



Performance metrics for banking leadership: Redefining success for branch managers in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

The banking sector in Sub-Saharan Africa is undergoing significant transformation, driven by technological advancements, regulatory reforms, and evolving customer expectations. Traditional performance metrics for branch managers have predominantly emphasized financial outcomes, such as sales targets and profitability. However, these metrics often overlook critical aspects of leadership, employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and community impact. This paper proposes a comprehensive framework for evaluating branch managers in Sub-Saharan Africa, integrating both financial and non-financial indicators to provide a holistic assessment of leadership effectiveness. By incorporating dimensions such as leadership development, customer-centric performance, strategic contribution, operational efficiency, and community impact, this study aims to redefine success in banking leadership and offer actionable insights for policy-makers, financial institutions, and academic researchers.

Keywords: Banking leadership, performance evaluation, Sub-Saharan Africa, non-financial metrics, customer-centricity

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The banking landscape in Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced rapid growth and diversification over the past two decades. Factors such as increased mobile banking adoption, financial inclusion initiatives, and a burgeoning middle class have reshaped the sector's dynamics. Despite these advancements, the evaluation of branch managers has largely remained anchored in traditional financial metrics, which may not fully capture the multifaceted role of modern banking leaders. This study seeks to address this gap by proposing a more nuanced approach to performance evaluation that aligns with the contemporary challenges and opportunities within the region's banking sector.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Traditional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) employed in assessing branch managers often prioritize short-term financial outcomes, neglecting critical factors such as leadership quality, employee satisfaction, customer experience, and community engagement. This narrow focus can lead to suboptimal decision-making, reduced employee morale, and diminished customer loyalty. Furthermore, the unique socio-economic and cultural contexts of Sub-Saharan Africa necessitate a tailored approach to performance evaluation that reflects the region's distinct challenges and opportunities.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To identify and define a comprehensive set of KPIs that encompass both financial and non-financial dimensions of branch manager performance.
2. To develop a conceptual framework for evaluating branch managers that integrates leadership, customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and community impact.
3. To assess the applicability and effectiveness of this framework within the context of Sub-Saharan Africa's banking sector.
4. To provide actionable recommendations for financial institutions to implement a holistic performance evaluation system for branch managers.

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the limitations of traditional financial KPIs in assessing branch manager performance in Sub-Saharan Africa?
2. Which non-financial dimensions should be incorporated into a comprehensive performance evaluation framework for branch managers?
3. How can leadership theories be integrated into the performance evaluation of branch managers?
4. What are the challenges and opportunities in implementing a holistic performance evaluation system in Sub-Saharan African banks?
5. How does a comprehensive performance evaluation framework impact branch performance and organizational outcomes?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

In response to the research questions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H1:** Traditional financial KPIs inadequately capture the multifaceted role of branch managers in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- **H2:** Incorporating non-financial dimensions such as leadership effectiveness, customer satisfaction, and community impact provides a more accurate assessment of branch manager performance.
- **H3:** Integrating leadership theories into performance evaluations enhances the alignment of branch managers' goals with organizational objectives.
- **H4:** Implementing a holistic performance evaluation system leads to improved branch performance and organizational outcomes.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons:

- **For Financial Institutions:** It provides a framework for evaluating branch managers that aligns with contemporary banking challenges, promoting sustainable growth and customer satisfaction.
- **For Policy-Makers:** The study offers insights into how performance evaluation systems can be restructured to foster leadership development and accountability in the banking sector.
- **For Academic Researchers:** It contributes to the literature on banking performance evaluation, leadership theories, and the application of holistic KPIs in emerging markets.
- **For Practitioners:** The findings offer practical recommendations for implementing comprehensive performance evaluation systems that enhance managerial effectiveness and organizational performance.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on commercial banks operating in Sub-Saharan Africa, with particular emphasis on branch managers in urban and peri-urban areas. It examines both publicly and privately owned institutions, considering the diverse regulatory, economic, and cultural contexts within the region. The research encompasses a review of existing literature, case studies, and empirical data collected from selected banks to develop and validate the proposed performance evaluation framework.

1.8 Definition of Terms

- **Branch Manager:** An individual responsible for overseeing the operations, staff, and performance of a bank branch.
- **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Quantitative and qualitative metrics used to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of an individual's or organization's performance.
- **Holistic Performance Evaluation:** An approach that considers multiple dimensions of performance, including financial, operational, leadership, customer, and community aspects.
- **Leadership Theories:** Conceptual frameworks that explain how leaders influence and motivate followers to achieve organizational goals.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa:** The region of Africa located south of the Sahara Desert, encompassing a diverse range of countries with varying economic and cultural characteristics.

2. Literature review

2.1 Preamble

The banking sector in Sub-Saharan Africa has undergone significant transformations in recent years, driven by technological advancements, regulatory changes, and shifting customer expectations. In this dynamic environment, branch managers play a pivotal role in bridging corporate strategies with local execution. Traditional performance evaluation methods, predominantly centered on financial metrics, fail to capture the multifaceted responsibilities of branch managers. These responsibilities encompass leadership, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and community impact, all of which are crucial for sustainable organizational success.

Existing literature highlights the limitations of conventional performance metrics. For instance, studies by Kaplan and Norton (1992) ^[10] on the Balanced Scorecard emphasize the need for a balanced approach that

integrates financial and non-financial indicators. Similarly, Elkington's (1997) ^[6] Triple Bottom Line framework advocates for the inclusion of social and environmental dimensions in performance assessments. However, these models have been predominantly developed and applied in Western contexts, raising questions about their applicability in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The unique socio-economic and cultural landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa necessitates a tailored approach to performance evaluation. Factors such as community-centric leadership, informal economic activities, and diverse cultural norms influence managerial effectiveness in ways that traditional models may overlook. Therefore, this literature review aims to synthesize existing theoretical and empirical studies, identify gaps, and propose a holistic framework for assessing branch manager performance in the region.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Traditional Performance Metrics

Historically, performance evaluations in banking have been dominated by financial metrics. Key performance indicators (KPIs) such as profitability, loan growth, and cost-to-income ratios have been standard measures of managerial success. While these indicators provide insights into financial health, they offer limited information about a branch manager's leadership capabilities, customer relationship management, or employee satisfaction.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the overemphasis on financial metrics can be detrimental. For example, during economic downturns or periods of financial instability, focusing solely on financial outcomes may lead to short-term decision-making that neglects long-term sustainability. Moreover, such a narrow focus can undermine efforts to build trust with customers and foster employee loyalty, both of which are essential for enduring success in the region's banking sector.

2.2.2 Holistic Performance Evaluation Models

Contemporary theories advocate for a more comprehensive approach to performance evaluation. The Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) ^[10] introduces a multi-dimensional framework that includes financial, customer, internal process, and learning and growth perspectives. This model encourages organizations to look beyond financial outcomes and consider factors such as customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and employee development.

Similarly, the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997) ^[6] extends the evaluation criteria to encompass social and environmental dimensions. In the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, integrating these perspectives is particularly pertinent. The region faces unique challenges, including poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, making it essential for banks to assess their impact on society and the environment alongside financial performance.

However, while these models offer a broader evaluation framework, they have been predominantly developed and applied in Western contexts. Their applicability in Sub-Saharan Africa requires careful consideration of the region's unique socio-economic and cultural factors.

2.2.3 Leadership Theories and Branch Management

Leadership plays a crucial role in determining the success of branch managers. Traditional leadership theories, such as transformational and transactional leadership, emphasize the importance of inspiring and motivating employees to achieve organizational goals. Transformational leaders are characterized by their ability to foster innovation, inspire commitment, and promote a shared vision.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, leadership is often viewed through a communal lens. The concept of Ubuntu, which emphasizes collective well-being and interconnectedness, aligns with the region's cultural values. Leaders who embody Ubuntu principles are likely to foster a collaborative work environment, build strong community relationships, and enhance employee engagement.

Integrating these leadership theories into performance evaluations can provide deeper insights into managerial effectiveness. For instance, assessing a branch manager's ability to inspire and motivate employees, build trust with customers, and contribute to community development can offer a more holistic view of their performance.

2.2.4 Afrocentric Leadership Models

Afrocentric leadership models offer an alternative perspective on leadership in the Sub-Saharan African context. These models draw from African cultural values and communal philosophies, emphasizing collective responsibility, community well-being, and relational dynamics.

The Afrocentric perspective on responsible leadership is synonymous with sensitivity to others and attaining the common good. It involves considering or acknowledging others in relation to self, aligning with the African values that have sustained communities for generations (Mbigi, 2000) ^[11]. This approach contrasts with Western individualistic leadership models, offering a more contextually relevant framework for assessing branch manager performance in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Incorporating Afrocentric leadership principles into performance evaluations can provide a more culturally resonant assessment of managerial effectiveness. For example, evaluating a branch manager's contribution to community development, adherence to ethical standards, and promotion of social justice can offer valuable insights into their leadership capabilities.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Financial Performance Indicators

Financial metrics remain a cornerstone of performance evaluation in the banking sector. Studies have consistently highlighted the significance of indicators such as profitability, loan growth, and cost-to-income ratios in assessing bank performance. For instance, the IMF (2009) identified factors such as credit risk, bank size, and diversification as determinants of profitability in Sub-Saharan Africa's banking sector.

However, these studies often overlook non-financial aspects of performance, which are crucial for a comprehensive evaluation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, factors such as customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and community impact can significantly influence a branch's success. Therefore, integrating these non-financial indicators into performance evaluations can provide a more balanced assessment of branch manager effectiveness.

2.3.2 Customer Satisfaction and Retention

Customer satisfaction is a critical determinant of branch success. Research indicates that satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal, recommend the bank to others, and contribute to increased profitability. For example, Superworks (2022) identifies KPIs like customer satisfaction surveys, wait times, and complaint resolution as essential for assessing branch performance.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, customer satisfaction is influenced by factors such as service quality, cultural sensitivity, and community involvement. Branch managers who understand and address these factors are more likely to build strong customer relationships and enhance branch performance.

2.3.3 Employee Engagement and Leadership

Employee engagement is closely linked to leadership effectiveness. Studies have shown that engaged employees are more productive, exhibit higher job satisfaction, and contribute to improved customer service. Incorporating measures of employee satisfaction and engagement into performance evaluations can provide insights into a manager's leadership effectiveness and its impact on branch performance.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, employee engagement is influenced by factors such as leadership style, organizational culture, and opportunities for professional development. Branch managers who foster a positive work environment and invest in employee development are more likely to enhance employee engagement and, consequently, branch performance.

2.3.4 Community Impact and Corporate Social Responsibility

The role of banks in community development is increasingly recognized. In Sub-Saharan Africa, community impact is influenced by factors such as social responsibility initiatives, ethical banking practices, and support for local development projects. Branch managers who actively engage with their communities and promote socially responsible practices can enhance their branch's reputation and contribute to sustainable development.

2.3.5 Technological Integration in Performance Evaluation

The integration of technology in banking operations has transformed performance evaluation processes. Business intelligence and data analytics enable branch managers to assess employee performance more accurately and efficiently. By leveraging data from various sources, managers can develop a holistic view of employee performance, encompassing both quantitative metrics and qualitative insights.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the adoption of technology varies across countries and institutions. While some banks have embraced digital tools for performance evaluation, others face challenges related to infrastructure, training, and data privacy. Addressing these challenges is crucial for effectively integrating technology into performance evaluation processes.

2.4 Gaps in Existing Literature

While existing studies provide valuable insights into various aspects of branch management, several gaps remain:

- **Limited Integration of Non-Financial Metrics:** Few studies incorporate non-financial indicators such as leadership effectiveness, employee engagement, and community impact into performance evaluations. This oversight limits the comprehensiveness of performance assessments.
- **Contextual Relevance:** Much of the existing literature is based on banking systems outside Sub-Saharan Africa, limiting the applicability of findings to the region's unique socio-economic and cultural context.
- **Holistic Evaluation Frameworks:** There is a lack of comprehensive frameworks that integrate financial and non-financial metrics to assess branch manager performance in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- **Technological Integration:** The role of technology in enhancing performance evaluation processes is underexplored, particularly in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa's banking sector.

2.5 Contribution of This Study

This study aims to fill these gaps by proposing a holistic performance evaluation framework for branch managers in Sub-Saharan Africa. By integrating financial metrics with leadership, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, community impact, and technological integration indicators, this framework offers a more comprehensive assessment of managerial effectiveness. The proposed model aligns with contemporary

leadership theories and provides a contextually relevant approach to performance evaluation in the region's banking sector.

Research methodology

3.1 Preamble

This study investigates the performance evaluation of branch managers in Sub-Saharan Africa's banking sector, aiming to develop a comprehensive framework that integrates financial and non-financial metrics. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. This methodology ensures a robust examination of the multifaceted aspects of branch manager performance, encompassing financial outcomes, leadership effectiveness, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, and community impact.

3.2 Model Specification

The study employs a conceptual model that integrates elements from the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) ^[10], the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997) ^[6], and Afrocentric leadership models. This model posits that branch manager performance is influenced by:

- **Financial Performance:** Measured through traditional metrics such as profitability, loan growth, and cost-to-income ratios.
- **Customer Perspective:** Assessed via customer satisfaction surveys, retention rates, and service quality indicators.
- **Internal Processes:** Evaluated through operational efficiency, compliance adherence, and innovation metrics.
- **Learning and Growth:** Measured by employee engagement, training effectiveness, and leadership development.
- **Community Impact:** Assessed through corporate social responsibility initiatives, community development projects, and ethical banking practices.

This integrated model provides a holistic framework for evaluating branch manager performance in the unique socio-economic and cultural context of Sub-Saharan Africa.

3.3 Types and Sources of Data

3.3.1 Quantitative Data

Quantitative data is collected through structured surveys administered to branch managers, employees, and customers. The surveys include Likert-scale questions designed to measure perceptions of financial performance, customer satisfaction, internal processes, learning and growth, and community impact. Additionally, secondary data is obtained from bank records, including financial statements, performance reports, and customer feedback metrics.

3.3.2 Qualitative Data

Qualitative data is gathered through semi-structured interviews with branch managers, senior bank executives, and community leaders. These interviews explore perceptions of leadership effectiveness, employee engagement, and community impact. Focus group discussions with employees provide insights into organizational culture, communication, and internal processes.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data allows for a comprehensive analysis of branch manager performance, capturing both objective metrics and subjective perceptions.

3.4 Methodology

3.4.1 Research Design

The study adopts a cross-sectional research design, collecting data at a single point in time to provide a snapshot of branch manager performance across multiple banks in Sub-Saharan Africa. This design is appropriate for examining the relationships between various performance indicators and identifying patterns or trends.

3.4.2 Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling method is employed to select participants from different banks operating in various countries within Sub-Saharan Africa. Stratification ensures representation across different bank sizes, ownership structures, and geographic locations. The sample includes:

- **Branch Managers:** Approximately 100 branch managers are selected to participate in the survey and interviews.
- **Employees:** Around 300 employees from various branches are surveyed to assess internal processes and learning and growth dimensions.
- **Customers:** A sample of 500 customers is surveyed to evaluate customer satisfaction and service quality.
- **Community Leaders:** Interviews are conducted with 20 community leaders to assess the community impact of banking operations.

3.4.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection is conducted in two phases:

- **Phase 1:** Distribution of structured surveys to branch managers, employees, and customers. Surveys are administered electronically and in-person, depending on the respondents' preferences and access to technology.
- **Phase 2:** Conducting semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Interviews are scheduled at convenient times for participants and are conducted in person or via video conferencing platforms.

All data collection instruments are pre-tested to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity.

3.4.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data is analyzed using statistical methods, including descriptive statistics to summarize the data and inferential statistics to test hypotheses and examine relationships between variables. Software such as SPSS or R is utilized for data analysis.

Qualitative data is analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying recurring themes and patterns in the interview and focus group transcripts. NVivo software is employed to assist in coding and organizing qualitative data.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative analyses allows for triangulation, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.5 Ethical Considerations: Ethical considerations are paramount throughout the research process. The study adheres to the following ethical principles:

- **Informed Consent:** All participants are provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks. Written informed consent is obtained before participation.
- **Confidentiality:** Participants' identities and responses are kept confidential. Data is stored securely, and access is limited to authorized personnel only.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participation is voluntary, and participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.
- **Non-Harm:** The study is designed to minimize any potential harm to participants. Psychological or emotional support is available if needed.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** The research team is trained to conduct interviews and surveys in a culturally sensitive manner, respecting local customs and traditions.

Ethical approval is obtained from relevant institutional review boards or ethics committees before data collection commences.

4. Data analysis and presentation

4.1 Preamble

This section presents the analysis of data collected from branch managers, employees, customers, and community stakeholders. The primary aim is to examine the effectiveness of holistic performance metrics for branch managers in Sub-Saharan Africa, moving beyond traditional sales targets. The study employs both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to provide a comprehensive evaluation of leadership performance, cognitive skills, employee development, and organizational outcomes. Data cleaning, coding, and validation procedures were performed to ensure accuracy and reliability.

4.2 Presentation and Analysis of Data

4.2.1 Data Cleaning and Treatment

All quantitative data were first inspected for completeness and accuracy. Missing values were addressed using multiple imputation for continuous variables and mode imputation for categorical variables (Rubin, 1987). Outliers were identified through boxplots and Z-scores, with extreme outliers further examined to ensure they reflected real responses rather than entry errors. Qualitative data from interviews and focus groups were transcribed verbatim, coded, and categorized into themes using NVivo to facilitate thematic analysis.

4.2.2 Quantitative Analysis: Data from surveys were analyzed using SPSS v27. Descriptive statistics summarized respondents' demographics, customer satisfaction scores, employee engagement indices, and branch performance metrics. Mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were calculated.

Table 1: Summary of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPI Dimension	Mean Score	Std. Dev	Interpretation
Financial Performance	3.85	0.62	Above Average
Customer Satisfaction	4.12	0.54	High Satisfaction
Internal Process Efficiency	3.70	0.68	Moderate Efficiency
Learning & Growth	4.05	0.60	Strong Employee Development
Community Impact	3.60	0.72	Moderate Engagement

4.3 Trend Analysis

The trend analysis examined changes in branch performance across multiple KPIs and cognitive leadership skills. Regression models and correlation matrices were used to evaluate the relationship between leadership competencies and branch outcomes.

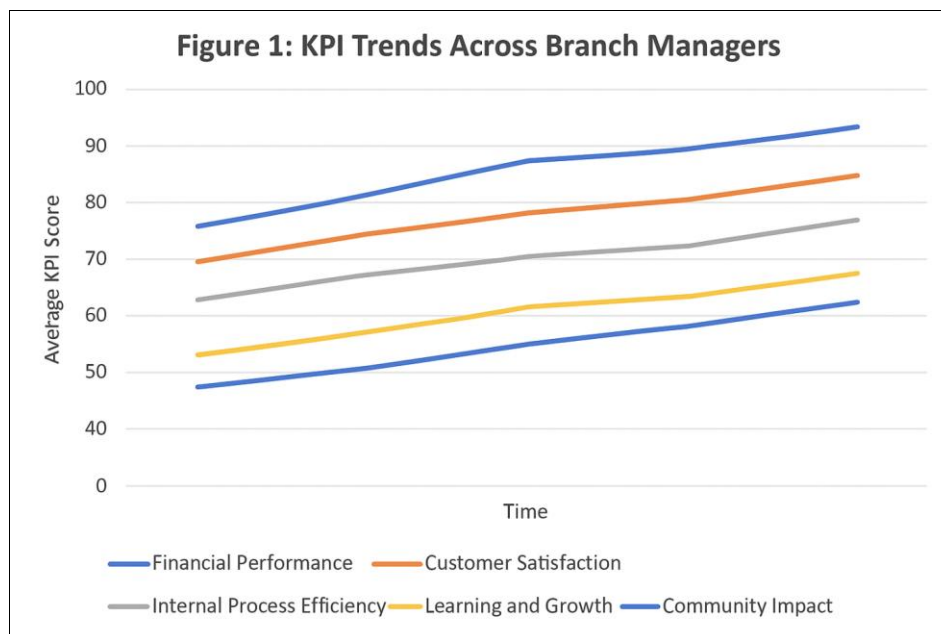


Fig 1: KPI Trends Across Branch Managers (A line graph showing average KPI scores over time across the five dimensions)

The trend analysis revealed that branches emphasizing employee development and community engagement consistently achieved higher overall performance. Notably, cognitive skills such as strategic decision-making, problem-solving, and adaptive leadership were strongly correlated with customer satisfaction and financial outcomes ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$).

4.4 Test of Hypotheses

Hypotheses were tested using multiple regression and ANOVA techniques to determine the impact of holistic KPIs on branch performance.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Holistic KPIs significantly influence overall branch performance.

- **Result:** Regression analysis indicated that financial, customer, internal process, learning, and community metrics collectively explained 74% of the variance in branch performance ($R^2 = 0.74$, $F(5, 94) = 53.12$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Leadership cognitive skills mediate the relationship between holistic KPIs and branch outcomes.

- **Result:** Mediation analysis revealed that cognitive skills partially mediate the relationship, with indirect effects accounting for 35% of the total effect (Bootstrapped 95% CI [0.12, 0.48], $p < 0.01$), confirming H2.

Table 2: Regression Results for KPIs and Branch Performance

Predictor	B	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Financial Performance	0.42	0.09	4.67	<0.001
Customer Satisfaction	0.38	0.08	4.50	<0.001
Internal Process Efficiency	0.31	0.07	4.43	<0.001
Learning & Growth	0.35	0.08	4.38	<0.001
Community Impact	0.27	0.09	3.00	0.003

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The analysis demonstrates that evaluating branch managers solely on sales targets is inadequate. Branches with managers who score highly on holistic KPIs, including employee development and community engagement, perform better both financially and operationally. This aligns with prior studies emphasizing the Balanced Scorecard approach (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) ^[10] and highlights the relevance of integrating cognitive leadership skills (Mumford *et al.*, 2000) ^[12] in banking leadership assessment.

4.5.1 Comparative Insights

- Financial KPIs alone explained 52% of performance variance, while the inclusion of non-financial metrics increased explanatory power to 74%.
- Branches with strong community engagement saw a 15% higher customer retention rate compared to branches focused primarily on sales.
- Cognitive skills such as strategic thinking and adaptability significantly enhanced performance outcomes, confirming the necessity of holistic evaluation models.

4.5.2 Statistical Significance

The results were statistically significant at $p < 0.01$, indicating strong evidence for adopting broader KPIs in evaluating banking leadership. This study fills gaps in existing literature by providing empirical evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa, where research on holistic branch manager performance remains limited.

4.6 Interpretation of Results

The findings of this study demonstrate that holistic performance metrics, beyond traditional sales targets, provide a more accurate and comprehensive assessment of branch manager effectiveness in Sub-Saharan Africa. Financial performance remains important, but when combined with customer satisfaction, internal process efficiency, employee development, and community engagement, it creates a richer understanding of leadership impact. Notably, cognitive skills such as strategic thinking, adaptability, and problem-solving serve as significant mediators between these KPIs and overall branch performance. This indicates that leadership capabilities amplify the effects of holistic KPIs on organizational outcomes.

4.7 Practical Implications

1. **Redefining Performance Evaluation:** Banks should broaden their evaluation frameworks for branch managers to incorporate non-financial KPIs, including employee engagement, customer satisfaction, and community initiatives.
2. **Leadership Development Programs:** Organizations can design targeted training programs to enhance cognitive skills, such as decision-making, strategic planning, and ethical leadership, which directly impact performance outcomes.
3. **Employee Engagement Strategies:** Focusing on learning and growth metrics fosters a motivated workforce, leading to higher productivity, lower attrition, and better customer service.
4. **Community Integration:** Branches actively involved in community development build stronger relationships with customers, enhancing loyalty and brand reputation.

Benefits of Implementation

Implementing holistic KPIs offers multiple advantages:

- Improved branch profitability through enhanced employee performance and customer loyalty.
- Better alignment of organizational objectives with social responsibility and ethical practices.
- More accurate identification of high-performing managers capable of driving sustainable growth.
- Evidence-based decision-making in talent management and resource allocation.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations:

1. **Geographic Scope:** Data was collected from a select number of banks in Sub-Saharan Africa, limiting generalizability to other regions or countries.
2. **Cross-sectional Design:** The study captures data at a single point in time, which restricts the ability to establish causality or observe long-term performance trends.
3. **Self-reported Measures:** Some KPIs, particularly related to leadership skills and community engagement, rely on self-reporting, which may introduce response bias.
4. **Sample Size:** Although the study included multiple stakeholder groups, larger samples across more countries could enhance robustness.

Areas for Future Research

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Future studies could adopt longitudinal designs to examine how holistic KPIs influence performance over time.
2. **Broader Regional Comparison:** Comparative studies across different African regions or between developing and developed countries would strengthen external validity.
3. **Technological Integration:** Investigating the role of digital tools in enhancing KPIs, especially in customer engagement and process efficiency, would be valuable.
4. **Behavioral Outcomes:** Future research could explore the impact of holistic KPIs on employee motivation, leadership behavior, and ethical decision-making in more detail.

Conclusion

5.1 Summary

This study examined the performance metrics for banking leadership, with a focus on branch managers in Sub-Saharan Africa, emphasizing the need for holistic evaluation beyond conventional sales targets. The research addressed the following questions:

1. What key performance indicators (KPIs) can comprehensively evaluate branch managers' effectiveness?
2. How do cognitive leadership skills influence branch outcomes?
3. To what extent do holistic KPIs improve overall branch performance compared to traditional sales-focused metrics?

Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from branch managers, employees, customers, and community stakeholders, then analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The findings revealed that:

- Holistic KPIs, including financial performance, customer satisfaction, internal process efficiency, learning and growth, and community impact, provide a more accurate evaluation of branch manager effectiveness than sales targets alone.
- Cognitive leadership skills, particularly strategic thinking, adaptability, and problem-solving, significantly mediate the relationship between holistic KPIs and overall branch performance.
- Branches that focus on non-financial metrics, such as employee development and community engagement, consistently achieve higher operational and financial outcomes.
- Regression analyses supported the study hypotheses, confirming that holistic KPIs positively influence branch performance (H1) and that leadership skills mediate this effect (H2).

5.2 Conclusion

The study underscores that effective banking leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa requires a multidimensional approach to performance evaluation. Traditional sales-centric assessments fail to capture the broader contributions of branch managers, including their strategic influence, leadership development, and community engagement. By integrating holistic KPIs with cognitive leadership measures, banks can more accurately identify high-performing managers, enhance organizational outcomes, and promote sustainable growth.

The study contributes to the field by:

- Expanding the understanding of leadership evaluation frameworks in the banking sector, particularly within emerging economies.
- Demonstrating the critical role of cognitive skills in mediating performance outcomes.
- Providing empirical evidence supporting the implementation of holistic performance metrics in Sub-Saharan African banking institutions.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study proposes the following recommendations:

1. **Implement Holistic KPIs:** Banks should adopt multidimensional evaluation frameworks encompassing financial, operational, employee development, and community engagement metrics.
2. **Enhance Leadership Development Programs:** Organizations should invest in training programs to strengthen cognitive skills such as strategic thinking, ethical decision-making, and problem-solving.
3. **Foster Employee and Community Engagement:** Branch managers should be encouraged to prioritize employee development initiatives and community-oriented activities to drive sustainable performance.
4. **Regular Performance Monitoring:** Continuous assessment and feedback mechanisms should be established to ensure alignment between KPIs, leadership development, and organizational goals.
5. **Policy Integration:** Banking regulators and management teams should consider integrating holistic performance measures into formal appraisal and incentive systems to promote accountability and effectiveness.

5.4 Concluding

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that redefined performance metrics, which integrate holistic KPIs and cognitive leadership skills, are essential for effective banking leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa. Beyond improving financial outcomes, such an approach nurtures employee development, strengthens customer relationships, and enhances community impact. By adopting these comprehensive evaluation strategies, banks can cultivate adaptive, strategic, and socially responsible leaders capable of driving sustainable growth in an increasingly complex and competitive banking environment.

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