

The Role of Leadership in Employee Motivation

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Abstract

While this study is to draw from the autocratic and transformational leadership styles to advance further understanding on the underlying mechanisms that enable leaders to behave in an autocratic or transformational manner; and to affect employee motivation, their behaviour and consequently, their organisational oriented ventures. The paper intends to establish the role of leadership style in motivating the teaching staff to be committed to their work. From these 13 high schools, 184 teaching staff were selected to participate. It should be noted that these 'high schools were not performing above the provincial benchmark. In order to obtain a holistic view of the overall leadership style present in the school system, a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was used. The researchers administered the questionnaires with the assistance of schools' administrative clerks and the completed questionnaires were collected by the research support group. Data were analysed by descriptive statistics, such as percentages, frequency and the Cronbach-alpha coefficient to test among other things, the reliability of describing the impact and the leadership style in these schools. The study reveals that there strong relationship between transformational leadership behaviours and commitment (affective commitment; continuance commitment; and normative commitment). The findings further highlighted the relationship trust, inspiring a shared vision, encouraging creativity and emphasising development as positive aspect that motivate staff. While it can be argued that transformational leadership cannot raise job satisfaction, however the commitment of teachers to their job can raise job satisfaction and ultimately improve the school's academic performance.

Keywords: Transactional Leadership, Organizational Commitment, Transformational Leadership, Motivation.

1. Introduction and Background

Every organisation, like every team requires leadership. Leadership allows managers to affect employee behaviour in the organisation. Thus, motivated employees are one of the most important results of effective leadership. According to (Abbas & Asgar 2010:9), successful managers are also successful leaders because they influence employees to help accomplish organisational goals. Achieving organisational goals, however, is not enough to keep employees motivated but helping employees accomplish their own personal and career goals is an important part of their motivation. Leadership and motivation are interactive. Leadership effectiveness is critically contingent on, and often defined in terms of leaders' ability to motivate followers toward collective goals or a collective mission or vision (Shamir, Zakay, Breinin, & Popper 1998:390). The more motivated the supporters, the more effective the leader; the more effective the leader, the more motivated the followers.

Leadership is a "social influence process that is necessary for the attainment of societal and organisational goals; it is both conspicuous in its absence and mysterious in its presence – familiar and yet hard to" (Faeth 2010:2). Leaders understand that they have power and that they understand the source of their power: their position; their ability to reward and to coerce; their expertise; and their personal appeal and charisma. They influence their followers' behaviour through communication, group dynamics, training, rewards and discipline. There are many types of leadership styles, namely: transformational, situational, autocratic, visionary and charismatic leadership. While this study is to draw from the autocratic and transformational leadership styles to advance further understanding on the underlying mechanisms that

enable leaders to behave in an autocratic or transformational manner; and to affect employee motivation, their behaviour and consequently, their organisational oriented ventures. The paper intends to establish the role of leadership style in motivating the teaching staff to be committed to their work.

2. Leadership

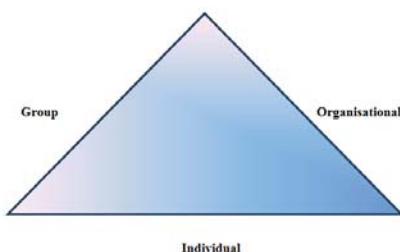
Leadership is complex because it is studied in different ways that entail different definitions. In this case, it can be defined as the process of a leader communicating ideas, gaining acceptance of the vision and motivating followers to support and implement the ideas through others (Lussier 2013). A leader always has the ability to influence others and may not necessarily be a manager; whereas another person can possess leadership qualities and also be a manager.

There are three types of Managerial Leadership skills, namely: Technical skills, Interpersonal Skills and Decision-Making skills. Technical skills are ideally concerned with the ability to use methods and techniques to perform a task; Interpersonal skills, on the other hand, focus solely on the ability to understand, communicate and work well with individuals and groups through developing effective relationships. Finally, decision-making skills involve the ability to conceptualise situations and select alternatives to solve problems and take advantage of opportunities (Faeth 2010).

2.1 Levels of analysis of leadership theory

The three levels of analysis of leadership theory are: individual, group and organisational and they are interrelated as they depend on one another. The interrelationship between these three levels is depicted in Figure 1.1:

Figure 1.1: Interrelationships among the levels of leadership analysis



Source: Lussier 2010:401

It should be noted that the Individual level is placed at the bottom of the triangle because group and organisational performance depend on individual performance. At the same time, group and organisational performance influence individual performance, in that if groups are highly motivated and highly productive, the chances are that the individual will definitely be equally productive.

In the last two decades, evidence has accumulated that transformational and autocratic leadership are influential types of leadership that are associated with high levels of individual and organisational performance (Kark & Dijk 2007). The effectiveness of these leadership styles is critically contingent on, and often defined in terms of leaders' ability to motivate followers toward collective goals or a collective mission or vision, because success in leadership comes when the leadership style is matched with the characteristics of the follower. Complications with leadership arise when the leadership style does not fit the follower. A manager using a leadership style that does not fit the needs of the employee is likely to frustrate the employee and decrease the employee's motivation. On the other hand, a new employee with no experience probably wants guidance and supervision, rather than being left to do a job without motivation, training and support from the manager. The delegation of responsibility to a person not prepared to handle it frustrates the worker and disappoints the employer. An unsatisfied worker often lacks motivation and when an employer blames an employee for a lack of motivation, s/he may fail to see that his or her own leadership ineffectiveness is to blame for the motivation problem. According to Chi-Ha and Walker (2008) organisational maturity and national culture play a key role in providing the foundations for leading projects using a style that maximises trust, affective commitment and cooperation between leaders and their respective teams.

2.2 *Transformational and autocratic leadership styles*

Transformational leadership seeks to change the status quo by articulating to followers, problems in the current system and a compelling vision of what a new organisation could be (Lussier 2013). Transformational leaders are often known for moving and changing things in major ways by communicating to followers a clear vision of the future by tapping into followers' highest ideals and motives. They are said to be powerful in transforming a weak or declining organisation by influencing followers/employees to be convinced by their new vision, ideas and possibilities. They effect positive change in organisational culture and learning.

Transformational leadership behaviours include, among other things, four major components: inspirational motivation; idealised influence; individualised consideration; and intellectual stimulation (Bass & Avolio 1994). Kirk and Dijk (2007) further explain that inspirational motivation includes the creation and presentation of an attractive vision of the future; the use of symbols and emotional arguments; and the demonstration of optimism and enthusiasm. Idealised influence includes such behaviours as: sacrificing for the benefit of the group; setting a personal example; and demonstrating high ethical standards. Individualised consideration includes providing support, encouragement, and coaching to followers. Finally, intellectual stimulation involves behaviours that increase an awareness of problems and challenge followers to view problems from new perspectives.

2.2.1 *Description of Transformational and Autocratic leadership:*

2.2.1.1 *Transformational Leadership*

- Demonstrates qualities that motivate respect and pride from association with him or her;
- Communicates values, purpose, and the importance of the organisation's mission;
- Exhibits optimism and excitement about goals and future states;
- Examines new perspectives for solving problems and completing tasks; and
- Focuses on development and the mentoring of followers and attends to their individual needs (Eagley, Johannesen-Schmidt & Engen 2003:573).

2.2.1.2 *Autocratic Leadership*

- Acts in self-centred ways;
- Makes decisions more unilaterally; and
- Supervises subordinates' work attitudes more closely (Van Der Vliet 2006:42).

Being autocratic or democratic is the usual way of thinking about leadership. Autocratic leaders depend on their authority and their power that emanates from being the owner of the business or of occupying a high position. This is often referred to as a dictatorial leadership style, and it implies that the people at the top level of the management of an organisation make all the decisions and delegate very little responsibility to their subordinates. Communication is top-down, with no prospect of feedback to the leader. It can cause much bitterness and frustration amongst the employees and it is not very common in today's business world (Canary & McPhee 2011).

2.3 *Motivation*

Motivation is the driving force in pursuing and satisfying one's needs (Kontodimopoulos, Paleologou & Niakas 2009). It is anything that affects behaviour in pursuing a certain outcome. Motivation is also defined as the process that accounts for an individual's passion, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining a goal, meaning the result of the interaction between an individual and a situation (Robbins, Judge, Odendaal & Roodt 2009). Motivation focuses on and includes the processes that guide the general strength and direction of a person's action over time. This duration is of great importance because although motivated behaviour takes place only in the present, its direction is toward the future (Bernard, Mills, Swenson & Walsh 2005).

Motivation is a fundamental instrument for regulating the work behaviour of employees (Olusola 2011). The motivation to work, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, is critical in the lives of employees because it forms the essential reason for working in life (Ololube 2006). Intrinsic motivation is regulated by personal enjoyment, interest or pleasure (Lai 2011) and it involves the performance of an activity for the inherent satisfaction of an activity. Extrinsic motivation refers to

doing something because it is inherently stimulating or enjoyable (Ryan & Deci 2000).

Balhaji (2008:3) identifies the following characteristics of motivation:

- Motivation is based on human needs and is generated within an individual;
- Motivation is whole, not piece-meal. Thus, an individual cannot be motivated by fulfilling certain of his/her needs partially;
- Motivation is a continuous process; as soon as one need is satisfied, new ones arise;
- Motivation causes goal directed behaviour; a person behaves in such a way that he or she can satisfy his or her goals or needs; and
- Motivation is a complex process: there is no universal theory or approach to motivation and individuals differ in what motivates them. Thus, a manager has to understand a diversity of needs and has to use a variety of rewards to motivate them.

Consequently, successful organisations use positive strategies to motivate their employees to be able to compete in the market. It is indeed against this observation that Manzoor (2011) reveals that if employees of an organisation are not motivated to perform their duties, no organisation can progress or achieve success.

2.4 Leadership and motivation

The success of every organisation depends on its employees' drive to thrive through their efforts, commitment, engagement, practice and persistence. Thus, motivation is an important topic because leadership competencies include the ability to motivate employees (Lussier 2013) as one of the crucial duties or jobs. Leadership begins with the initial effort made to recruit a new employee; proceeds through the entire induction process; and continues every day until the employee departs the organisation. This process is cultivated by a manager/leader, motivating new employees and it highlights, once again, the importance of leadership to an organisation.

The quality of a manager's relationship with an employee is the most powerful element of employee motivation. It creates a professional, positive and respectful attitude and employees are more likely to adopt a similar approach with their peers and enjoy work. It is clear that the management and leadership styles that are adopted by a business and its management will have a determining effect on the motivation level, the morale and the job satisfaction of the employees. Nevertheless, the relationship between the management style that is used within the business and the level of motivation within the workforce is a subject of much debate within industry. In many circles, there is continuous debate about whether leaders are born or developed. Reflecting on the discussions about motivation, it is evident that humans are very complicated and are made up of a number of traits. With motivation, these influences are both inherited and acquired from our environment and influences (Gary 1996). It is in this regard that the study seeks to establish the role of leadership on employee motivation.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Participants

The present study of principals' views of leadership style as an influencing factor on motivating and encouraging the teaching staff to perform better in their respective academic duties was conducted among 13 high schools. From these 13 high schools, 184 teaching staff were selected to participate. It should be noted that these high schools were not performing above the provincial benchmark. Teaching staff were selected to participate in this study because teaching is a core duty in this enterprise. The participants were conveniently selected; however, the sample was chosen in such a way that more participants came from schools that were not performing above the provincial benchmark. Of the total of 13 high schools, some have performed below the 70% benchmark for the past three academic years, which in principle, classifies them as perennial schools. The data were obtained from the schools and all the teaching staff were encouraged to complete the questionnaire. The sample size was 184 teaching staff and the response rate was 109 (59.2%). This response rate is regarded as good, this good and can be attributed to the fact that the questionnaires were administered during schools hours by administrative clerks.

3.2 Data Collection Instrument

Identifying similar phrases, relationships between themes, distinct differences between target blocks and common self-

administered questionnaires containing structured items, were applied. Items in the questionnaire focused on leadership styles and the role of leaders in the schools in assisting and supporting teaching staff. In addition, a question was asked on how the principal manages the school. Closed questions helped in eliciting specific information, while open-ended questions enabled the respondents to express their views freely and without restriction. In order to obtain a holistic view of the overall leadership style present in the school system, a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was used. From the MLQ the researcher decided to use 12 items for the current study and these were adapted from the original scale designed by Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993). As the methodological paradigm applied in this research is a survey method with the questionnaire constructed in the Likert-type approach, ranging from 1 to 5, the study may be classified as quantitative research.

3.3 Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was requested and granted by the district management. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires with the assistance of schools' administrative clerks and the completed questionnaires were collected by the research support group. Throughout the study every effort was made to maintain high ethical standards. Anonymity and confidentiality were protected at all times with a thorough explanation in the form of a covering letter provided to all participants, detailing the purpose of the study. Data analysis and interpretation were done using the interactive model of quantitative data analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994), which first involved sorting or sifting through the data and sequences.

3.4 Data analyses

After all the questionnaires had been returned, it was important that the mass of data collected should then be reduced to a format suitable for analysis. The respondents' responses were then coded according to the emerging themes using the SPSS program. Data were analysed by descriptive statistics, such as percentages, frequency and the Cronbach-alpha coefficient to test among other things, the reliability of describing the impact and the leadership style in these schools.

4. Results and Discussions

The study comprised 184 respondents of which a 109 response rate was received. The results obtained from the empirical study will now be discussed. These results will be discussed according to the emerging themes from the variables stated in the literature.

Table 1: Instil Pride

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	3	1.6	2.8	2.8
	once in a while	6	3.3	5.5	8.3
	Sometimes	16	8.7	14.7	22.9
	fairly often	43	23.4	39.4	62.4
	frequently if not always	41	22.3	37.6	100.0
	Total	109	59.2	100.0	
Missing	System	75	40.8		
	Total	184	100.0		

The role of the principal is to guide and direct the behaviour of the teaching staff in the school environment. In addition to this, there is also the influence of school leaders on the teaching staff which is a downwards influence. From Table 1 it is clear that respondents were confident that the principal, as an academic leader, instils pride in his/her teaching staff to perform better. Respondents (37.6%) felt that the principal always instils pride in them and 39.6% of the respondents felt that the principal fairly often instils pride in them. It is in this regard that the principal can be seen as an exercise of influence on the teaching staff, only if teachers are influenced positively. Although the majority of the teaching staff agree that the principal instils pride in them, some (2.8%) teachers disagreed.

Table 2: Guidance on achieving School Target

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	10	5.4	9.2	9.2
	once in a while	6	3.3	5.5	14.7
	Sometimes	20	10.9	18.3	33.0
	fairly often	27	14.7	24.8	57.8
	frequently, if not always	46	25.0	42.2	100.0
	Total	109	59.2	100.0	
Missing	System	75	40.8		
Total		184	100.0		

Table 2 presents the results of the respondents with regard to assistance in terms of achieving the school performance target. From 109 respondents, 28.8% were fairly happy with the assistance provided by the principal, while 42.2% of the respondents were of the view that the principal always sets the target for the school, as well as the deliverable goal. Based on the responses, there was overwhelming evidence that the principal discusses the plan and goal of the school with the teaching staff. Team leadership is practised by the principal by means of discussing his/her plans and the direction of the school, with the whole teaching team involved. Shared leadership is being practiced which involves a dynamic interaction between the principal and colleagues. The remaining 9.2% responded that this type of discussion does not exist at all.

Table 3: Leadership Capability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	5	2.7	4.6	4.6
	once in a while	8	4.3	7.3	11.9
	Sometimes	14	7.6	12.8	24.8
	fairly often	40	21.7	36.7	61.5
	frequently, if not always	42	22.8	38.5	100.0
	Total	109	59.2	100.0	
Missing	System	75	40.8		
Total		184	100.0		

From the table above, it is clear that the school principal should have a strong sense of purpose in order to encourage the teaching staff. The majority (75.2%) of the respondents were of the view that their principal has a strong sense of purpose. This strong sense of purpose encourages the teaching staff to trust the leadership vision demonstrated by the principal. Only smaller margins of the respondents were not in agreement with the statement; 24.8% of the respondents stated that the principal does not display a sense of purpose in his/her leadership role.

Table 4: Rewards on Target Achievement

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	3	1.6	2.8	2.8
	once in a while	9	4.9	8.3	11.0
	Sometimes	17	9.2	15.6	26.6
	fairly often	37	20.1	33.9	60.6
	frequently, if not always	43	23.4	39.4	100.0
	Total	109	59.2	100.0	
Missing	System	75	40.8		
Total		184	100.0		

From the table above it is clear that the school principal gives direction on how to achieve the set target. This question is the most important, as a failure to lead in this respect will render the school dysfunctional. The principal sets targets or goals for the school; however, the teaching staff should play a key role in assisting the principal. The respondents were in agreement with the statement that he/she is clear on what to expect when goals are achieved or the encouragement

given on achieving the set target. From 109 respondents 33.9% and 39.4% respectively were fairly and always happy with the statement as they believe that the principal always communicates these strategic issues with the staff. The remaining 15.6%, 8.3% and 2.8% respectively, were of the view that sometimes, once in a while or not at all does the leader communicate this information to the staff members.

Table 5: Value driven

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	5	2.7	4.6	4.6
	once in a while	10	5.4	9.3	13.9
	sometimes	21	11.4	19.4	33.3
	fairly often	30	16.3	27.8	61.1
	frequently, if not always	41	22.3	38.0	99.1
	40	1	.5	.9	100.0
Total		108	58.7	100.0	
Missing	System	76	41.3		
Total		184	100.0		

The principal, as a leader, encourages and motivates staff members to achieve better results. The majority (65.8%) of the respondents were in agreement with the statement as they felt that the principal motivated them to achieve better results. The respondents' responses show that the various teaching staffs were of the view that leadership influences their job satisfaction, thus making it clear that staff members shared the principles of participative leadership. The remaining (34%) respondents disagreed with the statement and believe that the principal does not motivate them.

5. Conclusion

The above-mentioned results suggest that there is positive relationship between the teaching staff and principal; these positive relationship between transformational leadership behaviours and commitment (affective commitment and continuance commitment). This suggests that leadership behaviours which involve building trust, inspiring a shared vision, encouraging creativity and emphasising development are positively related to employee commitment. While the study interrogates these two phenomena: that style can assist in the motivation of the teaching staff, it can be concluded that transformational leadership can be used to raise organisational commitment and employees' performance. Transformational leadership cannot raise job satisfaction. Rather, the commitment of teachers to their job can raise job satisfaction and ultimately improve the school's academic performance. On the other hand, job satisfaction can raise the employees' performance. To raise school academic performance, consideration should be given to the intellectual stimulation of individual teachers.

The leadership style that is accepted by the teaching staff will motivate, inspire and influence them when decisions and problem arise. Furthermore, these styles can create positive, organisational commitment and promote job performance. The school principal, through his leadership style, can always increase organisational commitment by providing rewards to induce employees to work harder.

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