



Leadership Styles and Employee Commitment: An Example from a Private University in Ghana

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DOI: 10.53103/cjess.v3i1.112

Abstract

The relationship between leaders and workers plays a critical role in deciding the performance and effectiveness of organisations. The present study sought to examine how leadership is associated with employee commitment. Questionnaire was used to gather data from both administrative and academic staff who do not fall into the University's Management organogram. Descriptive research design and a quantitative approach guided the study. Simple random sampling was used to select seventy-six (76) staff. Data were analysed using descriptive (frequency counts, mean and standard deviation) and correlation. The results showed that there is statistically significant relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment. It was further revealed that staff commitment is moderate and the leadership style mostly practiced at the school appears satisfactory. It is recommended that management be more democratic, and payment of incentives and attractive packages should be put in place as this would increase employee commitment in the University.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Job Satisfaction, Employee Commitment, Private University

Introduction

Leadership is about defining a course or building a vision of the future along with the Strategies required to generate the changes required to achieve a vision (Long, & Thean, 2011). One of the most experienced and least understood phenomena on earth is leadership. Leaders play a crucial role in directing their followers to achieve organizational objectives.

They need to thoroughly connect with their workers, and handle human resources, financing, and marketing. Therefore, leadership is a mechanism by which a person motivates or influences others to accomplish organizational objectives (Rodell et al., 2016). It is the method of strengthening and fostering employees' self-esteem in order to accomplish organizational tasks and objectives.

It should also be emphasised that the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment has gotten a lot of scholarly attention. Most leadership studies have identified many leadership styles that leaders use in managing organisations (Kelly & MacDonald, 2019; Sudha et al., 2016; Yukl, 2012). Transformational leadership,

transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership are the most commonly used types in organisational leadership research (Abasilim, 2014; Rehman et al., 2012).

Employees demonstrate three types of commitment (affective, normative, and continuation commitment) (Othman et al, 2013). Furthermore, most studies on the association between leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and employee commitment have found a favourable relationship. Research has shown that the level of job satisfaction of staff in Ghanaian private universities is nothing to write home about. Tuffuor et al (2013) looked at the relationship between leadership styles and employees commitment in the banking sector. To this end, it appears that studies have not examined leadership styles and employees commitment in a faith-based private University in Ghana. Therefore, this present study sought to bridge the lacuna by examining the nexus relationship between these variables; specifically, the extent to which leadership styles correlate employee commitment. Additionally, almost all of the studies on the relationship between different leadership practises (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) and workers' commitment have found that these styles have positive effects on workers' commitment, whereas laissez-faire leadership philosophies have negative effects on workers' commitment regardless of the type of workplace (Abasilim et al., 2018). Since these studies were conducted outside of Ghana, it is unclear whether the results also apply to the context in Ghana; taking into account a faith-based private University.

Significance of the Study

Additionally, it is unknown how the demographic variables will affect the relationship between leadership styles and employees' commitment, that is the reason for which this study was conducted. This study is crucial because it offers relevant data on the current relationship between management practices and commitment in Catholic University of Ghana. The university might use the findings of the study to formulate policy on staff commitment and development for both administrative and academic staff. Human resource development policy is vital for both administrative and academic staff of the university and empirical findings of the study is expected to help make the policy viable. On the other hand, this research will add to the system of practical knowledge on transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, and laissez-faire leadership style in the private sector and the Catholic University community in particular, as well as develop the right leadership style to increase employee engagement and improve leadership quality.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

What is the level of employee commitment?

What is the dominant leadership style practised at university?

H0 There is no statistically significant relationship between leadership style and employee commitment

H1 There is statistically significant relationship between leadership style and employee commitment

Review of Related Literature

This section reviews literature that is relevant to the topic. This review is organized along the following thematic strands: a) LMX Theory; b) Motivation-Hygiene Theory. Again, the review takes into account the Concept of Leadership; Forms of Leadership styles; Employee Commitment and the relationship between Employee Commitment and Leadership styles.

Theoretical Framework

The grounds for examining the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment are based on two theories: Leader Member Exchange Theory and Motivation Hygiene Theory. These theoretical frameworks helped the researcher to see clearly the variables of the study. It also provided the researcher with a general framework for the study.

LMX Theory

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) contributed to the LMX theory, which suggests that leaders adapt their styles of leadership to generate an interchange that is geared towards followers or subordinates. The basic idea behind the LMX theory is that leaders form two groups: an in-group and an out-group, of followers. In-group members are given greater responsibilities, more rewards, and more attention. The leader allows these members some latitude in their roles. They work within the leader's inner circle of communication. In contrast, out-group members are outside the leader's inner circle; they receive less attention and fewer rewards, and are managed by formal rules and policies. The LMX theory has some implications on job related outcomes. It is important to note that contrary to popular belief, even high-quality LMX can have a negative impact on employee performance. This can occur as a result of either the extraction of efforts by employees who appear to be in the out-group or the stress and burn-out of employees who appear to be in the in-group. Employee performance lags in both cases. (Jha & Jha, 2013) Furthermore, LMX fails to improve employee performance in highly regulated, specified, and routine work settings

(Rose & Wright, 2005). While poor performance of out-group members is viewed with punitive eyes by supervisors, lower output of in-group members is likely to be overlooked due to yes-man-ship. The theory suggests that for any leader to elicit positive response from followers, the leader-follower relationship must not be impersonal. In organisational settings, if employees perceive impersonal relationship from their leaders, they will respond by doing only what is required of them. They will act without any intrinsic desire to promote organisational effectiveness. Thus, for a leader to exhibit effective leadership qualities, that leader ought to go beyond what is officially required, to attend to the psychological needs of the individuals in the organisation. Transactional leaders are likely to interact with their followers on impersonal goals whilst transformational leaders are likely to be responsive and adaptive to the psychological needs of the employees. As the theory suggests, leaders who adapt their styles of leadership to generate an interchange derive more positive response.

Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Frederick Herzberg (1966) developed the Motivation-Hygiene Theory which included two factors relating to employee commitment and job dissatisfaction. This theory explained that there were always two factors in any job: motivators and hygiene. The motivators often thought of as the intrinsic dimensions included achievements, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, and advancement were all strong determiners of job satisfaction. Likewise, hygiene factors often thought of as the extrinsic dimensions related to the work environment and these added to job dissatisfaction. The hygiene factors included company policy, administration, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations with subordinates, superiors, and peers, and working conditions. Herzberg believed the way to increase employee commitment was through the intrinsic rewards which included increasing the motivators and decreasing the hygiene factors. This study contends that eliminating the dissatisfiers do not necessarily improve an individual's job performance or satisfaction.

The Concept of Leadership

The way the leader communicates with the staff will decide the way workers work. Leadership models, however, were individually viewed by some of the executives, and could be adopted as a strategic option. In this case, they need to customize their own style of leadership instead of selecting just one style. Research has shown that in the following emotional intelligence competencies, the most effective leaders have strengths: self-awareness, self-regulation, inspiration and even relational capacity.

According to Yukl (2012), leadership is the process by which an individual member of an organization influences the interpretation of events, the choice of objectives

and strategies, the organization of work activities, the motivation of people to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the organization.

Leadership advances increasingly from conventional command and control new concepts such as transformative, charismatic or self-leadership are the theory. The goal of these models is to facilitate the participation of team members or associates, to incorporate versatility in the way team members are managed, driven, guided and influenced; to improve the potential of human resources and to cultivate the creative capacities of team members

Forms of Leadership Styles

The greatest challenge organizations are faced with is the selection of competent and effective leaders. Over the decades much has been written about the search for the core components in leadership. However, despite all of this study and attention, the true essence of leadership still appears to remain only partially discovered. Leadership Styles, when adopted, can influence behaviour and even output levels in any organisation (Segun-Adeniran, 2015).

Transformational Leadership

Because it places equal emphasis on human elements and staff development, the transformational leadership style produces great leadership performance beyond aspirations. This is regarded as the primary driving force behind leaders' efforts to increase employee loyalty to the company. In addition to being very resourceful in creating employment satisfaction and commitment, transformational leaders are desirable because they constantly believe in their team members and pay close attention to enhancing the potentials of employees within the organization (Agarwal & Gupta, 2021). Burns asserts that transformational leadership upholds principles of justice, fairness, honesty, and honour (Anderson, 2012).

Transactional Leadership Style

The transactional leadership style is thought to be an interaction of rewards depending on completion, similar to the carrot and stick strategy used to motivate staff to complete their leadership tasks (Segun-Adeniran, 2015). Transactional leaders can use punishments when the work is substandard or the outcomes are unpleasant, but they can also use incentives when the work is good. Even though this is a collaborative engagement between management and staff, the transactional leadership style is critiqued for being more management-oriented rather than being strategic in leadership (Agarwal & Gupta,

2021). This means that worker's cooperation depends on the penalty or reward they receive; the employee's level of work engagement will be heavily influenced by the punishment or reward; and the organisation will be tough to change because leaders are more interested in processes than progressive ideas, in finding faults to punish, and achievements for rewarding rather than motivating employees to work.

Laissez-Faire Leadership Style

Laissez-faire leadership is frequently not representative of the function of the leader; instead, leaders inspire and motivate the personal development of their workers, allowing for greater employee expression, particularly before challenging assignments. However, a laissez-faire leadership approach promotes innovation and creativity, speeds up decision-making, and gives people the freedom to act without waiting for approval (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Even in challenging situations where the role of the leader is essential, laissez-faire leaders avoid interfering since they believe that the employees should make the decision (Giao & Hung, 2018). It appears to be appropriate for workers who are very responsible and disciplined, however it will be challenging to accomplish leadership objectives with this style.

Employee Commitment

Employee's commitment is broad and can mean many different things. According to Akanbi and Itiola (2013), employee commitment refers to how much a person identifies with their company and is willing to contribute to achieving the goals and objectives that company has set for itself. It could also be implied by a person's level of self-identification as an employee of an organisation and the level of excitement shown in carrying out his or her professional responsibilities (Mensah *et al.*, 2016).

The findings regarding the relationship between education and employee commitment are very inconsistent. Some researchers have found a negative relationship between education and job satisfaction. It was also found that Lebanese leadership style was thought to be more transformative than transactional. In other words, there are elements like religion, culture, and environment that may explain the adoption and use of a specific leadership style to elicit commitment from workers. Knowing these elements will help you better comprehend managing.

Relationship between Leadership styles and Employee Commitment

Studies have shown that transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership styles are extensively used and have attracted the attention of many reserachers working on organisational development in leadership contexts (Abasilim et al.,

2018; Rehman et al., 2012). There is a correlation between transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership styles and employee work engagements, with transformational leadership style and transactional leadership having a positive relationship with employee engagement and laissez-faire leadership styles having a negative relationship (Abasilim et al., 2018). This implies that the pursuit for leaders with the appropriate leadership style who fit the demands of the new context can lead to the development of the organisation. This paper concentrates on analysis, delving into democratic, authoritarian, and laissez-faire leadership styles based on the seminal theories of Lewin et al. (1939). Various studies on the relationship between transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership styles and employee engagement have been done in several countries and cultures (Abasilim et al., 2019; Yasir et al., 2016). Is this applicable in a private university? Thanh et al (2022) found that employee engagement and leadership styles are closely associated. The survey also found that leadership style has a significant impact on how engaged employees are at work. Duat's (2013) study of democratic, authoritarian, and laissez-faire leadership styles in the public sector found that democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles had a favourable association with organisational retention whereas authoritarian leadership styles hinder work satisfaction.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted descriptive survey design which follows the quantitative paradigm. Creswell (2014) contends that descriptive survey research helps us to know the perception, feelings, attitudes, behaviours and characteristics of a population. This design helps to provide accurate information about prevailing conditions, practices, attitudes and opinion.

Population

The target population that served as respondents for the study were staff of Catholic University of Ghana. The accessible population were full-time academic and administrative staff. The University had a total population of 125 fulltime staff.

Sampling Technique

Yamane (1967) formula was used to determine the sample size at precision value of 10%.; hence the sample size seventy-six (76). First, simple random sampling technique was used to select 50% of the academic staff. Names of the academic staff were obtained and the computer method was used to select the number. The same procedure was used to 60% of the administrative staff.

Research Instrument

Questionnaire was used to gather data. The items on the questionnaire were adapted from Management Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). There were 18 items on the instrument. However, this questionnaire was therefore modified to meet the context of the study. The Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire has been condensed; how to evaluate questions based on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 points: with 1 denoting strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= uncertain, 4= agree, and 5 = strongly agree. The Employee Commitment Questionnaire followed. For the purpose of establishing correlations between the indicated variables and the responses, the use of a questionnaire guaranteed that quantifiable responses were acquired. The questionnaire's reputation as a structured tool for getting information from a potentially large number of respondents quickly—especially when the population is freely accessible—was another factor in the instrument's selection (Sarantakos, 2017).

Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity of instrument, it was developed under close guidance of colleagues who have in-depth knowledge in Admiration, since content validity is determined by expert judgment. Internal consistency was used to assess the questionnaire's reliability. As a result, after two weeks had passed since the initial test, the same test was administered twice to the same group. After that, a reliability coefficient was generated to show the correlations between the two sets of scores collected. The Pearson correlation for the questionnaire was 0.814. Pallant (2013) posits that reliability coefficient of 0.7 and above is considered to be high.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to demonstrate the demographics (gender, experience, age and education) of the study sample and inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses.

Results

The variables that were sought for from the respondents include sex, age range, category, educational qualification and experience in the university. The results of the descriptive statistics of the variables using frequency counts are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	52	68.4
Female	24	31.6
Age range		
20-30	5	6.5
31-40	28	36.4
41-50	21	27.3
51-60	19	24.7
Above 60	3	4.2
Category of staff		
Administrative	29	37.7
Finance	8	10.4
Academic	39	51.9
Educational Qualification		
Bachelor's Degree	11	14.3
Master's Degree	54	70.1
Ph. D.	12	15.6
Working Experience		
Less than 5years	6	7.8
6-10years	20	26.8
11-15years	21	27.3
Over 15years	29	38.8

The background information obtained from the respondents as shown in Table 1 concerns their sex, age, their area of work, educational attainment and number of years of service in the university. As seen in the table, the male respondents are far more than the female representing 54(68.4%) and 24(31.6%). This situation is not surprising as males dominate in the senior members and senior staff employees of tertiary education landscape in Ghana due to the high educational level required for that status. The results further show the academic qualifications of the participants as those holding second degree are 54 representing 70.1%, those having terminal degree are 12 representing 15.6% and 11 representing 14.3% are first degree holder. The last background variable that was sought from the respondents is about the duration of their work experience with the university as it is relevant to the subject under investigation. Judging from this, it can be said that this is a good development as the respondents can provide ample information to aid the focus of the study.

Table 2: Level of employee commitment

Variables	Mean	SD
My opinion on work issues is respected	1.71	.47
I am allowed to use my initiative on the job	1.55	.51
I am well respected	1.29	.47
My promotion is regular	3.28	.77
My immediate boss is interested in my career progress	3.17	.72
My head recommends me for promotion regularly	3.22	.94
My promotion corresponds with the level of my input in the library	1.54	.78
My promotion boosts the level of my job performance	1.61	.68
My office is conducive for working	1.58	.75
The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job	3.29	.89
I am happy to go to work everyday	2.83	.73
I have the resources I used to work effectively	1.46	.52

The following decision rules were set out to rate the level of employee commitment.

Rule: 1-1.4 = VL (Very Low), 1.5-2.4 = L (Low), 2.5-3.4 = H (High), while the mean criterion is 3.5-4 = VH (Very High) = 2.50, which is $4+3+2+1=10 \div 4 = 2.5$. This means that every score lower than 2.5 is considered poor. It can be deduced from Table 3 that the degree of work satisfaction of university workers was poor, judging by the overall mean score of 2.13 on a scale of 4. Similarly, it was poor in terms of recognition as a measure of work satisfaction (mean average= 1.52), which means that the workers investigated at the university were not well regarded in their departments. It was also poor (average mean= 2.29) in comparison to the conducive work environment, meaning that the environment was not adequately conducive to the work examined by the workers. Opportunities for promotion were high (average mean = 2.57). All the standard deviation values were below; hence, it can be inferred that the responses were homogenous in nature.

Table 3: Leadership styles

Variables	Mean	SD
Transformational Leadership	3.88	1.54
Transactional leadership style	3.68	1.47
Laissez-Faire leadership style	3.53	1.37

Table 3 indicates that management of the University adopt different kinds of leadership styles. The table shows that the dominant form of leadership style in the school is Transformational leadership style with an average mean of 3.88 and standard deviation=1.54). And on a scale of 4, Transactional leadership style (average mean=3.68; standard deviation=1.47). Laissez-Faire leadership style mean =3.53; standard deviation=1.37). The standard deviation values indicate that the sample is more diverse and that the responses were heterogenous in nature. It was found that the dominant leadership style adopted by Management of the school is Transformational Leadership followed by transactional and laissez-faire leadership, respectively.

Relationship between Leadership Style and Employee Commitment

The study sought to ascertain how leadership styles affect the various aspects the staff's employee commitment at the University. In view of this, the study hypothesized that, there is no significant relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment at the. To be able to do that, correlational test was run to establish existence, direction and significance of the relationship. Pearson correlation was computed to examine the relationship and the outcomes of the analysis are presented in the table below.

Table 4: Correlation between leadership style and job performance

		Leadership Styles	Employee Commitment
Leadership Styles	Pearson Correlation	1	0.714*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.002
	N	76	76
Employee Commitment	Pearson Correlations	0.714*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	
	N	76	76

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

The results as displayed in that there is a positive and significant relationship between Leadership Styles and Employee Commitment ($r=0.715$, $n=76$, $p=0.002$). Therefore, at 95% level of significance, the appropriate Leadership Styles would lead to an increase in the various aspects of Employee Commitment. Based on this, the Null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis sustained.

Discussion

It was hypothesized that employee commitment is positively impacted by transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership. Additionally, the study showed that employees follow instructions regardless of whether their supervisors are transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire (Giao & Hung, 2018), revealing the distinctive traits of workers in the University. The findings from this study are consistent with those of earlier study by Duat, (2013). To this end, it is argued that transformational leadership style influences organisational commitment. As a result, suggestions for creating transformational leaders have been made, and it is important to focus on producing competent leaders who can use the transformational leadership style. This supports the argument that leadership style influences employee commitment in any organisation, in particular, at private University; this is because, a satisfied and productive worker does not want to leave the job. In relating the findings of this study to the Mc Gregor's Theory X it can be argued that workers are inefficient and operate under stringent oversight. The majority of private institutions, by way of incentives and penalties, prefer to follow this form of leadership. This finding also correlates Segun-Adeniran (2015) who stressed the value of leaders applying the proper style to deal with their subordinates to ensure that the organisation works effectively.

Conclusions And Recommendations

The present study supported the earlier discussion of employee commitment in private institutions, including private colleges. Analysis focused on the welfare of staff and other concerns such as management and work satisfaction in the Catholic University of Ghana. This suggests that effective and appropriate leadership is linked to the commitment of the staff and that the transformational leadership style should be adopted more in order for the employees to be active in decision-making, thus increasing their satisfaction in the organization. Nevertheless, Management needs to find alternative ways to boost the morale of staff where the need be, and pay them the necessary incentives and other fringe benefits.

Suggestions for Further Studies

For better representativeness, the number of respondents should have been higher. The classification of leadership styles is additionally limited. Further studies should look at mediating variables that implicate the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment.

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