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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN UGANDAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Morris Owani¹, Godfrey Okello Ogwang² & David Mwesigwa³

¹²MA Student, ³PhD, Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Management Sciences
Lira University
P. O. Box 1035
Lira – Uganda

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of the three leadership styles which include transformational leadership style, transactional and laissez-faire leadership style on organizational performance using Kyambogo University as a case study. Specifically, the study aimed at addressing three objectives; first to examine the influence of transformational leadership style on organizational performance, secondly to examine the influence of transactional leadership style on organizational performance and thirdly to examine the influence of laissez-faire leadership style on organizational performance. The study employed a desk method using secondary data. Basing on the past studies conducted by various scholars on different types of organizations including Universities regarding the influence of leadership styles on organizational performance, it was found that both transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style and laissez-faire leadership style had a positive and significant influence on organizational performance. The researcher argued that these similar findings may as well apply to Kyambogo University since some of the previous studies were conducted also in a University setting. The researcher concluded by recommending that people in the leadership position in any kind of organization need to study the different kind situation or environment that they are operating in apply the kind of leadership style that fit the situation at hand owing to the fact that a given leadership style may succeed in a particular situation yet the same style of leadership might fail in another operating environment.

INTRODUCTION
Leadership, as defined by Northouse (2004) refers to a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Leadership is a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organization goals (Bunmi, 2007). There are a combination of five important
components that provides a strong working definition of leadership, that is, there must be one or more leaders, leadership must have followers, it must be action-oriented, there must be a legitimate course of action, and there must be goals and objectives (Gandolfi, 2016). Basing on the above components, a leader is, therefore, one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization’s mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives (Winston & Patterson, 2006, p. 7).

A leadership style is viewed as a combination of different characteristics, traits and behaviours that are used by leaders for interacting with their subordinates (Mitonga-Monga & Coetzee, 2012). It is the kind of relationship that is used by an individual so as to make people work together for a common goal or objective (Harris, 2007). According to Manz & Sims (2010) in his book, The New Super Leadership: Leading Others to Lead Themselves, explained that, "Leadership style is the pattern of behaviour used by a leader in attempting to influence group member and make a decision regarding the mission, strategy, and operations of group activities. Leadership styles are approaches used to motivate followers. Leadership is not a ‘one size fits all’ phenomenon. Leadership styles should be selected and adapted to fit organizations, situations, groups, and individuals. It is thus useful to have a thorough understanding of the different styles as such knowledge increases the tools available to lead effectively (Amanchukwu, Stanely & Ololube, 2015).

This study adopted the three styles of leadership in the full-range leadership theory of Bass (1985) which include Laissez-faire, the transactional and transformational leadership. Laissez-faire leadership is where the manager delegates almost all authority and control to subordinates. There is no person of authority in the organization. The manager leads the organization indirectly, he/she does not make decisions; rather he/she abides by popular decisions. There is no set of goals and objectives by the manager. Tasks are done the way the manager thinks it should be done, but he/she gets involved on request and this may lead to the digression from broad organizational policy. Thus, this style of leadership may be effective with well-motivated and experienced employees (Dubrin, 1998:111), but could lead to failure when subordinates are deceptive, unreliable and untrustworthy.

Transactional leadership is characterized by transactions or exchanges – the promise of reward for good performance, and discipline for poor performance (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003) Transactional leadership, present in many businesses, may help clarify everyone’s roles and responsibilities, and because team members are judged on performance, ambitious people motivated by external rewards often thrive. Some of its measures can also de-motivate employees. For example, it doesn’t offer much in terms of inspiration, to motivate people to go beyond the basics; therefore, employees might get complacent and develop a tendency to achieve minimal expectations that only would help them avoid penalties.

Transformational leadership style focuses on the development of a value system of employees, their motivational level and moralities with the development of their skills (Ismail et al., 2009). It basically helps followers achieve their goals working in the organizational setting; it encourages followers to be expressive and adaptive to new and improved practices.
and changes in the environment (Bass, 1994). Transformational leaders are able to articulate an appealing vision of the future by communicating ideologies and leading through example. This leadership tends to improve the team's morale and motivates the team members (Stewart, 2006).

There are many theories that have been developed to explain leadership and for this study, the path-goal theory was adopted. The path-goal theory was first presented by Evans (1970) and House (1971). The path-goal theory is about how leaders motivate subordinates to accomplish designated goals. In a way it is a contingency approach to leadership because it states that effectiveness depends on the fit between the leader’s behaviour and the characteristics of the subordinates and the task. The basic principles of the path-goal theory are taken from expectancy theory, which suggests that employees will be motivated if they feel competent if they think their efforts will be rewarded, and if they find the payoff for their work is valuable.

The path-goal theory is designed to explain, how leaders can help their subordinates along the path to their goals by selecting specific behaviours that are best suited to the subordinates’ needs and to the situation. A leader can support subordinates by selecting the right style of leadership (directive, supportive, participative or achievement-oriented). Basing on path-goal theory, is it the leader’s responsibility to help the subordinates to reach their goals by directing, guiding and coaching them along the way.

Organization performance is the extent to which an organization achieves a set of pre-defined targets that are unique to its mission (Albrecht, 2011). It is a measure of organization progress, shows how well an organization is attaining its goals (Hamon 2003). According to Farlex (2012), it is the actual output/results of an organisation obtained when measured against its intended outputs (goals and objectives). Richard et al. (2009) propose that organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of organizations’ outcomes financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment, etc.); product market performance (sales, market share, etc.); and shareholder return performance (total shareholder return, economic value-added, etc.).

According to Polychroniour (2009), the leadership style adopted has a direct cause and effect relationship upon organizations and their success. Leaders determine values, culture, change tolerance and employee motivation. They shape institutional strategies including their execution and effectiveness. University as a modern organization carries responsibility in educating and teaching the surrounding community, as well as performing research and community services. However, according to Muriisa (2015), Universities face many challenges in meeting performance expectations for example; the World Bank in 1995 challenged the relevance of university education and observed that investing in university education has limited return on such investment.

Kyambogo University is the second-largest Public University in Uganda and located in the Central District of Kampala. The core function of the University is Teaching, Training and research as prescribed in its Vision “A centre of Academic and Professional Excellence”. Kyambogo University became a university as a result of the merger of the former Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK), Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo (UPK), and Uganda National Institute of Special needs (UNISE). It was established by an Act of Parliament under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act 2001 as amended in 2003.
establishment in 2003, the University is offering a number of academic programmes in line with vocational education, teacher training, special needs training, social sciences, pure and applied sciences, entrepreneurship and management and other courses. University has over 51,000 students on campus and in its affiliated institutions (Kyambogo University Fact Book, 2018).

2. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The performance of a University strongly lies in the kind of leadership being exercised by the management. The State of Higher Education and Training in Uganda Report (2012) indicated that Ugandan universities hardly: conduct research and innovation; engage in community development activities and the quality of education provided is relatively low, as is more theoretical and less pragmatic. In most cases, the biggest part of the blame is put on the dons and the top leadership for failing to perform their duties effectively and efficiently (Kasule, 2015). In addition, the leadership of the many Universities is blamed for financial mismanagement, corruption, irregular awarding of marks to students and failure to unite the student body and staff of different Universities (Parliament of Uganda, 2007). The performance at Kyambogo University reportedly declined over the past years despite having leaders. The Staff Evaluation Report (2012: 21) revealed that over 60% of the employees failed to meet their performance targets as observed in late starting of semesters and lectures and delayed publishing of exam results. The IGG Report (2015: 11) observed that the decline in the University’s performance was as a result of poor leadership of the former Vice-Chancellor. The majority of strikes that usually disrupts the running of the University could also be attributed to its leadership.

Purpose
The Purpose of the study was to examine the influence of leadership styles on organizational performance

Specific Objectives
The study was guided by the following objectives: To examine the influence of transformational leadership style on organizational performance; To examine the influence of transactional leadership style on organizational performance, and To examine the influence of laissez-faire leadership style on organizational performance

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a desk method using secondary data. Secondary data is a type of data that was collected by someone else for another primary purpose (Smith, 2008). It is data collected by a party not related to the research study but collected these data for some other purpose and at a different point in time. This method has been chosen because it is cheaper, fast and saves time and other financial resources. Additionally, it provides opportunity to access the work of numerous scholars over the world.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Transformational leadership style and organizational performance

The first objective of this study was to explore the influence of transformational leadership style on the organizational Performances. Many past studies have been done to
examine the impact of transformational leadership on University performance, for example, Ali (2019) conducted a study on the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance and the results demonstrate that transformational leadership style has a significant positive relationship on organizational performance (p=0.000<0.05). This kind of finding may also apply to Kyambogo University. Many researchers have found that transformational leadership has significant Positive effect on the performance of an organization be it a an academic institution like a university, a business organization, a private or public organization and this implies that the more an organization is inclined towards transformational leadership practices, the stronger the organizational performance will be.

Transformational leaders are able to positively influence organizational performance because the leaders pay regard to the subordinates’ development needs and give them supporting platform, open doors for development and focus on subordinates’ needs as well. Transformational leaders focus on promoting employees’ development and their needs, focus on the improvement of the value system of workforce, focus on their integrities, focus on their motivational level and focus on their improvement of skills as well (Bass and Riggio, 2006). It is, therefore, this kind of leadership behaviours that encourage the employees to exert maximum efforts in the performance of their duties which in turn translate in to increase organizational performance. The central issue regarding transformational leadership style and organizational performance is, therefore, employee development. They need to see that they are developing professionally rather than being static and this will motivate them to perform at maximum. This kind of argument may also be relevant to Kyambogo University because every University staff wants to see that they are developing in their respective profession while serving the University rather than focusing on monetary reward alone. Through this, they will be motivated to strive to achieve University goals and objectives.

Muchiri and Hazel (2018) conducted a study on the effects of leadership styles on organizational performance of listed commercial banks in the Nairobi Securities Exchange and from the findings, from the findings, transformation leadership style was found to have a positive effect on the performance of the commercial banks listed at the NSE in Kenya as shown by a regression coefficient 0.417. This is an indication that a unit increase in transformation leadership would lead to a 0.417 or 41.7% improvement in the performance of commercial banks listed at the NSE in Kenya. (p=0.000<0.05). Much as this study was conducted in a business setting, this kind of findings may apply in a University setting since it is also sometimes run as business organization that involves competing with other University both national and international.

Abubakar and Ahmed (2017) studied the impact of transformational leadership styles on the performance of universities in Nigeria and the findings show positive significant relationship between transformational leadership style and university performance. Through transformational leadership style, the leader identifies the needed changes, creates a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executes the change with the commitment of the members of the group and members are motivated to achieve the University objectives. It is expected that this kind of finding may apply to Kyambogo University.

3.2 Transactional leadership style and organizational performance

The second objective of the study was to explore the influence of transactional
leadership on organizational performance. A study was done by Ali (2019) to assess the impact of transactional leadership style on organizational performance using a public sector University as a case study and the findings indicate that transactional leadership style has a significant positive influence on organizational performance (p=0.000<0.05). And this implies that an increase in transactional leadership style leads to an increase in organizational performance and vice versa. In addition, the finding shows that a unit increase in transactional leadership style will lead to a 0.427 or 42.7%. This kind of results may apply to Kyambogo University since the study was also done in a University though not in Ugandan University.

Transactional leaders are able to lead to the accomplishment of the objectives of an organization more successfully by relating job performance to esteemed rewards and ensuring that followers utilized the required resources to do the job (Umar et al, 2012). Employees are only willing to exert efforts in accomplishing organizational goals and objectives if they believe that their efforts are being rewarded. The transactional leaders expect subordinates to follow them and in return, the leaders are keen to give them something, including a raise, a promotion, a good performance review, new duties or a desirable change in obligation. Therefore, reward in return for performance is central in transactional leadership style. This finding may be also relevant to Kyambogo University since some of the strikes by University academic staffs were related to the issue of salaries.

A study by conducted by Longe (2014) revealed that transactional leadership style has a positive impact on the organizational performance. The transactional leadership style helps in creating as well as sustaining the context in which organizational and human capabilities are maximized as the employees are always able to achieve tangible and intangible rewards. This leadership style particularly helps in creating an environment that is optimal for performance and also articulates the compelling vision that enhances the overall organizational performance. However, according to the research conducted by Sofi and Devanadhen (2015) on the impact of transactional leadership style on organizational performance, it was found that transactional leadership style did not have a direct impact on the performance of the organization. This leadership style does not encourage creativity and innovation among the employees and hence, the employees do not perform as per the expectations of the organization.

3.3. Laissez-faire leadership style and organizational performance

The third objective of the study was to explore the influence of laissez-faire leadership style on organizational performance. A study was conducted Linge et al (2016) to assess the relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) growth. The result gives evidence of existence of a positive significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership and SMEs growth (P= 0.021 (P<0.05). The laissez-faire style of leadership offers little or no supervision/guidance to teams of employees and leaves decisions making up to the employees implying that this leadership style effective in situations where employees are highly qualified in an area of expertise (Bernard and O’Driscoll, 2011).

Laissez-faire leadership style is relevant in circumstances where group members are profoundly gifted, inspired and have the potential to work on their own (Egri and Herman,
The laissez-faire style of leadership in an organization allows full freedom and power to employees and this motivates employees and other low-level management to be creative and approach work in a manner that is best for them without the leaders’ micromanaging them. Their freedom therefore positively affects their work as they will work as a team advocating for innovativeness and eventually high performance and growth of the organization. This kind of leadership behaviours may be very relevant in a University setting because most of the University academic staffs are knowledgeable and know what they are supposed to do and may not like to be push or instructed all the time. In other words, people in academia always want full autonomy in the execution of their duties. All they may need are the resources to perform their roles and these resources are supposed to be provided by the University leadership.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Basing on the findings of this desktop study, it can be concluded that all the three styles of leadership, that is, transformational, transactional and laissez-faire have a positive influence on organizational performance. Arising from this study findings are the following recommendations; organizational leaders may need to apply a mixture of these leadership styles but with due consideration to the situation and nature of task performed by the followers. People in the leadership position need to study the different situation that they are operating in and apply the kind of leadership style that may fit the situation as a given leadership style may succeed in a particular situation yet the same style of leadership might fail in other situations. In other words, no one leadership style is effective in all situations.

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