

# **AN EMPIRICAL SURVEY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TACTICAL INFLUENCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF FREIGHT FORWARDING FIRMS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Turbulent global markets characterised by uncertainty, heightened competition, shortened product life cycles and shifts in customer preferences have put organizational effectiveness at jeopardy. The impact of changing trends in international trade has been more pronounced especially in the freight-forwarding sector. Unprecedented occurrences have caused a drift from the conventional organizational management to a more dynamic approach that calls for tactical leaders who can assert influence and get things done for effectiveness. Freight forwarding firms in Kenya play a critical role in generating value and revenue. The logistics sector contributed 5.8% of Kenya's GDP in 2017 and has been increasing ever since. However, logistics performance indices have shown Kenya lagging behind other leading African countries including South Africa, Egypt, and Tanzania. Kenya's low index is attributable to factors that have continued to impair trade facilitation. This study sought to determine the effect of tactical influence on organizational effectiveness of freight forwarding firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The Leader-Member Exchange Theory anchored the study, which adopted descriptive and explanatory research designs from pragmatic philosophical view.

The target population was 400 freight-forwarding firms practicing in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Ninety-two firms were selected using simple random sampling technique from which 276 respondents were selected using stratified random sampling technique. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential techniques while qualitative data was analysed thematically. The study found that tactical influence was to a high extent practiced and emphasized. Correlational results revealed that tactical influence had a significant positive correlation ( $r=0.295$ ,  $p<.001$ ) with organizational effectiveness while regression results revealed that tactical influence had a significant positive effect on organizational effectiveness. Extracted tactical influence dimensions were found to apply in the freight-forwarding sector. The study concluded that tactical influence had significant effect on the effectiveness of freight forwarding firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. These findings contribute to the body of knowledge and hold promise for providing a deeper understanding of the link between tactical influence and organizational effectiveness.

**Key words:** Freight Forwarding Firms, Organizational Effectiveness, Tactical Influence

## **INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of modern globalization and internationalization in recent years coupled with evolution of markets has necessitated the need for more tactical leaders who fully understand the business environments in which they operate (Grant et al., 2017). The turbulent global market has put organizational effectiveness at jeopardy. This is occasioned by among other

factors heightened competition, shortened product life cycles, research and development, innovation, as well as shifts in customer preferences. The impact has been more pronounced especially in the logistics and supply chain sector including freight forwarding firms (Min, 2015). These unprecedented occurrences have caused a drift from the conventional organizational management to a more dynamic approach calling for tactical leaders as opposed to managers (Antonakis, 2018).

More precisely, modern business scope requires tactical leaders who use many tactics to assert influence and get things done (Daft, 2015; Yukl, 2013). Tactics include strategies such as appealing to a higher vision, rational persuasion, liking, reciprocity, developing allies, and making direct appeals. Cohen and Bradford (2017) argued that the common feature in all influence tactics is exchange, which involves an individual exchanging something of value for what is needed by others. Further, tactics are based more on the application of soft personal power, than the hard positional power or the use of punishment and rewards (Daft, 2015).

The demand for tactical leadership among the freight-forwarding firms is crucial due to challenges facing the sector, complexities, and cost implications in the international cargo clearance and transport processes (Brdulak & Brdulak, 2021). For instance, the cost of border delays relating to procedural requirements and lost business opportunities was over 15 % of the total value of goods traded globally in 2022 (World Bank, 2022). Issues of concern also arise from cultural shocks, price instability, logistical costs, and government regulations. Further, underdeveloped infrastructure, lack of expertise, inadequate education and training, new technology, IT security, systems incompatibility, and reliability add to the challenges (Brdulak & Brdulak, 2021).

The concept of organizational effectiveness is founded on the idea that business organizations should be adaptable to changing contextual environments. Adaptive strategies may include firms developing their workforce and optimally utilizing available resources to meet goals (Kareem, 2019). The responsibility of shaping organizations to perform well and meet both individual and organizational goals lies with leadership (Daft, 2015; Kasapoglu, 2018). Tactical leadership is thus linked directly to organizational effectiveness (Antonakis, 2018). An important measure of effectiveness of logistics systems is Logistics Performance Index (LPI), which is generated by World Bank surveys (World Bank, 2022). The index ranges from one to five, and analyses differences between countries in respect of logistics costs, clearance procedures, and infrastructure. High indices imply superior performance of a country's logistics system. The latest rating was compiled in 2018 for the period 2012-2018, and according to Ojala et al. (2018), the highest mean LPI globally was 4.2 (Germany) while the lowest was at 2.0 (Afghanistan, Haiti, and Somalia). South Africa topped the African continent with an LPI of 3.51 followed by Egypt at 2.95, while Nigeria stood at 2.59. Mean LPI for Tanzania in East Africa was 2.88 while it stood at 2.63 in Kenya (World Bank, 2022). These statistics suggest that there is low logistics effectiveness in Kenya when compared with peer countries in the region and others around the world. The low performance is associated with poor administration and clearance delays, inefficient or insufficient communication and transport systems, bureaucratic procedures, excessive documentation, poor coordination

between agencies, and corruption, among other factors impairing trade facilitation (Muoki & Moronge, 2021; Ndonye & Odiyo, 2022).

Logistics sector is a major trade facilitator in any economy, and its actors are key players in the international supply chain (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, 2019; Huang et al., 2019; Min, 2015). In addition to the traditional customs clearance services, freight forwarders also offer a variety of cargo related services including freight consolidation, transportation, warehousing, packaging, and supply chain security (Song & Yeo, 2017). Given the substantial contribution to national and regional economies, leadership among the freight forwarding firms is therefore critical to the sector's effectiveness. Effectiveness designates efficiencies in performance and achievement (Asgari et al., 2020; Kulachai et al., 2021; Northouse, 2019). This implies that freight-forwarding firms should adopt strategies embracing superior operational performance for effectiveness.

In Kenya, Freight forwarding firms are licensed as Customs agents for the declaration or clearance of cargo by the Commissioner of customs and border control under section 145 of the East African Community Customs Management Act (EAC, 1999-2021). According to Kenya International Freight and Warehousing Association, there were 400 duly licensed freight-forwarding firms operating in Nairobi City County in 2022 who were its members. Notable firms include Bolloré Africa Logistics (K) Ltd, Kuehne + Nagel Ltd, DHL Worldwide Express (K) Ltd, Freight Forwarders Kenya Ltd, Sheffield Cargo Logistics Ltd, Rapid Kate Services Ltd, Acceler Global Logistics, and Ken freight East Africa Ltd, most of which have a significant level of foreign equity (Arnold et al., 2011). Ken Research (2019) records that international firms control about 70% of the freight forwarding market in Kenya.

Freight forwarding firms in Kenya play a critical role in generating value and revenue. For instance, the sector contributed 5.8% of Kenya's GDP in 2017 increasing to 8% in 2019 and 10% in 2022. The contribution is projected to increase to 15% by 2030. However, the sector has continually faced internal leadership wrangles at the national level, a battered public image, service delivery delays and unpredictability (Freight Logistics, 2021; Kenya Association of Manufacturers, 2020). These challenges have led to firms' ineffectiveness as reflected in the falling trends in LPI scores nationally and concerns on service offering (Kenya Ports Authority, 2020; World Bank, 2022). The need to address these challenges is therefore urgent, and especially to meet business opportunities emerging from new and improved port and transport infrastructures within the region.

Existing literature suggests that leadership is key to achieving firm effectiveness (Jones, 2013, Ivancevich et al., 2014). However, most empirical studies on leadership and organizational effectiveness have been done outside Kenya, and focus has been on organizational performance as the dependent variable. Only a few empirical studies have focused on freight forwarding firms, with attention not given to organizational effectiveness (Kamau, 2020; Karingithi, 2020; Muoki & Moronge, 2021; Riitho, 2018). Furthermore, past empirical studies show no common approach in measuring organizational effectiveness in the freight forwarding industry. Thus,

there is need for a study to determine the effect of tactical influence on organizational effectiveness of freight forwarding firms in Kenya.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The study reviewed both theoretical and empirical literature on tactical influence aimed at identifying research gaps.

### **Theoretical Review**

The study was anchored on Leader–Member Exchange Theory (LMX). Initially advanced by Graen and Cashman (1975), Dansereau et al. (1975), and Graen (1976), LMX Theory focuses on the types of relationships leaders establish with individual followers to realise collective goals. The theory is built on two types of relationships: increased role responsibilities (in-group); and defined roles of the contract (out-group). Leaders accord members in the in-group more support and attention, while those in the out-group are treated based on what the formal engagement contract provides (Daft, 2015). A leader with an in-group can do more work effectively than working without one, because in-group members unlike those in the out-group are willing to do more through innovative ways and thereby advance common goals (Northouse, 2019).

The focus of LMX theory later shifted to the qualities of relationships that aim at achieving desirable outcomes for the followers, leaders, groups, and the whole organization (Andersen et al., 2020). In the later paradigm, it was construed that leaders should find ways to make the entire work unit an in-group by building relationships with all their followers for greater and positive impact. LMX Theory thus operates by laying emphasis on the superior relationships leaders develop with followers to advance the goals of the organization and individuals. As a result, tactical leaders come up with tactics through which to develop and maintain positive relationships with all stakeholders in the organization for effectiveness.

The theory suffers criticisms in being simplistic and assuming that leaders will automatically be able to eliminate conflicts and create relationships with all followers (Northouse, 2019). Still, how high quality leader–member relationships start and develop is not clear in the theory, as well as the strategies followers may use to gain access to the in-group (Bullington, 2016). Moreover, how contextual factors may affect LMX relationships is not fully addressed. It is also argued that most of the LMX measures are not sufficiently grounded in theory (Andersen et al., 2020).

Notwithstanding the criticisms, this study finds LMX Theory applicable in anchoring tactical influence and organizational effectiveness due to its emphasis on the need for effective communication across the organization, while making two-way relationships central to the leadership process. It also recognizes the exercise of fairness and equality by leaders in dealing with followers for positive outcomes. The theory thus contributes and points on the kind of dyadic relationships leaders and followers should develop in enhancing effectiveness in freight-

forwarding firms. Furthermore, LMX supports organizational effectiveness in explaining why some firms can be more effective than others while operating in similar business environments.

## **Empirical Review**

The study reviewed literature on tactical influence and organizational outcomes. Influence constitutes getting others to take lead in believing something, thinking in certain ways, or taking certain actions. Tactical and context specific behaviours or actions can guarantee long-term sustainability when effectively deployed (Coffman & Niehaus, 2020). Leaders have therefore used many tactics to influence others to attain desirable goals. Tactics used include soft approaches of making direct appeals, rational persuasion, having great visions, employing reciprocity, and developing allies.

In an empirical study, Chaturvedi et al. (2019) investigated the effect of tactics on the relationship between transformational leadership and followers' organizational commitment. Quantitative data was obtained from a sample of 352 respondents in Indian steel firms using questionnaires. Target Influence Behaviour Questionnaire (IBQ) was used with 44 items to show follower preferences of influence tactics used by leaders. Data analysis revealed that leaders' influence tactics had a significant positive relationship with followers' affective organizational commitment. Specifically, it was established that inspirational appeal and rational tactics partially mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and affective organizational outcomes. The study however faced single-method bias and the relationships derived may have been the result of the response bias by the respondents. In addition, only two influence tactics were considered yet other forms exist that are capable of influencing relationships. Conceptually, the study used tactic influence as a mediating variable while the present study considered tactics as a component of the independent variable.

To explore behaviours used to influence decision making in organizations, Madigan et al. (2020) conducted a cross-sectional survey among 385 Australian OHS professionals. Data was collected using IBQ while inferential and descriptive statistics were used in the analysis. Findings showed that individual factors such as work experience, age, and gender as well as organizational factors such as safety maturity level influenced the kind of tactics employed. In addition, inspirational appeals and rational persuasion positively influenced effectiveness, while exchange and legitimating tactics displayed a negative relationship. The study focused on influence tactics that were effective when influencing organizational decision-making in an upward direction only while it was possible that the same tactics were less effective for motivating workers and peers. The current study sought to fill this conceptual gap by investigating influence tactics applicable in all relational directions in determining organizational effectiveness.

Lu et al. (2019) carried out two quantitative studies to establish how employees used influence tactics in their organizations for their ideas to be accepted and implemented. The study was fuelled by the fact that managers do not always give positive assessments to employees' creative ideas, meaning that employees' ideas often never are implemented. Data was collected

from a field study of 54 supervisors and 192 employees in a Chinese firm and from an experimental study with 264 respondents in a US university. Fifteen items from IBQ were used to measure influence tactics of inspirational appeals, consultation, rational persuasion, and collaboration. Data was analysed using three-way ANOVA. Findings in both studies revealed that the effective use of upward influence tactics by employees affected the extent to which managers evaluated their creative ideas and implemented them for organizational effectiveness. A conceptual study gap was the use of influence tactics as moderators of the relationships, but the present study considered tactics as indicators of the independent variable. Further, the former study did not use any method to verify whether the organization actually implemented the ideas generated by employees and accepted by their leaders. The current study employed tested measures to confirm organizational effectiveness.

Rangus and Černe (2019) undertook a quantitative study to establish the effect of leadership influence tactics and employee openness on innovation performance. Data was collected from 85 employees and from 15 of their direct supervisors in a European manufacturer of automotive, electronics, and industrial products. Through multilevel data analysis, results showed that the relationship between openness and innovative behaviour was more positive when the level of leaders' building coalitions was high. The implication was that leaders needed to pay close attention to tactics of coalition formation and the creation of interrelated tasks that stimulated employees' interaction and collaboration for improved organizational outcomes. Findings were however based on a sample of respondents drawn from one organization and their replication in other organizations therefore suffers poor generalizability. In addition, the study examined the influence of leadership tactics and employee openness on individual and team level innovation, and was not directly related to innovation effectiveness at the firm level. The current study explored linkages between influence tactics in the leadership process and organizational effectiveness with data collected using mixed method techniques from selected freight forwarding firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Kim and Gausdal (2020) undertook a qualitative exploration of leaders' influence tactics for safety compliance and participation in a maritime context. Forty-one managers in the safety operation of ships and related machinery were selected for the study. Data was collected using individual interviews and focus group discussions. Sets of frequent and consistent influence behavioural categories in the data responses were developed by coding and directed content analyses. Through abstract categories, emerging patterns and similarities revealed that leaders effectively used five core tactics to influence their staff, namely consultation, role modelling, coaching, exchange, and pressure. The study also established a three-way use of tactics amongst leaders and followers thus, downward influence tactics to influence subordinates, upward tactics to influence superiors, and lateral tactics to influence peers. A methodological gap was that the study only used a qualitative approach in data collection, through interviews and focus groups. The study did not clarify the sampling method used while the current study selected respondents using stratified and simple random sampling methods. Key informants for qualitative data in the current study were selected through purposive sampling. External context factors influencing organizational effectiveness were also investigated.

In two separate studies, Gerpott et al. (2020) investigated how followers' willingness to share knowledge was influenced by respectful leadership tactics. The researchers viewed sharing of knowledge as a discretionary behaviour that allowed others to use shared knowledge. In the first study, time-lagged data was collected from selected German employees as part of a larger study. A data collection firm invited 34 panellists to participate out of which 1436 completed the study at Time One, 330 at Time Two, and 275 at Time Three. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to test discriminant validity of the study measures while structural equation modelling demonstrated the relationships between model constructs.

In the second study, Gerpott et al. (2020) aimed at replicating findings from the first investigation using multiple data sources to minimize common-method bias. Data was collected using 89 questionnaires completed by participants working in various industries in Netherlands. Across the two studies, path analysis findings revealed that followers' perspective taking mediated a positive relationship between respectful leadership and knowledge sharing by followers. A mediating effect of empathic concern in the relationship was found in the first study. Moreover, the first study identified an interaction effect of the mediators, to the extent that "followers' perspective taking was positive for their knowledge sharing at high levels of empathic concern and vice versa" (p. 802). In sum, findings revealed that leaders who were respectful positively exerted influence on followers' willingness to share knowledge, through the mediating techniques of increased empathic concern and perspective taking. The tactics examined in the study were emotional and rational influence while the present study examined the effect of these and other forms of influence tactics on organizational effectiveness.

Based on the empirical literature reviewed, it is clear that influence tactics in leadership process and organizational effectiveness in the freight forwarding industry have not been adequately explored. It also emerged that most studies have focused on the individual leader as the party solely responsible for organizational outcomes. Similarly, many studies have overlooked organizational effectiveness and concentrated on organizational performance as the dependent variable. There is therefore limited literature on tactical influence and its effect on organizational effectiveness and hence the need for the current study.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a pragmatic philosophical view, which applies both quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell, 2014). A mixed research design comprising of both descriptive and explanatory designs was adopted to integrate both quantitative and qualitative data. As recommended by Lune and Berg (2017), descriptive methods were used to portray the characteristics of the phenomena while explanatory method explained the causal-effect relationships between tactical influence and organizational effectiveness.

The target population comprised of all the 400 freight-forwarding firms operating in Nairobi City County. These firms were selected because their businesses are located at the major hub of the four main forms of cargo transportation systems in Kenya, namely sea, air, rail, and road. These transport systems feed cargo to and from the businesses that contract the services of the

freight-forwarding firms. A sample of 92 was selected from the 400 freight forwarding firms operating in Nairobi City County using Cochran’s (1977) formula. Stratified random sampling method was used to select total 276 respondents comprising a representative of the top, middle, and lower-level management from each firm.

Primary data used in the study was collected via a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions, and individual semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire provided for detailed demographic information about the respondents as well as statements on each of the variables for respondents to respond to on a scale of 1-5. Interviews were conducted among the top management. and data subjected to content analysis using NVivo software. Data was presented in verbatim quotes depicting emerging themes.

In the analysis of quantitative data, descriptive and inferential techniques were used. Descriptive analysis involves calculation of frequencies, mean score, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics comprised of correlation analysis and regression analysis. Pearson moment correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between study variables while regression analysis was carried out to determine the effect of tactical influence on organizational effectiveness. The predictive power of the model was based on the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ). Using 95 percent confidence level to compute F-statistic, overall model significance was tested. The significance of tactical influence in affecting organizational effectiveness was based on T-test at 0.05 significance level.

To assess the effect of tactical influence on organizational effectiveness of freight forwarding firms in Nairobi City, the following simple linear regression model was applied:

$$EFF_O = \beta_0 + \beta_1 T_i + \varepsilon$$

Where:

- $EFF_O$  = Composite index for organizational effectiveness
- $\beta_0$  = Constant
- $\beta_1$ , = Beta coefficient
- $T_i$  = Composite index for tactical influence

In generating the composite index for the variables, data collected through the 5-point Likert scale was harmonized and summarized into a composite figure. Researchers recommend the use of this dimensional reduction technique in recovering the underlying low-dimensional structures in data, which allows further analysis on an index rather than the original data (Field, 2013; Wandiga, 2019; Wandiga et al., 2019). The index was computed using the weighted harmonic mean, which represents the reciprocal of the arithmetic mean of the reciprocals of the given values and is not affected much by sampling fluctuations (Gupta & Kapoor, 2002). An adjustment is made on the computed value to provide for the relative weight for each variable using the following formula as recommended by Kilika et al. (2012):

$$C_i = \sum_{i=1}^N \left( \left( \frac{n}{\sum_{i=1}^n \frac{1}{x_i}} \right) W_i \right)$$

Where:

$C_i$  = Composite Index for the variable  $i$ : tactical influence and organizational effectiveness.

$N$  = Total number of components that comprises the specific variable.

$n$  = Total number of respondents who responded to the respective section of the questionnaire.

$x_i$  = Percentage Mean Score for each component for each freight forwarding firm, calculated as a ratio of the actual score to the maximum possible score on the statements for each Variable.

$W_i$  = The weight of the Mean Score for each Variable for each freight forwarding firm computed as the ratio of the mean scores for each Variable to the sum of all the mean scores.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Response Rate**

The study sample size was 276 respondents. Hence, 276 questionnaires were issued to management level employees in the sampled firms. From the issued questionnaires, 232 were duly filled and returned, forming an overall response rate of 84.06%. Categorically, there was 78.26% response rate among the top-level management, 83.70% among middle level management, and 90.22% among the lower-level management.

### **Demographic Information Analysis**

The study sought to determine the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Key characteristics sought included gender, position held in the organization, years of service, and the category of practice in which the freight forwarding company operated that is, international or local. Results showed that majority of the respondents were male (64.7%) and a minority female respondent (35.3%). It was established that 35.8% of respondents were supervisors, 33.2% were operations managers and 31.0% were either chief executive officers, directors or general managers. Additionally, 39.2% of the respondents had worked in the organization for 6-10 years, 28.4% for 1-5 years, 19.4% for over 10 years, and 12.9% for less than one year. This implies that majority of the respondents (58.7%) had worked in the freight forwarding firms for more than six years and therefore possessed sufficient information sought by the study.

Since 41.3% of the respondents had worked in the firms for five years or less and 58.7% for more than six years, this suggested that there was low staff turnover in the sector. These results were consistent with the observations by Al-Khamaiseh et al. (2020) and Northouse (2019) that as employees develop more skills and get committed to the organization, they tend to demonstrate more leadership behaviours. According to Kareem (2019), organizational effectiveness is positively associated with the experience gained by the human capital such that the more the experience, the greater the effectiveness and vice versa. This study held that this relationship was a result of the learning curve experience by which a task is performed more effectively and efficiently with repeated trials.

In terms of practicing category, the study established that 73.3% of the freight-forwarding firms were local while 26.7% were international. This indicated that majority of the freight forwarding firms in Kenya are local in their scope of operation. This may suggest that there is more demand for local services than it is for international services. It also implies that most local freight forwarding firms may not have the capacity to operate and trade outside the country. Conversely, it may suggest the existence of some internal barriers that constraint the establishment of international freight forwarding firms in Kenya. Such barriers may include severe competition from local freight forwarding firms providing high quality and competitively priced services, a phenomenon also observed in East Asia by Huang et al. (2019).

## **Descriptive Analysis**

### **Tactical Influence**

The study aimed to determine the extent to which tactical influence is manifested in freight forwarding firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Frequencies, mean scores, and standard deviations were calculated. In a scale of 1-5 where 1= No Extent, 2= Low Extent, 3= Moderate Extent, 4=High Extent, and 5= Very High Extent, respondents were required to indicate the extent to which freight-forwarding firm applied different tactics to influence others for better relationships and effectiveness. The assessment was based on six key elements. The results are summarised in Table 1.

*Table 1: Descriptive Results for Tactical Influence*

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The organization is normally clear about what is needed and directly asks for it.	232	4.42	.598
The organization shows concern for others' needs and wants, finds common ground, respect, and exercises fair treatment.	232	4.34	.644
This firm uses data, facts, and logical arguments to persuade people that the proposed ideas are the best.	232	4.29	.637
This firm reaches out of formal settings to understand others' needs and concerns and to explain the proposed ideas.	232	4.29	.697
Our organization helps people to see that their efforts are worthwhile.	232	4.22	.623
Our organization shares resources, services, time, or support expecting favours in return.	232	4.19	.852
<b>Aggregate</b>		<b>4.292</b>	<b>0.675</b>

The results in Table 1 showed that leaders in freight-forwarding firms demonstrated tactical influence as exemplified by the aggregate mean score of 4.292. The standard deviation of 0.675 suggests that there was low deviation in opinion and that the respondents agreed to a high extent

regarding deployment of tactical influence in their organizations. Specifically, the respondents affirmed to a high extent that freight forwarding firms were normally clear on what is needed in the organization and they directly asked for it (mean score = 4.42: Std dev = 0.598) and they show concern for others’ needs and wants, find common ground, respect, and exercise fair treatment (Mean score = 4.34: Std dev = 0.644).

It was also established that freight-forwarding firms use data, facts, and logical arguments to persuade people on best ideas (Mean score = 4.29: Std dev = 0.637), and they reach out of formal settings to understand others’ needs and concerns (Mean score = 4.29: Std dev = 0.697). Further, the firms help people to see that their efforts are worthwhile (Mean score = 4.22: Std dev = 0.623). The attribute with the least score was that firms share resources, services, time, or support expecting favours in return (Mean score = 4.19: Std dev = 0.852). This means that although the freight forwarding firms share resources expecting favours in return to a high extent, this is the tactic least employed to influence others for effectiveness. The findings on this variable were consistent with the conclusions made by Lu et al. (2019) that the effective use of upward influence tactics by employees affects the extent to which managers evaluate their creative ideas and implement them for organizational effectiveness.

**Organizational Effectiveness**

The assessment of organizational effectiveness was based on nine elements. In a scale of 1-5 where 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, and 5= Strongly agree, respondents were required to express their opinion on the effectiveness of the firm in relation to goal attainment, resource acquisition, obtaining strategic stakeholders, and competing values. The results were summarised in Table 2.

*Table 2: Descriptive Results for Organizational Effectiveness*

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our firm optimizes the use of available resources	232	4.64	.507
Our firm makes efforts to improve its levels of service provision	232	4.62	.530
Our firm makes efforts to ensure its long-term survival and stability	232	4.62	.513
Our firm easily adapts to any changes in the business environment	232	4.59	.559
Our firm has measures in place to ensure that customers are satisfied	232	4.56	.531
Our customers are satisfied with the services we offer	232	4.56	.539
Our firm knows the individuals or group of individuals critical to its survival and fully meets their needs	232	4.21	.698
Our firm has clear, visible, and mutually agreed upon goals	232	4.20	.613
Our firm is able to easily obtain whatever inputs and resources are needed from the environment	232	4.18	.785
Aggregate		4.46	0.586

The results in Table 2 indicate that the aggregate mean score was 4.46 and an associated standard deviation of 0.586, denoting that respondents agreed that freight-forwarding firms in Nairobi City County were effective. This suggests that majority freight-forwarding firms had in place clear and mutually agreeable goals, had the ability to obtain necessary inputs for

survival, met the needs of stakeholders, and made efforts to optimize resource utilization and attain stability.

Specifically, most of the respondents agreed that their firms optimized the use of available resources (Mean score = 4.64: Std dev = 0.507). In that order of significance, respondents also agreed that the firms made efforts to improve their level of service provision (Mean score = 4.62: Std dev = 0.530), made efforts to ensure their long-term survival and stability (Mean score = 4.62: Std dev = 0.513), and easily adapted to changes in the business environment (Mean score = 4.59: Std dev = 0.559). They also agreed that their firm had measures in place to ensure that customers are satisfied (Mean score = 4.56: Std dev = 0.531), and that their customers were satisfied with the services offered (Mean score = 4.56: Std dev = 0.539).

There was agreement among respondents that their firm knew individuals or group of individuals who are critical to its survival and fully meets their needs (Mean score = 4.21: Std dev = 0.698). It was also agreed that firms had clear, visible and mutually agreed goals (Mean score = 4.20: Std dev = 0.613). Finally, respondents agreed that their firm was able to easily obtain whatever inputs and resources are needed from the environment (Mean score = 4.18: Std dev = 0.785).

These results concurred with the observations by Daft (2016) that organizations must cultivate the ability to utilize resources in a manner that best creates value for their stakeholders. Jones (2013) held that for an organization to be effective, it must function responsively. This includes functions like innovating fast, securing, managing, and controlling valued skills, and efficiently converting scarce resources into goods and services. Specifically, findings related to the observations by Robbins (1990) that organizational effectiveness is expressed by the degree to which an organization attains its short and long-term goals. Previous studies have shown that the kind of leadership strategies deployed in firms have a direct influence on various organizational outcomes (Khamaiseh et al., 2020; Mwai et al., 2018; Mwesigwa, 2018).

### **Correlation Analysis**

Using Pearson's coefficient of correlation ( $r$ ), the study conducted analysis to determine the relationship between the study variables. Correlational coefficients lie between -1 and +1, implying negative and positive relationships respectively (Kothari, 2004). Zero value means that there is no relationship and the closer the coefficient is to one, the stronger the relationship between the variables (Bryman, 2012). The study employed recommendations by Akoglu (2018) for social science research that correlation values of  $\pm 0.40$  and above, between  $\pm 0.30$  and  $\pm 0.39$ , and below  $+0.30$  imply strong, moderate, and weak correlation respectively. Table 3 is a summary of the results.

**Table 3: Correlational Results**

		Organizational effectiveness	Tactical influence
Organizational effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	232	
Tactical influence	Pearson Correlation	.295**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	232	232

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Results show that the correlation coefficient between tactical influence and organizational effectiveness was 0.295, implying that there exists a weak positive correlation between the two variables. The associated p-value was 0.000, which is less than the acceptable significance level of 0.01. This could mean that although organizational effectiveness increased in direct proportion to the deployment of tactical influence in the freight-forwarding firms studied, the increase was gradual. The findings relate to the conclusions by Chaturvedi et al. (2019) that influence tactics used by leaders have a significant positive relationship with followers’ organizational commitment. Madigan et al. (2020) also found that the size of an organization determined the kind of influence tactics most employed.

**Regression Analysis**

The study sought to assess the effect of tactical influence on organizational effectiveness of freight-forwarding firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. To achieve this objective, organizational effectiveness was regressed on tactical influence. The results were as summarized in Table 4.

**Table 4: Regression Results for Tactical Influence**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.295 <sup>a</sup>	.087	.083	.28660

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.796	1	1.796	21.871	.001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	18.892	230	.082		
	Total	20.688	231			

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.604	.185		19.504	.001
	Tactical influence	.200	.043	.295	4.677	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational effectiveness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Tactical influence

Results in Table 4 showed an adjusted R Square ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.083 indicating that the model predicted 8.3% of the variations in organizational effectiveness of freight forwarding firms in Nairobi City County. The results also showed that the F-statistic for the model was 21.871, which was greater than the F-critical (1,230=3.882). The p-value for the model was  $0.001 < 0.05$  indicating that the F-value was significant. The study therefore concluded that the model was fit in predicting organizational effectiveness of freight forwarding firms in Nairobi City County.

Coefficient results showed that the model constant was 3.604 indicating that when tactical influence is at a constant, organizational effectiveness would be equal to 3.604. Further, the standardized beta coefficient for tactical influence was 0.295 implying that a unit increase in tactical influence would lead to a 0.295 increase in organizational effectiveness. The findings also depict that the p-value was  $0.001 < 0.05$  indicating that tactical influence was significant in predicting organizational effectiveness. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and it was concluded that tactical influence has a significant effect on organizational effectiveness of freight-forwarding firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

The above results were consistent with empirical results by Lu et al. (2019) who concluded that the effective use of influence tactics by employees affected the extent to which managers evaluated their ideas and implemented them for organizational effectiveness. Rangus and Černe (2019) also concluded that the relationship between openness and innovative behaviour was more positive when the level of leaders' building coalitions was high. Madigan et al. (2020) established that inspirational appeal and rational persuasion positively influenced effectiveness.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

Qualitative data obtained from interviews was analysed through content analysis to derive meaning. This analysis involved detailed and systematic examination of data to identify patterns, themes, assumptions, and meanings as recommended by Lune and Berg (2017). This was done through NVivo software following the five stages recommended by Saunders et al. (2007). They include identifying codes, attaching data from different sources to the applicable code for integration, developing analytical categories to identify relationships, developing testable propositions and finally making conclusions.

Respondents were required to express their opinion on how tactical influence affected organizational effectiveness in freight forwarding firms. Results showed that various dimensions of tactical influence were used to positively influence others in the firm. For instance, TM3 highlighted that:

*“Logical facts, persuasion techniques, logical persuasion, directives, supporting where necessary, rational approach, assurance of benefits to accrue from given tasks, relationships, and consultations are commonly used by managers to influence workers.”*

Other influence strategies observed included collaboration, escalation of issues to senior staff, formal requests, leading by example, direct appeals, and openness. Other tactics included senior staff participating alongside junior staff, encouraging staff to do what is expected of them, and rewarding hard work. Respondent TM7 stated as follows:

*“We encourage our staff through persuasion, collaboration and rewards that are provided for outstanding work. Employees are also given monthly targets to achieve and best performers are rewarded. Managers help staff to overcome difficulties faced in their tasks at work and also follow up to establish reasons for underperformance.”*

Respondents noted that staff adopted strategies adopted by leaders to foster positive relationships with other leaders and subordinates in the firm included as highlighted by TM2.

*“Maintaining an open-door policy, sharing ideas and decision making, regular communication and being available for consultation.”*

Other tactics included empowering others with the tools and knowledge needed to accomplish tasks, performance monitoring and evaluation, creating good relationships, formal engagements, respect, motivating followers, mentoring followers, developing of clear goals, observing good industrial relationships and encouraging healthy competition with other organizations during events. As suggested by TM4:

*“Leaders foster positive relationship by empowering and motivating others and also interacting with staff regularly.”*

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The objective of the study was to assess the effect of tactical influence on organizational effectiveness of freight-forwarding firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. On the descriptive results, the study found that tactical influence was to a high extent practiced and emphasized in the firms. Correlational results revealed that tactical influence had a significant positive correlation with organizational effectiveness of the freight-forwarding firms.

Regression results revealed that tactical influence had a significant positive effect on organizational effectiveness of freight forwarding firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Because of the significant positive effect on organizational effectiveness, the study recommends that management should focus on strategically deploying various influence tactics in the firm. This will enhance the overall individual and organizational effectiveness.

## **Contribution of the Study**

These findings make an important contribution to the body of knowledge in organizational leadership. First, previous studies have not shown the link between tactical influence and organizational effectiveness. The study has provided that link. Secondly, previous studies presented a conceptual gap by studying tactical influence as either a mediator or moderator in the relationship between various independent and dependent variables. This study looked as influence tactics as an independent variable. Third, previous studies were carried out in

different contexts while organizational effectiveness was not directly linked to tactical influence. Through this finding, the link between tactical influence and effectiveness of the freight-forwarding firms in Nairobi City County, Kenya, has been demonstrated.

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