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An Empirical Evidence of the Effect of Leadership Styles on Faculty Staff Performance at Universities in Ghana

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Abstract:

This paper is an empirical evidence of the effect of leadership styles on faculty staff performance within universities in Ghana. About 330 respondents sampled from ten public and private universities responded to questionnaires and used for the analysis. A quantitative research paradigm was employed and data was analysed by use of SPSS. It is evident from the study that different leadership styles affect faculty staff performance and that leadership skills truly do matter in improving performance of staff and hopefully, the leadership style practiced at universities could be incorporated. The regression results portray positive and statistically insignificant relationship between Autocratic Leadership Style and Employees' Performance. Further, the study showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between Authentic Leadership Style and Employees' Performance at one percent alpha level among others. This research guides prospective entrepreneurs and governments among others who seek to establish universities as to knowing leadership practices by management for effective performance of faculty to becoming globally competitive. Further, it gives an empirical data from a developing country perspective relating to management effectiveness at tertiary institutions in terms of leadership practices. Suggestions for universities in Ghana are presented and finally future studies are highlighted in the study.

Keywords: Leadership, faculty staff performance, university

1. Introduction

The role of higher education no doubt contributes significantly to the development of nations. This with no hesitation permits governments and other stakeholders to be particular about leadership at higher education institutions specifically universities. Researchers including Marshall et al., (2011) have contended that two diverse but key elements for the governance of higher education are leadership and management. An indicator of higher education that countries work to accomplish possibly is quality. Effah and Hofman (2010) argue that the need to ensure quality education is even more compelling in a developing country experiencing a growing social demand for tertiary education. Lecturers/teachers play a role to this quality that countries are yearning for. Earlier, Duke (1990) was of the view that staffs'/teachers' success in growing professionally is not only of their own innovation, awareness and imagination but of the nature of the institution in which they teach implying that management practices of institutions constituting part of the teachers' environment can contribute to promoting high performance of staffs. In addition, Mwadiani (2002) did write that universities by their unique nature are expected to be a repository of the most specialized and skilled intellectuals and serve as storehouses of knowledge for nurturing the manpower needs of the nation thereby satisfying the aspirations of the people for a good and human society. He further argued that universities goals and objectives cannot be realized without the academic staff whose roles are key and their number, quality and their effectiveness makes the difference in university education production function to the wider society. Universities teach the people who work, lead and innovate tomorrow and faculty no hesitation is fundamental to the functioning of any university. Universities according to World Bank and CMI (2012) generate knowledge, innovation and human capital required to increase competitiveness in a knowledge-based economy.

Managerial effectiveness to institutions has engineered numerous researchers delving into various management practices in educational institutions. For example, Oladipo, Jamilah, Abu, Mohammed, Aishat, Narges and Nwosu (2013) argued that leadership style has been largely attributed to the success or failure of formal organisations, nations and other social units. Hukpati (2009) perceived that leadership is a fundamental aspect of management in that it has an important bearing on a range of activities that leading to the attainment of organisational outcomes.

The study of leadership over the past few decades from literature focused on leadership styles and how leadership influences organisations. Researchers including Binfor et al (2013) writing on leadership reasoned that many definitions, explanations and proposals on styles and models have been presented by academics, authors and institutions. Currently, leadership and its role to business and organisations are receiving special unusual prominence in the global world. Much of the interest however in the area of leadership research from these researchers are based on the obvious claims that leadership is linked to organisational performance. But to Owusu-Bempah et al (2011), leadership and management scandals and leadership failures in various organisations at national and international levels and the

accompanying societal challenges facing public and private organisations, have drawn both practicing leaders and academicians' attention to the ethical challenges in leadership. Writing on university leadership context, Stiles (2004) assert the importance of university leaders being able to help their people engage in change. Universities in the developed countries in recent decades have experienced essential changes and developing countries are not exempted. These changes which are significant according to Ackroyd and Ackroyd (1999) are 'both internally generated and externally imposed' and have ranged from the consequences of growth to changes in legal status and the effects of new government policies.

The effective functioning of every tertiary education as argued by Mensa Bonsu and Effah (2003) depends largely upon the manner in which participation of the leaders of the various constituencies represented on the campuses are fostered. Their argument to the researcher calls for good leadership practice by management of universities to foster university effectiveness. In an era of fast developing economies, changed expectations regarding university access, and the effect of market demands, the community becomes the 'client' for universities in unprecedented ways. But years past, universities have proved to be extremely durable institutions capable of aligning to changing circumstances while maintaining their traditional ideals, Coaldrake and Stedman (1998). Thus, the easy manner with which leaders of universities interact may determine to very large extent the peace and stability needed to achieve the university's existence. Sathye (2004) in his work found that academic leadership poses problems that are distinctly different than leadership in business or government agencies and that for leaders in academic environment to be outstanding must cling to teaching, learning, learning and scholarship. No wonder Paul (2011), argues that universities are among the most difficult of all organisations to lead.

It is against these mixed approaches on leadership from the literature that the researcher empirically researches into leadership styles practiced within universities in Ghana. Precisely, the study;

- Identifies the leadership style practiced by management of universities in Ghana.
- Examines the effect of leadership styles employed by management of universities on faculty staff performance in Ghana.

2. Literature Review

The section has been presented into three stages. First, perspective of leadership is debated into detail followed by the argument of the contingency approach. Finally, works of the link between leadership style and performance are delineated

2.1. Leadership

The work of Daft (2008) as cited by Effah and Osei-Bonsu (2013) writes that leadership is one of the most observed phenomena on earth and one of the least understood. Earlier, Zacharatos et al (2000) explained leadership as a group process, an attribute of personality, the art of inducing complaisance, an exercise of influence, a particular type of action or behaviour, a form of persuasion, a power of relationship, an instrument to achieve goals, the result of an interaction and a differentiated role or initiation of a structure. In his work, Muijs (2011) writes that leadership is seen as a key factor in organisational effectiveness but that interest in educational leadership has increased over the few decades. This, has been attributed to changes in the educational system globally over the past two decades. The change in the educational system as opined by Teddlie and Reynolds cited in Muijs (2011) has led to a growth in the importance of the school heads and their roles and therefore to a greater interest in leadership as a needed factor in the effectiveness of schools for which universities are included. Contributing to the debate on what leadership does, Chandra & Priyono (2016) maintain that 'leadership seeks the participation of the employees with all their dedication and sense of ownership through the power of mobilization, motivation and communication in the organization'. This to the researcher results through exercising authority as a leader. Murphy et al (2006) write that leadership is one key element that has contributed to private companies being more effective than the public sector. One thing to be learnt from the private sector where leadership is an important element in the performance of business is also a contributing factor in leadership in education. Leadership and its importance in schools have been backed by many researchers and policy makers. Muijs (2011) comments on how successive British government leaders have stressed the importance of school leadership and as a confirmation researchers including Hallinger and Heck's (1998) suggest a link between leadership and school effectiveness.

Different leadership styles have been proposed by researchers from the literature. For example, Hersey-Blanchard model proposed four types of leadership behaviour as: telling style, selling style, participating style and delegating style. Other leadership styles from the literature included but not limited to: autocratic, bureaucratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational and transactional. In analysing leadership styles in this study, four elementary styles are explained and these styles are: autocratic, authentic, democratic and laissez-faire.

Autocratic style also termed as dictatorial leadership style involves a close supervision of subordinates. The leader here details instructions to cover every task being taken. With this style, staff initiatives are inhibited, staff knowledge, skills and experiences are not fully applied to their work. The absence of the group leader therefore implies that important work may not be completed.

Many researchers including Avolio (2007); Yukl (2006); and others writing on authentic leadership argue that leadership is no longer simply described as an individual characteristic or difference, but rather is represented in different models as dyadic, shared, relational, strategic, global, and a complex social dynamic. This leadership style that addresses this leader-follower relationship is what researchers termed as the authentic leadership.

Democratic style of leadership from the literature does improve employees' morale through involving them in decision making, planning and control which eventually motivate followers in the long round. To Schimmoeller (ibid) taking decisions in organisations are left to other employees in the organisation as such, *'laissez-faire'* leaders often quickly lose power in the organisation due to lack of action. The *'laissez-faire'* manager can be distinguished from other managers depending on how power source are used; leading to ineffective means of managing subordinates.

2.2. Theories of Leadership

Several theories of leadership have been developed over the years with the intent to apprehend why leaders behave in a specific way. These theories have been explained briefly in this study except the Contingency approach discussed into detail simply of the fact that it guided the study. The Trait theory according to Bennett (1995) is the very first theory on leadership, though no longer of interest to practitioners despite its concentration on the leaders as observed from the literature. Promoters of this approach accept as true that the ability to lead is an innate characteristic and that people naturally are born to lead and individuals cannot learn the skills required of a leader. Behavioural theories are generally based on the observation of people in leadership positions with the aim of identifying certain behavioural patterns and categorising these as leadership behaviours. The Situational Leadership Theory is based on the argument that a leader's behaviour is dictated by the situation through which the leader is.

Contingency approach perhaps is a refinement of the situational leadership theories. Jones (2008) contributing to this writes that 'contingency theories dwell on identifying the situational variables that dictate the most appropriate leadership style.' This approach asserts that leadership should be tailored according to the needs of a particular situation because there is no one particular approach that could be fully effective in all circumstances. Earlier, Vroom and Jago (1995) specified that 'optimum leadership style was dependent on the situation faced by the leader.' As such, people in leadership position ought to adjust behaviours as circumstances changed. Researchers advocating for this theory observed that a leader's effects on subordinates were contingent on some precise situational moderator variables. A model developed by Fiedler as cited by Owusu-Bempah et al. (2011) termed it 'a contingency model of leadership effectiveness.' The model argued by Steers et al. (1996) establishes the relationship between leadership style and favourableness of the situation. Proponents however recommended it when there is the need for quick decisions to be taken thereby in favour of the autocratic style of leadership as appropriate than participative. Though, noted from literature search that the approach encourages managers to analyse logically the characteristics of several situations, individual managers are likely not to be skilled enough to adapt leadership style from one to the other. Additionally, certain fundamental underlying principles perhaps should always be applied regardless of the situation. An assumption that everything about the leader is stable is one weakness of this theory. The Path-Goal theory has been debated by House and Mitchell and cited in Owusu-Bempah et al. (2011) as one strand of Contingency approach. This from the literature is based on the expectancy theory of motivation, where leaders are regarded by subordinates as the source of rewards. Regarding contingency, the leader defines the 'path' to be followed and explains the associated rewards to the subordinate (Chea, 2007; Thomas 2001).

Some studies have shown the gains made in related variables with leaders' effectiveness. For instance, in contributing to this debate, Hart (1993) argued that leader follower interactions 'involved a two- way process and followers played an important role in determining leadership effectiveness which in the end brings about organisational effectiveness'. These theories have strengthened the study specifically the concept of contingency indexed by performance of organisations.

2.3. Leadership and Performance

In examining the effect of a transformational leadership style on performance of universities in Nigeria by Ahmed Abubakar and Sani Ahmed (2017), data was collected from respondents through structured questionnaire survey via census. By the usage of Partial Least Squares (PLS) algorithm and bootstrap techniques in the data analysis by the researchers, the outcome showed that transformational leadership style had a significant positive effect on university. It was suggested to management that leadership principle for better performance of universities ought to be embraced.

Shadi Hijazi, Abdul Latif Kasim and Yaakob Daud (2016) researched into Leadership Styles and their relationship with the Private University Employees' Job Satisfaction in United Arab Emirates. The drive was to examine the relationships between leadership styles and job satisfaction among the private university employees in the UAE which in the long term could increase the university/organizational performance. Faculty members numbering 241 from seven private universities in UAE by use of random sampling participated in the study. Two different instruments: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) were employed to collect data which was quantitative. It was revealed that 'there was positive and significant relationship between transformational style and employee Job Satisfaction' whilst 'the relationship between transactional leadership style and job satisfaction was observed to be negative and significant.' With the present study, data collected was not limited to only private universities but included public, private and quasi universities to establishing what pertains at universities in general.

Ayoubi and Khalifa (2014) worked on two leadership styles: transactional and transformational leadership at Syrian universities. The researchers explored further to establish if differences existed in leadership styles were caused by sector demographics. With the use of a quantitative research paradigm a questionnaire survey method was employed. Data was gathered from top management staff from two public and private universities. In all, 216 questionnaires were used for the analyses using SPSS. The research revealed there 'is a high level of transactional leadership except one of its dimensions, management by exception-passive, which occurred in a medium level.' In addition, 'there is also a high level of transformational leadership except one of its dimensions, individualized consideration, which occurred in a medium level.' The study also revealed significant differences in leadership styles that were caused by follower demographics.

This present study considered different leadership styles (four) and how these leadership styles affected faculty staff performance adding to the existing literature on other leadership styles equally affecting performance.

Additionally, Nasir, Nordin, Seman & Rahmat (2014) studied the relationship between the leadership styles and the organizational performance among the Malaysian Public Universities (IPTA) academic leaders in Klang Valley Area. The study, which was a quantitative research explored the differences that existed between the leadership styles of academic leaders and organizational performance. The research showed finding that Transformational leadership; Transactional leadership and Laissez Faire leadership styles had a positive and significant relationship with organizational performance. The study under discussion however took into consideration different leadership styles from what Nasir, Nordin, Seman & Rahmat (2014) considered.

Moreover, the study of Nordin (2013) surveyed ‘the relationship between transformational leadership behaviour and its augmentation effects among the academics in a Malaysian higher educational institution.’ Academic staffs from Universiti Teknologi MARA participated in the study. By employing a stage cluster sampling, 169 respondents took part in the survey. The outcome did show a positive and moderate relationship between transformational leadership and leadership outcomes. The results add to the numerous research works from literature that transformational leadership works best on performance from other leadership styles.

Effah and Osei-Owusu (2013) worked on the leadership effectiveness of leaders of tertiary institutions in Ghana. The study did examine the leadership styles adopted, the leadership energy and effectiveness of the leaders of two tertiary institutions. Effah and Osei-Owusu work was undertaken at two institutions; a polytechnic and a university. The results showed that leaders of both institutions adopted team leadership style and were concerned about the organizational goals and wellbeing of the lecturers.

This research is motivated from the observation made from literature to addresses some specific leadership styles (apart from transformation and transactional) relationship on faculty staff performance empirically in the context of higher education, universities in Ghana to be particular.

3. Methodology

Faculty staff of universities (private and public) in Ghana were chosen for the study. The target population however, consisted of all faculty staffs of ten (10) universities in Ghana: four(4) Public (University of Cape Coast, University of Professional Studies-Accra, University of Mines and Energy, and University for Development Studies-Tamale). Four(4) Private universities/colleges (Central University, Methodist University College, Wisconsin International University College and Regent University College of Science and Technology) and two (2) Quasi Universities, (Ghana Technology University College and Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration). The population for the study was about 3000 but the sample size was 800. However, 330 responded questionnaires were obtained after screening the received questionnaires. Data was analysed quantitatively by use of SPSS version 21. The tools used in analyzing the data included correlation and regression among others.

The model below was developed by the researcher to analyse specifically the type of leadership style effect on faculty staff performance.

$$\text{Employee Performance} = \text{Constant} + \eta_1\text{AutocraticLS} + \eta_2\text{AuthenticLS} + \eta_3\text{DemocraticLS} + \eta_4\text{LaissezfaireLS} + \varepsilon$$

Where:

AutocraticLS = Autocratic Leadership Style

AuthenticLS = Authentic Leadership Style

DemocraticLS = Democratic Leadership Style

LaissezfaireLS = Laissez faire Leadership Style

(η_1, η_2, η_3 and η_4) = Co-efficients of the explanatory variables

ε = Error term of the model

4. Results

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.551	.085		6.504	.000
AutocraticLS	.049	.040	.045	1.202	.230
AuthenticLS	.248	.038	.373	6.617	.000
DemocraticLS	.180	.047	.213	3.817	.000
LaissezfaireLS	.186	.045	.256	4.145	.000

Table 1: Regression Output of Components of Leadership Style

Source: Field Data, 2016

4.1. Estimated Model for components of Leadership Style

$$\text{Employee Performance} = .551 + 0.049\text{AutocraticLS} + 0.248\text{AuthenticLS} + 0.180\text{DemocraticLS} + 0.186\text{LaissezfaireLS} + \dots$$

Where LS= Leadership style

The regression results portray positive and statistically insignificant relationship between Autocratic Leadership Style and Employees' Performance. The finding also discovers a positive and statistically significant relationship between Authentic Leadership Style and Employees' Performance. The coefficient of Authentic Leadership Style .248, implies that a unit change in Authentic Leadership Style will increase Employees' Performance by .248, all other things being equal. The regression result further showed positive statistically significant relationship between Democratic Leadership Style and Employees' Performance. The coefficient of Democratic Leadership Style is .180, which implies that a unit change in Democratic Leadership Style will increase Employees' Performance by .180, all other things being constant. There is also a statistically positive significant relationship between Laissez faire Leadership Style and Employees' Performance. Laissez faire Leadership Style has co-efficient of .186. This means that a unit change in Laissez faire Leadership Style will cause Employees' Performance to change by .186, all other things being constant. The regression results obtained co-efficient of determination of $r^2 = .566$, which shows that approximately 57 percent of variations in the Employees' Performance is jointly explained by Autocratic Leadership Style, Authentic Leadership Style, Democratic Leadership Style and Laissez faire Leadership Style. This means that about 33 percent of Employees' Performance is explained by other factors. The values of standardized coefficients communicate which of the explanatory variables best predicts the explained variable. Comparatively, it is observed from the table that the most important predictor of the explanatory variables is found to be Authentic Leadership Style followed by Democratic Leadership Style and Laissez faire Leadership Style.

4.2. Discussions and Implication

In evaluating the effects of components of leadership style on employees' performance, the study revealed from the analysis that Authentic Leadership Style, Democratic Leadership Style and Laissez faire Leadership Style have positive statistically significant relationship with Employees' Performance. These results are on one hand, inconsistent with Hinkin and Schriesheim (2008), who observed in their work that laissez-faire leadership style was the most passive and ineffective type of leadership.

But the findings are in line with initial empirical findings by Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson (2008) that authentic leadership at the individual level has an impact on followers' performance. Additionally, consistent with prior studies, Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May and Walumbwa (2005) found that authentic leadership is significantly related to both performance and trust. Further, the findings on democratic leadership style are in consonance with Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi and Shaikh (2012) who found a direct significant relationship between democratic leadership style and work performance. Specifically, they found that the higher the employees' score are on democratic type of a leadership style, the more job satisfaction they will seek, invariably leading to work performance (Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi & Shaikh, 2012). Autocratic Leadership Style, on the other hand, showed insignificant relationship with Employees' Performance. This is in line with Puni, Ofei and Okoe (2014), who found statistically insignificant relationship between autocratic leadership style and service sector performance in Ghana. Suggestions from these findings can be contended that perhaps due to Ghana's political history, institutional managements resort to other leadership styles other than autocratic form of leadership, since its adoption may not have any significant impact of staff performance.

Some studies have also shown that adoption of appropriate leadership style has favorable impact on both management and staff output. Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi and Shaikh (2012) for instance, maintain that absence of leadership style brings about lack of direction from the leader resulting in low morale and lack of interest in the work. However, Hayers (2000) found that workers who fell under pressure reported autocratic supervision on the part of their leaders, and workers under autocratic style of leadership argued by Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy (2014) 'do not experience higher sense of community than workers under democratic style of leadership.' Related with earlier studies, these findings are not different from the study of Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang and Avey (2009), who expected authentic leadership and its effects to positively predict performance growth and found nothing different from what they expected in their results.

Contrary to this study, in terms of individual contribution, authentic leadership style was found to be the most important predictor of employees' performance than the almighty democratic leadership style which has all-inclusion decision making characteristic. This finding is rare as several studies show that the contribution of democratic leadership style to organisations' performance is extremely significant than other leadership approaches. For instance, according to Şimşek (2010), democratic leadership style allows group discussions and emphasizes group decisionmaking, and workers under democratic leadership style Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, (2014) further maintained 'do not experience higher job-related tension than workers under autocratic leadership style.' However, this study's finding is consistent with the modern research findings which indicated that authentic leadership is a higher-order, multidimensional construct, comprised of self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalization of a moral perspective (Walumbwa et al., 2008). More so, on the type of leadership style as a management practice, it came to bear that autocratic leadership style averagely practiced by management of universities discourages creative thinking; inhibits academic growth; kills morale, affect faculty staffs negatively and stifles creativity and initiative.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has extremely advanced knowledge as far as an empirical evidence of the effect of leadership styles on faculty staff performance within universities in Ghana is concerned. It is anticipated that the findings help management of universities to do self-assessment of the types of leadership styles so that action could be taken to decrease any gaps. Universities by all indications and from the literature is crucial in the generation and transferring of knowledge. The ten universities which were the attention for this analysis are by no means unique. They were selected simply to enable assessment on leadership style between different universities. With respect to the objectives of this study, it could be

concluded that authentic leadership style is best practiced by management of universities in Ghana. Further, the regression results obtained co-efficient of determination of $r^2 = .566$, denoting that approximately 57 percent of variations in the Employees' Performance is jointly explained by Autocratic Leadership Style, Authentic Leadership Style, Democratic Leadership Style and Laissez faire Leadership Style, inferring that about 33 percent of Employees' Performance is explained by other factors. The study has verified empirically that other leadership styles could positively affect employees' performance at universities in Ghana specifically, and other universities generally, other than transformational leadership which researchers including Ahmed Abubakar and Sani Ahmed (2017) have argued has been associated to higher education performance. Additionally, a combination of leadership styles such as authentic, democratic and laissez faire positively significantly affect employees' performance, but autocratic leadership style would do otherwise.

Researchers have argued for more applicable models of leadership; for instance, a type such as democratic cultures and less hierarchical cited by Jones Lefoe, Harvey & Ryland (2012) recently in the higher education literature about leadership. In contributing to the discussion of leadership at higher education institutions, Jones et al. (2012) among others were optimistic that there was the need for academics to develop distributed and collective leadership styles as a means of shared responsibility in changing higher education cultures. Further while Bolden, Petrov & Gosling (2008), maintained that 'leadership is everyone's responsibility', Jones et al., (2012) upheld that 'collective collaboration rather than individual power and control' to building leadership capacity in learning and teaching must be the focus of distributive leadership.

It is the researcher's wish that the recommendations provide discernment to management of universities in Ghana on how to foster leadership styles in the precise stability to survive in the turbulent environment of competition among universities globally. Though the research makes a practical contribution to knowledge in leadership styles and its effect on performance within universities in Ghana, it has some limitations and unties new avenues for future research. It must be noted that this study is limited to ten universities (public-4, private-4 and quasi-2) of the many accredited universities in Ghana. It may be quite challenging to perhaps generalize the findings to other universities in Ghana, (Technical Universities), a hopeful area for future research. Secondly, this study aimed as one of its objectives at examining the effect of leadership styles employed by management of universities on faculty staff performance, it attempted to explore other leadership styles affecting staff performance so that a baseline description of leadership types at universities could be established. Further, studies in the near future can compare how leadership styles affects staff performance at the respective universities; for instance, regular and technical universities in Ghana.

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