**Project Proposal**

**Introduction**

The topic that the study aims to explore is, 'The influence of transformational leadership on organizational change and the strategic goals of public sector organizations in creating a positive and sustainable work environment.' The public sector is experiencing numerous changes in recent years as a result of the highly dynamic environment. Notably, the situation is becoming more demanding from the perspective of performance and innovation. Hence, the leadership concept is crucial in influencing, driving, and effectively implementing change. Therefore, this study examines how the transformational leadership approach affects strategic goals and change in public organizations in a bid to create sustainable and positive work environments.

**Problem Statement**

The need to successfully implement organizational change is one of the most crucial management tasks, particularly in modern organizations that are increasingly focusing on enhancing their market survival and competitiveness. However, public leaders are limited in terms of practicing transformational leadership since they are bound by political demands, financial constraints, regulations, as well as unforeseen events (Paulsen, Callan, Ayoko & Saunders, 2013). However, the limiting nature of the environment in which public organizations operate, as described by the previous studies, also justifies the application of transformational leadership. Given that the standardization of the rewards and payment system hinders the implementation of transactional practices, transformational leadership is, therefore, among the few tools that public leaders can use in the change process (Van der Voet, Kuipers, & Groeneveld, 2016). As a result, the concept is increasingly emerging in empirical studies focusing on the public sector. Additionally, contemporary leadership theories are increasingly emphasizing the role of the transformational approach in the understanding of organizational outcomes and administrative processes (Harb and Sidani 2019).

In most cases, the effect of leadership on change in an organization is challenging to determine due to the presence of multiple factors that shape the change process (Van der Voet, 2014). Moreover, most researchers have failed to examine the theory concerning the public sector because it provides a less appropriate framework to allow for transformational leadership. Hence, this study aims at contributing to filling these gaps by examining the influence that transformational leaders have on a firm’s strategic goals and change in a bid to create sustainable and positive work environments. Specifically, the study focuses on firms operating in the public sector.

**Research Objectives**

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To demonstrate the relationship between the transformational leadership approach and organizational change
2. To illustrate the influence of transformational leadership on a firm’s strategic goals
3. To examine the effect of transformational leadership on organizational change
4. To demonstrate how transformational leadership helps in creating a positive and sustainable working environment in public organizations

**Research Significance**

The public sector plays a crucial role in terms of providing services and commodities to the populace, whose prices are often subsidized by the government. Despite the critical role that firms within the sector play, it is often characterized by multiple malfunctions, including quality challenges, administrative problems, and chronic absenteeism, among others (Carter, Armenakis, Feild & Mossholder, 2013). Additionally, the sector faces a high risk of interruption by conflicts and other elements in the national government (Noruzy et al., 2013).

Other factors that affect the sector include political, technological, economic, and social factors. With these internal and external influences, organizational change has become crucial to solving administration dysfunctions in the sector (Wang, Courtright & Colbert, 2011). Moreover, the difference is essential in promoting the smooth functioning of the industry, particularly given that uncertainty is increasingly growing in the global environment (Hanna, 2011). Therefore, this study is of considerable significance since it will provide insight into how firms in the public sector can use the transformational leadership approach to influence successful change processes and implement strategic goals to achieve a sustainable and positive work environment.

**Research Questions**

The following questions will guide the study:

1. How do transformational leaders influence change in public organizations?
2. How does transformational leadership influence a firm’s strategic goals?
3. Does the transformational leadership approach promote a positive and sustainable environment in public organizations?

**Variables of Interest**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable Type** | **Variable Name** | **Definition** |
| Independent variable | Transformational leadership | The concept of transformational leadership entails the leader working with teams in identifying the required change, developing a vision that acts as a guide for the change, inspiring teams, and collectively working together with the committed team members (Harb & Sidani 2019). |
| Dependent variable | Organizational change and the strategic goals of public sector organizations | Organizational change entails the process through which firms transform their strategies, structure technologies, and operational methods as well as the impact of the revisions on a firm (Moynihan, Donald, Pandey & Wright, 2014).  Strategic goals, on the other hand, describe an organization’s vision by defining the actions that should be executed to achieve the overall business outcomes (Carter, Armenakis, Feild & Mossholder, 2013). |
| Mediating variable | The positive and sustainable work environment | Positive work environments are workplaces, where all employees feel acknowledged, safe, and capable of doing their best towards achieving their professional objectives (Noruzy et al., 2013).  Sustainable work environments are those that provide conditions that support and encourage employees to remain at a workplace for a long time Longoni, Golini & Cagliano, 2014). |

**Theoretical Framework**

The study will be guided by the theoretical framework presented below:

Transformational leadership

(Independent variable)

Positive and sustainable work environment

(Mediating Variable)

Organizational change and the strategic goals of public sector organizations

(Dependent variable)

**Literature Review**

In recent years, change has become a common feature in organizations, both in the public and private sectors. Technology is one of the major factors driving change in the 21st century. Technology has accelerated globalization and eliminated physical borders between regions, creating severe fluctuations in the global economy (Graetz & Smith, 2010). As a result, change has become a crucial factor in the survival and growth of organizations in highly dynamic environments (Nging & Yazdanifard, 2015). To survive, Hill (2012) holds that organizations require revolutionary transformational change. Such change is crucial to coping with increasing competition, layoffs and budget cuts, downsizing, frequent restructuring, and uncertainty.

In this context, the style of leadership that an organization adopts is vital to the successful implementation of strategic goals as well as change. Within such dynamic environments, an organizational leader should be competent in terms of influencing the acceptance, and introduction of new technologies, ideas, and concepts (Garcia-Morales, Jimenez-Barrionuevo & Gutierrez, 2012). The leaders should be capable of effectively setting goals that specifically address the needed change and create a work environment that influences change acceptance. According to Li et al. (2019), transformational leadership theory forms one of the most basic behavioral approaches. However, McCleskey (2014) notes that in the context of its application to organizations, most researchers have studied the theory about firms in the private sector.

In a study that seeks to evaluate the applicability of transformational leadership in the public sector, Li et al. (2019) notes that although public organizations’ resource base is mainly declining or static, they operate within a highly demanding environment that necessitates higher performance and innovation levels. Halkos (2012) argues that for leaders of these organizations to be effective within the changing environment, they need to establish mechanisms for overcoming the numerous structural and environmental constraints that prevail within the public sector (Moynihan, Donald, Pandey & Wright, 2014). Besides, the growing interest in the transformational leadership approach as it relates to the public sector is concurrent with the emergence of theories that indicate more motivation and altruism in public organizations as well as new public management approaches (Chou, 2014). Additionally, the available literature still demonstrates a deficiency in studies that have examined how the transformational theory of leadership enhances organizational performance. Middleton, Harvey, and Esaki (2015) posit that researchers have extensively explored the traits of leaders who demonstrate competence in contexts of change. However, Wright and Pandey (2010) asserts that knowledge gaps in the relationship between the characteristics of leaders and successful organizational change processes are still evident.

**Research Design**

           The study utilizes an exploratory qualitative study. Schwartz-Shea and Yanow (2013) defines exploratory research as the aspect of examining a problem or an issue that is yet to be studied. Exploratory studies contribute towards a better understanding of an existing problem. The qualitative data will be collected using semi-structured interviews. It will involve both middle and top-level managers working in public organizations. The interview guide will consist of questions that seek to derive the relationship between the independent, mediating, and dependent variables. The managers will be selected from different fields in the public sector, including education, health, public service among others. The non-probability sampling approach will be employed to select the respondents. The data acquired will then be sorted, grouped, and analyzed using the SPSS tool.

**Type of Study**

           The study takes an empirical approach. Empirical studies draw their conclusions strictly from evidence acquired through such mechanisms as experimental methods, interviews, statistical records, or direct observation (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013). Hence, the conclusions of empirical studies can be verified using additional data or by making comparisons with the findings of previous studies.

**Conclusion**

The study seeks to examine how transformational leadership influences organizational change as well as strategic goals in a bid to achieve a sustainable and positive work environment within the public sector. Previous studies have portrayed transformational leadership as a vital and useful tool in achieving positive outcomes in change processes. However, most of the earlier studies examine the leadership approach in relation to the private sector. Limited literature is available in regard to the effect of transformational leadership on public organizations. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher will employ an exploratory qualitative study, which aims at providing additional insight into the field of transformational leadership and the public sector. Finally, the study is empirical research that will involve collecting data through interviews.

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