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Leadership Styles as Perceived in the Changing Aviation Industry and their Effect on Pilot Commitment: A Kenyan Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on a Kenyan-based airline and investigates how leadership influences the commitment of its pilots. The need for this study emerged from the changes that affected the aviation industry in the past years, including COVID-19, political unrest, fluctuation of oil prices, and supply chain disruptions. Deregulations also impacted well-established state airlines. The aim of this study is to find ways to improve the performance and commitment of pilots, whose demand generally does not match supply.

The theoretical framework examines transformational and transactional leadership modified from MLQ (5X) and the Allen and Meyer three-component model of commitment. The study utilises a mixed method approach and obtains empirical findings that support theory. The study also reveals that job embeddedness has a significant influence on pilots' retention rates. The study recommends the adoption of academically supported solutions, including the movement from transactional leadership to transformational leadership for state airline leaders.

1. INTRODUCTION

The global arena of the aviation industry has undergone a constant change from the evolution of warplanes during World-War II into the modern air mass transportation era, experienced with a time differential across the continents. The industry is affected by factors such as politics, economics, terrorism, diseases, and cost of energy.[1] Deregulation in the aviation industry impacted America from 1944 to 2002, and Europe by

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[1] International Air Transport Association. (2018), *Future of the Airline industry 2035*. Retrieved from https://www.iata.org/policy/Documents/iata-future-airline-industry.pdf

1997.[2] Southwest, based in the USA, is regarded as the pioneer of the low-cost model in air transport, having started operations in 1977.[3] The change in the European market, from a highly regulated one dominated by highly subsidised government-owned international carriers, was forced to similarly change by economics and political dynamics in the 1980s and early 1990s.

In Europe, the effects of the free market determined the outcome of European carriers until the 20th century. Bachman cites several examples of bankrupt national carriers that operated with government support.[4] These airlines are Sabena SA (the Belgian national airline), Swissair (the Swiss national airline) and the Greek Olympic Airlines. Denti talks about Alitalia, which faced competition from Ryanair and EasyJet in its domestic market, leading to a sale of 49 per cent of its shares to the Middle Eastern airline Etihad in 2014. According to Denti, Alitalia airline has also seen several industrial actions by pilots and cabin crew: one of the union leaders stated that they were taking industrial action for the 100th time due to the company's crisis.[5]

In Africa, liberation was set in motion by the Yamoussoukro Convention on Market Access for Air Transport in Africa in 1988, resulting in new carriers like Kulula and 1 Time competing against state-owned airlines.[6] Harvey and Turnbull noted that despite the cost-cutting required when crises hit the industry, good practises were demonstrated. The impact of global financial turmoil in aviation tends to have an immediate effect on employment and working conditions of workers. However, the response varies from "immediate and individual to deliberate and consultative".[7]

The Kenyan case discussed in this paper faced the same changes and challenges that characterise the global aviation landscape. The impact of liberalisation is evident in the emergence of low-cost airlines such as Fly540 and JamboJet, which feature in Shea, CNN's list of the ten low-cost airlines transforming African airspace.[8] The national carrier also faced increased competition from regional players such as Rwandair, Tanzania Airline, Fast Jet and other Middle Eastern airlines entering the market.

Individual companies have encountered their share of challenges. Jetlink, for example, was hit by difficulties in repatriating cash from South Sudan, forcing it to suspend flights due to a shortage of foreign currency,[9] which led to bankruptcy.[10] Both East Africa's Safari Air Express[11] and Fly540[12] have been affected by ownership changes in the recent past. The national carrier, which

[2] Dobson, A. (2009), Negotiating the EU-U.S. Open Aviation Area Agreement 2007 in the Context of Transatlantic Airline Regimes Since 1944. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*. 20 (1), pp. 136–160.

[3] Mertens, D. P. & Vowles, T. M. (2012), Southwest Effect" - Decisions and Effects of Low Cost Carriers. *Journal of Behavioral & Applied Management*. 14 . (1), pp. 53–69.

[4] Bachman, J. (2018), Blooberg- Are you a Robot? Retrieved March 16, 2019, from https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-15/there-s-a-fight-brewing-for-control-of-italy-s-skies

[5] Denti, A. (2017), *Alitalia cancels 60 percent of flights as workers go on strike* [online]. Available from: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-alitalia-strike/alitalia-%09cancels-60-percent-of-flights-as-workers-go-on-strike-idUSKBN1771N0

[6] Amankwa-Amoah, J., & Debra, Y. (2011), Competing for scarce talent in a liberalised environment: evidence from the aviation industry in Africa. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *12*(17), 3565–3581.

[7] Harvey, G. and Turnbull, P. (2009), Can labor arrest the "sky pirates"? Transnational trade unionism in the European civil aviation industry. *Labor History*. 56 (3), pp. 308–326.

[8] Shea, G. (2017), *CNN Travel*. Retrieved from https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/10-budget-airlines-africa/index.html

[9] Maina, W. (2012), Jetlink suspends operations over forex scarcity in S. Sudan. Retrieved July 9, 2019, from Business Daily website: https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/corporate/Jetlink-suspends-operations/539550-1621014-37u1j0z/index.html

[10] Munguti, R. (2016), Jetlink airline faces closure over Sh4bn debt. Retrieved July 9, 2019, from Daily Nation website: https://www.nation.co.ke/business/Jetlink-faces-closure-over-Sh4bn-debt/996-3380236-format-xhtml-souxf6/index.html

[11] Situma, E. (2014), SAX returns to Juba route in expansion plan. Retrieved July 9, 2019, from The East African website: https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/SAX-returns-to-Juba-route-in-expansion-plan/2560-2448798-hq5mdhz/index.html

[12] Wanjiru, P. (2012), Fly540 gets new owners as Lonrho sells aviation business to Rubicon.

according to Amankwah-Amoah and Debrah[13] is one of the success stories of privatisation of former state-owned airlines in Africa. It lost a record 55 pilots in 2016, bringing the number to 105 for two consecutive years.[14] According to Egwah,[15] the pilots moved to Middle Eastern airlines for reasons related to poor management decisions, operational inefficiencies and lack of competition.

The data on which this paper is based comes from a study conducted between April and May 2019. The study aims to determine the current leadership of the Kenyan aviation industry as perceived by pilots during periods of industrial unrest. The authors examine how leadership during such times affects employees' continuity and affective commitment to the organisation they work for. The study examines whether effective leadership of the airline can be an antidote to the recurring phenomenon of disruptive and costly industrial action in the global aviation industry. Recent industrial disputes observed in the industry include: Ryanair in BBC News,[16] Kenya Airways in The Standard[17] and the strike at Lufthansa in The Guardian.[18] Humphries[19] and Faragher[20] refer to the shortage of needed aviators and the undesirable impact this had on Ryanair as a business. A survey conducted by HKAOA in Hong Kong found that almost half (43%) of Cathay Pacific Airways pilots wanted to leave the company.[21] They attributed this to strained relations between management and pilots at the company, which reported massive losses in 2018.

The corrected data came from the administration of questionnaires using an online survey tool. The measures on leadership were taken from the MLQ (5X)[22] and adapted for the study, while the measures on affective commitment and continuity correspond to the model described by Meyer and Powell.[23]

Change brings about a new environment full of uncertainty to both leaders and workers requiring leadership intervention to ensure the engagement of staff and optimize performance. How pilots make sense of the new environment and leaders' mediation affects organization outcomes such as commitment or industrial action – explained by mobilisation theory. The study addresses these issues using the conceptual framework presented and discussed below:

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[13] Amankwa-Amoah, J., & Debra, Y. (2011), Competing for scarce talent in a liberalised environment: evidence from the aviation industry in Africa. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *12*(17), pp. 3565–3581.

[14] Mwaniki, C. (2017), KQ in pilots crisis as 55 flee to rivals in one year. Retrieved February 28, 2019, from https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/corporate/companies/KQ-in-pilots-crisis-as55-flee-to-rivals-in-one-year/4003102-4085864-aw0ql/index.html

[15] Eghwa, B. (2016), *Kenya Airways losing pilots to Middle East. [online] Citizentv.co.ke.* [online]. Available from: https://citizentv.co.ke/business/kenya-airways-losing-pilots-to-middle-east-135805/

[16] BBC News. (2017), *Does Ryanair have a pilot shortage?* Retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/news/business-41319482.

[17] The Standard (2017), *Pilots call strike next week to demand change at Kenya Airways*

[18] https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/nov/23/lufthansa-strike-nearly-900-flights-cancelled-in-pilots-dispute

[19] Humphries, C. (2017), *Three months that shook Ryanair: How cancellations sparked a pilots* [online]. Available from: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ryanair-pilots-insight/three-months-that-shook-ryanair-how-cancellations-sparked-a-pilot-revolt-idUSKBN1EE2D1

[20] Faragher, J. (2017), ARE YOU THE NEXT RYANAIR? Workforce planning is often taken for granted, but get it wrong and disaster isn't far away. *People Management*. pp. 37–39.

[21] Lee, D. (2018), Cathay pilots' union chief quits after new deal fails to take off.

[22] Meyer, J. P., & Powell, D. M. (2004), Side-bet theory and the three-component model of organizational commitment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, pp. 157–177.
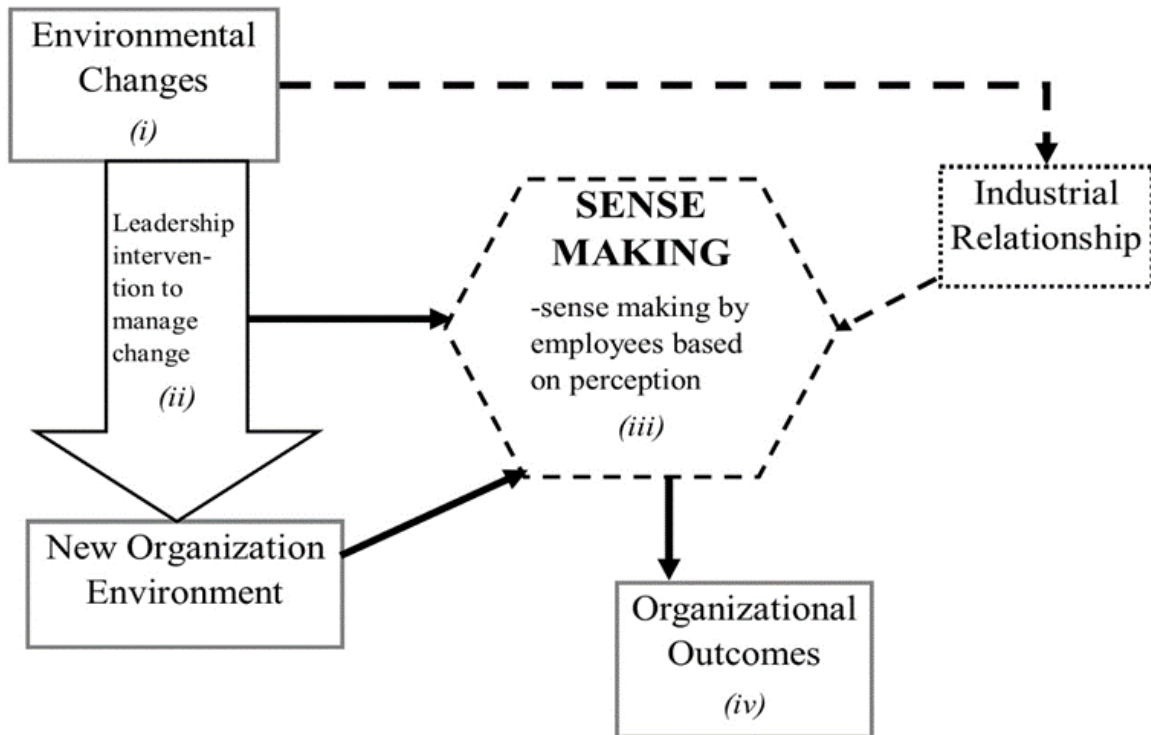
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

i. In any organisation, people involvement becomes critical when it has to innovate, improve continuously, price products competitively, enhance standards and employees' elective effort becomes a precious resource. These characteristics are to be expected in a competitive business in a constantly changing environment. The aviation industry is profoundly affected by global political events, fluctuation of oil prices and entry of new players competing against established state-owned airlines as a result of reduced regulations in the sector.

ii. Leaders' interventions bring about changes that employees are expected to adjust to, in a bid to manage the changes. At the same time, staff members are making sense of the new working environment.

iii. Sense making involves an interaction with both leaders and colleagues and this might also include organisational as well as union leaders. Different perceptions emerge which affect employee relations to the airline.

iv. Organisational outcomes include commitment, satisfaction, job embeddedness and industrial action among others. Some of the outcomes

have cross ties, for example, competition for effective commitment to a union and organisation can lead to diminishing affection for both.

The purpose of this study is to find out how leadership affects pilot commitment during a time of change in the Kenyan aviation industry, using Kenya Airways as an example. The target population for this study was Kenya Airways pilots. The study finds that implicit leadership influences commitment, and that commitment, in turn, determines organisational outcomes, although other factors also come into play prior to voluntary turnover. The study also shows that job embeddedness has a significant impact on pilots' retention, while job crafting and trust only emerge as factors that help respondents remain emotionally attached to the airline. The study recommends the application of science-based solutions, such as switching from transactional leadership - which is perceived by the sample population without negation by any of the respondents - to transformational leadership.

The paper contains five chapters; this introduction has outlined the background of the study, the purpose of the study, the research objectives and the scope of the study. The first chapter reviews literature pertinent to the

investigation as presented by other scholars and researchers. The second chapter presents a critical review of the theories presented in chapter one. Chapter three looks at the research methodology outlining the execution of the research, discussing the research design, target population, data collection procedures, and techniques. Chapter four describes the data analysis, presentation, and interpretation. The last chapter (five) presents the summary of findings, implications and recommendations, before the conclusion section. Overall, the study supports Bass' advancement of moving from transactional to transformational leadership to manage the recurring industrial unrest in the aviation industry, and notes that the effectiveness of leadership during change impacts upon the commitment to the organisation and behaviour of employees.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowles[24] confirms that human relations theorists were the last group to seek a solution to the persistent problem of workers' strikes and discontent in the 1950s. Mobilisation theory states that a collective group must perceive an injustice emanating from someone, usually management, for workers to participate in a strike. Furthermore, the leadership of the union is essential to the mobilisation process.[25] A practical example of how mobilisation works is the industrial action in the British Airways cabin between 2009 and 2011. This activity was the result of unilateral decisions by management to change working practises in response to market pressures.[26]

Theories of industrial relations were developed from theories of human relations to examine the dynamics associated with organised labour.[27] These arguments were preceded by a 1966 theoretical framework by Fox, which included three 'frames of reference': a unitary, a pluralist and a radical frame of reference.[28] Party interests dictated the frames of reference.[29] Tapia et al. explain the three reference points: The unitary reference point is characterised by a harmonious relationship based on trust, where conflict is managed, with a focus on performance and employee satisfaction; the pluralist reference point is based on recognition of divergence of interests, with arrangements for conflict resolution involving institutional and union involvement; and finally, the radical reference point is characterised by a power struggle with an underlying structure of injustice.

2.1 Leadership

A common view of leadership, according to Vos & Rupert,[30] is an influence on peoples' motion towards a vision or achievement of set goals. Yukl[31] states that research on leadership is at the core of understanding management and organisational behaviours. According to Allio,[32] individuals with the aspiration of leadership or intending to improve their performance as leaders need knowledge on ongoing leadership debates within academia. The debate revolves around the following behaviours: Good leaders have a good character; there is no best way to lead; leaders must collaborate; flexibility makes longevity possible; and leaders are self-made. According to Vos & Rupert,[33] a common conception of leadership is influencing the movement of people towards a vision or the achievement of set goals. Yukl[34]

[24] Knowles, W. H. (1958), Human Relations in Industry: Research and Concepts 1(1), p. 87. *California Management Review*. 1 (1), pp. 87.

[25] Holgate, J. (2018), The limitations of the theory and practice of mobilization in trade union organizing. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*.

[26] Taylor, P. and Moore, S. (2015), Cabin crew collectivism: labour process and the roots of mobilization. *Work, Employment & Society*. 29 (1), pp. 79–98.

[27] Peter, N. (1999), Rethinking Industrial Relations: Mobilization, Collectivism and Long Waves John Kelly. *Work, Employment & Society*, *13*(3), pp. 327–343.

[28] Tapia, M. et al. (2015), Mapping the frontier of theory in industrial relations: the contested role of worker representation. *Socio-Economic Review*. 13 (1), pp.157–184.

[29] Budd, J. W. and Bhave, D. (2008), *Values, Ideologies,*

and Frames of Reference in Employment Relations, The Sage Handbook of Industrial Relations. London

[30] Vos, J. F. J. and Rupert, J. (2018), Change agent's contribution to recipients' resistance to change: A two-sided story. *European Management Journal*. pp. 36453–462.

[31] Yukl, G. (1989), Managerial Leadership: A Review of Theory and Research. *Journal Of Management*, *15*(2), 251.

[32] Allio, R. J. (2009), Leadership - the five big ideas. *Strategy & Leadership*, *37*(3), pp. 4–12. https://doi.org/10.1108/10878570910941163.

[33] Vos, J. F. J. and Rupert, J. (2018), Change agent's contribution to recipients' resistance to change: A two-sided story. *European Management Journal*. pp. 36453–462.

[34] Yukl, G. (1989), Managerial Leadership: A Review of Theory and Research. *Journal Of Management*, *15*(2), 251.

states that the study of leadership is central to understanding management and organisational behaviour. According to Allio,[35] individuals who want to aspire to a leadership position or improve their performance as a leader need knowledge of the ongoing leadership debates in academia. The debate revolves around the following behaviours: Good leaders have good character; there is no best way to lead; leaders need to collaborate; flexibility enables longevity; and leaders are self-made. Multiple studies suggest that leadership work engagement, which is defined as a positive, work-related state of mind characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption,[36] is related to extremely positive outcomes, particularly in terms of employees' job performance, commitment and retention.[37]

The study examines transformational and transactional leadership styles. The characteristics of transformational leadership behaviour are *intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, idealised influence, and motivation*.[38] Researchers' interest in charismatic and transformational leadership increased in the 1980s as competition between companies in the US increased in the face of new entrants, necessitating a revitalisation of incumbents. This revitalisation took place in many USA industries, including aviation. Bass and Riggio and Yukl note that transformational leaders inspire others to commit to shared goals or visions, develop the leadership skills of those they lead, and challenge them to find innovative solutions to problems. These types of leaders generate enthusiasm, inspire their followers and build trust through persuasive communication and symbolic action.[39]

The behavioural basis of transactional leadership is conditional outcomes, where motivation comes from praise and rewards and correction is based on disciplinary action, threats, reprimands or negative feedback. According to Bass, transactional leaders aim to control or monitor people through rational or economic needs. Transactional leadership is characterised by *contigent reward*, which involves clear communication of goal-oriented expectations, and *management by exception*.[40]

2.2 Change Influence

Change can distract leaders from performing their roles, and the uncertainty component of change can alter employee behaviour. The combination of fear of uncertainty, hostility, and dynamism in the business environment can lead to an inability to make thoughtful and reasoned decisions, consequently, resulting in erratic strategic choices.[41] Recently, the aviation industry has experienced many reviews in the trading environment. For example, Pitt and Koufopoulos[42] refer to Easy Jet taking the point-to-point model away from the traditional hub-and-spoke model. A point-to-point network connects a number of locations directly and without interruption of services (e.g. pick-up or drop-off), even if the route itself is not direct. A (pure) hub-and-spoke network connects each location via a single intermediate location, the hub While the International Civil Aviation Organization projects a 51 % drop in passenger seats offered by airlines and a potential gross loss of up to 391 billion USD passenger revenue generation, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.[43]

[35] Allio, R. J. (2009), Leadership - the five big ideas. *Strategy & Leadership*, *37*(3), pp. 4–12. https://doi.org/10.1108/10878570910941163.

[36] Schaufeli W.B., Salanova M., González-Romá V., Bakker A.B. The measurement of engagement and burnout: A two sample confirmatory factor analytic approach. Journal of Happiness Studies. 2002; 3(1), pp. 71–92

[37] Björk J.M., Bolander P., Forsman A.K. Bottom-up interventions effective in promoting work engagement: A Systematic review and meta-analysis. Frontiers in Psychology. 2021; 3754. pmid:34566819

[38] Bass, B. M. (1990), From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. *Organizational Dynamics*, *18*(3), pp. 19–31.

[39] Bono, J. E., & Judge, T. A. (2004), Personality and transformational and transactional leadership: a meta-

analysis. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, *89*(5), pp. 901–910.

[40] Bass, B. & Riggio, R. (2006), *Transformational leadership*. 2nd edn.), New York

[41] Mitchell, J. R., Shepherd, D. A., & Sharfman, M. p. (2011), Erratic Strategic Decisions: When and Why Managers Are Inconsistent in Strategic Decision Making. *Strategic Management Journal*, *32*(7), pp. 683–704.

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[43] ICAO, (2020), Effects Of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) On Civil Aviation: Economic Impact Analysis. [ebook] Montréal, Canada: Air Transport Bureau. Available at: <https://www.icao.int/sustainability/Documents/COVID-19/ICAO_Coronavirus_Econ_Impact.pdf>

Commitment and motivation may diminish if subordinates realise that their supervisors are searching for other jobs or feel they are not performing their tasks. For example, a Kenyan aviation manager who adopts a transaction style might demotivate employees and decrease engagement whereas one adopting a transformational leadership style would improve commitment. Waldman et al.[44] posit that an environment perceived as highly uncertain is hazardous. A few wrong decisions could prove extremely costly and even threaten the existence of the organisation. Hailey and Balogun[45] list change styles as an implementation option for their context-sensitive framework for dealing with change. They define change style as the management approach used in introducing change, which can range from coercion to collaboration between different groups of workers. Leadership is an important factor in the outcome of change, especially in relation to rapid change, while management is about coping with complexity.[46] Balogun[47] uses the sense-making perspective to explain how changes influence employee behaviour. Stability results in preconceived practices executed automatically. Change, however, disrupts preconceived notions and forces the individuals concerned to consider new information while trying to re-establish a pre-programmed way of working. Part of the sense-making process involves a social interaction process featuring both informal (gossip, rumours, or stories) and formal (written or verbal) communication. On the other hand, Friedman and Miles[48] claim that companies can ignore or fight protest groups by using illegal and unethical means.

2.3 Commitment

Mowday et al. characterise commitment as the increased belief in the goals and values of the organisation, the enthusiasm to act on behalf of the institution, and the desire to remain a member of the organisation.[49] Commitment is more relevant today than in the past, as organisational changes such as restructuring and cultural revolutions are the likely driving factors.[50] In general, practitioners tend to associate high levels of engagement with increased productivity and lower turnover.[51] In an industry with increased competition and a shortage of skilled labour, it is important to understand how to not only minimise turnover but also increase productivity. Retaining employees with scarce and critical skills has become a top priority given the global shortage of certain skills. Allen and Meyer[52] present the three components of the model with the elements of: affective; continuance; and normative commitment. The three components have behavioural, cognitive, and attitudinal aspects. Affective commitment is associated with feelings and an attitudinally-based mindset.[53] According to Jaros[54] et al.[55] continuance commitment can 'simply' reflect an

[44] Waldman, D. A. et al. (2001), Does Leadership Matter? CEO Leadership Attributes and Profitability under Conditions of Perceived Environmental Uncertainty. *Academy of Management Journal*, *44*(1), pp. 134–143.

[45] Hailey, H. V., & Balogun, J. (2002), Devising Context Sensitive Approaches To Change: The Example of Glaxo Wellcome. *Long Range Planning*, pp. 153–178.

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[51] Hackett, R. D., Bycio, P., & Hausdorf, P. A. (1994), Further Assessments of Meyer and Allen's (1991), Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *79*(1), pp. 15–23.

[52] Allen, N. J., & Meyer, P. J. (1990), The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, *63*(1), pp. 1–18.

[53] Klein, H. J. et al. (2012), Reconceptualizing Workplace Commitment to Redress a Stretched Construct: Revisiting Assumptions and Removing Confounds. *Academy of Management Review*, *37*(1), pp. 130–151.

[54] Jaros, S. (2007), Meyer and Allen Model of Organizational Commitment: Measurement Issues. *The Icfai Journal of Organizational Behavior*.

[55] Jaros, S. J. et al. (1993), Effects of Continuance,

attachment-based on gains versus the cost. Therefore, one has to be cognitively aware of any such cost for a continuance bond to develop. Normative commitment, on the other hand, originates from an obligatory point of view. According to Jaros,[56] an instrument to measure commitment needs to identify a reference point (target) for the attachment, and a mindset from one of these three components. The reference would either be a career, profession, employer, immediate supervisor, institution, or a cause of action.[57]

This chapter presented a literature review explaining the relationship between leadership and employee commitment in the aviation industry. The subsequent discussion adds value to this body of work by exploring these areas within developing world contexts, identifying how leadership theory and practice play out in crisis moments. Specifically, it explores the phenomenon of the explosion of numerous unrest incidents by airline professionals and sought ways to increase employee engagement and improve overall performance. This was done in the context of the changing aviation industry in Kenya.

3. CRITICISM OF THE THEORIES

Transformational and transactional leadership have been widely reviewed by scholars. These leadership theories were introduced in 1978 by Burns, and Bass in 1985, who also discussed a Laissez-faire approach (lack of leadership) along with many others.[58] A difference of opinion exists on whether transformational and transactional are opposites or can survive together in an individual. According to Bass, leaders can be transformational, transactional, both or neither,

although Burns initially considers the two styles as incompatible. Bass and Riggio state that transformational leadership is something of an expansion of transactional leadership.[59]

3.1 Transformational leadership critique

The exemplary performance of transformational leadership also has its critics. According to Bass and Riggio, the debate over whether Hitler was a transformational leader led Bass to introduce the category of pseudo-transformational leadership. This category listed Osama bin Laden, Stalin and Pol Pot as leaders who used the dark side of charisma to lead their followers to destructive and even evil ends. Bass also notes that transformational leadership has an authoritarian dimension characterised by a reluctance to compromise, a sense of self-importance and a lack of tolerance for critics. Tourish[60] compares the idealistic dimension of transformational leadership to a cult-like following and cites Enron as an example of the negative effects of dysfunctional leadership.

There has also been more criticism of the sub-dimensions of transformational leadership. As much as this type of leadership is always associated with positive outcomes, it is often linked to other factors.[61] The four-factor structure includes: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration. Van Knippenberg & Sitkin[62] have questioned the four-factor structure because of the apparent overlap of elements. The different dimensions of transformational leadership remain undefined. Epitropaki & Martin[63] argue that operationalising it as a

Affective, and Moral Commitment on the Withdrawal Process: An Evaluation of Eight Structural Equation Models. *The Academy of Management Journal*, *36*(5), p. 951.

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[57] Klein, H. J., Molloy, J. C., & Brinsfield, C. T. (2012), Reconceptualizing Workplace Commitment to Redress a Stretched Construct: Revisiting Assumptions and Removing Confounds. *Academy of Management Review, 37*(1), pp. 130–151.

[58] Deinert, A., Homan, A. C., Boer, D., Voelpel, S. C., & Gutermann, D. (2015), Transformational leadership sub-dimensions and their link to leaders' personality and performance. *Leadership Quarterly*, *26*(6), pp. 1095–1120. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.08.001

[59] Bass, B., & Riggio, R. (2006), *Transformational Leadership* (2nd ed.), New York.

[60] Tourish, D. (2013), *The Dark Side of Transformational Leadership: A Critical Perspective', Development and Learning in Organizations*.

[61] Deinert, A., Homan, A. C., Boer, D., Voelpel, S. C., & Gutermann, D. (2015), Transformational leadership sub-dimensions and their link to leaders' personality and performance. *Leadership Quarterly*, *26*(6), pp. 1095–1120. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.08.001

[62] Van Knippenberg, D., & Sitkin, S. B. (2013), A critical assessment of charismatic transformational leadership research: back to the drawing board? *The Academy of Management*, *7*(1), pp. 1–60.

[63] Epitropaki, O., & Martin, R. (2013), Transformational-

unified construct makes it even more difficult to replicate the structure.

3.2 Transactional leadership critique

The limitations of transactional leadership are the primary source of criticism. According to Tavanti,[64] transactional leadership's limitation is the assumption that pure rewards and money constitute human motivation. There are various understandings of commitment that differ from those of Allen and Meyer, either because of the underlying philosophical perspective or because of the dimensions involved. Penley and Gould,[65] for example, state that instrumental and affective commitment are the two predominant conceptions of commitment, disregarding normative commitment as a separate dimension.

There is also disagreement about whether engagement should be considered an attitude or a behaviour.[66] González and Guillén,[67] on the other hand, propose a conceptualisation based on a rational explanation drawing on Aristotle's philosophical framework which explicitly considers the role of the will in human commitment. Solinger et al.[68] also argue for limiting the three-component model to a turnover intention model, thus limiting commitment to the affective component, which is consistent with the proposals of previous scholars.

According to Jaros and Klein et al.,[69] other scholars have argued for the merging of the dimension or for treating the components as distinct constructs apart from commitment. The arguments are based on the fact that, while all the three elements predict job turnover, only the affective component is significantly associated with other organisational citizenship behaviours.

Jaros states that recently developed constructs dealing with work attitudes pose a validity challenge to the three component model. For example, job satisfaction and job embeddedness, with the measurements of the constructs having higher correlations with individual items of the model than across the other components of the model. The relation between pilots and management follow Industrial relation theories, which evolved from human relation theories.[70]

In the case of disagreement, Fox's three 'frames of reference' determine whether the source of resolution is joint intervention or external agencies. For example, regulators or dominance.[71] Change creates an uncertain environment for both leaders and employees requiring leadership intervention to ensure employee engagement and optimal performance. The way pilots perceive the new environment and how leaders mediate affects organisational outcomes such as commitment or industrial action.

According to Xenikou,[72] affective identification with the organisation is generated by transformational leaders

transactional leadership and upward influence: the role of relative leader-member exchanges PErceived Organizational Support (POS). *Leadership Quarterly*, *24*, 299–315.

[64] Tavanti, M. (2008), *Transactional Leadership. Leadership Studies: The Key Concepts (Routledge Key Guides)*. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/1183835/Transactional_Leadership

[65] Penley, L. E., & Gould, S. (1988), Etzioni's Model of Organizational Involvement: A Perspective for Understanding Commitment to Organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *9*(1), p. 43.

[66] Jaros, S. J. et al. (1993), Effects of Continuance, Affective, and Moral Commitment on the Withdrawal Process: An Evaluation of Eight Structural Equation Models. *The Academy of Management Journal*, *36*(5), p. 951.

[67] González, F. T., & Guillén, M. (2007), Organizational Commitment: A Proposal for a Wider Ethical Conceptualization of "Normative Commitment."

Journal of Business Ethics, *78*(3), pp. 401–414.

[68] Solinger, O. et al. (2008), Beyond the three-component model of organizational commitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *93*(1), 70–83.

[69] Klein, H. J., Molloy, J. C., & Brinsfield, C. T. (2012), Reconceptualizing Workplace Commitment to Redress a Stretched Construct: Revisiting Assumptions and Removing Confounds. *Academy of Management Review*, *37*(1), pp. 130–151.

[70] Tapia, M., Ibsen, C. L., & Kochan, T. A. (2015), Mapping the frontier of theory in industrial relations: the contested role of worker representation. *Socio-Economic Review*, *13*(1), pp. 157–184.

[71] Budd, J. W., & Bhave, D. (2008), *Values, Ideologies and Frames of Reference in employment relations*. London: The Sage Handbook of Industrial Relations.

[72] Xenikou, A. (2017), *Transformational Leadership, Transactional Contingent Reward, and Organizational Identification: The Mediating Effect of Perceived Innovation and Goal Culture Orientations. Frontiers in Psychology*.

through the provision of meaning (sense-making), with work challenges further engaging people emotionally through communicated visions. Transactional leaders on the other hand, use the achievement of goals set as part of contingent rewards to affectively engage employees.

3.3 Justification of transformational and transactional leadership

Criticisms of both transformational and transactional leadership are insufficient to invalidate the core concept of the construct and the evidence linking the two styles with different outcomes. Yukl[73] argues that transformational leadership is a unified construct because the sub-dimensions of this leadership are highly correlated and therefore should not be conceptually distinguished.

Both leadership styles have historically been useful in predicting organisational behaviour. According to Judge and Bono,[74] drawing on previous research, transformational leadership predicts, among other things, commitment and motivation. Contingent reward, on the other hand, exceptionally predicts subordinates' satisfaction with the leader and active management, another element of transactional leadership that is negatively related to satisfaction. The overlap of the two styles through contingent reward should not be a problem, as this dimension is a different and easily defined measurement and its predictor is precise.

3.4 Justification of the three-component model of commitment

Criticism on commitment, as discussed above, has improved the three-component model resulting in various efforts to develop measurements. Although the concept of the model as a bond based on the rational approach differs from the description in the earlier literature, it is still multidimensional like Allen and Meyer's model. Proponents of this approach advocate

for a qualitative method that allows individuals to express how they conceptualise their experiences in relation to commitment.

Meyer et al.[75] note that commitment is only one force that affects motivation and is generally considered long-term compared to motivation. The main differences between the constructs of workplace embeddedness and commitment are that the latter includes only the organisational dimension, whereas workplace embeddedness includes a community dimension. Another difference is that commitment focuses on the specifics of the reasons for attachment, while job embeddedness tries to find out the level of attachment without the reasons.[76]

To sum up, transactional and transformational leadership both affect employee commitment in the airline industry. Although the subject has been examined by various researchers, there is still a gap in the literature for the Kenya aviation industry. For example, according to Judge and Bono,[77] although the results of their research suggest that transformational leadership is effective in influencing organisational outcomes and perceptions of leadership effectiveness, there is still room in several areas, such as the link between leadership style and employee engagement in particular.

This missing link is a gap that this paper attempts to fill. This research attempts to extend leadership style studies to the aviation industry, more specifically to a Kenyan company at a time when competition is increasing due to deregulation. The following chapter examines the research methodology that the researchers employed in order to collect data for this study.

4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The positive impact of transformational leadership is evident in the aviation industry. The leadership environment at Southwest Airlines is a good example. A

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[73] Yukl, G. et al. (2013), An improved measure of ethical leadership. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational*, *20*(1), pp. 38-48.

[74] Judge, T. A., & Bono, J. E. (2000), Five-factor model of personality and transformational leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *85*(5), pp. 751–765.

[75] Meyer, J. P., Becker, T. E., & Vandenberghe, C. (2004), Employee Commitment and Motivation: A Conceptual Analysis and Integrative Model. *Journal of Applied*

Psychology. (Theoretical Models and Conceptual Analyses), *89*(6), pp. 991–1007.

[76] Crossley, C. D. et al. (2007), Development of a global measure of job embeddedness and integration into a traditional model of voluntary turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *92*(4), pp. 1031–1042.

[77] Judge, T. A., & Bono, J. E. (2000), Five-factor model of personality and transformational leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *85*(5), pp. 751–765.

study by Hallowell,[78] based on the company, found that employee motivation resulted from the value the company created for its employees. In an attempt to study transformational leadership in Kenya and Africa, Walumbwa et al.[79] showed that transformational leadership is applicable in Kenya. According to Judge and Bono, meta-analytic evidence suggests that transformational leadership influences organisational outcomes and perceptions of leadership effectiveness.

Thus, there is a clear link between leadership style and employee engagement but understanding the nature of that link is less well understood. Judge and Bono also point out that most research on transformational behaviour has a military or educational background. Therefore, there is a need to extend it to other professions and work environments.

The purpose of this research is to extend the studies on leadership style to the airline industry and in particular to a Kenyan airline that is experiencing a period of increased competition as a result of deregulation. The situation is similar to the time when transformational leadership became popular in the United States in the 1980s. At that time, institutions had to be revitalised to survive in the face of increased competition by reducing regulations.

4.1 Methodology

Williams[80] notes that research is a systematic process that involves the definition of goals, management of data, and communication of results within an established framework, according to the existing guidelines. Different methods of research are applicable during such a process. These include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Quantitative methods deal with the quantification of data and generalisation of the results. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, contribute towards gaining an understanding of people's situations in various context-based setups, applying differing perceptions.[81] When compared with quantitative methods, qualitative methods are less structured because they formulate and construct new theories.[82] The third method of research is the mixed method, which involves the integration of methods of data collection or analysis of quantitative and qualitative research approaches.[83]

The methodology adopted for this study is a mixed methodology due to the value it adds to research as opposed to conducting a purely quantitative or qualitative study. The technique allows triangulation, which increases the validity of the survey.[84] Moreover, it enables researchers to obtain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon.[85] The main argument for using a mixed-methods approach to research transactional and transformational leadership is that the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods provides a better understanding of the research problem than using a single approach.[86]

Mixing methods is justified by McKim's[87] argument that mixed methods add value to the research, as opposed to conducting a purely quantitative or qualitative study.

[78] Hallowell, R. (1996), Southwest Airlines: A Case Study Linking Employee Needs Satisfaction and Organizational Capabilities to Competitive Advantage. *Human Resource Management*, *35*(4), pp. 513–534.

[79] Walumbwa, F. O., Orwa, B., Wang, P., & Lawler, J. J. (2005), 'Transformational leadership, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction: A comparative study of Kenyan and U.S. financial firms. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, *16*(2), 235.

[80] Williams, C. (2007), Research Methods. *Journal of Business & Economic Research*, *5*(3).

[81] Bengtsson, M. (2016), How to plan and perform a qualitative study using content analysis. *Nursing Plus Open*, 28–14.

[82] Leedy, P.; Ormrod, J. (2001), *Practical research: Planning and design* ((7th Editi). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

[83] Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2009), *Foundations of mixed-methods research: Integrating quantitative and*

qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences. Foundations of mixed-methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

[84] Greene, J., & Caracelli, V. (1997), *Advances in mixed methods evaluation: The challenge and benefits of integrating diverse paradigms*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

[85] Hurmerinta-Peltomaki, L. Nummela, N. (2006), Mixed methods in international business research: A value-added perspective. *Management International Review*, pp. 439–459

[86] Creswell, J. (2003), *Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

[87] McKim, C. A. (2017), The Value of Mixed Methods Research: A Mixed Methods Study. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. [Online] 11 (2), pp. 202–222.

Hurmerinta-Peltomaki & Nummela state that the added value is to increase the validity of results, support the collection of second-hand data sources, and promote knowledge building. Greene and Caracelli state that the method allows for triangulation, which increases the validity of the study. This method allows the researcher to gain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon. Integrating components into mixed methods gives the reader more confidence in the results and conclusions drawn from a study.[88]

Bass and Avolio[89] developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire form 5 (MLQ-5X) to assess the extent to which an individual is a transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire leader. The MLQ-5X was developed due to limitations of the original MLQ. The MLQ-5X measures five areas of transformational leadership: (a) idealized traits, (b) idealized behaviors, (c) inspirational motivation, (d) intellectual stimulation, and (e) individual consideration. Data collection for this study was done by administering questionnaires using an online tool. In developing the tool, the MLQ (5X) measures for leadership[90] and the Meyer and Powell derived measures for engagement were modified.

A sample of 30 pilots working for the Kenyan aviation industry was drawn from the target population using the techniques of random sampling and snowballing. In purposive sampling, participants are selected purposively based on the most relevant information. In snowballing, one person from each population group is approached and asked to recommend the researcher to others in the target community, creating a chain effect.[91] The analysis utilised descriptive statistics, using data processed through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Thematic analysis followed, creating sense from the qualitative data. The researchers performed a correlation analysis to test the relationship between dependent variables (leadership behaviour of managers) and independent variables (commitment of pilots) for the study.

5. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The mixed-method approach adopted proved effective during data collection in this phenomenological case study. Out of the 38 participants invited through emails, phone calls, and social media platform (WhatsApp) with a target of 30 respondents. 34 responded, a rate of 89.5%. The widely used Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was adopted to check the internal consistency of the quantitative data. All the Alpha coefficients ranged between 0.60 and 0.8, which, according to Bryman & Cramer,[92] is acceptable in basic research. The validity of quantitative investigations is ensured by the appropriateness of the tools used, the process involved, and data handling.[93]

For this study, a clear correlation between the research methodology and theory was established and justified, while thematic analysis was used to process the qualitative data. The results are per the male-dominated industry, with males making up 94% and females 6% of the responses. The age group of the respondent was mainly between 30-39 years, at 91 %, 40-49 years at 6%, and the remaining being under 30 years. The results are consistent with the male-dominated industry, with 94% of responses coming from men and 6% from women. The age range of respondents was mainly between 30 and 39 years old (91%), between 40 and 49 years old (6%), and the rest were under 30 years old.

On work experience with employer prior to a period of unrest and any separation or intent to separate due to changes in labour relations: 76.5% of respondents had worked for an organisation in Kenya for 5-9 years prior to the unrest, with the remainder between 0-4 years, representing 23.5%. The majority (52.9%) of respondents are still working for the company where they experienced the unrest, 32.4% have considered separating from that particular company. 11.8% separated from their employer during an ongoing

[88] O'Cathain, A. et al. (2007), Why, and how, mixed methods research is undertaken in health services research in England: A mixed methods study. *BMC Health Services Research*. [Online] pp. 7 (85).

[89] Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1996), Multifactor leadership questionnaire. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*.

[90] Bass, B., & Riggio, R. (2006), *Transformational Leadership* (2nd ed.). New York.

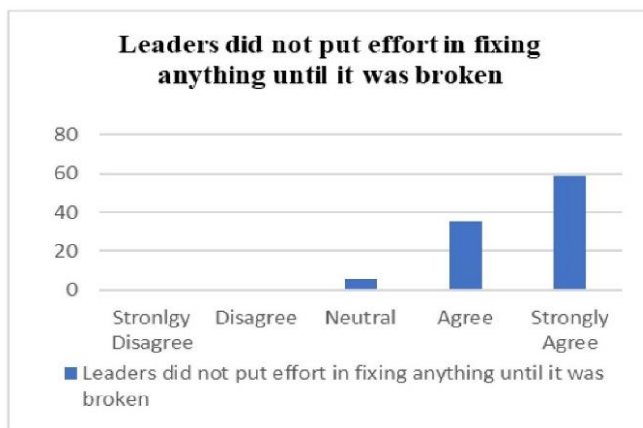[91] Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R., & Jackson, P. (2012), *Management Research* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

[92] Bryman, A., & Cramer, D. (2012), *Quantitative data analysis with IBM SPSS 17, 18 & 19: A guide for social scientists.* Routledge.

[93] Leung, L. (2015), Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 4(3), p. 324.

labour dispute, and 2.9% left the company after the labour dispute.

In terms of the highest educational qualification, professional qualification (transport/airline pilot licence) was the most important with 50% of all respondents. 41.2% also had a university degree, while only 8.8% had a university degree.

Figures 2 and 3: Passive Management

5.1 Descriptive Analysis

According to Marshall and Jonker[94] descriptive statistics should be applied when one wants to summarise and describe data. The summary below is actualised through frequency tables, percentages, and graphs, from the data drawn from the various items loaded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from, strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3) to disagree (2) and strongly disagree being (1). To determine the prevailing leadership style perceived by the pilots, nine questions adapted from MLQ (5X) contained in Bass & Riggio's, were loaded on the 5-point Likert scale.

The results indicated that the perceived leadership style of the Kenyan airline managers was transactional' with a slight positive idealised influence. Figures 2 and 3 indicate clearly that none of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the presence of passive management by exception. The only other items above the midpoint were a contingent reward predictor, a negatively worded intellectual simulation predictor and

an idealised influence predictor, which is a transformational leadership behaviour feature.

The study examined the role of leadership on affective and continuous commitment during uncertain times using questions adapted from Meyer & Powell, modified for the study, and then loaded onto a five-point Likert scale as previously described. The results indicate that respondents showed affective attachment to their company of employment, albeit to a small degree, even during the period of unrest.

The results show that the cumulative score for continuous commitment was just below the mean. However, respondents strongly agreed that too much disruption would have occurred in their lives if they had chosen to leave their respective organisations at that time. Affective commitment was slightly above the mean, as shown in the following two tables.

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[94] Marshall, G. and Jonker, L. (2010), 'An introduction to descriptive statistics: *A review and practical guide', Radiography,* 16(4), pp. e1–e7. doi: 10.1016/j.radi.2010.01.001.

Table 1: Mean of the leadership style elements

Leadership style Element	No. of Respondents	Min	Max	Mean
Leadership instilled pride in me by association	34	1	5	2.0294
Leaders specified strong sense of purpose	34	1	5	2.7353
Leaders said what to be done without expecting questions	34	1	5	3.7647
Leaders articulated a compelling vision of the future	34	1	5	2.2059
Leaders sort diff. perspectives during problem solving	34	1	5	2.2353
Leaders encouraged staff empowerment	34	1	5	2.2059
Rewards were primarily based on present targets	34	1	5	2.8824
Leaders did not put effort in fixing anything until it was broken	34	1	5	4.5294
Leaders attention was mostly focused on mistakes, deviations and irregularity	34	1	5	4.4706
Total	34			3.0065

Table 2: Mean of the affective commitment elements

Affective Commitment Element	No. of Respondents	Min	Max	Mean
Would have been happy to spend the rest of my career with the organization	34	1	5	3.5294
Enjoyed positively discussion the organization with outsiders	34	1	5	2.9118
Really felt as if the organization's problems were personal	34	1	5	3.2353
Thought I could easily become as attached to another organization as I was in this one	34	1	5	2.6471
Felt like 'a part of family' at the organization	34	1	5	2.9412
Felt emotionally attached to the organization	34	1	5	3.1176
The organization had a great deal of personal meaning for me	34	1	5	3.7059
Felt a strong sense of belonging to the organization	34	1	5	3.1765

Table 3: Mean of continuance commitment element

Continuance commitment Element	No. of Respondents	Min	Max	Mean
One of the major reason I continued to work for KQ is that leaving would have required considerable personal sacrifice-another organization may not have matched the benefits I had there	34	1	5	3.1471
A negative consequence of leaving the organization would have been the lack of available employment alternatives	34	1	5	2.1471
Too much in my life would have been disrupted if I decided to leave the organization at that time	34	1	5	3.9706
The costs associated with leaving the organization would be far greater than the benefits of staying	34	1	5	2.7941
Felt I had too few options to consider leaving KQ	34	1	5	1.8824
Had invested too much time in KQ to consider working elsewhere	34	1	5	2.5000
I would not have left the organization because of what I stood to lose	34	1	5	2.4118
Continued to work for the organization because I did not believe another organization could offer the benefits I had at KQ.	34	1	5	1.7059
Total	34			2.4699

5.2 Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis identifies topics and patterns in qualitative data. It provides core competencies that are useful for performing many other types of analysis.[95] The themes identified below emerged spontaneously and without researcher influence. They provide rich contextual information that helps in understanding the relationship between perceived leadership, commitment, and other variables and organisational outcomes. These variables include performance and turnover, which are stages of the withdrawal process.

  i. Leadership or management attributes and results: these include challenges of credibility, mismanagement, attitude, and poor leadership.
  ii. Embeddedness in the workplace: this is explained by respondents choosing to stay with the organisation, mostly related to personal reasons such as commitment to local family, patriotism towards the country, local investment, as well as pride in working in their respective companies.

  iii. Sense-making: explained by the fact that respondents continued to work for an organisation mainly due to a personal interpretation. Some embraced the situation and used it as an opportunity to improve contact with the current leadership.
  iv. Dysfunctional work relationships: These were characterised by labour unrest, conflict, and lack of appreciation. Some felt there was a lot of aloofness and inaccuracy, coupled with mistreatment and targeted vindictiveness.

Other forms of commitment, such as residual and normative, also emerged. Other themes, such as seniority issues, also emerged. Some respondents chose to stay to protect their rank and position with regard to future promotions. The opportunity cost of moving to other airlines that emerged in the results focused on the geographic location of the alternatives, which represented a social value. In a single case study, the challenge of presenting rich qualitative data is easily overcome by simply presenting a relatively complete

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[95] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006), Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in* *Psychology*, 3, pp. 77–101.

rendition of the story in the text.[96] The discussion below features mainly on commitment and leadership style as the main topics of research with the emerging themes only outlined in connection to the two.

5.2.1 Commitment

The descriptive analysis depicts an affective commitment measure slightly above the midpoint. From the qualitative data, a positive attitude towards commitment originated from; a "Sense of pride and belonging," "bonds with colleagues," making sense of the situation through enhanced interaction with management, and parental relationships within an organisation.

Continuance commitment elements cumulatively were below midpoint as indicated on table 3 above. Personal sacrifice associated with leaving, and matching of benefits by other organisations items, scored slightly above, while, too many personal investments in the organisation score, was precisely at midpoint. These participants' perceptions, could have been informed by the feedback that although alternatives existed, they were either perceived to be few or outside the country, and many individuals had other attachments locally.

According to Cohen,[97] commitment to an organisation has a strong link to the withdrawal process. From the findings, it is evident the various stages of withdrawal, some directly attributed to leadership, were visible in the case study. Faith, job embeddedness, and job crafting emerged alongside commitment as factors that influenced turnover intentions.

5.2.2 Organisation outcomes as influenced by commitment (excluding turnover)

The first stage of withdrawal revolves around behaviours associated with being an employee of an organisation. Issues of dysfunctional work relationships arose. An example is a response that: "The work environment has been overcrowded by

interdepartmental antagonism and blame." The reference to lack of motivation and demoralisation by participants implies a decline in performance. An example is the statement, "Morale was at an all-time low, and there was no longer any joy or pride in going to work." The findings are consistent with those of Cheema and Asrarul-Haq[98] and Weakliem and Frenkel[99] that there is a linear relationship between morale and performance, which is reinforced by the need for quality products.

Industrial action, also classified under organisational citizenship, is the only form of absenteeism deduced from the findings. As stated earlier, industrial unrest arises, only if injustice is perceived, usually emanating from the (negative) perceptions of those in leadership roles held by employees. One respondent who changed employers after the period of turmoil said that he first considered leaving during the period under study.

5.2.3 Turnover as a commitment outcome

Descriptive analyses indicate that a significant number of 32.4% of those who are currently employed but are considering leaving. From the qualitative data, it appears that leaving was highly motivated by factors outside of the organisation. Factors cited included: moving to another country, different compensation, and appraisal packages at different companies. Patriotism, faith, and local business interests were also cited as additional factors motivating participants to stay. According to Lee et al.,[100] the factors of commitment, lack of alternatives, and dissatisfaction dominate in studies predicting voluntary turnover theory. They add that despite the validity of the approach, the studies have a modest success rate in predicting turnover.

5.2.4 Leadership implications

All elements of transactional leadership were rated positively, with no single item of management by exception rated as "disagree" or "strongly disagree." The element of idealised influence of transformational

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[96] Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007), Theory building from cases: opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, *50*(1), pp. 25–32.

[97] Cohen, A. (1993), Work commitment in relation to withdrawal intentions and union effectiveness. *Journal of Business Research. (Loyalty in a Multi-Commitment World*, 26(1), 75–90. https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963(93)90044-P

[98] Cheema, J. R., & Asrar-ul-Haq, M. (2017), Effects of

staff participation, morale and shortage on organizational performance: an international survey. *Issues in Educational Research*, 27(4), pp. 677–696.

[99] Weakliem, D. L., & Frenkel, S. J. (2006), Morale and Workplace Performance'. *Work & Occupations*, *33*(3335).

[100] Lee, T. W. et al. (2004), The Effects of Job Embeddedness on Organizational Citizenship, Job Performance, Volitional Absences, and Voluntary Turnover. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(5), pp. 711–722.

leadership was also evident. Thus, the predominant perceived leadership behaviour was transactional. The transactional behavioural component associated with caring commitment and conditional reward was rated weakly positive (see Table 1). This is consistent with Podsakoff et al.'s hypothesis that contingent rewards are effective in determining organisational outcomes and behaviours such as engagement and performance.[101] Affective commitment, mentioned earlier, was only slightly positive, with the rationale based mainly on the community dimension and thus based on the theory of embeddedness in the workplace rather than the theory of commitment.

Only one person indicated that interaction with management had improved their understanding of the prevailing situation. This close contact was due to the fact that the interviewee was assigned to ground duties at the time, as opposed to the usual function of pilots who fly: other, perceived enforcement of management through intimidation. Threats such as warnings and loss of job for minor infractions were the key power enforcement tools that caused some of the employees to disengage from an organisation. However, two of the respondents overcame the inadequacies of current leadership and redefined their role by seeking answers and not accepting the status quo. The results also indicate that management has shifted its goals to cost savings, with one possible management solution being to lay off employees and hire from abroad.

6. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings indicated the presence of transactional leadership, marked by undisputed management by exception, and a weak contingent reward within the company under study. The objectives of the study aimed to understand how to boost performance and address the issue of widespread industrial conflicts and voluntary turnover in an industry that has a scarce workforce globally. The findings not only cast a light on the link between leadership and commitment but also

brought forth other factors at play in the phenomenon under study.

6.1 Findings in Relation to Theory

The findings from this study are consistent with those of Halbesleben and Tolbert[102] that there is an implicit motivation to work in one's own country or in a company whose main shareholders are locals. For example, some respondents affirmed that they preferred not to leave the country despite numerous job opportunities abroad. The plausible explanation was that they were not willing to relocate with their family to another country.

The finding of traces of idealised influence alongside the predominant transactional leadership follows Bass' argument that transactional and transformational leadership elements can exist simultaneously. The lower level of commitment seen alongside identified leadership reflects Tavanti's assertion that transactional leadership may be inadequate when the demand for skills is higher than the supply.[103] Aside from the findings supporting the theories discussed in the literature review, job embeddedness emerged as an issue significantly influencing pilots' intentions to quit. In addition, job crafting and trust emerged as factors that helped respondents remain emotionally attached to the airline during uncertain times.

6.2 Impact on leadership effectiveness

Before adapting a leadership style, the management should be aware of its limitations. A weakness of transactional leadership is the assumption that monetary rewards can serve as the basis for human motivation.[104] Cost-cutting emerged from the study as a possible limitation to the contingent rewards available to the leaders. Besides, promotions based on a seniority list also constrained a reward-based administration.

Based on the limitations of transactional leadership, the study supports Bass' advancement of moving from transactional to transformational leadership, to manage

[101] Podsakoff, N. P., Podsakoff, P. M., & Kuskova, V. V. (2010), Dispelling misconceptions and providing guidelines for leader reward and punishment behavior. *Business Horizons*, *53*(3), pp. 291–303. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2010.01.003.

[102] Halbesleben, K. L., & Tolbert, C. M. (2014), Small, local, and loyal: How firm attributes affect workers'

organizational commitment. *Local Economy*, *29*(8), pp. 795–809.

[103] Tavanti, M. (2008), *Transactional Leadership. Leadership Studies: The Key Concepts (Routledge Key Guides)*. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/1183835/Transactional_Leadership

[104] ibid

the recurring industrial unrest in the aviation industry. In support of the furtherance, Bass argues that the promise of reward depends on the leaders' control of the same and followers fear of punishment. Going on to give inadequate resources, and seniority list, and required qualification as items that limit the leader's influence on reward, while policy, organisational politics, and contracts, limit control over punishment. Based on the limitations of transactional leadership, the study supports Bass' suggestion to move from transactional to transformational leadership to address the recurring industrial unrest in the aviation industry. In support of promotion, Bass argues that the promise of reward depends on the leader's control over it and the follower's fear of punishment. He cites insufficient resources, seniority and required skills, as factors that limit the leader's influence over reward, while politics, organisational policies, and contracts limit control over punishment.

The report also supports Bass's recommendations that top leaders, hiring, and promotions should be oriented toward transformational leadership in order to reap the benefits associated with this style. If management intends to motivate through rewards, performance should determine rewards. Reasons for rewards should be specified and separated from personality to avoid animosity and the appearance of favouritism; they should also be timely, consistent for all individuals, and equivalent to the action.[105]

6.3 Impact of change

Leadership is the be-all and end-all in the change process. People are involved in all major organisational activities, and the future of organisations is linked to change.[106] A good example of this is the industry approach to the COVID-19 crisis. OECD[107] discusses how the pandemic led to a drastic decline in passenger numbers that threatened the existence of many companies. Rucinski, in an article in Reuters news agency, reports how United Airlines is negotiating a deal with pilots to save jobs by accepting a pay cut while they remain on duty, allowing the company to recover quickly once the industry recovers.[108] It's a common interest approach. Cathay Pacific opted for a dominant approach. According to Freed,[109] citing company union officials, the airline would force pilots to take forced pay cuts, a move that was not only short-sighted but draconian, would cause resentment, and would be remembered for years to come. The study recommends that leaders in the aviation sector realise that workers depend on their leadership during change, especially when labour disputes arise in the industry. The effectiveness of leadership during change impacts commitment to the organisation and behaviour as a citizen of the organisation, including turnover. Leaders should consider the impact of behaviours the pilots might engage in if they choose to remain with the organisation with reduced commitment

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of the study are consistent with the theoretical framework and other research findings discussed in the previous chapter. The identification of traces of idealised influence alongside the predominant transactional leadership follows Bass' argument that transactional and transformational leadership elements can exist simultaneously. The unfavourable effect of leadership on commitment is consistent with the argument that both leadership styles affect affection for the organisation. Through persuasive communication and symbolic action, transformational leaders build enthusiasm,[110] whereas transactional leaders build affectionate commitment through the achievement of current goals.[111] The lower commitment observed in

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identified leadership is consistent with Tavanti's argument that transactional leadership may be insufficient when skill demand is higher than supply, although it is effective in other constellations.[112]

Industrial action resulting from perceptions of leadership problems, sometimes ending in voluntary turnover, either due to fear of future job loss or insensitivity, is consistent with the concept of the industry relationship presented in this paper. The different sources of commitment found are consistent with the argument of Klein[113] that commitment is an attachment and arises from a rational mindset.[114]

Apart from the findings supporting the theories discussed in the literature review, job embeddedness emerged as an issue that significantly influences pilots' turnover intention. Job crafting and trust appeared as factors that contributed to respondents remaining emotionally attached to the airline. According to Mitchell et al.,[115] job involvement is described as an intertwined web in which a person forms ties to various targets both at work and in society, with the number and strength of ties determining attachment to an organisation. In this case study, connections to family, country, friends, and personal businesses seemed to steady the ship when leadership failed, with some participants relied on faith and job crafting to provide a sense of hope and purpose. Job crafting involves employees changing the official job description by altering the scope of work tasks, work relationship, and/or perception of work in order to cope with adversity or achieve a positive self-image.[116] Some pilots chose to take on mentoring roles, others challenged leadership, and still others changed their view of work to include it as a source of income for their families.

The study achieved its goal of identifying the predominant leadership practices in the Kenyan aviation industry. The results indicate the presence of transactional leadership, characterised by undisputed management by exception and weak conditional rewards; idealised influence was also found, albeit to a small extent. The mean of cumulative affective commitment was 3.1581, which is 63% when expressed as a percentage; continuous commitment was below the mean. The qualitative data collected helped to establish the relationship between perceived leadership and pilots' perceived commitment.

The objectives aimed to understand how to boost performance and address the problem of widespread labour disputes and voluntary turnover in an industry with a globally scarce workforce. The findings not only shed light on the relationship between leadership and engagement in the aviation industry, but also bring to light other factors at play in the phenomenon under study.

During the course of the study, gaps emerged that will contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon in the future. One of these, the inclusion of the views of industry executives, would help clarify the picture. Replication of the study in other institutions and countries would be beneficial for cross-case analyses. Finally, the inclusion of other constructs associated with commitment in other studies, such as job embeddedness, will add to the body of knowledge about how leadership influences pilot performance and turnover during the change process.

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