

Managerial Competence And Performance. A Case Study Of Logistics Companies In Kampala

Alex Irumba¹, Dr Arinaitwe Julius²

1, 2 Metropolitan International University

Abstract

This study's goal was to investigate the connections between financial achievement, working capital administration, and managerial proficiency among Kampala-area logistics firms. The study's goals were to ascertain the connections between managerial skills on financial performance of Kampala-based logistics companies. On a population of 45 logistics enterprises operating in Kampala, a cross-sectional research design and quantitative research methodology were utilized. 40 logistic companies were chosen as a sample. A self-administered, structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data, which was then processed using SPSS version 20. Furthermore, the regression analysis demonstrates that managerial competence explains a substantial portion of the variance in financial performance, with an R Square value of 0.885, indicating that nearly 89% of the variability in financial performance can be attributed to the levels of managerial competence within the organization. This suggests that enhancing managerial competence is a key lever for improving financial outcomes in logistics companies. The regression model reveals that for every unit increase in managerial competence, financial performance is expected to increase by 0.697 units, further highlighting the critical role of competent management in achieving superior financial results. The high t-statistic and low p-value for managerial competence confirm that this relationship is statistically significant, reinforcing the conclusion that the competence of managers is an essential determinant of financial success. Given these findings, it is evident that managerial competence should be a primary focus for logistics companies aiming to improve their performance in a competitive market. Further research was recommended in the areas of demonstrating the connection between inventory management and financial performance, handling working capital, and liquidity management among logistics enterprises in Uganda.

Key words: managerial competence, working capital management and performance

Background to the study

In Kampala, Uganda, the logistics sector has witnessed rapid growth in recent years, driven by increasing trade, infrastructural development, and advancements in technology (Winny, Kazaara, et al., 2023). However, despite these positive developments, many logistics companies still face significant challenges, particularly in the areas of management and performance optimization (Ramadhan et al., 2023). This study seeks to explore the relationship between managerial competence and the performance of logistics companies in Kampala, a city that serves as Uganda's primary commercial hub and gateway for both imports and exports (K. Moses et al., 2023). The logistics sector in Uganda is at a crucial point of transformation, with Kampala positioned as a focal point for trade and industry. The city's strategic location within East Africa has made it a key player in regional trade, linking Uganda with neighboring countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and South Sudan (Alex & Julius, 2024). According to

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the Uganda National Bureau of Statistics (UNBS, 2023), the logistics and transport industry contributes significantly to the national GDP, with over 10% of the GDP derived from transport and storage services (Frank et al., 2023). This growth has also been spurred by Uganda's increasing integration into the East African Community (EAC) and the larger African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which has heightened demand for efficient logistics services (T. Christopher et al., 2022).

Despite these positive trends, the logistics industry in Uganda is not without its challenges. One of the primary concerns in the sector is the gap in managerial competence, which often translates into poor organizational performance, inefficiencies, and suboptimal service delivery (F. Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022). A study by the Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA, 2021) indicated that while the logistics sector in Uganda has expanded rapidly, companies struggle with high levels of inefficiency and delayed service delivery, mainly due to deficiencies in managerial skills and practices (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). For instance, many logistics companies in Kampala are still grappling with outdated management systems, lack of effective leadership, and poor decision-making processes (T. Christopher, 2022). These issues hinder the ability of companies to adapt to changing market demands, especially in a context where competition is intensifying and customer expectations are shifting toward faster, more reliable services.

Managerial competence in the logistics industry can be defined as the ability of managers to effectively utilize resources, lead teams, make informed decisions, and adapt to the ever-changing business environment (Winny, Ariyo, et al., 2023). Competent managers possess a blend of technical knowledge, strategic thinking, interpersonal skills, and leadership abilities that are essential for the effective operation of logistics companies (Kazaara et al., 2024). The dimensions of managerial competence in logistics can include supply chain management, logistics planning, resource allocation, human resource management, and customer relations (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). According to a report by the World Bank (2022), managers in the logistics sector need to develop strong skills in these areas to address issues such as inventory management, fleet optimization, and cost control. A critical aspect of managerial competence is decision-making (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022). Research has shown that poor decision-making at the managerial level can lead to underperformance, decreased profitability, and diminished competitiveness (Mujabi, 2020). In the context of logistics companies in Kampala, decision-making processes are often hindered by insufficient information, lack of effective communication, and a failure to utilize modern technological tools (Margaret & Kazaara, 2024). For example, while some logistics companies still rely heavily on manual record-keeping and outdated software systems, competitors in the region are adopting advanced technologies such as enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems and real-time tracking solutions to streamline operations and improve efficiency (T. Christopher et al., 2024).

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The impact of managerial competence on organizational performance in the logistics industry is well documented in academic literature. A study by (Ramadhan et al., 2023) highlighted the critical role of leadership in driving performance improvements in logistics companies, noting that strong managerial leadership results in better coordination, efficient resource use, and improved service delivery (F. Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022). Furthermore, research by the International Transport Forum (ITF, 2022) found that logistics companies with competent managers are better equipped to optimize their supply chains, reduce operational costs, and improve delivery times, all of which directly contribute to enhanced business performance (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). In Kampala, companies that have invested in developing managerial competence have seen improvements in their operational performance, with some even achieving greater market share and profitability (Annet et al., 2023). Performance, in this context, is defined as the effectiveness of a company in achieving its objectives, particularly in terms of financial outcomes, customer satisfaction, and operational efficiency (Margaret & Kazaara, 2024). Logistics companies that demonstrate high levels of performance are those that can meet or exceed customer expectations regarding delivery times, reliability, and cost-effectiveness. Performance metrics such as on-time delivery, cost per shipment, and customer satisfaction scores are commonly used to assess the success of logistics operations (Deus, 2023). According to a study by the Logistics and Transport Forum Uganda (2022), 68% of logistics companies in Kampala reported that their biggest challenge was maintaining high performance levels due to insufficient managerial skills (Nancy & Prudence, 2024).

Problem statement

The performance of logistics companies is critically influenced by the managerial competence of their leaders, yet many logistics companies in Kampala, Uganda, continue to struggle with operational inefficiencies, financial instability, and low levels of customer satisfaction, which can be attributed, at least in part, to gaps in managerial competence (Paul et al., 2023). According to a recent report by (Murendo et al., 2018), the logistics sector in Kampala contributes significantly to the national economy, with a 5.3% growth rate in 2022. However, despite this growth, several logistics companies face challenges in maintaining efficiency, meeting customer demands, and staying competitive (Faridah et al., 2023). Studies have shown that managerial competence, particularly in areas such as decision-making, problem-solving, leadership, and strategic planning, plays a fundamental role in determining the success or failure of these organizations (Sarah & Audrey, 2024).

In Kampala, many logistics companies still exhibit inefficient management practices that lead to poor resource allocation, suboptimal use of technology, and delays in the supply chain, which ultimately affect their overall performance (Nelson, Christopher, Teddy, et al., 2022). According to a 2022 survey by the Uganda Manufacturers Association, 65% of logistics companies in Kampala reported poor performance in terms of delivery times and customer service, largely attributed to weak managerial leadership (N. Moses & Nancy, 2024). Furthermore, research conducted by Omondi (2021) indicated that many logistics managers in Kampala lack the necessary

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training and skills in modern management techniques, such as data-driven decision-making and innovation management, which are crucial for improving company performance in a competitive market (Winny, Kazaara, et al., 2023). While some logistics companies have invested in technology and infrastructure, managerial competence remains a significant bottleneck in their performance improvement efforts. A study by (F. Christopher, Moses, et al., 2022) found that only 28% of logistics companies in Kampala had managers with formal training in logistics management, and 46% of these managers lacked strategic decision-making skills, which resulted in inefficient operations and lost business opportunities (Winny, Kazaara, et al., 2023). Furthermore, the lack of proper leadership development programs for managers in the logistics sector has hindered the ability of these companies to adapt to changing market demands, such as the increasing importance of sustainable practices and digital transformation in the logistics industry (Sophie & Crispus, 2024). This study, therefore, aims to investigate the relationship between managerial competence and company performance in logistics companies in Kampala

Objective of the study

1. To determine the relationship managerial competence and financials performance within logistics companies in Kampala

Methodology

The research followed a descriptive-correlational research design, which was particularly suitable for investigating the relationship between managerial competence and company performance (Jallow et al., 2022). The descriptive aspect of the design was used to provide a detailed account of the various managerial competencies within logistics companies, while the correlational component aimed to test the hypothesis that managerial competence has a positive relationship with organizational performance (Abiodun Nafiu, 2012). Given the complex nature of both managerial competencies and organizational performance, this research design was effective in uncovering patterns and relationships without altering the environment of the logistics companies in Kampala (Maiga et al., 2021). This design allowed for the establishment of clear correlations between the managerial capabilities of leaders and the measurable outcomes in the performance of their companies, encompassing factors such as operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and financial stability (Olanrewaju, Waititu, et al., 2021a).

The study focused on logistics companies located in Kampala, Uganda's capital and primary economic hub, which hosts a significant proportion of the country's logistics operations (Olanrewaju, Waititu, et al., 2021b). According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2023), there are over 300 logistics companies in Kampala alone, ranging from small-scale operations to large, multinational firms. Given the diversity in the types of logistics companies in Kampala, the research adopted a stratified random sampling method, which ensured that different company sizes were represented in the study (Sarah et al., 2024). This stratification allowed for the comparison of managerial competence and performance across small, medium, and large logistics firms. The stratified sampling approach was

essential to ensure that the sample reflected the diversity of the logistics sector in Kampala, thus increasing the generalizability of the findings (Nafiu, 2012).

To select the sample, the logistics companies in Kampala were first categorized into three strata based on their size: small, medium, and large, with size determined by factors such as the number of employees and annual turnover (Gunto Lu et al., 2013). A total of 15 companies were chosen for participation in the study, with five companies selected from each category. This stratified selection resulted in a sample of 45 managers, with one manager from each company, representing senior, middle, and operational management levels. In addition to the survey participants, 5 industry experts with considerable experience in the logistics sector were selected for semi-structured interviews (Olanrewaju, Waititu, et al., 2021b). These industry experts were expected to provide in-depth insights into the role of managerial competence in enhancing organizational performance, drawing from their experience working with logistics companies across different regions (Ramadhan et al., 2023). The study employed Cochran's sample size formula to calculate the required sample size, ensuring the statistical power of the study with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 5% (Olanrewaju, Waititu, et al., 2021b). This sample size was deemed appropriate for the exploratory nature of the study, and it enabled the collection of a sufficient amount of data to draw reliable conclusions about the relationship between managerial competence and organizational performance (Julius, 2024).

Data collection for this study involved a combination of survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, allowing for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The use of a mixed-methods approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, enabling triangulation of data from different sources (A. Nafiu et al., 2012). The quantitative data gathered from the surveys provided numerical evidence of the relationship between managerial competence and performance, while the qualitative data from interviews provided richer insights into the factors that influence managerial competence and its impact on logistics company performance (Olanrewaju, Lukman Abiodun, et al., 2021).

A structured survey questionnaire was developed based on an extensive review of the literature on managerial competence and organizational performance (Nicholas & Nancy, 2024). The questionnaire consisted of two main sections. The first section focused on assessing the managerial competence of respondents. This section included items designed to measure four key dimensions of managerial competence: leadership skills, strategic decision-making, problem-solving abilities, and communication skills (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). These dimensions were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree), allowing the respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements related to their managerial abilities (Nancy & Prudence, 2024). These competencies were selected because they have been widely recognized as crucial for effective management in the logistics sector, where rapid decision-making, problem-solving, and clear communication are essential for operational success. The second section of the questionnaire focused on assessing the performance of the companies.

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This section asked respondents to rate various aspects of company performance, such as operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, financial performance, and market competitiveness, using the same 5-point Likert scale (Muhamad et al., 2023). These performance indicators were chosen because they are commonly used in business performance measurement models and are directly impacted by the managerial competence of the leadership. The questionnaire was pretested with a sample of 5 managers from logistics companies to ensure the clarity, relevance, and reliability of the items. Based on the pretest feedback, minor revisions were made to the questionnaire before distributing it to the final sample (Irumba et al., 2024).

In addition to the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 industry experts to provide qualitative insights into the impact of managerial competence on the performance of logistics companies. The interview guide focused on several key themes, including the most critical managerial competencies for success in the logistics sector, the challenges logistics companies face in developing managerial competence, and the strategies used by high-performing companies to improve managerial effectiveness (Nafiu et al., 2012). The interviewees were selected based on their extensive experience in the logistics sector and their deep understanding of the factors that contribute to company performance.

The semi-structured interview format allowed the researcher to ask open-ended questions while providing the interviewees with the flexibility to discuss issues in more depth. The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour and were conducted in-person, ensuring that the researcher could engage in a more interactive conversation with the participants (Sarah et al., 2024). All interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants, and the transcripts were later analyzed to identify recurring themes related to managerial competence and performance. The quantitative data collected from the survey were analyzed using SPSS (Version 27) and STATA (Version 16), two widely used statistical software programs (Nelson, Christopher, & Milton, 2022). The use of both SPSS and STATA ensured that the analysis was robust, providing a comprehensive assessment of the data (Nelson et al., 2023). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine the relationship between managerial competence and organizational performance. Descriptive statistics were computed first to summarize the basic characteristics of the data. Measures such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages were used to provide an overview of the sample's demographic characteristics (e.g., age, education level, years of experience) and the distribution of managerial competence and company performance scores (A. Nafiu et al., 2012). These statistics allowed for the identification of trends and patterns in the data, offering a clear picture of the competencies possessed by managers in the logistics sector and the overall performance of their companies.

Results

To investigate this relationship among the constructs, a correlation table was generated. The summary of these findings is indicated in Table 1.

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Table 1: Pearson's Correlation for study variables

	MC	Kn	Ex	Skills
Managerial Competence (MC)	1			
Knowledge	.902**	1		
Experience	.899**	.857**	1	
Skills	.915**	.909**	.876**	1
Financial Performance (FP)	.708**	.587**	.595**	.647**

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The correlation between Managerial Competence (MC) and Knowledge (Kn) is 0.902, which is very strong and statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests that higher levels of managerial competence are closely associated with greater knowledge, meaning managers who possess more competence tend to have more knowledge, which is crucial for effective decision-making and leadership (Nelson et al., 2023).

The correlation between Managerial Competence (MC) and Experience (Ex) is 0.899, also a very strong positive relationship and significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that more experienced managers are generally more competent, aligning with the assumption that managerial experience is a key component of competence.

Similarly, Managerial Competence (MC) has a correlation of 0.915 with Skills (Skills), which is a very strong positive relationship and also significant at the 0.01 level. This means that the more competent a manager is, the stronger their skills tend to be, suggesting that competence is closely tied to having the necessary abilities and competencies to perform managerial tasks effectively.

The correlation between Knowledge (Kn) and Experience (Ex) is 0.857, which is also a strong positive correlation, statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This finding shows that more knowledgeable managers are often more experienced, which may indicate that knowledge and experience are interrelated in shaping managerial competence.

Knowledge (Kn) is also strongly correlated with Skills (Skills), with a value of 0.909, significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests that managers who possess more knowledge tend to have better-developed skills, emphasizing that knowledge acquisition is integral to developing managerial skills.

Experience (Ex) is positively correlated with Skills (Skills), with a value of 0.876, also significant at the 0.01 level. This implies that the more experience a manager has, the better their managerial skills, highlighting that experience plays a vital role in skill development.

Finally, Managerial Competence (MC) has a moderate positive correlation with Financial Performance (FP) of 0.708, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that higher managerial competence is

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generally associated with better financial performance, suggesting that competent managers tend to drive better financial outcomes for their organizations.

The correlations between Knowledge (Kn) and Financial Performance (FP), Experience (Ex) and Financial Performance (FP), and Skills (Skills) and Financial Performance (FP) are 0.587, 0.595, and 0.647, respectively, all significant at the 0.01 level. These moderate to strong positive correlations suggest that higher levels of knowledge, experience, and skills contribute positively to better financial performance in logistics companies. The strongest relationship with financial performance is seen with Managerial Competence (MC), followed by Skills (Skills), Experience (Ex), and finally Knowledge (Kn).

Table 2: Regression between managerial competence and financial performance

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.941 ^a	0.885	0.883	0.42216		
a. Predictors: (Constant), Managerial Competence						
Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.807	0.072		7.324	0.000
	Managerial Competence	0.697	0.031	0.195	1.984	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Financial Performance

Source: Primary Data, 2024

The R value of 0.941 indicates a very strong positive relationship between the predictor variable (Managerial Competence) and the dependent variable (Financial Performance). This means that Managerial Competence explains a significant portion of the variance in Financial Performance.

The R Square value of 0.885 suggests that 88.5% of the variance in Financial Performance (FP) can be explained by Managerial Competence (MC). This is a very high proportion, indicating that managerial competence is a highly significant determinant of financial performance in logistics companies.

The Adjusted R Square value of 0.883 takes into account the number of predictors in the model and adjusts for the potential overfitting that can occur when multiple variables are included in the analysis. The adjusted value is almost identical to the R Square, which reinforces the robustness of the model and indicates that the model is reliable.

The Standard Error of the Estimate is 0.42216, which represents the average distance that the observed financial performance values deviate from the predicted values. A lower value for this statistic indicates a more precise prediction, and in this case, the value suggests that the model is relatively accurate in predicting financial performance based on managerial competence.

Coefficients

The Intercept (Constant) is 2.807, which represents the expected financial performance when managerial competence is zero. This value indicates that, even in the absence of managerial competence, the base level of financial performance is still positive, although it is not sufficient to drive high performance.

The Coefficient for Managerial Competence is 0.697, which means that for every one-unit increase in managerial competence, the financial performance is expected to increase by 0.697 units, assuming all other factors remain constant. This coefficient is positive, confirming that as managerial competence improves, financial performance also improves.

The Standard Error for Managerial Competence is 0.031, indicating the variability in the coefficient estimate. A smaller standard error suggests that the coefficient estimate is precise.

The Beta value for Managerial Competence is 0.195, which represents the standardized effect of managerial competence on financial performance. This indicates that managerial competence has a moderate effect on financial performance when compared to other variables that might be included in a more complex model.

The t-statistic for Managerial Competence is 1.984, and the associated p-value is 0.000. The t-statistic is used to determine whether the coefficient for Managerial Competence is statistically significantly different from zero. Since the p-value is less than the 0.01 significance level, we can confidently conclude that Managerial Competence significantly affects Financial Performance.

Conclusion

The study found a positive association between managerial competence and financial performance among logistics companies. Also, the components of managerial competence of knowledge, experience and skills were also found to be positively related to financial performance among logistics companies.

Recommendations

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The study recommends that logistics companies to put much emphasis on improving managerial competence if they are register positive improvements in financial performance. Hence, it is fundamental for such firms to ensure that staffs have the right knowledge, experience and skills necessary to execute tasks.

Logistics firms should also consider improving working capital management if they are to register improvement in their financial performance. Accordingly, working capital practices associated to receivables management, cash management and inventory management should be improved in order to register such improvements in financial performance.

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