relate to the followers, and the influence the relationship has with staff productivity.

The context of the study is in educational institutions, where the COVID-19 pandemic has equally affected. A study by Contreras, Baykal and Abid (2020) ranked the sectors that were interrupted most, leading to more staff working virtually. These included service industry with about 17% of its workforce working remotely, closely followed by healthcare sector at 12%, insurance and finance sector at 10%, manufacturing at 8.5% and then education at 7.5% closing the top five most telecommuting sectors (Contreras et al., 2020). The education institutions have adjusted to a large extent on how they deliver content to students and how the teaching staff engage with the learners. Similarly, the administrative functions have also seen great adjustment with significant number of workers rescheduled for remote working. While key roles are executed at the offices, significant other supporting roles have been delegated to staff, working remotely. Further, the selection of institutions gives a good platform to understand how the e-leadership can influence remote staff productivity as it has largely been adopted by the administrators and teaching staffs.

1.1.1 E-leadership

DasGupta (2011) defined e-leadership as a process of social influence which is mediated by technology in a bid to initiate changes in feelings, attitude, thinking, behavior and performance of individuals, firms and groups. E in leadership is the electronic platforms that leaders use to influence their followers/subordinates. Another definition by Torre and Sarti (2020) is leadership in the new era, that is, information age which is characterized by fast technology development, creating a shift from the traditional leadership setting. Van Wart et al. (2019) also defines e-leadership as a process where leaders use virtual environment to have basic responsibilities executed. Further, van Wart acknowledge that e-leadership is characterized by virtual monitoring, motivating teams, building and developing teams, as well as staff working remotely. In another context, Kahai (2020) notes that e-leadership is challenged by separation by space and time, where it becomes difficult to build close working bonds. Kahai further explains that e-leaders can use platforms like e-mails, mobile phone application and other computer applications to communicate visions, pass feedback, and recognize performing staff.

In the context of this study, it conceptualized that the role of e-leader is in terms of facilitating communication, using socializing skills to keep the remote staff engaged in organizations work, and having the right technology skillset to facilitate the connection between the remote worker and expected deliverables at workplace. While the roles of communication, socializing and technology among leaders have been expounded in contemporary leadership roles, less has been explored under electronic leadership arrangements.

1.1.2 Employee Productivity

A study by Gajendran, Harrison and Delaney-Klinger (2014) defined employee's productivity in terms of timely delivery on work assigned, meeting the expected output and maintaining the expected quality. According to Nda and Fard (2013), an employee's productivity is the amount of work delivered in a given period of time. Overall productivity can be set at individuals' or at team/organizations' level. Productivity, according to Dutcher (2012), is measured based on the outputs (the outcomes) as influenced by the inputs like labor hours and resources. Further, productivity can be defined by the levels of efficiency and effectiveness of the work executed. In another definition by Hüsing, Korte and Dashia, (2015), employees' productivity is influenced by the level of social skills exhibited by their leaders.

Work-related outcomes that influence employee's productivity as mentioned by Allen, Golden and Shockley (2015) include performance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment among others. Leader-member exchanges, work-family conflicts and team-member exchanges have been cited to play partial role in employee's productivity. Attaran, Attaran and Kirkland (2019) mentioned employee wellbeing, communication tools, management practices and trainings as critical aspects affecting employee's productivity. This points that employees' productivity is an outcome that is influenced by work-related conditions. In another study on employee productivity, Maduka and Okafor (2014) defines productivity as the efficiency of a employees in completing a task. Further, Clear notes that quantifying productivity can be done through measuring the goals (setting goals at start of work and achieving them), measuring the quality of work delivered, and measuring the amount of work done. Therefore, productivity in this study is defined as timely delivery of allocated roles, work motivation, delivery of expected work load, achieving working balance and meeting the anticipated quality of work allocated.

1.1.3 The University of Nairobi

The study shall focus on the University of Nairobi (UoN), which is a collegiate research institution. UoN is among the leading institutions of higher learning in Kenya, with its main campus in Nairobi City. The institution is a government corporate entity established under the Act of Parliament Cap 210 of the Laws of Kenya. UoN had six colleges and ten campuses but after the reforms that were effected in July 2021, it now has eleven Faculties and ten Campuses. The colleges were disbanded and replaced by faculties (University of Nairobi, 2022).

Further, the university has fifteen Extra Mural Centers which offer learning to evening class students. The institution has over 500 academic programs distributed in 51 department. Further, it has over 84,000) students, and 2,220 academic employees with PhD qualifications. This being a qualitative and explorative study, the focus will be on the eleven faculties, targeting administrators/leaders and subordinate employees (University of Nairobi, 2022). The University of Nairobi (UoN), as any other public learning institution, adopted electronic measures including e-leadership to continue its operations. Similarly, UoN has adopted various electronic leadership approaches to promote its continuance of programs. Some of the key techniques that the institution has applied include enhanced telecommunication technology to promote remote operations and learning, and enhanced communication channels for internal communications. The UoN links to the study variables in that it promotes and embraces technology, communication and has invested in social skills of the staff, hence integrating properly with the study variables and research objective.

1.2 Research Problem

E-leadership is a relatively new concept, moderately practiced but propelled further and lately into prominence by the COVID-19 pandemic. E-leadership has been associated with enhanced remote employee's productivity. For instance, Loubier (2018) noted that about 80% of remote workers reported higher levels of morale, 69% had lower absenteeism and another 82% indicated that it helped them to lower their stress levels. In the same study, 74% of the respondents reported work flexibility that also enhanced work-life balance, associating the arrangement with increased productivity. Some other reviewed studies indicate that e-leadership has a significant positive role regarding impact on employees' performance, giving employees freedom and flexibility needed to execute roles (Alfehaid & Mohamed, 2019; Onyemaechi et al., 2018). Few contradictions against the positive association of e-leadership and employees' performance have been presented, a case in point being Hüsing et al. (2015) who found reduced (negative) employees' performance with e-leadership.

With emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, e-leadership has gained popularity in institutions of higher learning. Partly because of the need to keep social distancing and avoiding large groupings which are associated with spreading the virus. In the context of e-leadership, most of the subordinates have started working from home/remotely, signifying a paradigm shift in their working routines. The change to remote working has thus necessitated a refocus on e-leadership qualities, including communication, socialization and further specialized knowledge on using technology to promote employees' productivity. The change to remote leadership has probably in very significant dimensions altered employees' productivity in the context of the leader - subordinate relationship.

Few studies have been conducted on the effects of electronic leadership on the remote employee's productivity. This observation is even more critical at the moment, given the ravaging impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, Contreras et al. (2020) explain how e-leadership was accelerated by COVID-19, and how it has pushed organizations into virtual working and ultimately affecting employees' performance. Others like Alfehaid and Mohamed (2019) helped to explain how e-leadership has been spearheading virtual team performance, showing mixed results. Further, Wolor et al. (2020) found significant association between e-leadership and employees' performance, while mediated by favorable work-life balance. Similarly, Dutcher (2012), focusing on the role of dull and creative tasks on the effectiveness of telecommuting, established strong associations between telecommuting on creative tasks and employees' productivity, and a negative implication for productivity resulting from dull tasks.

Interestingly, Thorstensson (2020) in a thesis, compared effects of working from home in 2000s and in 2020s analyzing five articles from each period. The findings were that working from home had both positive and negative influence on employee's productivity. A key finding was that some leader characteristics and attitudes of employees influenced the outcome of employees' productivity. Allen et al. (2015) also established positive significant relationship between virtual leadership and employees' productivity, citing key work-related outcomes like job satisfaction, attitude change, organizational commitment and work-family issues. Locally, a search on Google Scholar on e-leadership and employees production yields only three studies on e-leadership in Kenya. One by Anyango, (2015) establishes a significant association between traditional leadership roles and employees' productivity. There is a clear gap indicating that little has been done locally on e-leadership and remote working. A few available studies have focused on virtual working platforms and team performance, among them being Alibhai (2017) and Asudi (2019).

Alibhai (2017) focused on the influence of virtual platforms on team performance at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, establishing positive association between virtual workplace and employee's performance. The few local studies on e-leadership have not addressed the roles of e-leadership in influencing performance and productivity of remote workers, hence the need for this study. In this study, the researcher therefore seeks to answer the question, what is the effect of e-leadership on the productivity of employees. The University of Nairobi was selected as a case study, suitable for both unit of analysis and units of observation and contextualizing representation of institutions of higher learning with well-developed e-leadership for study on how it influences employee's productivity. In this study, the researcher therefore seeks to answer the question, what is the effect of e-leadership on the productivity of employees at the University of Nairobi?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study was to explore the role of electronic leadership on employee productivity at the University of Nairobi.

1.4 Value of the Study

The study would add value in terms of practice, policy making and for scholars as well as academicians.

The study informs the institution on how e-leadership influences staff productivity, informing on leadership adjustments. Through the study's findings, education institutions and other firms might learn on how to effectively use e-leadership to effect changes on staff productivity, and overall, firm performance in the era of remote working. Management would be able to adjust accordingly and instill the best e-leadership practices to improve staff motivation and overall productivity through virtual leadership. It is expected that the findings might inform other educational

institutions to plan on how to conduct efficient e-leadership practices, enhancing overall staff productivity.

The study findings are also expected to add value in terms of policy formulations, especially on dealing with e-leadership forums. Policies on electronic leadership are expected to be formulated based on the prevailing workplace conditions, and dynamics at workplace. In the case of COVID-19 pandemic and the increasing need for staff to work remotely, the findings from this current study shall inform on how the management can formulate frameworks and policies to ensure sufficient staff productivity. The findings might help formulate policies relating to employee relations on remote working.

The study findings add to the pool of existing scholarly knowledge on leadership and staff performance. Academicians might benefit from the study through using the findings to inform future studies. In the context of the changing working environment as necessitated by the corona virus pandemic, the findings shall inform on other studies on electronic leadership and workplace productivity. Further, the study findings inform scholars on the variables and areas to inform future studies on e-leadership and staff productivity.

In the case of COVID-19 pandemic and the increasing need for employees to work remotely, the findings of this study shall provide useful insights into appropriate operational frameworks and policies managements in relation to improved supervisor employee relations and employees' productivity while pointing out areas of gaps for further study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to literature chapter

The chapter explains literature review, organized into empirical literature where the researcher reviewed previous scholarly studies on the topic of e-leadership. Further, the chapter explains the theories backing the study and establishes their connection to this current study. A conceptual framework is provided, explaining graphically how the variables are related, and at the end, a summary of the literature review is presented at the end.

2.2 Theoretical Literature Review

The section presents the theories associated with the study. The two theories included the leader member exchange theory (LMX) and the Locke's Goal Setting theory which relate to staff productivity.

2.2.1 leader-member exchange theory (LMX)

The leader-member exchange theory (LMX) was proposed by Dansereau, Graen and Haga in 1975 though their seminal article, introducing the leadership theory that reflected vertical dyadic interactions between the managers (or leaders) and their followers (Dansereau, et al. 1975). The theory, also termed as Vertical Dyad Linkage theory, describes how managers, or leaders manage their followers and how they develop their relationship with other players in contributing to the growth of the organization. The LMX evolved from the vertical dyad linkage (VDL) theory. The leader-member exchange theory indicates that leaders and their followers create unique relationship based on their social exchanges as well as the quality of such exchanges (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The exchanges, according to the proponents of the theory, Khorakian and Sharifirad (2019), the quality of the social exchanges in a firm influence the organizational as well

as the staff outcomes. Aspects like humor can be a contributing factor to the quality of social engagement, contributing overall the nature and extent of relationship (Wisse & Rietzschel, 2014). The researcher chose to use the LMX theory based on the indications given by Dulebohn, James and Bommer et al. (2012) whose study, "A Meta-Analysis of Antecedents and Consequences of Leader-Member Exchange" provided an explanation of antecedents of the leader interaction with worker, and the potential consequences. Based on Dulebohn et al., three key antecedents were mentioned, follower characteristics, leader characteristics and interpersonal relationship that in turn influenced LMX and the firm/employee consequences. For instance, follower characteristics included competence, agreeableness, extraversion, openness, and locus of control, positive and negative affectivity. On the other side, Dulebohn and colleagues noted that leader characteristics included supervisor expectations of workers, extraversion, agreeableness, contingent reward behavior, and transformational leadership. Further, the component of interpersonal relationship included perceived similarity, supervisor reported affect/liking ingratiation, assertiveness, self-promotion and leader trust. The authors conceptualized that the three predictors, that is, follower, leader characteristics and interpersonal relationships influenced the firm/staff consequences like job performance, affective and normative commitment, satisfaction with pay, empowerment, and overall organizational commitment.

The theory has had its strengths and limitations as pointed out by Rockstuhl et al. (2012). The strengths include that the LMX theory shows an exceptional model in which firm or staff outcomes are associated with leadership. As opposed to other theories, it focuses on relationship between the subordinates and the leaders. The LMX model is also a robust explanatory theory, with clear antecedents and the anticipated consequences. Another strength is that the theory focuses on the significance of communication in leadership, a part that is critical to any leadership engagement.

Gottfredson et al. (2020) also noted that the theory is valid as well as practical, hence shows causal effects of leadership engagement between the leaders and the subordinates. Some of the limitations of the theory include the failure to explain particulars of how high- and low-quality exchanges are created. The LMX theory also does not explain assumptions on which the model is applicable in real situation, where other than work relationship, other underlying factors may influence the nature of communication and leader-coworker engagement. Gottfredson et al. (2020) also notes that LMX is taken as an independent variable or sometimes as a moderator variable, thus violating the exogeneity assumption that is associated with causal models, thus creating an intractable endogeneity problem. Despite the strengths and the mentioned weaknesses, the researcher selected the LMX theory to explain the causal relationship between the e-leader and the staff performance. Through understanding the roles e-leader plays in communication, socialization skills (high- and low-quality exchanges), technology platforms and skills as an enabler, and the contextual challenges, the study conceptualizes that the independent variables have a significant influence on the performance of staff.

2.2.2 Locke's Goal Setting theory

The goal setting theory as proposed by Dr. Edwin Locke and Dr. Gary Latham in early 1968 serves as a connection between leaders and their followers, and the ultimate goal of organizational performance (Locke & Latham, 2012). The goal-setting theory provides a framework of understanding how staff productivity is influenced by leadership features and the intrinsic factors associated with staff/followers. The proponents of the theory asserted that working towards a goal was a major source of motivation, which in turn led to staff performance. Staff productivity is mostly associated with both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, among them motivation,

communication, and work environment. When employee needs are catered for, then motivation is likely to drive staff to full potential performance.

Locke in a study on effects of goal setting and staff productivity/performance showed that, in about 90 percent of the times, challenging and specific goals were associated with higher performance than having easy and "do your best" goals. The proponents of goal-setting theory argued that hard goals were motivating to achieve more as compared to easy goals. Similarly, Locke and Latham's study titled "A theory of goal setting and task performance" outlined five principles that were associated with staff productivity. The principles included clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback and task complexity. Based on this current study on e-leadership and staff productivity, setting clear goals for the staff is paramount towards achieving the desired staff performance. The leader, whether electronically or physically, needs to set clear SMART goals. Vague goals are not likely to achieve the desired staff productivity as they are not clearly measurable. Further, the aspect of setting challenging goals to the staff even when working remotely motivates them to achieve more. The third principle under Locke's goal setting theory is securing team commitment, where the leader needs to motivate the followers and have them commit to the roles assigned. The study by Lunenburg (2011) noted that team members, even those working electronically were likely to "buy into" a goal when the leader involves them from the start.

The goal setting theory has been criticized by a number of scholars, hence its strengths and limitations. According to Locke and Latham (2009), there are concerns that in an organization, goals can incentivize engagement in unethical behaviors. For instance, when aggressive goals are set (stretch goals), some employees may take the desire to achieve the goal too far. In the event of having rewards, staff work through any possible approach, even if not ethical, to achieve the set goals, and avoid sanctions. The overall unethical behavior can hurt the organization in long term.

Another possible shortfall is the setting of wrong goals, creating a sense of tunnel vision. Focusing on goals solely may lead to ignoring the perceptions and likes of the target stakeholders, in the process leading to a spectacular failure. Locke's goal setting may therefore lead to failures by the staff and organization especially when the stakeholders are not involved in the process. As observed by Locke and Latham (2019), the goal setting theory may work against an organization when a series of set goals fail to be achieved. The morale of staff can decline, hence reducing overall performance of an organization. The strengths of the goal-setting theory include probable increase of employee engagement in the setting of workplace. The theory also provides a clear guideline for setting and achieving goals in an effective way. Proponents of the theory also note that it allows constructive feedback on regular basis, where employees constantly improve their productivity.

Goal setting theory fits into this study as it shows how the leader is involved in mobilizing the followers to attain productivity desired. The leaders' involvement is critical in that it determines the level of staff productivity. For instance, giving feedback serves as a way of improving on areas falling short of expectations and maintaining the areas well performed. Leaders also need to consider task complexity when engaging staff working electronically. For instance, those who have the capacity to deliver ought to be considered for more complex roles. The goal setting theory is therefore chosen in this study to support staff productivity, and the process of engaging the e-leader as the catalyst.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

A study by Alfehaid and Mohamed (2019) titled "Understanding the influence of E-leadership on Virtual Team Performance" focused on investing the existing and importance of e-leadership on performance of Saudi-based organizations. The study noted that virtual organizations (VO) had

emerged in the early 2000s in Saudi Arabia, with the managers managing virtual teams (VTs) to execute designated tasks and projects. This mixed study, focusing on 66 Saudi firms for both interviews of VO managers and questionnaires for middle level managers, used thematic analysis and inferential statistics to make conclusions. The findings were that despite the virtual team members being geographically dispersed, they effective in executing their assigned roles if the management cultivated trust, professionalism and common urgency in executing firm's goals. Alfehaid and Mohamed also mentioned some challenges that were likely to influence the performance of e—leaders and virtual teams, including articulating ones' influence, building trust and having clear communication. Further, the findings showed significant association between virtual team members' performance, and the use of virtual technology to execute roles. The research gaps identified from the study by Alfehaid and Mohamed (2019) is that the approach used was mixed design and a focus on 66 firms, where else the current study narrows to a case study, and relies mostly on quantitative approach for its results. The location is also different, where the perceptions of participants at the UoN might be different from that of Saudi Arabian firm employees. Further, this study presents findings that relate to the current research where virtual team members performance, e-leaders behavior and skills are conceptualized to influence overall staff and firm performance.

A more recent study was done by Wolor, Solikhah, and Fidhyallah et al. (2020) on the "Effectiveness of E-Training, E-Leadership, and Work Life Balance on Employee Performance during COVID-19" in Jakarta, Indonesia. The aim of the study was to add insight on the effectiveness of e-leadership, e-training and work motivation on millennial generation employee's performance, and within the context of COVID-19 pandemic, where most organizations resulted to online working. The base of the study was that millennials are more techno-savvy compared to

the older generations, with intentions to succeed quickly and seek instantaneous gratification. From this perspective, the authors conducted a cross-sectional quantitative study of 200 millennial employees at Honda motorcycle dealers stationed in Jakarta in Indonesia. The data collected through questionnaires was processed and analyzed using Lisrel 8.5 program and through Structural Equation Modeling. The findings were that e-leadership, e-training and work-life balance had positive effect on work motivation. Further, the authors established that work motivation, work-life balance and e-leadership were associated with staff performance. The recommendation was that e-leadership, e-training and work-life balance were important components for Vos to offer to millennial staffs to maintain their optimal performance during the COVID-19 pandemic period. One of the research gap identified is the different locality and the type of respondents, a major focus on millenials, and a sample of 200 respondents. This current study focuses on administrators at the university, cutting across different ages, hence the findings might be different. Since this study focused on e-leadership and other supporting aspects like e-training and work-life balance, it adds to this current research through showing how findings elsewhere in Asia established links between the variables and staff performance, an aspect that can be replicated here in Kenya.

Contreras, Baykal and Abid (2020) focused on "e-leadership and teleworking in times of COVID-19 and beyond" focused on the potential of e-leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and how it was likely to influence staff performance going forward. The study was based on secondary literature, involving peer reviewed scholarly works sourced across the globe. The background of the study was that the pandemic has created the need for virtual organizations to spearhead virtual teams and equip e-leaders to effectively manage geographically dispersed teams. Further, the study by Contreras and colleagues was informed by the research gap that findings from several

researches have been inconclusive on e-leadership effects on virtual team performance. Another gap in studies on e-leadership was cited as weakness in their methodologies, where small samples were used, mostly not representative and with scarce theoretical foundation. Contreras et al. recommended that there is need for more correlational or descriptive studies to establish how e-leadership was influencing staff performance. The research by Contreras and colleagues significantly established positive correlations of staff performance and e-leadership. The recommendation was that e-leaders needed to take advantage to create suitable working environments, develop trust among the staff, and handle emerging changes associated with computer technologies like change in behavior, thoughts, emotions as well as performance of workers. The research gap identified from the study by Contreras et al. (2020) is that it focused more on qualitative approaches and less of quantitative approach, hence the current study might have different findings compared to that of Contreras et al. (2020).

Carreño (2014) study on "Emergent leadership: E-leadership implications for virtual education" was done in Spain, where the purpose was to emphasize how technology can be used by leaders in education (teachers) to star performance. The study focused on three main areas, the first one on including theoretical frameworks that improve overall understanding on relationship between e-leaders and performance of tutors in virtual environment. The study, which was informed by secondary literature review, sought to understand what constituted e-leadership in organizations. Similarly, the authors also discussed the main strengths and skills needed to push management of educational institutions at a distance. Carreño further recommends more research on the aspects of e-leadership, calling for better understanding of how e-leadership influences overall performance of tutors in educational settings. The research gap from the study by Carreño (2014) is that it was based in Spain, and focused on teacher's performance as opposed to the administrative staff in the

institutions. Further, this current research has been castigated by emergency of COVID-19, which was not present when the study by Carreño (2014) was being executed, hence the current situation could provide more clear and significant findings.

Torre and Sarti (2020) study titled "The "Way" Toward E-leadership: Some Evidence from the Field" focused on evolution of e-leadership and how it is connected to technologies. The study was based on the aspect of organizations both consciously and unconsciously using technology tools for enhancing leadership, a concept the author's term as e-leadership. Through a qualitative study of 15 Italian companies based in Genoa, the authors use in-depth interviews to gather information on how e-leadership was considered influential in staff performance. The findings showed that awareness to e-leadership had increased and the pervasiveness of technologies was playing a significant role in the change of traditional to modern, especially e-leadership. Another finding was that working relationships between the supervisors and the staff was to be conscious and articulate to ensure geographical distance does not adversely influence performance of the staff. This research shall assist the current study in ascertaining the conditions, qualifications and training e-leaders need to have to ensure there is continuity in leadership performance even when the traditional working environment is not conducive. The research gap was that Torre and Sarti did their study in Italy, and focused on 15 companies, while the current study focuses on one learning institution, and relies entirely on questionnaires (quantitative approach) for its findings. The method did not use quantitative statistical analysis to establish statistically significant factors, a possible diversion with the current study, which seeks to embrace quantitative statistical analysis.

DasGupta (2018) on a literature review on e-Leadership reviewed 28 articles addressing the topic of e-leadership across the globe. The study provided into rich insights into how e-leadership was not significantly different from the traditional leadership styles. The study cited effective

communication, technology disparity, differences in technology proficiency among the virtual team members, and varying time zones as the leading challenges in e-leadership practices. The study established that team members needed to embrace solutions that were capable of enhancing service delivery and staff performance. Cost reduction, cycle-time reduction, problem solving, and improved decision-making were some of the key aspects that staff needed to focus on to enhance e-leadership. The research gaps from the study by DasGupta (2018) is that it was a literature review, covering 28 articles while the current study is a quantitative one, focusing on one case study, hence the findings might be different.

2.4 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework shows the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, performance of staff. The researcher conceptualizes staff productivity in three key elements, achieving the desired work output, timely delivery of work, and the quality of work. It is conceptualized that e-leader communication capacity, their socialization skills, technology capacity and the contextual challenges of e-leadership influence the overall staff productivity.

The conceptual framework is shown on figure 3.1.

Independent variable   **Dependent variable**

E-leadership

| E-leader communication capacity |

| E-leader social skills |

| E-leader technology cpacity |

Staff Productivity
-Work utput
-Timely delivery
-Quality of work
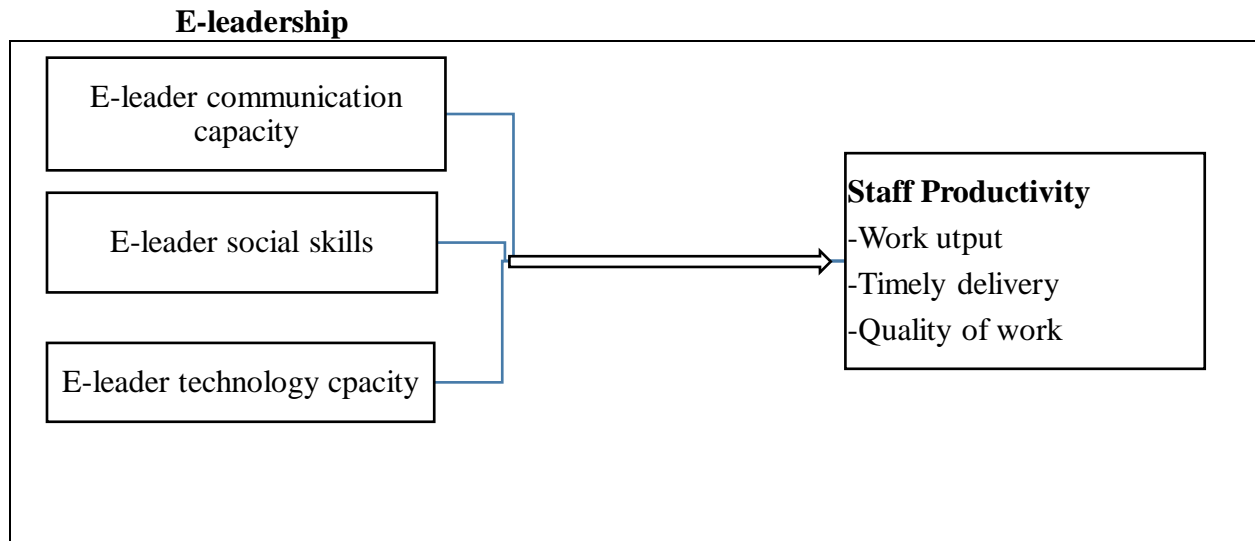
Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework for e-leadership and staff productivity

2.5 Summary of Literature

This chapter has reviewed literature on e-leadership and how it influences staff productivity. For instance, Alfehaid and Mohamed (2019) identified the challenges of e-leadership, associating it with lack of trust among the leaders and followers, lack of clear communication and articulating one's influence. This view on the challenges was also held by Li, Godley and Belitski et al. (2016) and that of Torre and Sarti (2020). Further, the literature cited several aspects of both significance and insignificance of communication as a predictor to staff performance through eleadership (Baykal & Abid, 2020; DasGupta, 2018; García 2015; Wolor et al., 2020). The literature thus shows inconclusive findings on how e-leadership affects staff productivity, and especially during the period of COVID-19 pandemic.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter addressed the research methodology embraced to help in collecting and analyzing information for the purpose of answering the research questions. In detail, the chapter shall address research design, the targeted population, sample size as well as sampling procedures. Further, the chapter explored on the research tools, instrument validity as well as reliability, data collection procedures. Finally, the researcher presented data analysis and presentation as well as the ethical considerations observed during the data collection process.

3.1 Research Design

According to Sileyew (2019), a research design informs the considerations to take when executing the process of data collection. Further, the researcher shall adopt a descriptive survey research design where the aspects of e-leadership shall be studied to establish how they influence staff productivity. Descriptive survey research design is best suited to explain how e-leader communication, e-leader social skills, e-leader technology capacity and the contextual challenges of e-leadership, and how they influence staff productivity, as it helps in describing the relationship and the distribution of the variable characteristics. The selection of descriptive survey research design was informed by the need to establish any significant association between the two connected variables, e-leadership and staff productivity, as well as describing how the independent variables influenced dependent variable.

3.2 Target Population

For this study, the target population involved the administrators working at the University of Nairobi (UoN), across all the faculties. The study focused on the administration staff, who also doubled up as leaders in charge of other staff across the eleven (11) faculties of the university.

From the eleven faculties, there are over 56 (fifty-six) teaching departments spread across different campuses. Some teaching faculties have more than two administrators. In this case, there were estimated 160 administrators who are in charge of running of the university. Faculty deans and the ICT staff working at the central administrative offices were also targeted as they played key administrative roles. The total target population was therefore 175 staff (160 admins, 4 ICT officers, and 11 deans of faculties).

Table 3.1 Distribution of target population

Faculty	No. of departments teaching	Estimate no. of admins
Agriculture	4	12
Arts	4	12
Built environment and design	4	12
Business and management sciences	3	9
Education	5	15
Engineering	5	15
Law	1	2
Health sciences	14	32
Science and Technology	7	21
Social sciences	5	15
Veterinary medicine	5	15
ICT Officers	--	4
Faculty deans	11	11
Totals	**57**	**175**

Source: University of Nairobi (2022).

3.3 Sample and sampling procedures

The sampling procedure applied was proportionate random sampling. Proportional random sampling design was embraced where the administrators in each of the schools and campuses were selected randomly to participate in the study. This was done through identifying the campuses and schools, identifying the total number of admins and ICT officers in main campus, and then identifying the proportional sample size. The proportional sampling was embraced based on the total number of administrators in each campus and school.

Sample size was calculated using Yamane formula.

$$ n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} $$

Where n = sample size, N was the target population and e is the precision level (confidence level). Substituting the formula, N was 175 respondents and e of 95% which corresponds to 0.05, the following was achieved;

n. = $175/1+ 175(0.05)^2$

= 175/1.4375

=121.74, which was rounded off to the nearest number, hence the total sample size was; n= 122 administrators.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher first sought permission from the University and then research permit from NACOSTI to conduct the research. This was further followed by identifying and informing potential respondents on the intention of conducting the data collection process. After the respondents were identified, the researcher then distributed the questionnaires (either hard copies or an email link) to the respondents. The respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire

appropriately, and send back to the researcher (in case of emailed questionnaires). For the questionnaires send in hard copies, the researcher gave a period of one week to collect them.

The questionnaire were the main tool for data collection. The questionnaire had both closed- and open-ended questions. Specifically, the questionnaire had five sections, starting with demographic information where age, education level, work experience and position at the institution was captured. Second section captured e-leader communication capacity, with prompts on the extent to which electronic communication influences staff productivity at the institution. The third section covered e-leader social skills and how it influences staff productivity. Further, fourth section was on how e-leader technology capacity was associated with managing staff remotely, and whether or not it had an effect on staff productivity. The last section covered contextual challenges of e-leadership and how they influenced staff productivity.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis involved quantitative processes. For quantitative information, descriptive analysis was performed where the researcher presented in basic terms the nature, and distribution of the study variables. The descriptive statistics include mean, frequencies, averages, percentages and standard deviations. Secondly, inferential analysis was done on the quantitative data, where simple regression was conducted to establish whether the e-leadership variables had significant influence on staff productivity. In addition, the regression analysis provided coefficients that helped define the strength and influence of e-leadership on staff productivity. Quantitative information was presented using tables and graphs. The multivariate linear regression model used was as follows;

$Y = b_o + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta X_2 + \beta X_3 + \square$

Staff Productivity = constant + β1 (E-leader communication capacity) + β2 (E-leader social skills) + β3 (E-leader technology capacity) + Error term

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The chapter address the results and finding of the study, as drawn from the primary data collected. The chapter's organized as follows; introduction to the chapter, then the demographic information, then each of the independent research variable is presented as well as the dependent variable, employee productivity. Then bivariate analysis using Pearson chi-square analysis and inferential statistics at multivariate level using simple linear regression are presented. A summary of the chapter is also presented.

4.0.1 Response Rate

The study had a target sample size of 122, where 115 managed to respond positively, filling in the google form of the questionnaire send to them via email and/or WhatsApp platforms. The positive responses translated to 94.3% response rate. According to Ponto (2015), a response rate of 60% is usually considered adequate for doing quantitative analysis and interpretation of data.

4.1 Demographic Information

The summary of demographic information included period served at the institution, highest level of education, levels of management, department of operation, and the range of staff managed. The summary of the results is shown on table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Summary of Demographic Information

Variable category	Sub-Variable	Frequency	Percent
Period at the institution	2-5years	9	7.8
	6 - 10 years	40	34.7
	11 years and more	66	57.4
Highest Level of education	Diploma	2	1.7
	Graduate	25	21.7
	Masters	79	68.7
	PhD	9	7.8
Level of management	Low level Management	30	26.1
	Middle Management	78	67.8
	Senior Management	7	6.1
Department	Health Sciences	17	14.8
	Arts and Social Sciences	42	36.5
	Business	15	13.0
	Education	17	14.8
	Built Environment &Engineering	8	7.0
	Central Administration and ICT	9	7.8
	Law	4	3.5
	Others	3	2.6
Range of Staff Managed	1.0-10	84	73.0
	11-20.0	10	8.7
	21-50	13	11.3
	Over 51	8	7.0

It was established that majority of the administrators and other staffs at the institution had stayed for over eleven years, making 57.4% of the entire respondents. This was followed by 34.7% of those who had worked for between 6 and ten years at the institution. A smaller proportion of the respondents had worked for between 2-5 years, which formed 7.8% of the entire sampled

population. This implied that majority of the staff had worked for more than 10years and hence have been with the University long enough to relate with leadership and productivity at the university.

In terms of education level, majority of the respondents at 68.7% had master's degree, while 21.7% had their first undergraduate degree as their highest level of education. Similarly, only 1.7% had diploma as their highest level of education, while another 7.8% had PhD as their highest level of education. This implies that a large number of staff at University of Nairobi had university level education and can easily relate to the concepts of leadership and productivity.

On the management level context, over half of the participants (67.8%, n=78) classified themselves as in middle level management, while another 26.1% were in low level management. This means that all levels were covered in the study and this study can therefore be generalized for all staff at the institution.

It was also observed that majority of the participants at 36.5% (n=42) were from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, while another 14.8% and 13.0% were from Health sciences and Businesses respectively. There were 14.8% of the participants from the Faculty of Education and Built Environment and Engineering had a representation of 7.0% (n=8). Further, there were 7.8% (n=9) were from Central Administration and ICT. In terms of the staff managed, there were 73.0% (n=84) managing below ten staff, and another 8.7% were managing between 11 and 20 staff. There were 7.0% of the administrators who controlled over 50 staff as shown in table 4.1. The implication of that was that all departments were covered and therefore the study can be used to generalize findings across all departments.

4.2 E-Leadership

E-leadership in this study was conceptualized to be driven by three aspects; e-communication skills/capacity of leaders, E-leader social skills to interact with the other staff, and E-leader technology skills to effectively execute the assigned roles. This section explains in detail

4.2.1 E-Communication Capacity

E-leader communication capacity was one of the independent variables used to measure employee productivity in e-leadership. E-leader communication capacity was measured by aspects like hold regular online meetings to update staff, communicating electronically in different styles to different staff, listening to the staff and reasoning with them on execution of some roles, and being proactive in providing feedback to the staff among other roles as shown in tale 4.2. The summary of the responses are shown on table 4.2

Table 4.2 Summary of perception on E-leader communication capacity

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
The leadership of the university/department regularly hold on line meetings to update staff on departmental/university progress	4.22	0.935
My leaders communicate electronically in different styles to different staff via e-platforms	3.93	0.971
The leaders listen to the staff and reason with them on execution of roles	3.42	1.017
Leaders have clarity in communication, simple and straight instructions to the staff	3.77	0.911
My leaders allow remote staff to ask open-ended questions to understand their roles	3.21	1.013
My leader is proactive in providing, receiving and implementing feedback via e-technology	3.97	0.982
My leader via electronic media motivates, mentors and influences staff execution of roles	3.7	0.948

My leader invests in their staff on right verbal and non-verbal communication via e-platforms	3.64	1.156
The leader has ensured all staff have e-technology and skills to execute roles	3.22	1.269
The leader has provided all staff with equipment and resources for handling remote tasks	2.36	1.215

Key: M= mean and S.D = standard deviation

Majority of the participants agreed to a very great extent (mean of 4.22, and SD of 0.935) that the leadership of the university/department regularly held on-line meetings to update staff on departmental/university progress. Further, the mean of 3.93 and SD of 0.971 indicates that participants agreed to a moderate extent that their leaders communicate electronically in different styles to different staff via e-platforms. It was also observed that a majority of the staff agreed to a moderate extent (mean of 3.42 and SD of 1.017) that the leaders listen to the staff and reason with them on execution of roles. There was a majority of the participants who agreed to moderate extent (mean of 3.77, and SD of 0.911) that their leaders have clarity in communication, simple and straight instructions to the staff.

On the aspects of investing on staff non-verbal communication, majority of the participants agreed to a moderate extent, as shown by mean of 3.64 and SD of 1.156 that their leader invests in their staff on right verbal and non-verbal communication via e-platforms. There were a great majority of the staff who agreed to a moderate extent as shown by a mean of 3.22 that their leader has ensured all staff have e-technology and skills to execute roles. Further, there were an average of the staff disagreeing as shown by a mean of 2.36 (some extent) that their leader had provided all staff with equipment and resources for handling remote tasks.

From the findings, it is concluded that most of the staff were satisfied with how staff were handled in getting updates on works in progress or delivery of assigned roles. The overwhelming agreement among the staff indicates that the regular online meetings to update staff keeps them abreast of what is happening, and are therefore able to work as a team and in cohesion to achieve common goals. The high mean further implies that regular online meetings for updates promotes staff productivity. Further, this also implied that there was general agreement that leaders communicated effectively electronically in different styles to different staff via e-platform, hence this translated to positive staff productivity.

This further implied that at an average, most leaders would reason with their staff in promoting delivering of assigned roles, hence it promotes staff productivity. Similarly, the findings implied that most of the staff are able to effectively deliver in their roles due to clarity in communication by the leaders, and that this would promote improved staff productivity. In addition, the responses on communication by e-leaders implied that there was right communication via e-platforms which translated to improved staff productivity.

This meant that the participants agreed to some extent that the staff were probably lacking some equipment for communication on their execution of their assigned roles. Further, it shows that there are unmet needs in facilitating communication through providing necessary equipment. Similarly, it also points that there is need for the institution to invest in equipment for the staff to promote and ensure efficient electronic communication with the staff for efficient staff productivity. From the analysis on e-communication capacity, it can be concluded that leaders at University of Nairobi hold online meeting, communicate electronically with clarity. The leaders also are able to motivate and mentor employees online. However, the Leaders at UoN do not always appreciate questions online and some staff may not have the skills to use e-technology.

From the analysis, it can also be concluded that staff in UoN have not been provided with adequate equipment for effective electronic/remote working.

4.2.2 E-Leader Social Skills

The E-leader social skills were measured by leader having clear control over all staffs, leader acting as knowledge generator for staff and roles, and that the faculty/department creates electronic social platforms for bonding of staff. Further, E-leader social skills were measured by the university/department providing opportunities for trainings on social skills via electronic platforms, providing support for executing remote tasks, and acting as a liaison, connecting the staffs and their execution of their roles. Further, it was measured by the e-leader handling disagreements emanating from staff working electronically appropriately, as well as the e-leader acting as sources of information and resources for all staff. The summary of the responses from the participants were shown below in table 4.3;

Table 4.3 Summary of the perceptions on E-leader social skills

Statement	Mean	S.D
My leader has clear control over all staffs, irrespective of their diverse backgrounds	3.90	0.94
My leader acts as knowledge generator for staff and roles	3.86	0.92
My faculty/department creates electronic social platforms for bonding	2.79	1.39
The university/department provides opportunities for training on social skills through electronic platforms	3.10	1.28
My leaders' behaviors over electronic platforms provides support for executing remote tasks	3.53	1.03
My leader acts as a liaison between the staffs and their execution of their roles	3.83	0.95
The leadership handles disagreements emanating from staff working electronically appropriately	3.39	1.10
The leader acts as sources of information and resources for all staff	3.65	0.97

Key: M=mean and SD= Standard deviation

From the analysis on e-leader social skills, majority of respondents represented by a mean of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 0.9 agreed to a moderate extent that their leader had clear control over all staffs, irrespective of their diverse backgrounds. Similarly, the mean of 3.86 and the SD of 0.92 indicated that the participants agreed to a moderate extent that their leader acted as knowledge generator for staff and roles. The staff were in an agreement that their leaders were providing solutions to the tasks they were executing. On the role of faculty/department creating electronic social platforms for bonding, there was a mean of 2.79 and a SD of 1.39indicatingthat majority of the participants agreed to moderate extent the statement that the department creates electronic social platforms for bonding. Further, a majority of the participants agreed to a moderate extent to the statement that their leaders' behaviors over electronic platforms provided support for executing remote tasks (mean of 3.53 and SD 1.03). A strong majority of the participants as showed by a mean of 3.83 agreed to a moderate extent that their leader acts as a liaison, connecting the staffs and their execution of their roles.

Similarly, the mean of 3.10   and SD of 1.28 indicates that the participants agreeing to a great extent that the university/department provides opportunities for training on social skills through electronic platforms.Further, there were majority of the participants as represented by a mean of 3.39 and SD of 1.10 agreed to a moderate extent that the leadership handles disagreements emanating from staff working electronically appropriately. Further, the mean of 3.65 and SD of 0.97 is an indication that most of the participants agreed to a moderate extent that their leader acts as sources of information and resources for all staff.

From the discussion on e-leader social skills, the findings implied that the leaders had control over their staff, and that the managed staff respect and observed leadership instructions. This implied that leaders possessed supportive behavior over the electronic platforms and were willing to assist the staffs. Further implication was that staff were able to perform based on the support given by their leaders. Similarly, the findings implied that there were not many opportunities created satisfactorily for the staff to bond. In addition, the findings implied that there was a deliberate attempt by the leaders to supervise and oversee execution of roles assigned electronically to the staff.

Further, the findings on e-leader social skills implied that there was general agreement that the department/university strove to provide training and capacity building that would see improvement in performance. This meant that there was a deliberate attempt from the university leadership to handle disagreements and promote cohesion and understanding in a process to improve staff productivity. The implication of this was that leaders provided necessary information and resources that would enable staff to enhance their productivity.

4.2.3 E-Leader Technology Skills

E-leader technology skills was measured by a set of variables which included the capacity of the leader to handle staff electronically, e-leaders possessing requisite technology skills, the department having invested in technology to monitor, evaluate, and communicate tasks to the other staff. It was also measured by the presence of adequate IT tools and equipment for efficient electronic engagement with the staff, and investment in leaders to improve their capacity to respond to staff needs electronically. The summary of e-leader technology skills was presented on table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Summary of perceptions on E-leader skills

Statement	Mean	S.D
The faculty/department leaders have requisite technology skills to delegate and execute tasks effectively	3.58	1.00
Leaders with experience in handling staff electronically and remotely have easy time executing their roles	3.85	1.05
The department has invested in technology to monitor, evaluate and communicate tasks to subordinates	2.95	1.10
There is adequate IT tools/equipment for efficient electronically engaging with staff	3.04	1.20
The university/faculty has adequately invested in training leaders on ICT tools for electronic task execution	3.29	1.11
Responsive ICT communication for both e-leader and staffs are a critical factor for staff productivity	4.15	1.16
The faculty/department adequately handles ICT connectivity issues, information exchange and provides support to staff	3.63	0.98

Key: M=mean and S.D= Standard deviation

It was established that majority of the participants agreed to moderate extent as shown by a mean of 3.58 (SD of 1.00) that the faculty/department leaders have requisite technology skills to delegate and execute tasks effectively. Similarly, majority of the participants as shown by mean of 3.85 and SD of 1.05 agreed to a moderate extent that leaders with experience in handling staff electronically and remotely have easy time executing their roles. Further, the majority of the participants as shown by a mean of 2.95 and SD of 1.10 agreed to moderate extent that their department has invested in technology to monitor, evaluate and communicate tasks to subordinates.

Further, majority of the participants agreed to a moderate extent that there is adequate IT tools/equipment for efficient electronically engaging with staff (mean of 3.04 and SD 1.20). This

implies that there is need to invest in adequate IT tools and equipment to support staff electronically. In another approach, the mean of 3.29 and SD of 1.11 points to the fact that majority participants agreed to a moderate extent that the university/faculty has adequately invested in training leaders on ICT tools for electronic task execution. It was also observed that majority of the participants agreed to a great extent as shown by mean of 4.15 and a SD of 1.16 that there is responsive ICT communication for both e-leader and staffs which is critical factor for staff productivity. Similarly, the mean of 3.63 and SD of 0.98 implies that participants agreed to a moderate extent that the faculty/department adequately handles ICT connectivity issues, information exchange and provides support to staff.

From the findings on e-leader technology skills, it implied that most leaders were able to effectively use technology to delegate tasks, hence performance of the staff would not be affected by the skills to delegate the duties. The implication of this statement is that the subordinates felt that their leaders were able to effectively execute their roles based on their previous experiences. Further, it shows that experience affects performance of the staff, with more experienced leaders having likelihood of improved staff performance. The findings also point that there was need to invest in technology skills and platforms to monitor, evaluate and communicate tasks to the staff remotely. Moderate agreement on the communication indicates there are gaps to be filled in monitoring, evaluating and communicating tasks to the staff. In addition, the findings from the e-leader technology skills imply that because of training, staffs are able to effectively deliver on their roles and improve staff productivity. With an overwhelming majority agreeing to a very great extent, it implied that staffs were able to communicate effectively and solve any emerging issues, improving the overall staff productivity.

4.2.4 Employee Productivity

The employee productivity was the dependent variable, which was measured by several prompts that were measured using five-point Likert scale. Staff productivity was measured by timely delivery of the assigned roles, staff meeting the expectations of executing the assigned roles, and adequate staff motivation for executing the assigned roles. Further, staff productivity was measured by staffs having adequate social time for work-lie balance, satisfaction with the staff's amount of work delivered in a given time-frame, and the creation of a conducive environment for working. The summary of the perceptions is sown on able 4.5.

Table 4.5 Summary of perceptions on Employee Productivity

Statement	Mean	S.D
There is timely delivery on the work assigned to staff	3.63	0.79
Staffs meet the expectations in executing assigned roles	3.93	0.86
The quality of work done by remote staff is satisfactory	3.58	0.90
There is adequate staff motivation for doing assigned roles	2.79	1.32
The staff have adequate social time for work-life balance	2.94	0.99
There is satisfaction with the staffs' amount of work delivered in a given period.	2.92	1.16
The staff exchanges and communication create a conducive environment for efficient staff productivity	3.38	1.05

Key: M=mean and S.D= Standard deviation

There mean of 3.63 (and SD of 0.79) shows that the staff agreed to a great extent that there is timely delivery on the work assigned to staff. With majority of the staff agreeing to the statement, it implies that timely delivery of assigned work leads to improved staff productivity. Similarly, the mean of 3.93 indicates that majority of the staff agreeing to a greater extent that staffs meet the expectations in executing assigned roles. This points out that there was a perception that staff were

averagely delivering on their tasks (as shown by SD of 0.86), and more was needed to improve their delivery of tasks electronically. Majority of the staff agreed to a moderate extent as shown by mean of 3.58 and SD of 0.90 that the quality of work done by remote staff was satisfactory. Most of the participants as shown by mean of 2.79 and SD of 1.32 showed that majority of the staff agreed to a small extent that there is adequate staff motivation for doing assigned roles. The staff do not have adequate social time for work-life balance as show by a mean of 2.94 and a SD of 0.99, implying that the participants agreed to a low extent, that there was adequate social time for work-life balance. There is low satisfaction with the staffs' amount of work delivered in a given period as shown by a mean of 2.92 and SD of 1.16 pointing to the fact that staff agreed to low extent that There is satisfaction with the staffs' amount of work delivered in a given period. Finally, the mean of 3.38 and SD of 1.05 indicates that majority of the participants agreed to a great extent that the staff exchanges and communication create a conducive environment for efficient staff productivity.

From the data results and findings, it implied that electronic leadership was equally satisfactory in delivering staff productivity, as the staff were satisfied with the work done and delivered remotely. This implied that there was no adequate motivation to encourage staff to improve on their work productivity while working electronically or remotely. The observation from this perception was that staff were not properly motivated, hence there is need to motivate them to equally promote staff productivity. similarly, the study findings point to the fact that lack of social time for work-life balance could have an impact in the overall staff productivity. There is a need for learning institutions to also invest in giving staff adequate social time to enhance work-life balance, which promotes staff productivity. The implication of the findings on staff productivity is that more is needed to be done to improve satisfaction of staff in delivering the amount of work assigned. The

University of Nairobi has created a good platform for communication and exchange of information that promotes good working environment, and which promotes enhanced staff productivity. On the other hand, there is need for the university to invest in programs that promote work-life balance and motivation for the staff to improve their overall staff productivity.

4.3 Effect of E- leadership on employee productivity

The e-leader communication skills, social skills and technology skills were subjected to bivariate and multivariate analysis to measure the extent of influence on staff productivity. At bivariate level, Pearson chi-square analysis was used to establish if the independent variables of e-leadership had statistically significant association with the response variable, staff productivity. At multivariate level, simple linear regression was used to establish if there were statistically significant influence of the e-leader variables on staff productivity.

Pearson chi-square analysis

The summary of the results is shown in the following table 4.6;

Table 4.6 Correlation of predictor variables against staff productivity

Variable	Pearson Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) (P-value)
E-Leader communication skills	86.135	114	<0.001
E-Leader social skills average	92.997	114	<0.001
E-leader technology skills	42.132	114	<0.001

From the correlation analysis, it was established that the three independent variables had significant correlation with staff productivity. E-Leader communication skills (X^2=86.135, df=114, sig. 0.0), E-Leader social skills (X^2=92.997, df=114, sig. 0.0) and E-leader technology skills (X^2=42.132, df=114, sig. 0.0) were established to have significant correlation with staff productivity as 95% confidence interval.

Multivariate linear regression

The independent variables were subjected to multivariate linear regression, where the results are shown on the table 4.7;

Table 4.7 Model Summary for regression analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.518a	0.268	0.249	0.77448

a Predictors: (Constant), E-leader technology skills, E-Leader social skills average, E-Leader communication skills

b Dependent Variable: Staff productivity

From the regression model summary, it was established that the three predictor variables of E-leader technology skills, E-Leader social skills average, E-Leader communication skills were associated with a positive variation of 26.8% change in staff productivity. The combined influence of the three independent variables was a change in staff productivity by 26.8%.

Table 4.8 ANOVA Summary[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.411	3	8.137	13.566	<0.000[b]
	Residual	66.58	111	0.6		
	Total	90.991	114			

a Dependent Variable: Staff productivity

b Predictors: (Constant), E-leader technology skills, E-Leader social skills average, E-Leader communication skills

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) model was established to be significant (p-value <0. 0.000), indicating that the model of fit was suitable for the data, and that the three independent variables combined had a statistically significant influence on the dependent variable, staff productivity.

Table 4.9 Regression Coefficients

The summary of regression coefficients are shown on table 4.9 below;

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.778	0.285		6.241	<0.001
E-Leader communication skills	0.426	0.081	0.483	5.291	<0.001
E-Leader social skills	0.405	0.089	0.459	4.533	<0.001
E-leader technology skills	0.384	0.08	0.438	4.8	<0.001

a Dependent Variable: Staff productivity

From the simple linear regression, it was established that the three independent variables of E-leader technology skills, E-Leader social skills average, E-Leader communication skills, had statistically significant positive effect on staff productivity. For instance, e-leader communication skills with significant value of 0.00 at 95% confidence level was established to influence staff productivity. Similarly, e-leader social skills variable (sig. Value 0.00, CI 95%) was established to have statistically significant influence on staff productivity, the same as e-leader technology skills (sig. value 0.00, CI 95%). The three independent variables were therefore established to significantly influence staff productivity.

Based on multivariate linear regression model below;

$Y = b_o + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta X_2 + \beta X_3 + \square$

Staff Productivity = constant + β1 (E-leader communication capacity) + β2 (E-leader social skills) + β3 (E-leader technology capacity) + Error term

The coefficients for E-leader communication capacity) was 0.426; for E-leader social skills was 0.405; and for E-leader technology capacity was 0.384. Therefore, the model generated is as follows;

Staff Productivity = 1.778+ 0.426 (E-leader communication capacity) + 0.405(E-leader social skills) + 0.384*E-leader technology capacity + □

This further meant that a unit increase in e-leader communication capacity was associated with 0.426 times increase in staff productivity. Similarly, a unit increase in e-leader social skills was associated with 0.405 times increase in staff productivity. For a unit increase in e-leader technology capacity, there was an increase of staff productivity by 0.384 times.

4.4. Discussion of Findings

The study was assessing the influence of e-leadership on staff productivity, with the case study of University of Nairobi. The findings were that e-leader technology skills had statistically significant correlation with staff productivity. Further, at the regression level, e-Leader communication skills were also established to have significant influence on staff productivity. It was therefore concluded that e-leader communication skills were significantly correlated and influenced staff productivity at the institution. There were other studies that had similar and related findings. For instance, DasGupta (2018) study, a literature review on e-Leadership, established that effective communication, technology disparity, and differences in technology proficiency among the virtual team members, were some of key determinants of e-leadership success, and in extension, staff productivity. Further, findings by Onyemaechi et al. (2018) indicated that there is a significant shift from the traditional leadership approaches to modern leadership styles like e-leadership which advocates for more skills and changes on leadership practices, especially on communication

approaches. The findings by Van Wart et al. (2019) also confirm that socializing influences communication skills, which in turn promotes team building and consequently change management, promoting effective e-leadership and staff performance. Wang et al. (2019) also established that staff productivity under e-leadership was a function of e-communication, e-social skills, and e-technology skills among other skills like change management and trustworthiness.

E-leader technology skills were found to have statistically significant correlation with staff productivity. From the regression analysis, it was established that technology skills strongly influenced staff productivity. It was therefore concluded that e-leader technology skills had statistically significant influence on staff productivity. The study had similar findings compared to other studies done by Alfehaid and Mohamed (2019) whose study findings showed significant association between virtual team members' performance, and the use of virtual technology to execute roles. This study findings are also similar to the findings by Carreño (2014), who emphasized how technology can be used by leaders in education (teachers) to star performance. This current study findings are also similar to those by Torre and Sarti (2020) who established that awareness to e-leadership had increased and the pervasiveness of technologies was playing a significant role in the change of traditional to modern, especially e-leadership. This current study findings indicate that technology is increasingly becoming a key component of electronic leadership across different sectors.

E-Leader social skills was established to have statistically significant correlation with staff productivity. This meant that possessing e-leader social skills was positively associated with improved staff performance. At the regression level, e-leader social skills were established to have

statistically significant influence on staff productivity. It was therefore concluded that e-leader social skills had statistically significant influence on staff productivity. The findings were similar to other studies on the influence of e-leader social skills on staff performance. For instance, study by Wolor et al. (2020) established that social skills and other social factors like work motivation, work-life balance and e-leadership were associated with staff performance. Similar study by Contreras et al. (2020) also established positive correlations of staff performance and e-leadership. This study findings also relate to Kahai (2020) observations who noted that e-leadership is challenged by separation by space and time, hence establishment of close working bond through alternative ways was considered a significant step towards improving staff performance.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the summary of the entire study, presents the conclusion of the study, as well as the recommendations from the findings. The recommendations are categorized into those for policy implementation and those for future studies.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The study was led by one main objective; to explore the role of electronic leadership on employee productivity at the University of Nairobi. In achieving that objective, the researcher established three independent variables, of E-leader technology skills, E-Leader social skills average, E-Leader communication skills, and how they influenced staff productivity. The summary of the findings is presented below;

Most of the administrators had served for over ten years, underscoring their experience in understanding staff productivity. Further, a majority number of the staff had masters' level of education as their highest education achieved, implying that majority had knowledge on the e-leadership and staff productivity. Similarly, majority of the staffs were in the middle level management, overseeing at least some employees under them. The staffs were also spread across different departments.

It was established that the leadership of the university/department regularly held on-line meetings to update staff on departmental/university progress. It was also established that leaders listen to the staff and reason with them on execution of roles. In addition, staff felt that their leader had not provided all staff with adequate equipment and resources for handling tasks electronically.

At bivariate level, it was also established that E-leader technology skills had statistically significant correlation with staff productivity. Further, at the regression level, e-Leader communication skills were also established to have significant influence on staff productivity. It was therefore concluded that e-leader communication skills were significantly correlated and influenced staff productivity at the institution.

The study established that the faculty/department leaders have requisite technology skills to delegate and execute tasks effectively. Majority of the participants indicated that their department has invested in technology to monitor, evaluate and communicate tasks to subordinates. Similarly, university/faculty was found to have adequately invested in training leaders on ICT tools for electronic task execution, hence targeting specific interventions towards enhanced staff productivity

The study established that the participants agreed that their leader acted as knowledge generator for staff roles and tasks. Majority of the participants agreed to moderate extent the statement that the department creates electronic social platforms for bonding. Similarly, a significant majority of the staff indicated that their leader acts as a liaison, connecting the staffs and their execution of their role

E-leader technology skills were found to have statistically significant correlation with staff productivity. From the regression analysis, it was established that technology skills strongly influenced staff productivity. It was therefore concluded that e-leader technology skills had statistically significant influence on staff productivity.

E-Leader social skills was established to have statistically significant correlation with staff productivity. This meant that possessing e-leader social skills was positively associated with

improved staff performance. At the regression level, e-leader social skills were established to have statistically significant influence on staff productivity. It was therefore concluded that e-leader social skills had statistically significant influence on staff productivity.

5.2 Conclusion of the Study

The study sought to explore the role of electronic leadership on employee productivity at the University of Nairobi. In this case, the researcher sought to answer the research question, on what is the effect of e-leadership on the staff productivity at the University of Nairobi. E-leadership in this study was summarized into three key elements; E-communication skills/capacity of leaders, E-leader social skills to interact with the other staff, and E-leader technology skills to effectively execute the assigned roles.

On e-communication, I can conclude that it is critical for the institution to give frequent online updates on the delivery of assigned roles. Leaders ought to have significant communication skills that when used in right use promote team cohesion and consequently enhanced staff productivity. In in this study, I find e-leader communication skills to have a statistically significant influence on staff productivity. From the regression coefficients, I can confidently conclude that communication skills have the largest significant influence on staff productivity for electronic leadership. I have established that electronic leader communication skills work to foster effective communication of tasks, policies, commands/instructions and other information meant for effective execution of roles, affecting staff productivity in the process.

On E-leader social skills, I established that it had a significant influence on staff productivity. Socialization serves to create team work and bond among staff, making it easy for staff to interact and share knowledge/ideas. I established that an institution creating opportunities for bonding promotes staff cohesion as well as teamwork, and when workplace disagreements arise, solving them becomes relatively easier in a cohesive team. Electronic leaders therefore ought to have basic social skills like bonding with other staff, passing information in an amicable approach, hence enhancing staff productivity. In my study, I conclude that electronic leader social skills play a critical role in promoting staff productivity.

On the e-leader technology skills, I conclude that electronic leaders having basic technology skills enhance execution of roles. Electronic leaders having capacity to operate computers and other basic communication equipment like telephones/phones, addressing electronic mails, facilitating virtual meetings and executing tasks electronically create a competent leader and staff. I therefore conclude that electronic leader technology skills are significant predictors of staff productivity at institutions of higher education like the University of Nairobi.

5.3 Recommendations from the Study

From the study findings, it was established that E-leader technology skills, E-Leader social skills and E-Leader communication skills were all significant predictors of staff productivity. From the findings, the following was recommended; that learning institutions need to invest in technology skills of the administrators and other staff to adapt efficiently to the electronic leadership, which is more flexible for the staff. Secondly, the university and other learning institutions need to invest through capacity building, seminars and trainings to improve the e-leader communication and social skills of staff to improve staff productivity.

5.4 Recommendations for further research

This research did not capture all possible independent variables for e-leadership that could be contextualized and conceptualized to influence staff productivity. Therefore, future research on other variables is required to establish how other related independent e-leader variables influence staff productivity. Similarly, more studies are needed for how learning institutions are adapting to technology developments and improving staff productivity, and the need for staff working electronically and remotely.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTION LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

Telegrams: "Varsity",	P.O. Box 30197-00100, G.P.O.
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Our Ref: **D64/7927/2017**   October 28, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: <u>INTRODUCTION LETTER: MARTHA SERAH LANKISA</u>

The above named is a registered Master of Science in Human Resource Management Student at the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences, University of Nairobi. She is conducting research on: **"The Role of E-Leadership in Employee Productivity: A Case Study of the University of Nairobi."**

The purpose of this letter is to kindly request you to assist and facilitate the student with necessary data which forms an integral part of the Project.

The information and data required is needed for academic purposes only and will be treated in **Strict-Confidence**.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

<u>PHILIP MUKOLA (MR.)</u>
FOR: ASSOCIATE DEAN, GBS & R
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

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APPENDIX II: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

The following form seeks to collect the required research information on the Role of e-leadership in employee productivity: a case study of the University of Nairobi.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. For how long have you worked in the institution   (Tick   what applies)

   Less than 2 years   [….]   2-5years   [….]

   6 - 10 years   [….]   11 years and more   [….]

2. What is your highest completed level of Educational?

   Diploma   […..]   Graduate   [….]

   Masters   […..]   PhD   […..]

3. What level of management do you currently occupy at the institution?

   Senior Management   [….] Middle Management […..] Low level Management […..]

4. Faculty: …………………………………………………………………………….

5. Number of staff you manage: …………………………………………………………

SECTION B: E-LEADER COMMUNICATION CAPACITY

The subsequent statement will be utilizing Likert scale of 1-5 where 1 is "Not at all", 2 is "To a small extent", 3 is "to some extent", 4 is "to a moderate extent" and 5 is "to a great extent."

6. Kindly specify the extent to which you agree with the statements below on E-leader communication skills (tick the right section) by demonstrating your degree of agreement.

Statement	Not at all	To a small extent	To moderate extent	To great extent	To a very great extent
The leadership of the university/department regularly hold on line meetings to update staff on departmental/university progress					
My leaders communicate electronically in different styles to different staff via e-platforms					

The leaders listen to the staff and reason with them on execution of roles					
Leaders have clarity in communication, simple and straight instructions to the staff					
My leaders allow remote staff to ask open-ended questions to understand their roles					
My leader is proactive in providing, receiving and implementing feedback via e-technology					
My leader via electronic media motivates, mentors and influences staff execution of roles					
My leader invests in their staff on right verbal and non-verbal communication via e-platforms					
The leader has ensured all staff have e-technology and skills to execute roles					
The leader has provided all staff with equipment and resources for handling remote tasks					

Any other comment on how e-leader communication influence staff productivity?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION C: E-LEADER SOCIAL SKILLS

7.The subsequent statement will be utilizing Likert scale of 1-5 where 1 is "Not at all", 2 is "To a small extent", 3 is "to some extent", 4 is "to a moderate extent" & 5 is "to a great extent."

Kindly specify the extent to which you agree with the statements below on E-leader social skills (tick the right section) by demonstrating your degree of agreement.

Statement	Not at all	To a small extent	To moderate extent	To great extent	To a very great extent

My leader has clear control over all staffs, irrespective of their diverse backgrounds					
My leader acts as knowledge generator for staff and roles					
My faculty/department creates electronic social platforms for bonding					
The university/department provides opportunities for trainings on social skills through electronic platforms					
My leaders' behaviors over electronic platforms provides support for executing remote tasks					
My leader acts as a liaison, connecting the staffs and their execution of their roles					
The leadership handles disagreements emanating from staff working electronically appropriately					
The leader acts as sources of information and resources for all staff					

Any other comment on how e-leader social skills' influence staff productivity?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION D: E-LEADER TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

The subsequent statement will be utilizing Likert scale of 1-5 where 1 is "Not at all", 2 is "To a small extent", 3 is "to some extent", 4 is "to a moderate extent" and 5 is "to a great extent."

8. Kindly specify the extent to which you agree with the statements below on E-leader technology skills (tick the right section) by demonstrating your degree of agreement.

Statement	Not at all	To a small extent	To moderate extent	To great extent	To a very great extent
The faculty/department leaders have requisite technology skills to delegate and execute tasks effectively					
Leaders with experience in handling staff electronically and remotely have easy time executing their roles					
The department has invested in technology to monitor, evaluate and communicate tasks to subordinates					
There is adequate IT tools/equipment for efficient electronically engaging with staff					
The university/faculty has adequately invested in training leaders on ICT tools for electronic task execution					
Responsive ICT communication for both e-leader and staffs are a critical factor for staff productivity					
The faculty/department adequately handles ICT connectivity issues, information exchange and provides support to staff					

Any other comment on how e-leader technological skills' influence staff productivity?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION E: STAFF PRODUCTIVITY

The subsequent statement will be utilizing Likert scale of 1-5 where 1 ="Not at all", 2 ="To a small extent", 3 is "to some extent", 4 is "to a moderate extent" & 5 is "to a great extent."

9. Kindly specify the extent to which you agree with the statements below on staff productivity (tick the right section) by demonstrating your degree of agreement.

Statement	Not at all	To a small extent	To moderate extent	To great extent	To a very great extent
There is timely delivery on the work assigned to staff					
Staffs meet the expectations in executing assigned roles					
The quality of work done by remote staff is satisfactory					
There is adequate staff motivation for doing assigned roles					
The staff have adequate social time for work-life balance					
There is satisfaction with the staffs' amount of work delivered in a given period.					
The staff exchanges and communication create a conducive environment for efficient staff productivity					

Any other comment on the role of e-leadership and performance of staff?

………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………..END………

APPENDIX III: RESEARCH BUDGET

S/N	ITEMS	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	TOTAL COST(KSH)
1	Stationery	Two rims of photocopy papers Computer accessories Other writing Materials	5	15,000
2	Research Assistants	Research assistant @ 1500 Ksh per day for 10 days	5	70,000
3	Referencing	Internet		10,000
4	Support services	i) Secretarial services ii) Binding services ii) Consultations for data analysis		15,000
5	Contingency	10% of total cost		10,000
6	**Total**			**120,000**

APPENDIX IV: WORK PLAN

	PHASE	TIME (Months)	2018-2022
A	Development of proposal/ approval	12 months	Sep 2021 - Aug 2022
B	Research tools piloting	1 months	Sept 2022
C	Data collection	1 months	Oct 2022
D	Data analysis and Interpretation	1 months	Oct-Nov 2022
E	Report writing	1 months	Nov 2022
F	Journal Publishing	1 months	November 2022
G	Defense and Presentation	1 month	November 2022
H	Presentation & Graduation	1 month	December 2022