

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION: A CASE OF HEAD OF DEPARTMENTS IN WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study was based on the relationship between the leadership styles of Academic head of Department and employee job satisfaction at the Higher Education Institution (HEI). In so doing, the study was based on the following questions: What is the relationship between leadership styles of HODs and employee job satisfaction in a Higher Education institution in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. A purposive sampling technique was utilised to select the participants, which comprised 80 academic staff members to which the researcher hand-delivered 80 questionnaires. The study employed a quantitative method to collect and analyse data. The study found that Perceptions on the leadership styles of academic HODs at the HEI are varied. No clear pattern emerged on what leadership styles are prevalent. The relationship between leadership styles and employee job satisfaction appears to be non-linear. Job satisfaction is a phenomenon that is determined by many factors, not simply leadership styles.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Job Satisfaction, Higher Education Institution, Relationship, Head of Departments, Employee.

INTRODUCTION

According to Govender et al. (2013), a leader is a change-agent that influences subordinates to achieve anticipated goals. In other words, the attainment of set objectives and goals of an organisation with a high level of effectiveness and efficiency is the input of humans who are in most cases influenced by leaders and the types of leadership involved. Similarly, Chandrasekara (2019) defines leadership as:

...A process that involves outline organisation vision, selling the vision to members, furnishing the members with knowledge, skills and knowledge to actualise the vision.

Leadership is simple the act of influencing others to direct their determination and abilities to the achievement of organisational goals. Effective leadership is the ability to provide the vision and necessary motivation to a group of people or team to ensure they work together toward the same goals. Based on the above description of leadership, it is clear that leadership plays a very important role in determining the success and failure of an organisation. In recent years, leadership styles and job satisfaction has been defined in literature. Chandrasekara (2019) defines job satisfaction as, “*the expression of pleasure or agreement of the workers related to their jobs*”. The author adds that job satisfaction includes benefits, pay, work conditions, promotions, organisational practices and relations with co-workers. Employee job satisfaction is further influenced by pension pay, fringe benefits, success, and dependency, appreciation, working conditions, job security and work flexibility.

Leadership style and employee job satisfaction are variables of interest in developing organisational competitiveness. The leadership in the context of HE may be defined as “a personal and professional ethical relationship between those in leadership positions and their subordinate staff, needed to appreciate and call forth their full potential.” Significant research exists on the influence of leadership styles on employees’ job satisfaction. For example, in Ethiopian public universities, it was identified that leadership behaviour in sampled universities influences the job satisfaction of academic staff. These authors further report on the challenges faced by academic staff in coordinating their work. They recommend that academic leaders should refine leadership styles to suit the preferences of the faculty members.

African problems all have similarities in some way. Hence, there are lessons to learn from a Kenyan study reported by Kiplangat examined the relationship between leadership styles and lecturers’ job satisfaction within HEIs and found that leadership styles influence employee job satisfaction. The findings revealed that a consultative leadership style was the style of choice for deans and lecturers because it produced higher job satisfaction. Dlamini (2016) observes that educational institutions have been affected by internationalisation, which has resulted in the establishment of both world level and locally-based university rankings. The effect of this has been the acceleration of metamorphosis efforts in university operations to improve their ranking. These transformations have been associated with research into how leadership styles can propel academic departments to higher performance to improve rankings. Following these trends, numerous studies at an international level on the leadership style/job satisfaction relationship but in the South African context, there is a gap epitomised by limited studies of this nature. In other words, the correlation between leadership style and job satisfaction has been studied in a wide variety of fields and an equally wide variety of settings; however, few of these studies focused on this relationship in the context of HE (Hamidifar, 2009).

Relationship Between Democratic Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction

As stated by Afshinpour (2014); Kelali & Narula (2017), a connection exists between democratic leadership styles and employee job satisfaction. Leaders have a significant impact on performance and growth in general. Afshinpour (2014) emphasises the correlation in that democratic leaders make extensive use of the ideas, suggestions and recommendations of subordinates. Leaders are likely to be tolerant of their subordinates’ mistakes. Afshinpour (2014) adds that the democratic leadership style leads to employee engagement, which in turn leads to superior employee performance in the organisation. In other words, democratic leadership involves decentralisation of decision-making and it is shared by subordinates.

Given that leaders are often not specialists in all fields, listening to others before decisions are reached in this way is more effective and precise. Dike & Madubueze (2019) share similar views, that in an organisation, democratic leaders guide participants and acknowledge their input in the group when making decisions and solving problems. Based on the above statement, the researcher describes democratic leadership as one whereby decision-making is decentralised and shared by subordinates. Democratic leadership styles focus more on people and have greater interaction within the group. The leader is more part of the group and functions are shared among members.

Dike & Madubueze’s (2019) study focused on the effect of leadership styles on job satisfaction, with the objective of creating efficiency in an organisation. The study established a positive relationship between the application of a democratic relationship and the performance of employees. It was concluded that high employee satisfaction will be achieved when the leader involves employees in decision-making through constant consultation. The

researcher recommends that a leader in any organisation should apply a democratic style to get input from employees when making decisions that affect employees as well as the organisation in general.

In a related study, Jerome (2018) stressed the connection between leadership styles and job satisfaction. Jerome (2018) opined that democratic leadership styles focus more on the power in a group as a whole, there is better communication with members and members contribute to making decisions. Because of high participation, the level of creativity and innovativeness of employees increases. Jerome adds that democratic leadership builds a sense of responsibility in the employees simply because they are involved in the making of decisions. The findings revealed a positive connection between democratic leadership style and job satisfaction.

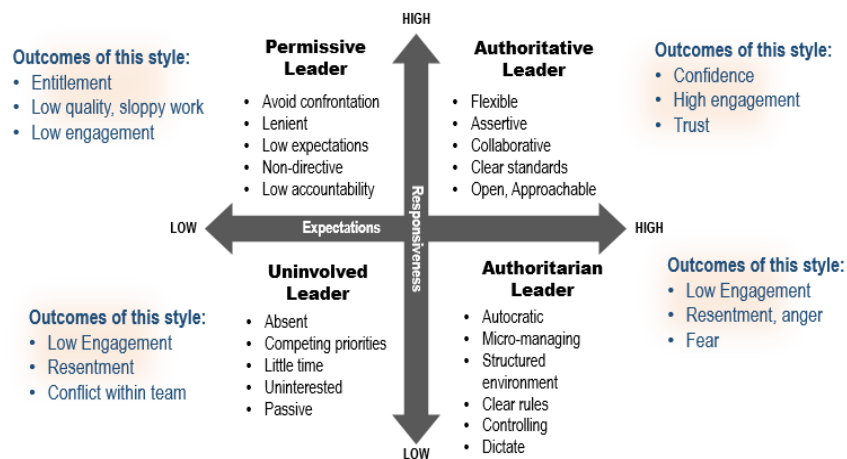
Furthermore, Dolly & Nonyelum's (2018) study on academic libraries in Port Harcourt, Nigeria revealed that democratic leadership has a constructive impact on the job performance of subordinates because it results in high productivity and respondents showed a high degree of job satisfaction. The researcher recommends that academic HODs should be encouraged to adopt a democratic leadership style since it yielded improved performance of subordinates and users' satisfaction with the service of the libraries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relationship Between Autocratic Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction

According to Quible (2005), autocratic leadership allows members of a group to focus on the group performing tasks without worrying about suggested ideas or recommendations on complex decisions. Authoritarian leaders reach resolution independently and do not allow the rest of the group to act as they wish. Autocratic decisions may be appropriate when dealing with an emergency, a situation that requires an immediate decision, or when new employees are unfamiliar with the tasks he or she is expected to perform. Roul (2012) argues that although authoritarian leadership is often characterised by abuse of power and may lead to being bossy, controlling and dictatorial, this style of leadership can be used effectively in situations where the leader is most knowledgeable or has access to information that other members of the group do not have.

According to Harms et al. (2018) the subject of dictatorial leadership styles and how it affects leadership and leadership processes has been neglected in recent decades. Recently, it has become very important to better understand the benefit of a renewed interest in researching why subordinates embrace autocratic or dictatorial leaders. Notwithstanding, Thusyanthini & Thusyanthini (2014); Jerome (2018), indicate that there is a contradiction between the authoritarian leadership style and job satisfaction. Authoritarian leadership reflects an overbearing style that generally has contradictory implications (Harms et al., 2018). The recent resurgence of studies into toxic, abusive and "dark side" leadership tangentially relates to authoritarianism but does not specifically measure the construct (Padilla et al., 2007). Figure 1 clearly shows that this leadership style has low engagement with followers, which in turn creates resentment, anger and fear.



Source: Pinterest.com (2020)

FIGURE 1
LEADERSHIP STYLE MATRIX-CONGRUENT PATHS

Relationship Between Laissez-Faire Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction

This type of leadership style is known as a “carefree” kind of leadership style, in which employees in the organisation are given freedom of action. According to Quible (2015), laissez-faire leadership offers group members the latitude to make decisions. This style of leadership is successful in producing desired results in situations where group members are highly skilled, motivated and capable of working on their own but often reduces cohesiveness and motivation. It is a completely hands-off approach although the leader is still open and available to members for consultation and feedback (Chaudhry & Javed, 2012). Quible (2015) opines that leaders utilise it because they believe they will be more popular with subordinates. They also use it because they give subordinates considerable responsibility and provide little assistance. However, Limsila & Ogunlana (2008) argue that Laissez-faire leadership is not ideal in situations where group members lack knowledge or experience to complete a task and make decisions. In situations where employees are not able to set their own deadlines, manage their own projects and solve their own problems, projects can veer off track and deadlines can be missed due to lack of guidance or feedback from leaders (Goodnight, 2011). In a study conducted by Govender et al. (2013) on leadership style and job satisfaction, the objectives were to identify employees’ perceptions of their leadership style and to determine employee job satisfaction levels related to their leadership style. The results suggest a significant relationship between the laissez-faire leadership style and job satisfaction.

Relationship Between Transactional Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction

According to Erkutlu (2008), transactional leaders communicate with their subordinates to explain how a task must be done and let them know that there will be rewards for a job done well. Lee & Chang (2007) state that a characteristic of the transactional leadership style is reward for performance. A congruent reward system is based on the starting point that the leader and subordinates agree to negotiate the terms and conditions of a transaction and how to accomplish the organisational goals, after which the leader will reward the subordinates. Leaders must make sure the subordinates understand the expectations and offer recognition when goals are achieved (Xiaoxia & Jing, 2006). Also, management by exception (active), in

which the leader specifies the standards for compliance and only steps in when there is great deviation or ineffective performance and may punish subordinates for being non-compliant. Hamidifar (2009) states that employees are closely monitoring employees for mistakes and errors and then taking corrective action quickly. Hamidifar (2009) adds that sometimes passive leaders fail to clarify expectations and standards to be achieved by subordinates but often will intervene when problems become apparent. This style does not respond to situations and problems systematically (Hamidifar, 2009).

There is an interdependent relationship between leadership styles and cultural underpinnings, which cannot be ignored or underestimated. Explicit differences exist between cultures, particularly in terms of the values, attitudes and behaviours of individuals and this divergence has implications for leadership in organisations (Jogulu, 2010). Subordinates bear the responsibility for performing a task according to orders and they have to account for their actions. Ferreira et al. (2013) state that responsibility is the obligation of a subordinate to achieve objectives by performing assigned tasks. Smit et al. (2013) add that for the sake of good leadership and effective management of the organisation, the delicate balance between the different components of leadership should be maintained.

Relationship Between Transformational Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction

According to Jogulu (2010), transformational leaders can be defined as “*People who emphasise work standards and have task-oriented aims*”. Lee & Chang (2007) state that transformational leaders challenge the status quo and are less likely to accept conventional norms. Transformational leaders enhance their subordinates’ innovativeness by intellectual stimulation and motivation and allow them to seek new ways of working. The intellectual stimulation encourages employees to use new approaches for solving old problems (Tabassi & Bakar, 2010). According to Yaghoubipoor et al. (2013) the leader is trusted and respected. The leader maintains high moral standards and the followers seek to emulate the leader. Idealized influence can be attributed to the followers (Lai, 2011). Leaders provide subordinates with meaning and challenging tasks. The spirit of the team is aroused and enthusiasm and optimism are displayed. Leaders communicate expectations, demonstrate commitment to goals and share their vision (Quible, 2015). Quible adds that leaders who understand various theories of motivation will be able to work more effectively with their subordinates than their counterparts can. Leaders utilise the questioning assumptions approach such as reframing and approaching old situations in new way as a guide to inform and stimulate subordinates’ efforts to be innovative and creative. Lai (2011), add that the intellectually stimulating approach encourages subordinates to try new approaches but emphasises rationality. Leaders also act as mentors or coaches to build relationships with individuals, pay attention to the individual’s need for achievement and growth and develop subordinates in a supportive climate to reach their potential. Individual differences in terms of needs and desires are recognized (Hogg et al., 2012).

METHODOLOGY

The researcher reviewed existing literature on the different leadership styles, the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction and the factors affecting job satisfaction. According to Petticrew (2006), a systematic literature should produce a scientific evidence in a specific area. In line with Petticrew (2006) in order to include or exclude certain articles, the criteria followed to achieve the set objective were: A) leadership and Job satisfaction definition: Leadership is simple the act of influencing others to direct their determination and abilities to the achievement of organisational goals whereas job satisfaction is defined as, “the expression of pleasure or agreement of the workers related to

their jobs. B) Language: Only Studies published in English in both developed and less developing countries. C) Quality: Only articles published in the last 20 years were considered. In general, the first section described the methodology used, followed by the literature review on the relationship between democratic leadership styles and job satisfaction, relationship between autocratic leadership style and job satisfaction, relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job satisfaction, relationship between transactional leadership styles and job satisfaction, relationship between transformation leadership style and job satisfaction. Furthermore, a purposive sampling technique was utilised to select the participants, which comprised 80 academic staff members of the Ibika Site, to which the researcher hand-delivered 80 questionnaires. The study employed a quantitative method to collect and analyse data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was utilised to analyse the data. The second sections focused on the discussion on the findings

DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

Summary of Findings on the Effect of Leadership Style and Employee Job Satisfaction at the HEI

Table 1.0 below summarises the findings on the perceived leadership styles of HODs at the HEI and the results that arose from the assessment of indicators of employee job satisfaction. In Table 1, SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree and SA=Strongly Agree.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Autocratic leadership style					
My HOD makes decisions and plans on his own and tells us what and how to do it.	15%	46%	17%	18%	3%
S/he shows greater concern for production of work than subordinates.	9%	28%	42%	17%	15%
Democratic Leadership Style					
My HOD listens to team members' points of view before making decisions	3%	0%	9%	48%	29%
S/he shows greater concern for people than for high production of work.	6%	12%	43%	17%	11%
Laissez-Faire Leadership Style					
My HOD does not interfere with tasks until problems become severe.	22%	28%	37%	0%	9%
My HOD is efficient in achieving institutional requirements.	14%	17%	22%	28%	11%
Transformational Leadership Style					
My HOD promotes an atmosphere of teamwork	8%	8%	9%	42%	28%
My HOD gives me insightful suggestions to what I can improve	14%	12%	43%	12%	9%
Transactional Leadership style					
My HOD is task-oriented and has reward-based performance initiatives	45%	12%	22%	2%	6%
My HOD is particular with regards to who is leading performance targets	31%	11%	32%	15%	2%
Indicators of Job satisfaction					
I am given a chance to do multiple things associated with the projects assigned to me.	0%	3%	5%	55%	35%
My job provides for steady growth	2%	15%	28%	29%	29%

My job is subjected to favourable working conditions.	28%	43%	22%	5%	0%
I think my skills are not thoroughly utilised in my job.	9%	29%	38%	23%	5%
I am forced to work more than I should.	5%	18%	42%	22%	8%

Table 2 SHOWS THE FOLLOWING					
Autocratic leadership style					
My HOD makes decisions and plans on his own and tells us what and how to do it.	15%	46%	17%	18%	3%
S/he shows greater concern for production of work than subordinates.	9%	28%	42%	17%	15%

A) Leadership Styles

- There was little support that the HODs at the HEI were autocratic.
- A strong neutral response for the autocratic perception was observed.
- The neutral response was significant on perceptions of laissez-faire leadership.
- Respondents who were not neutral on perceptions for laissez-faire HODs at the HEI were more inclined to disagree that the HODs were laissez-faire leaders.
- There was support that the HODs were democratic, with a tendency for respondents to be neutral.
- There was support that the HODs were transformational leaders, with a tendency for respondents to remain neutral.
- There was general disagreement that the leaders were transactional, with a tendency to be neutral.

B) Employee Job Satisfaction

- Respondents perceived that projects they do as part of their jobs offered task variety. Task variety stimulated job satisfaction.
- Growth opportunities enhanced job satisfaction, with a tendency for respondents to remain neutral.
- Working conditions caused job dissatisfaction, with a tendency for respondents to be neutral.
- Neutral responses dominated the skill utilisation perception.
- Most respondents remained neutral on the notion that they were forced to do more work than they should.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership styles of heads of academic departments and employee job satisfaction in a Higher Education institution in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The focus of the study was on the academic staff members of Ibika Site at Walter Sisulu University. Informed consent and permission were requested from the participants before the study commenced. Participants' privacy was respected and confidentiality was maintained at all times. The researcher reviewed existing literature on the different leadership styles, the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction and the factors affecting job satisfaction. A purposive sampling technique was utilised to select the participants, which comprised 80 academic staff members of the Ibika Site, to which the researcher hand-delivered 80 questionnaires. The study employed a quantitative method to collect and analyse data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was utilised to analyse the data. Owing to the varied demographic

distribution of staff at Higher Education institutions, perceptions of the leadership styles of heads of departments can differ widely from person to person. A number of the respondents chose to remain neutral on the leadership style assessment, while the majority of those who did respond suggested a prevalence of democratic and transformational leadership. The relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction at the Higher Education institution is non-linear and can only be understood within a system view that takes into consideration multiple factors. This was indicated by the tendency for respondents to align themselves with the neutral response option, which suggested the prevalence of other factors. Factors such as praise and recognition, autonomy to execute new work methods, job security, interactions with colleagues and supervisor relationships with subordinates appeared critical in determining the leadership style-employee job satisfaction relationship. As such, the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction can be adequately described in linear terms but it tends to be complicated within a system of other factors.

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