STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE

OF STANDARD GROUP PLC

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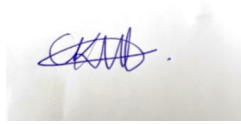
A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED IN PARTIAL

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented in any other institution.
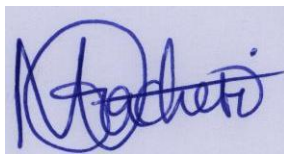
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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to both my parents. My father, the late Dickson Mwendwa Mwaniki believed in my mother so much that a few days before his demise he told my mother to ensure that his kids get educated. His memories gave me the nourishment and focus to fulfill the dream he had for his little girl. He's the person I will always aspire to be. May his gentle and loving soul rest in peace.

To my mother, Grace Mutuo Mwendwa, my hero, my superwoman whose unendless love, unselfish support, sacrifices and prayers have made it possible for me to complete this work. Thanks to the woman who taught me to take responsibility for my actions and perform life's tasks to the best of my ability and without complain.

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Secondly, I wish to thank my friend, Mathiu, my mentor and guide who has put his valuable experience and wisdom at my disposal. Thank you for constantly serving as a support system and a source of my motivation. Thank you for the love and peace of mind. I am truly thankful for having you in my life.

Last but not least I am very grateful to GOD ALMIGHTY for without his grace and blessings this work would not have been possible.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BSC   : Balanced Scorecard

KTN   **:** Kenya Television Network

SME   : Small and Medium Enterprises

SPSS   : Statistical Package for Social Sciences

TV   **:** Tele Vision

UN   : United Nations

ABSTRACT

The business environment in which the organizations operate is volatile and dynamic thus requiring strong strategic leadership skills and knowledge to manage the business. The art of development of an organization's strategic direction, control, and capabilities that are geared towards achieving its goal and objectives is a strategic leadership function. Media houses in Kenya are currently facing unprecedented competition between the various organizations, which has compelled Standard Group plc to adopt different strategies to enhance performance. Strategic leadership practices are one of the key strategies adopted but it has not been empirically established whether this has a significant effect on their performance. The general objective of the study was to establish the effect of strategic leadership practices on performance of Standard group plc in Kenya. This study was based on two theories, strategic leadership theory as well as path-goal leadership theory. The research adopted a case study approach and an interview guide was used for collection of data. Content analysis was used to analyze data which was qualitative in nature. The study established that Standard Group Plc adopted the following strategic leadership practices setting strategic direction, core competencies, training and development programs, organisational culture, autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership style, laissez-faire leadership style and bureaucratic leadership. Standard Group Plc found it necessary to use these practices in order to achieve business objectives and to successfully thrive in a dynamic environment. Strategic leadership strategies have been proven to be successful in creating and strengthening the connection amongst workers by fostering a sense of shared purpose and similar values among those who are working toward the same objectives. Increasing the pooling of money and resources to invest in technology and innovation would help Standard Group Plc enhance staff productivity while also lowering operating expenses. The Standard Group Plc will be able to provide value-added services that will meet the changing demands of its clients, resulting in increased customer attraction.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Strategic leadership and understanding are required to run the firm in today's turbulent and dynamic market climate (Abashe, 2021). The leaders through elaborate leadership skills develop strategic direction and controls within the organizations to aid in directing the business. Strategic leadership has emerged as a critical predictor of a company's competitiveness and profitability. Customers and employees are more satisfied with companies that have strong strategic leadership, and company operations are more successful. Well thought out and proper strategy enhances and boosts the performance of the business by identifying trends and opportunities in the future and helps create a vision as well as direction for the whole firm (Jooste 2021).

This research is based on two leadership theories: strategic leadership and path-goal leadership. Strategic leadership theory as pioneered by Finkelstein and Hambrick (1996) holds that an organization's successes as well as values are a result of its leaders' efforts. Top managers' strategic decisions, for example, would have an impact on the organization's success in the long run. Path-goal leadership theory as founded by Evans (1970) focuses on the leader's role in motivating followers towards the achievement of an organization's goal. The theory is results- focused and equally strategic leadership practices are results-focused. There exists a linkage between path-goal theory as well as strategic leadership practices since they both focus on results. The theory is in support of the argument that strategic leadership practices influences organizational performance.

This research is based on the argument that strategic leadership practices have become a key driver in Standard Group Plc. performance. Since its inception in 1902, the Standard group plc had faced very little competition, since they had always been the market leaders in terms of following and innovation. This however came under threat when competition became more apparent and they had to find other ways to ensure they enhance their performance and sustain competitive advantage over their competitors (Kimani, 2021). In Kenya, the media industry has a significant impact on economic growth. PwC (2021) report holds that the total entertainment and media expenditure in Kenya exceeds US$3 billion annually and this represents 4.9% of the Kenyan GDP.

1.1.1 Strategic Leadership Practices

Taking strategic leadership actions in order to accomplish an organization's goals and objectives, according to Bakar and Mahmood, requires making decisions and implementing corrective measures (2014). Generally speaking, it refers to the series of choices that lead to the design and execution of plans that are intended to aid in the fulfillment of organizational goals (Pearce & Robinson, 2008). Strategic leadership practice is the leader's ability of anticipating, maintaining flexibility, thinking strategically and collaborating in implementing changes creating a stable future for the company (Serfontein, 2010).

Strategic leadership practices are crucial since they are used in shaping the formation of a strategic intention that has a direct impact on the successful strategic practices used by a company. Such practices empower organizational leaders in influencing their following to effectively accomplish the goals as well as company objectives (Omar, 2018). The failure of an organization is caused by a lack of leadership, which is the result of the leaders' inability to sell the vision of the organization to their followers, as

well as their inability to persuade them to have a personal attachment to the organization and their inability to earn the loyalty of the organization's employees (Kirimi & Minja, 2010).

Strategic leadership practices have been operationalized differently by various scholars. According to Ireland and Hitt (2005), strategic leadership tactics include identifying the firm's objective and vision, exploiting and preserving organizational capabilities, developing human resources, selecting an acceptable culture, emphasizing ethics, and putting strategic controls in place. Strategic leadership practices, according to Boal and Hooijberg (2000), are concerned with making strategic decisions, imagining the future and communicating it, developing key competencies and capabilities, developing organizational structures, controls, and processes, selecting and developing future leaders, maintaining an appropriate organizational culture, and infusing ethical value systems into the organization. Given this, the study seeks to focus on the following critical strategic leadership practices identified as strategic direction determination, development of organizational capacities, emphasizing ethical practices, development of strategic controls and maintain an organizational culture that is effective.

1.1.2 Organization Performance

Huang (2018) describes performance as entailing attainment of goals that an organization sets out to achieve. It entails an organization's ability of attaining its goal through efficient and effective utilization of it resources (Daft & Marcic, 2013). Bharadwaj, Chauhan and Raman (2015) believe that an organization's performance is a complex relationship with the following seven criteria: efficiency, reliability, productivity, effectiveness, quality of work, creativity and profitability. Performance is therefore closely linked to the achievement of all the seven criteria, which can be

considered as performance goals. Even though there is no commonly agreed upon meaning of performance, an organization ought to have objectives and measure all outcomes based on the set objectives.

Organization performance is an important measure which helps determine the productivity, organizational efficiency and competence of a company. It can be thought of as a measure of how efficiently and effectively resources have been utilised to produce the output of items that customers as well as society require in the longer term (Bain, 2016). Organization performance helps show the profitability of the firm which is measured with income and expense. Promoting organization performance is a vital task for business managers because a profitable business has the ability to survive (Chakravarthy, 2016).

Organization performance cannot be measured by any single index and this has resulted to reluctance in using both monetary as well as non-monetary performance measures of a business organization (Chakravarthy, 2016). Prior to Kaplan and Norton's 1992 Balanced Scorecard (BSC), researchers routinely utilized the BSC to evaluate performance. In order to assess the company's performance, the balanced scorecard uses the company's aim, vision, and strategy. For measuring the company's total performance, it's a measure. It involves the financial factor, customer factor, internal processes and learning and development (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Because it is widely recognized as a performance measure, the balance scorecard will be utilized in this research.

1.1.3 Standard Group Plc.

The Standard Group Plc. is one of the leading media houses in Kenya. It was founded as Kenya's pioneer media house in 1902 and enjoyed monopoly for close to 50 years.

After years of being solely involved in print business, Standard Group plc management decided to venture into broadcast in 1996, with the birthing of Kenya Television Network (Kimani, 2018). The broadcast section of Standard Group plc now boasts four TV stations, with Kenya's only 24-hour news channel, KTN News and three radio stations. The print section has also grown tremendously and now has two newspapers and three monthly publications. In 2010 the Standard Digital was launched. This was a welcome move since there was a buzz about the digital world. This started with the launching of the Standard Digital website which since 2012, has been the number one news website in Kenya (Alexa, 2019).

Having gone through stable periods, the business is currently facing unprecedented competition between the various organizations which has compelled Standard group Plc. to adopt different strategies to enhance performance. The formulation of business units was done purposefully to have each business segment focus and drive key competitive advantages identified by the firm for a comeback positioning in the market. The firm has experienced tremendous changes in the recent past triggered by new entrants, the introduction of new technologies and innovations. If a firm wants to stay competitive in the market, it must strengthen important strategic leadership processes in order to produce strategic direction and maintain controls in line with the changing business environment, according to the corporation (Mburu, 2019).

In terms of organization performance, The Standard Group plc. has proved itself as one of the leading media houses in Kenya with the Newspaper being ranked as the number two newspaper in Kenya in terms of readership. While also maintaining the second position in broadcast with KTN being ranked the second best TV station in Kenya and KTN News being ranked as the third TV station in Kenya, according to Geopoll (2019).

The Standard Digital is and has been the number one website in the country for seven years running, according to PwC (2019).

1.2 Research Problem

The art of development of an organization's strategic direction, control, and capabilities that are geared towards achieving its goal and objectives is a strategic leadership function (Fred, 2011). However, despite these strategies, most businesses still struggle with the dynamism of the business environment such as new and evolving products, expanding markets, and advanced technologies (Gathungu & Mwangi, 2012). Hambrick and Cannella (2009) have searched for the current requirements of organizations' and established that strategic leadership practice is required by these leaders to be able to lead and to manage the challenges that arise from the dynamic environments. To be able to react appropriately to issues relating to performance, a company needs such leadership (Pearce & Robinson, 2011). Several academics have shown that these strategies may be used to improve an organization's performance (Kirimi & Minja, 2010; Pearce & Robinson, 2011).

Media houses in Kenya are currently facing unprecedented competition between the various organizations, which has compelled Standard Group plc. to adopt different strategies to enhance performance. Strategic leadership practices are one of the key strategies adopted but it has not been empirically established whether this has a significant effect on their performance. These institutional problems include an inability to effectively coordinate policy, strategy, management and marketing operations as well as an inability to effectively coordinate the departments within SMG (Mburu, 2019). In order to address the aforementioned issues, SMG need strategic leaders who are capable of thinking strategically, governing and managing organizational processes in a way

that increases the firm's competitive edge. By implementing balanced scorecards and shamrock organizational structures at SMG, the company has been able to increase employee morale, control external threats and pressures and regulate internal processes, as well as find new opportunities in the market.

Strategic leadership and performance have been studied in a variety of circumstances, both worldwide and locally, but the findings cannot be generalized since they were performed in a variety of contexts. Serfontein (2010), for example, looked at the impact of strategic leadership on the operational strategy and performance of South African commercial businesses. According to the findings of this research, commercial organizations in South Africa may profit from strong strategic leadership techniques, despite the chaotic and uncertain environment in which they operate. Noor's work, "Strategic Leadership on Commitment: An Empirical Banking in Indonesia," was given that title (2015). According to the findings of this study, organizational commitment is positively impacted by training, culture, and ethical conduct. Because these studies were done in a diverse setting, their conclusions cannot be applied to all Kenyan businesses.

Locally, Ogechi (2016) addressed the strategic leadership correlation and firm performance among SMEs in Kenya and found out that SMEs with strategic leaders outperformed those without strategic leaders. Kabetu, and Iravo (2018) addressed the relationship between strategic leadership and performance at UN-Habitat and revealed that strategic direction communication, core competencies adoption and human capital development greatly affect performance of UN-Habitat in Kenya. Omar (2018) investigated the effect of strategic leadership on the performance of Kenyan manufacturing firms, with a particular emphasis on Zenko Kenya Limited. According

to the findings, knowledge management, resources and competences, vital work processes, and information and communications technology (ICT) are significant indicators of performance. This is the setting in which the research tries to emphasize the problem of organizational performance in the communication business from a strategic leadership perspective. As a result, the goal of this research is to answer the question; Do strategic leadership techniques have any impact on the performance of Standard Group plc. in Kenya?

1.3 Research Objective

The objective of this study is to establish the effect of strategic leadership practices on performance of Standard group plc in Kenya

1.4 Value of the Study

There may be ramifications for both strategic and path-goal leadership theories as a consequence of this study's findings. This research will bring a better strategic leadership understanding and its influence on organization performance. The research may also serve as a starting point for potential research into the relationship between strategic leadership and organization performance.

Communication firms can gain from the study and enforce best practices in strategic leadership as well as in understanding factors influencing strategic leadership organizational performance. Findings will avail opportunities for the communication leaders to assess their strategic leadership practices with industry competitors within Kenya, which will be useful in identifying the limitations and strengths of their strategic leadership practices.

In addition, policymakers should concentrate on policies that support and preserve excellent strategic leadership practices, which will improve the performance of Kenyan

communication enterprises. The research will aid in the improvement of policy deliberations in this area. The policy changes may be important in terms of strengthening guidance on how to maximize organization performance and the efficacy of strategic leadership actions in order to increase their performance for the economy's benefit.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Research and literature linked to strategic leadership practices and their link to organizational success are examined in this part in detail. This review examines the research's theories, highlights the gaps, and pinpoints the inconsistencies in the empirical research.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

This research will be based on two theories: strategic leadership theory as well as path-goal leadership theory.

2.2.1 Strategic Leadership Theory

House and Baetz were the forerunners of the concept in this country (1979). The article's writers claim that strategic leadership may help business executives establish and mend the reasons for a company's continuing existence. Competition and higher-than-average revenues may be attained via leadership that develops and leads mission development and strategic actions for the creation of strategies. For strategic leaders, the creation of a clear goal and vision is critical to influencing how their companies are seen by the rest of the world. In accordance with this notion, organizations are formed in order to achieve certain objectives. The ability to motivate and inspire personnel to effectively contribute to the accomplishment of previously agreed-upon goals and objectives resides in the hands of leaders.

The goal of strategic leaders is to promote a consistent vision, purpose, and set of values to their members, which they do by establishing a compelling vision and knowing their

goals from every meeting with their followers. Providing followers with a feeling of significance and challenge is how these leaders steer their flock of followers. They endeavor to foster the spirit of commitments and teamwork amongst the followers. Transformational leaders inspire their members to be innovative and creative. New ideas are encouraged and corrections are not made to the members publicly and on such occasions, they focus on what is the problem rather than blames (Barine & Minja, 2011).

Leadership is seen as a catalyst for good development in the followers, who are encouraged to watch out for each other's and the group's well-being (Warri, 2012). Strategic leadership's main constituents include awakening, inspirational, envisioning, and redesigning. Members and organizations benefit greatly from the leadership of these leaders. As stated in the article, the leader's character and ability to create changes via visions and objectives has a direct impact on the workers' expectations, as well as their desire to be a part of the organization (Barine & Minja, 2011, p.26). Accordingly, it's relevant to the present study since it explains the theoretically predicted link between strategic direction and business performance. The theory has been criticized for not providing a basis of identifying strategic leaders (Warri, 2012).

2.2.2 Path-Goal Leadership Theory

The theory was first suggested by Evans (1970), and it was further studied by House (1980). (1971). The notion is built on the recognition of a leader's style and mannerisms that are most appropriate for an employee as well as the work environment in order to achieve objectives (House, 1974). The aim is to rise employee motivation, to empower them, and keep them satisfied for them to become productive. Expectancy theory is based on Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, in which a human acts based on the idea

that the act will give a certain consequence and how appealing that result is to the individual.

Path-goal leaders, according to Dixon and Hart (2010), incentivize and reward their subordinates when they help them reach their objectives. The theory enables the determination of the appropriate direction useful to the staff and the institution. Malik (2012) stated that it has a role in predicting the behavior of the leader which motivates followers and has a linage to improved organizational performance. Implementing the theory improves the motivation of followers through clarification of the paths which improve performance. Strategic leadership practice has been linked to a substantial positive improvement in organizational performance by encouraging others to utilize the same path.

The relevance of the theory is that it focuses on the leader's role in motivating followers towards the achievement of an organization's goal. The theory is results- focused and equally strategic leadership practices are results-focused. Path-goal theory and strategic leadership techniques have a strong connection since they both emphasize outcomes. The theory is in support of the argument that strategic leadership practice influences organizational performance. According to Northouse (2013), strategic leaders are unable to articulate how they determine the level of development of their subordinates in a task context and then adopt the proper leadership style for the situation at hand.

2.3 Strategic Leadership Practices

Strategic leadership practice is required of leaders when dealing with environmental challenges (Hitt et al., 2010). It is also crucial for organizations when dealing with the development of the organization's vision, mission, strategy, and culture (Gill, 2010). According to Kirimi and Minja (2010), in order to accomplish their objectives, leaders

must blend management, strategic, and visionary leadership. The dimensions of strategic leadership practices are discussed in this section.

One of the practices required is determining strategic direction. This involves the development of a long-term company vision. According to Mutia (2015), the process of selecting direction includes the formulation of the organization's purpose and vision, the establishment of goals and objectives, and the formulation of a strategic plan. According to Ireland and Hitt (2010), the strategic leader is responsible for determining the long-term strategic direction of the organization. In this study, strategic direction has been operationalized into strategic intent, vision statement, mission statement and objectives.

Development of human capital is a crucial strategic leadership practice. It is accredited that no firm or company has the ability to conduct operations without the help of knowledgeable, skilled and talented employees (Stowell, 2016). According to McIsaac et al., this includes the skills, knowledge, talents, and individual characteristics that contribute to the creation of value in a company's employees (2013) It is critical for every company leader to consider the firm from the perspective of the human capital it employs in order to succeed in today's business climate.

Core competencies in a nutshell are the capabilities serving as a source of competitive advantage or edge for a business over its competitors. During the course of competition, the company's competitive actions and answers are always being re-evaluated (Hitt et al., 2013). Firms learn and reconfigure their skills on a constant basis, resulting in core competences that are used to generate a competitive edge in the marketplace. The ability to use core talents involves distributing resources throughout the firm, which is a function that effective strategic leaders play. According to Lear (2012), the most

successful core talents are those that are based on intangible resources since they are less evident when compared to employees' knowledge and abilities than physical resources.

An organizational culture ought to encourage strategic thinking and with this it will be able to deal with the challenges that arise from shared assumption of the core mission (that stipulates the culture of an organization) which can restrict both the strategy and the vision of the company (Goldman & Casey, 2010). The development of a culture that promotes strategic thinking is an essential effort that relies on personal, interpersonal and organizational resources and is therefore strongly influenced by the executive. Schneider et al. (2013) indicate that theoretical literature on organizational culture is abundant of debates about the impact that the founder and senior managers have on the culture of the organization though only a few empirical studies.

2.4 Measures of Organization Performance

The balanced scorecard developed by Kaplan and Norton (1992) has long been used in performance evaluation research. The balanced scorecard establishes performance metrics that are based on the purpose, vision, and corporate strategy of the organization. It is used to evaluate the organization's general performance. It encompasses the financial side of the organization, which determines the financial consequences of the organization's varied decisions. Another important issue to consider is customer pleasure. It emphasizes on the customer as well as the market, and it assesses key success criteria unique to these groupings. Another important statistic is internal procedures. It finds the high-performing business processes within the company. Lastly, a balanced scorecard stresses learning and growth, that are both important for a company's long-term success (Kaplan & Norton, 1996). Because it is well

acknowledged as a performance measure, the balance scorecard will be utilized in this research.

Stowell (2014) suggests that financial performance is a measure of revenue growth which shows the leader's ability to attract the necessary finances to sustain the efficiency of the program. The operational cost and return on investments should be on monitoring. Organizations are required to increase revenue and ensure sustainability of their service offerings. In this study the respondent would be implored on how they are satisfied with the effort made by strategic leaders toward revenue growth in the organization.

Internal focus is related to the organization's effectiveness. To understand performance, it is crucial to appreciate the goals and strategies of the business and how effective they are. Effectiveness denotes to the degree by which a firm moves in achieving its mission and goals. It is indicators include formulated strategy with clear vision, mission, strategic objectives and feedback system for evaluations. Organizational effectiveness measures how successful organizations are in achieving their goals using the strategic objectives (Darrab & Khan, 2010).

Customer focus refers to a customer's sense of satisfaction after comparing their perceived performance to their expectations. The degree to which performance meets expectations determines the amount of satisfaction (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Similarly, Owino (2013) claims that customer satisfaction level is determined by how well the product/service characteristics meet the client's wants. When a customer's expectations are exceeded, the customer is said to be happy; nevertheless, when the customer's expectations are not met, the client is said to be unsatisfied. While Kotler and Keller (2012) argue that it is a choice made after a specific service meeting. According to

Makgosa and Molefhi (2012), it is an emotional reaction that influences attitudes and is specific to consumption.

2.5 Strategic Leadership Practices and Organization Performance

According to Moss (2008), transformational leadership provided protection to 160 persons working in the public and private sectors in the United States. The research assessed the transforming style of the immediate superiors of the participant and, by regression analysis, evaluated their own self-esteem, attachment style, fair world values, regulatory emphasis and function. When leaders show emotional support and value the engagement of followers, followers are linked happily and believe in a fair world from potential losses to potential benefits.

In Kenya, Ogech (2016) investigated how strategic leadership affects SMEs' performance. Decisions on business strategy and resource allocations were among the measures used to assess strategic leadership. Ethics and ethical standards, as well as organizational controls were also considered. According to the results, strategic leadership practices improve the performance of SMEs in Kenya.

Strategic leadership strategies and non-profit organization performance were studied by Kitonga, Bichanga, and Muema (2016). In-depth studies demonstrate a strong link between effective strategic leadership and a company's success. Results showed that if such organizations leaders utilize strategic leadership well, they will substantially improve the performance of their organizations. This paper examined strategic leadership in non-profit institutions in Nairobi.

Olaka, Lewa, and Kiriri researched strategic leadership and the operationalization of strategy in Kenyan commercial banks as part of their dissertation (2017). The seven components of strategic leadership examined in the research were ethical practices,

corporate culture, social capital, human capital, core competencies, strategic direction, and strategic control. Questionnaires were used to obtain data from 436 top commercial bank executives. The findings show that strategy execution and all facets of strategic leadership have a favorable and statistically substantial link. While conducting their research, Olaka and colleagues (2017a) limited their study to the top management team of a commercial bank, which may have resulted in biased reporting.

According to Omar (2018), the case study of Zenko Kenya Limited was utilized to investigate the influence of strategic leadership on the performance of Kenyan manufacturing firms. Knowledge management, competencies and resources, important work processes, and information and communications technology (ICT) are all critical markers of performance, according to the research. It was also concluded that Zenko Kenya Limited's strategic goal would have only a minimal impact on the company's long-term performance. Because Zenko Kenya Limited's goal, core values, and firm's vision were so important to the company's success, it was concluded that strong strategic direction communication had an influence on the company's performance.

According to Muriithi (2018), a study of adolescents at Gospel Celebration Church (GCC) was conducted with the goal of identifying the influence of strategic leadership on congregation attendance . The research indicated that teenage retention was positively correlated with church programs, leadership competency, and ethical practice adherence. The research found that church programs, leadership ability, and ethical practice adherence all had a detrimental impact on the retention of adolescents. According to this study, church programs, leadership skill, and ethical practice adherence have a mixed affect (both positive and negative) on adolescent retention, with the positive influence outweighing the negative.

It is obvious from the empirical evaluation conducted in this research that the majority of studies on strategic leadership strategies were conducted in other contexts other than communication firms. Further, most of the previous studies conducted locally have been qualitative in nature and therefore might not have captured the quantitative aspects on the how strategic leadership practices and performance relates. Although, Muriithi (2018) utilized both qualitative and quantitative data, there exist conceptual gaps as the focus of that study was on strategic leadership practices and retention of adolescents while the current study focuses on leadership practices and performance. In the international scene, studies have been conducted. These studies were however conducted in a diverse contextual setting thus their results cannot be utilized to generalize communication firms in Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A brief overview of the study's methodology is given in this section. There are multiple subsections in this chapter, including sections on the study's design, its intended audience, the methods used to gather the data, and the results.

3.2 Research Design

Cooper and Schindler (2014) described research design as a procedure that the researcher learns and that enables the researcher to answer questions properly, effectively, objectively, and affordably. Khan (2008) reports that a research design intends to improve the research capacity to design an operational plan so as to embark on the numerous available techniques and tasks needed to complete the study while ensuring that the methods employed are sufficient to provide valid, objective and exact answers to research concerns.

The unit of study was Standard Group Plc, which necessitated the use of a case study research approach. Case studies are studies of individuals, organizations, or occurrences (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). It is suitable for this research since it includes a thorough evaluation by a single institution, which is mainly focused on depth analysis rather than broad analysis. It is best suited if a comprehensive and thorough examination of a particular research unit is needed. In the case study, Yin (2018) emphasized the need of monitoring social units in great detail. Using a case study, we were able to get an up-close look at a trait that was previously unknown or understudied. In a case study, nearly everyone in the unit is examined for unearth patterns of behaviour.

3.3 Data Collection

This study relies on data from primary research. It is included in Appendix II, which includes an interview guide used to collect the research's data. Since it allows respondents to supply more information and gives the researcher a clearer picture of the study's results, an interview guide was used for this case study. The interview guide provided the researchers with more up-to-date information and information that may not have been obtained by alternative data collecting methods.

The targeted respondents for this research was five senior managers at Standard Media Group namely; commercial director, head of broadcast, chief finance officer, general manager advertising and chief talent officer. The interview guide were structured into various sections. One component of the survey focuses on demographic information, while the other sections are focused on the study objectives. When no evident response was given to a researcher's open queries, he or she posed further questions to see if there was anything else that might be discovered. The researcher was conducted the interviews personally.

3.4 Data Analysis

Since we may make general conclusions about how the types of data are related, we used qualitative data analysis to assess the interview guide. Due to the difficulty of quantitatively presenting, interpretating, and critiquing a research issue, it is decided that the study would employ qualitative analysis instead of quantitative. The qualitative analysis was carried out using content analysis.

Content analysis will be used to evaluate the response, develop inferences, and provide recommendations. Understanding the data, assigning preliminary codes to describe the content, looking for patterns or themes in codes through the interviews, defining and

identifying themes and drawing conclusions from the findings were some of the steps

in the content analysis process, which concluded with drawing conclusions.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

Standard group plc's performance in Kenya was analyzed to identify the effect of strategic leadership approaches. Standard Group plc's top five executives were the focus of this investigation. The interviewees in this study were the commercial director, head of broadcast, chief finance officer, general manager advertising and chief talent officer.

4.2 Analysis of Responses

The study established that three of the leadership team were male and two were female. The respondents indicated the positions they held in the organization. To meet the study's goals, researchers focused on five members of Standard group plc executive leadership team. According to the findings, each respondent has worked for the company for over two years in a variety of positions and capacities. Low turnover suggested that they understood Standard group plc strategic leadership and had the expertise and knowledge on the study subject matter to aid in the accomplishment of the research aim. The respondents are involved in strategy formulation for the company.

4.3 Strategic Leadership Practices Adopted by Standard Group Plc

The five interviewees unanimously agreed that the most common strategic leadership practices at Standard Group Plc were setting goals (strategic direction), maximizing core competencies (teaching and learning), training and development (organizational culture), democratic leadership style, laissez-faire leadership style, and bureaucratic leadership.

Interviewees said that Standard Group Plc's leadership techniques are typically successful. Employees are motivated to operate more effectively when their human capital is developed effectively. Organizational performance is more influenced by modern human capital development initiatives than by previous tactics.

Human resource development in firms is aided by methods such as mentorship, coaching, role acting, and computer programming, according to those polled. Standard Group Plc was found to have developed an authoritarian leadership style, as shown by employee interviews. Standard Group Plc's leaders are task-oriented and concerned only with completing a certain goal as rapidly as possible. Group Plc Leaders are responsible for making all of the group's decisions and assigning work, and they are generally led by a strong Managing Director who has many titles.

Standard Group Plc has a democratic leadership style, according to interviewees, which encourages workers to participate in decision-making. At Standard Group Plc, the top executives collaborate with their employees to solve problems and make decisions that have an influence on their jobs. Their style is similar to a coach who makes decisions based on input from the team before making any final decisions. Employees at Standard Group Plc appreciate the confidence bestowed upon them, and as a result, many of them exhibit traits such as collaboration, camaraderie, and a positive outlook. In most cases, the Standard Group Plc executives build programs to assist workers assess their own performance, let employees to set objectives, urge employees to advance in their careers and be recognized for their achievements, and motivate them to keep going.

Laissez-faire leadership style was also mentioned by interviewers, according to Standard Group Plc. The executives of Standard Group Plc have a hands-off approach,

allowing their employees to take the lead and make the choices. In contrast, experts have discovered that this is the most ineffective leadership style for groups.

Respondents revealed that Standard Group Plc has consistently strived to be an astounding firm that is competent and appealing. Standard Group Plc shows its commitment to their customers by offering quality products and services. Standard Group Plc engages marketing, distribution and finance teams whereby it evaluates the costs and impact and aligns the sales channel plan with a channel marketing structure. Respondents reiterated that one of the most critical ingredients in a successful channel sales program is how well sales plan with the marketing organization. Respondents confirmed that they embrace customer needs focus and when that is put in place, energy, creativity and solutions happen faster and more often than not results in closing more sales. Standard Group Plc also participates in sporting events and related activities which have greatly enhanced Standard Group Plc brand and increasing customers.

The philosophy of laissez-faire leadership is a non-interference approach that offers entire flexibility to all workers and does not have a specific purpose in mind. Respondents said that as a consequence of the study, Standard Group Plc was able to clearly identify its strategic direction and human resource actions in order to attain specified goals and targets. Strategic leadership techniques can only be successfully implemented if workers and stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process, three respondents said.

Core competencies were also a popular strategic leadership technique, according to the workforce. It was agreed that Standard Group Plc was able to provide value for its clients by using its core capabilities. Significant investments in cutting-edge technology and the use of digital applications to boost the firm's performance were made possible

thanks in large part to the strategic leadership of Standard Group Plc. Some of the respondents said that Standard Group Plc's key strengths offered it an advantage over its rivals. Stable Standard Group Plc invested in new technology, which allowed the company to provide value-added services for customers.

Standard Group Plc funded a quarterly training and development program for its employees in order to enhance their skills and knowledge on how to plan, achieve their objectives, and improve efficiency. Those that were interviewed were in agreement. Specifically, it was argued that the Standard Group Plc was responsible for the development of human capital, which included people's talents, abilities, and intellectual property. A deliberate effort was made by the Standard Group Plc's strategic leadership to increase the amount of human capital available in order to enhance the quality of the input offered by its workers.

Respondents quoted that Standard Group Plc focuses on operations that is robust, simple and customer centric. It is obligated to coming up with a customer-centric culture and aligning itself as an icon in service delivery. Precisely Standard Group Plc recognizes its customers and emphasizes on listening attentively and delivering the best. Besides customer focus, Standard Group Plc also ensures that customers reliably get quality products and services even with change in technology without necessarily incurring extra costs. The introduction of better systems and automation of services has led to effective and efficient operations and consequently BRCK is comfortably provides similar products and services to customers at reduced prices than its competitors. This demonstrates that Standard Group Plc adopts the cost leadership strategy. Respondents mentioned that Standard Group Plc established a Customer Experience Division in 2016 which geared to its commitment to customer-centric

approach. It incorporates two major arms: contact experience and service experience compliance. Standard Group Plc pride is to make every customer contact satisfied with motivation of reaching out on others. Standard Group Plc encourages its staff to understand customers and deliver to the maximum with specific touch points.

All the respondents believed that the Standard Group Plc's organizational culture had a significant impact on the behavior, activities, and interactions of its workers. In order to encourage and motivate employees to strive toward their specified goals, the Standard Group Plc's strategic leadership is responsible for creating a supportive culture inside the company. A critical component of the plan's implementation, according to the respondents, was strategic leadership. Standard Group Plc had a duty to establish attitudes and behaviors that would have a major impact on employee devotion and contribution to the company's long-term strategic objectives.

It was also said that ethics were an important part of strategic leadership. The interviewees all agreed that Standard Group Plc's strategic leadership upheld an ethical code by ensuring that its employees adhered to the company's standards of conduct and behavior. Three of the interviewees said that the Standard Group Plc's personnel were governed by standards of conduct while doing business. They said that Standard Group Plc, which was trying to create and keep consumers and investors' trust and credibility, was worried about the behavior of its workers.

According to the responses, the most effective strategic leadership practice used by Standard Group Plc of Kenya was the development of a strategic direction, since it established the framework for the implementation of all other strategic leadership practices in the company. Standard Group Plc had to first identify its strategic direct route, which provided a clear road map for the Standard Group Plc to follow, and as a

result, the participants in the interview stated that this strategy was critical. A list of the least successful methods of strategic leadership was compiled from questions posed to those who were interviewed. All five interviewers agreed that none of the practices had the least influence on organizational performance, which is understandable given that implementing strategic leadership practices is a process in which one practice is dependent on the others.

To enable the company to optimize its key competencies, Standard Group Plc's senior management creates an environment that is conducive to effective teamwork. To do so, skilled personnel who are familiar with Standard Group Plc's processes and procedures are required in order to work effectively toward established goals. As a consequence, the culture of an organization may have a substantial impact on the beliefs and actions of the individuals who work inside it. Furthermore, a company's code of ethics is vital in determining the behavior of its personnel. All of the respondents believed that the Standard Group Plc has invested a significant amount of money and resources into current technologies in order to improve strategic leadership techniques. Interviewees unanimously agreed that strategic leadership approaches had played a key impact in allowing staff to meet their established goals.

Interviewees said that strategic leadership helped Standard Group Plc develop its vision, achieve its goals, and enhance the overall performance of the company. The interviewees agreed that strategic leadership helps management guide workers in the proper direction and drive strategic change by aligning the organization's resources and employees with the organization's strategic vision to persuade employees to work toward accomplishing specified objectives and targets.

Research suggests that Standard Group Plc's goal is to become the recognised industry leader and give the best customer service, while an equal percentage want to develop a new technology into a competence that is innovative. A company's aggressiveness in becoming a market leader, efficient execution of a company's strategic vision and mission, clarity in defining the path taken by the company in carrying out its vision, and adoption of an intentional strategic leadership assessment of the business environment were also shown in the findings to impact competitiveness. A more radical organizational vision and precise milestones for the organization's workers to strive toward were not shown to effect competitiveness, but, a thorough awareness of the stakeholders of a business's firm was not.

4.4 Strategic Leadership Practices and Performance of Standard Group Plc in Kenya

Standard Group Plc acknowledges the need of implementing an effective leadership style in order to enhance its overall performance, as shown by the results, and the success of the company may be connected to the successful organizational leadership style established. An effective leadership style includes managers at all levels of the business's management structure, while a good leadership style aids the organization in attaining performance by boosting employee commitment levels.

All respondents believed that strategic leadership methods had strengthened relationships among Standard Group Plc workers because they have brought them together to work toward common objectives. Having similar aspirations and beliefs bolstered the cohesion of the workforce, which in turn encouraged individuals to strive harder toward their collective objectives. Strategic leadership techniques have

enhanced communication and engagement among workers and between employees and upper management as a result of the adoption of these practices.

Respondents also said that the success of Standard Group Plc is contingent on the company's ability to effectively manage its human and social capital, which has an impact on people in order to achieve improved performance. Successful human capital development encourages people to function effectively in unpredictable and chaotic business situations, according to the research. Contemporary human capital development tactics have a greater influence on organizational performance than traditional human capital development strategies, according to the research.

According to four interviewees, Standard Group Plc's top management engaged workers in crucial decisions, allowing them to voice their opinions and help shape the company's direction. As a result, there is less resistance to change as a result of the favorable connection between management and workers. As a result, senior management had a firm foundation on which to build successful strategic leadership techniques. Interviewees unanimously agreed that Standard Group Plc's strategic leadership methods boosted the value of its goods and services. Standard Group Plc provided services that were specifically tailored to meet the demands of its customers. Customer complaints at Standard Group Plc have decreased significantly as a result of the use of strategic leadership practices, according to all respondents in this survey.

Customers who participated in the survey said that Standard Group Plc customer care employees were compassionate and professional in their responses to their complaints. Customers' problems were addressed by the Standard Group Plc via phone calls and short text messages. The company also resolved customer disputes, provided customers

with information about services and items, and explained the procedures to them as part of its customer service. The Standard Group Plc's customer service representatives were noted to be able to recognize and prioritize issues whenever a need arose. Four respondents stated that the Standard Group Plc grew tougher in retaining customer records in line with standard operating procedures as a result of the application of strategic leadership techniques.

All respondents agreed that strategic leadership approaches had a positive impact on customer satisfaction. Standard Group Plc has molded its management efforts by enhancing its customer connections and harmonizing corporate procedures. Standard Group Plc has been able to obtain a better knowledge of the consumer by providing them with tailored goods or services that may directly meet their requirements in key areas via close customer connection. As a result, Standard Group Plc was able to satisfy the demands of its clients quickly and in some instances exceeded the expectations of its consumers. Clients' real-time feedback mechanisms (live chats and emails) were a big help in getting this right.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The results obtained from the research study do agree with other empirical studies. It is clear from the data analyzed in the study that Standard Group Plc strategic leadership is in line with the vision of the company. They further stated that the vision was to create after an intensive consultation with various stakeholders and it is reviewed after a span of every five years. The mission has changed since pandemic to target development partners to fund them for continuity. The findings agree with Kirimi and Minja (2010) who argued that in order to accomplish firms objectives, leaders must

blend management, strategic, and visionary leadership and top executives should collaborate with their employees to solve problems and make decisions that have an influence on their jobs.

According to those who spoke with Standard Group Plc, the company made the most of its assets by investing heavily in innovation in order to enhance the quality of its services while also reducing its operating expenses. Respondents said that Standard Group Plc made strategic use of technology to enhance its ability to provide services quickly. The findings agree with Hansen and Birkinshaw, (2007) indicating that process innovation increases the capability of using advanced technology during the production process which allows organizations to reduce their overhead and cost of production.

Standard Group Plc's interviewees all agreed that a significant driver for the effective application of strategic leadership techniques was investing in human resources. The claim was made that well-trained personnel were driven and capable in their job on their own initiative. These results are supported by Abdul et al (2016), who states that workers are an organization's human capital, and that including them in regular activities helps them become more effective at reaching their goals.

Three respondents said that the company's culture encouraged workers to strive toward the company's objectives. The Standard Group Plc's strategic objectives and aims were linked with the company's organizational culture. This encompasses the skills, knowledge, abilities, and individual attributes that create value in the workforce of any firm, The findings agree with McIsaac et al. (2013) who argued that companies need to embrace diversity and look for ways to become inclusive organizations because diversity has the potential to yield greater work productivity and competitive advantages.

Strategic leadership methods have a positive impact on employee relations, as shown by interviewees. Employees were unified in their objectives and vision when strategic leadership methods were implemented, according to all respondents. As a result, the staff were able to follow the orders of their superiors without any resistance. These findings are in line with Mutia (2015) who argued that employees' dedication and solidarity in the company's aims increase due to good leadership.

The purpose of strategic leadership theory is to promote a consistent vision, mission, and set of values to their members, they establish a compelling vision and know their goal from every encounter with the followers. These leaders' direct followers by providing them with a sense of importance and challenge. They endeavor to foster the spirit of commitments and teamwork amongst the followers. Transformational leaders inspire their members to be innovative and creative. The results of this research support this theory Standard Group Plc continuously improves its employee through training and development. Standard Group Plc invests in establishing an atmosphere that encourages its employees to learn new skills and information.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study, the research conclusions based on the findings and recommendations as per the study conclusions. The chapter also presents the research limitations and suggestions for additional research.

5.2 Summary

Strategic leadership approaches and their impact on Standard Group Plc's success are described in this section. The research found that Standard Group Plc's leadership style is autocratic. Leaders at Standard Group Plc are task-oriented, and their goal is to complete a certain assignment as rapidly as possible. The Standard Group Plc has strong CEOs who hold numerous positions serves as the group's leader; they make all of the decisions and delegate work. When it comes to leadership style, the survey found that Standard Group Plc uses a democratic approach that values employee input.. Leaders share decision-making and problem-solving duties with their staff, keeping them informed about everything that impacts their job.

Investment in cutting-edge technology and innovation helped Standard Group Plc create key strengths in product and service design. Employees at the Standard Group Plc were given the opportunity to participate in the execution of strategic plans via the use of quarterly training sessions, which were implemented as part of a supportive culture by the company's strategic leadership. Plc of the Standard Group Success of strategic leadership techniques is largely determined by how well they are implemented, according to those interviewed.

The success of Standard Group Plc in the industry hinged on the company's ability to achieve the goals it set for itself. When it comes to motivating and developing their workforce, Standard Group Plc has a proven track record of doing just that. The use of strategic leadership methods enhanced communication and engagement among the staff, which resulted in a reduction in customer complaints. Standard Group Plc's service delivery efficiency has improved as a result of this. As a result of enhanced efficiency, the Standard Group Plc gained a competitive advantage over its competitors

by attracting more clients and increasing sales. It was Standard Group Plc's use of strategic leadership techniques that improved the company's connection with its customers and resulted in more customer loyalty.

5.3 Conclusion

Strategic leadership practices at Standard Group Plc included setting strategic goals (targets), developing core competencies, implementing training and development programs, and fostering an organizational culture that included autocratic leadership styles, democratic leadership styles, laissez-faire leadership styles, and bureaucratic leadership. It was thought crucial that none of these strategic leadership approaches be executed in isolation. Standard Group Plc saw these strategies as essential to achieving business objectives and surviving in a changing environment.

Strategic leadership strategies have been demonstrated to help successfully to creating and strengthening the connection between workers by sharing same aims and values in working toward the same goals. Standard Group Plc benefited from these procedures since they were in line with the company's long-term strategic objectives, which streamlined its decision-making processes. Because of this, the Standard Group Plc was able to provide clients with value-added goods and services that increased their overall pleasure.

As a consequence of applying strategic leadership techniques, the Standard Group Plc had considerable reductions in customer complaints, which helped the Standard Group Plc perform better. Researchers wishing to delve more into the topic of strategic leadership might use the results as a resource. The study also concludes that development of new operating technologies, Invention and innovation of new services,

discovery of new markets, customer service and support increase the performance of the firm.

5.4 Recommendations

Standard Group Plc should spend more money and resources in technology and innovation in order to increase staff productivity and reduce operational expenses. By providing value-added services, the Standard Group Plc would be able to increase customer satisfaction and hence attract new clients. As a consequence, Standard Group Plc will be able to provide better care to its patients.

The workers of Standard Group Plc should participate in a training and development program that will allow them to learn new skills and techniques. Enhance their knowledge of strategic leadership approaches and how they affect the success of Standard Group Plc. Employees will be more motivated to achieve their goals as a result of this increased efficiency.

The highest levels of management are responsible for providing enough resources and facilities to their employees. Work and interpersonal relationships improve when workers have a positive work environment. As a result, workers have a more positive attitude toward their jobs and feel more secure in their ability to meet their goals. In order to encourage private businesses to adopt strategic leadership methods, the national government should establish standard rules. As a result, healthcare institutions will begin to employ strategic leadership approaches.

5.5 Limitations for the Study

The researcher took more time than expected to conduct the study as she interviewed the top management of the firm. The sample included a small number of the firm's management. Using a case study of Standard Group Plc as the basis for the research has

certain drawbacks. Some of the respondents were hesitant, to ensure the disclosure is not detrimental to the company. Mainly, the respondents gave general information to avoid exposing the company to competitors.

The researcher encountered a number of difficulties when performing the study, including the fact that the company generally does not want to provide information because of the confidentiality of clients. Others would be reluctant to provide the information because of its value to them. This resulted in a longer time frame for collecting data.

The onset of covid 19 necessitating people working from home and maintaining social distance limited the interactions the researcher could have with the respondents. Follow up questions had to be done remotely via a phone call or zoom meetings. These limitations further made it harder to adequately validate some of the responses as would have been the case in face-to-face meetings.

5.6 Areas for Further Research

The media sector in Kenya was the subject of this research, although the analysis was limited to Standard Group Plc and did not include other companies in the field. The study therefore recommends a similar study, which will incorporate other media firms to establish the strategic leadership practices that they have adapted and how they affect the organizations' performance.

In summary, combining the study suggests that a mixture of approaches used to undertake this research as a case study method may not have exhausted the problem or produced robust findings hence the need to use in-depth interviews together with surveys might assist solve the issues.

Customers' wants and demands, as well as external influences like technology advancements, competition, and legislation, are always shifting. Because of these alterations, management must adapt its approach to strategic leadership choices and activities. After a period of time like 10 years, it is recommended that future researchers duplicate this study so that they may discover some of the strategic leadership methods used at that time and compare their results.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

June 2021

Carol Kiluti Mwendwa

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University of Nairobi

RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH DATA

I am a University of Nairobi student undertaking a Master of Business Administration degree. As my course work requirement part, am supposed to submit a research on **"STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE OF STANDARD GROUP PLC"** In order to accomplish the objectives of this study, we have sampled your organization to provide the needed data for the study. The data obtained will solely be utilized for academic reasons alone and the report will not indicate your name. In case you will need the findings of this study, we shall avail them to you.

Your contribution and support will be very much valued.

Thank you in advance.

CAROL KILUTI MWENDWA

MASTERS STUDENT – RESEARCHER

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Appendix II: Interview Guide

This interview guide is intended to gather information that will aid in a better understanding of Standard Group Plc's strategic leadership processes and performance. The data collected by this interview guide will be held with strict confidentiality.

The purpose of this interview is to:

i) Establish the strategic leadership practices adopted by Standard Group Plc.

ii) Determine the impact of strategic leadership approaches on Standard Group Plc's performance.

PART A: RESPONDENT PROFILE

1) What is your current position in the firm?

2) For how long have you been with the firm overseeing this function?

3) Are you involved in strategy of the firm?

PART B: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ADOPTED BY STANDARD GROUP PLC

4) What are some of SMG's most popular strategic leadership approaches, in your opinion?

5) To what extent has SMG embraced offering strategic direction as a strategic leadership practice?

6) To what extent has SMG embraced exploitation of core competencies?

7) To what extent has SMG embraced human capital development?

8) To what extent has SMG embraced a sustaining organization culture?

9) What, in your opinion, is SMG's best strategic leadership practice?

10) Which of SMG's strategic leadership practices, in your opinion, is the least effective? Please provide more information.

11) Kindly elaborate how SMG has used current technology to strengthen strategic leadership techniques?

12) In your view, what are some strategic leadership practices that Standard Group Plc should adopt?

PART C: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCE

13) Has the implementation of strategic leadership approaches enhanced the growth of your organization, in your opinion?

14) Has the implementation of strategic leadership methods benefited your company's market share, in your opinion?

15) Please describe how implementing strategic leadership practices has enhanced your working relationship with your coworkers.

16) Kindly elaborate how SMG's use of strategic leadership practices has enhanced the value of its products and services.

17) Has SMG achieved increased financial performance because of the application of strategic leadership?

18) Has SMG's implementation of strategic leadership practices enhanced customer satisfaction, in your opinion?

Thank you for your co-operation