Secondary School Headteachers' Leadership Styles and Teachers' Organizational Commitment in Tororo Municipality

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Abstract: **The commitment and maximum utilization of an organization's human resource among others accelerates the achievement of the organizations' vision, goals, and values. The organization's leadership plays a critical part in mobilising, motivating and focussing the employees to achieving its tasks. This study aimed at investigating how secondary school headteachers' leadership styles affects teachers' organizational commitment in Tororo Municipality. Using a cross-sectional survey, 178 teachers, were selected using stratified and simple random sampling, with 10 deputies, and 10 headteachers having been selected on account of the selection of their schools. The participants completed the Bass and Avolio (1997) Multifactor Leadership Scale and Allen and Meyer (1996) Organizational Commitment Scale, which considered leadership styles as comprising of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. Using SPSS 20, descriptive statistics and bivariate correlation coefficients were computed. The results revealed that all the leadership styles had non-significant effect on overall organizational commitment, and its dimensions. However, laissez faire leadership style significantly specifically affected affective component of commitment (0.186**). On the other hand transformational leadership had a significant negative effect on, affective commitment (-0.145*). In conclusion, it was recommended that Headteachers, School Board, and Higher education officials foster transformational and transactional leadership styles to elicit high level of commitment among teachers.**

Keywords: **Leadership styles; Transactional leadership; Transformational leadership; Laissez-faire leadership; Teachers' Organizational Commitment.**

1. BACKGROUND

Leadership, the process of social influence in which a leader creates deliberate involvement, and inducement of compliance (Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987), of subordinates in order to achieve organizational goals (Rezaiian, 1995), is pivotal in influencing performance in an organization. Leadership has defined the existence of man, manifested in most facets of life, over 5000 years, since civilization (Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987). The history and effects of leadership on performance dates as far back as the 17th century (Carter, 2008). In the early part of the 20th century, studies on leadership majorly concentrated on Great Man and Trait leadership theories (Kirkpatick & Locke, 1991). Leadership styles, today is being practiced in different ways, and is important in enhancing organizational commitment (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the importance of, and attention focused on Leadership styles, what is practiced by different leaders seem not to influence employees' commitment that much. The global Gallup study in the period 2011-2012 conducted in 142 countries established that only 13 percent of employees were committed at their work (Crabtree, 2013). Further, the same study indicated

that in Sub-Saharan Africa only 10 percent of employees were committed to their organization. A study carried out by Uwezo in the East African region schools, up to 12% teachers were found not going to school on any given day, a possible representation of lack of organizational commitment (Uwezo, 2014). The report further shows that, in Uganda up to 29% of teachers were absent at school in a given day. These scenarios seem to be an indictment of teachers' organizational commitment in Uganda, including Tororo Municipality.

There are various leadership styles practiced, certainly with different outcomes on the level of staff organizational commitment, for instance, Bass and Avolio (1997), in their improved Full Range Leadership Theory (FRLT), which views Leadership Style as a multidimensional construct encompassing transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. This study adopted the FRLT to explain the effect of leadership styles on organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment is an individual's attachment with the organization and his or her readiness to utilize his/her energy for the organizational wellbeing (Walumbwa & Lawler, 2005). Organizational commitment according to researchers Allen, Natalie and Meyer (1990) is divided into three components; affective, normative, and continuance commitment.

Affective commitment refers to emotional attachment of an employee to the organization. Continuance commitment refers to commitment that is based on the costs that employees associate with leaving the organization. Whereas, normative commitment is an employee's feeling of moral obligation to remain working in the organization.

In any organization, leadership is the most central, and effective factor required to enhance staff organizational commitment (Bennis & Nanus, 2003). Avolio, Zhu, Koh, and Bhatia (2004) established that transformational leadership is positively correlated with organizational commitment. Yu, Leithwood, and Jantzi (2002) too established a weak but significant relationship between transformational leadership style and teachers' commitment. According to Prestine and Nelson (2005), headteachers who practice transformational leadership styles are able to gain the support of teachers' in-order to work towards achievement of school objectives.

Mert, Keskin, and Bas (2010) established that transformational leadership style is positively correlated with organizational commitment. Lee (2004) in his work with samples of research and development professionals in Singapore found out that transformational leadership correlates significantly with organizational. Hayward, Goss and Tolmay (2004) established that transformational leadership has moderate positive correlation with affective commitment, lower correlation coefficients between transformational leadership, and normative, and continuance commitment were also established. The findings have further indicated that no correlation was found between transactional leadership and affective, normative and continuance commitment.

According to Bass and Avolio (1994), transformational leaders who encourage their followers to think critically and creatively have an influence on their followers' commitment. Walumbwa and Lawler (2003) argue that transformational leaders can motivate, and increase followers' organizational commitment by getting them to solve problems creatively. Barbuto (2005) in his study asserted that transformational and transactional leadership styles and their components have positive and significant associations with organizational commitment.

Garg and Ramjee (2013) established that laissez-faire leadership behaviors had negative relationship with organizational commitment. While Awan and Mahmood (2009) established that laissez-fair leadership style had no effect on organizational commitment. Aboodi, Javadi, and Kazemian (2013) posit that laissez-faire leadership style has negative relationship with followers' organizational commitment. Saqer (2009) reported a significant negative relationship between laissez-faire leadership and organizational commitment. Ibrahim, Nurzahit and Türker (2010) in their study established a significant correlation between transactional and transformational leadership, and organizational commitment. In light of the studies so far done, there is a dearth of literature in the study area - Tororo Municipality in Eastern Uganda. This study was intended to investigate the relationship between the various FRLS, and organizational commitment among secondary school teachers in Tororo Municipality.

Leadership styles have been shown to enhance employees' organizational commitment (Ng'ethe, Namusonge & Iravo, 2012; Garg & Ramjee, 2013). In the secondary school setting, headteachers play an essential role in ensuring that teachers and other school resources are mobilized and integrated to achieve school objectives (Blanchard, 2008). Regrettably, in spite of all the

effort put in by headteachers, attracting and retaining committed teachers in schools is a major challenge. For instance, the Joint Monitoring Report (2012) in Eastern Uganda cited in Ministry of Education and Sports (2013) report posits, teachers' job dissatisfaction at 51 percent, an indication of low level of commitment. The researcher believes that the low level of organizational commitment among teachers is as a result of headteachers' not practicing to high level the appropriate leadership styles. Further, Ministry of Education and Sports (2013) report indicates that headteachers' absenteeism in the education system was very high at 60 percent, an indication of poor leadership. The negative effects associated with lack of teachers' organizational commitment include absenteeism, moonlighting, poor work attitude, and teachers' turnover among others, which in effect negatively impacts on the achievement of the overall school objectives (Panayiotis, Pepper, & Phillips 2011).

The study is based on the *hypothesis* that, there is no significant relationship between headteachers' leadership styles, and teachers' organizational commitment in Tororo Municipality.

3. METHODOLOGY

In a cross-sectional survey, following a multistage sampling, which involved, first clustering schools as Government Non USE, Private Public Universal Secondary Education, (USE), and Private, Non USE (NUSE) schools; resulting in four Public, three Private Public, and four Private schools were selected. Second, teachers in the chosen schools were randomly selected while the headteachers' and deputies were selected on account of selecting their schools. Two hundred and five participants, 82% of the 250 (well above the 198 sample size) given by Krejcie and Morgan's (2006) table filled the questionnaires.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections; the demographic information, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) of (Bass & Avolio, 1997). The MLQ is a 36 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*frequently*). Score range obtained from the MLQ was interpreted as follows; Laissez faire leadership, High = 13 -16, Moderate = 8 - 12, Low = 0 – 7; Transactional leadership, High = 37 -48, Moderate = 22 - 36, Low = 0 – 21; and Transformational leadership, High = 60 -80, Moderate = 36- 59, Low = 0 – 35. High score shows high effectiveness of leadership style perception while low score implies low effectiveness perception in the scale.

The third section consisted of Allen and Meyer (1996) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ). The OCQ consisted of three dimensions: (a) affective commitment, (b) continuance commitment, and (c) normative commitment. It was a self-scoring questionnaire and the responses to each of the 18 items (6 items for each dimension) was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). High scores 54 – 72, showed high organizational commitment while low scores 0 – 32, implied low organizational commitment among the teachers.

4. ANALYSIS

The completed questionnaires were categorized according to the schools and other relevant demographic variables for data management. The data from the screened and coded questionnaires were entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) Version 20.0.

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlational statistical procedures were employed to analyze the data collected. Statistical Packages for Social Scientist (SPSS) Version 20.0 software was used to organize, analyze and interpret collected data. The quantitative data from the questionnaire was encoded, tabulated and interpreted. Frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations was used to analyze the data.

5. RESULTS

The demographic information revealed that there were more males, 143(72.2%), than females, 55(27.8%). This implies that the distribution of teachers in Tororo Municipality Secondary Schools was skewed in favour of males.

Further analysis revealed that secondary school headteachers practiced laissez faire leadership style to a low extent *(M = 4.04, SD = 3.31);* transformational leadership to a moderately high extent *(M = 57.55, SD = 11.72),* while transactional leadership was practiced to a moderate extent *(M = 26.89, SD = 5.86).*

Friedman's Test of Leadership Styles revealed that there was a significant difference in leadership styles practiced among secondary school headteachers in Tororo Municipality. The transformational leadership style was practiced more, followed by transactional leadership style, while laissez faire leadership style was least practiced.

The Relationship between Secondary School Headteachers' Leadership Styles and Teachers' Organizational Commitment in Tororo Municipality:

The result of the analysis provided correlation coefficients that indicated the strength and direction of the relationship between the secondary school headteachers leadership styles, and teachers' organizational commitment in Tororo Municipality. To test **hypothesis** that *there is no significant relationship between headteachers' leadership styles and teachers' organizational commitment in Tororo Municipality*, the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was run. The correlation coefficients in Table 1 was generated.

Table 1. Correlation between Headteachers' Leadership styles and Teachers' Organization Commitment

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	LF Score	1						
2.	TFL Score	$-.308^{**}$	1					
3.	TL Score	$.312^{**}$	$.350^{**}$	1				
4.	AC Score	$.186^{**}$	$-.145^{*}$	.049	1			
5.	CC Score	.031	.004	.071	$.317^{**}$	1		
6.	NC Score	-.055	.134	-.004	$.321^{**}$	$.600^{**}$	1	
7.	OC Score	.050	.015	.049	$.618^{**}$	$.864^{**}$	$.843^{**}$	1

Note. LF = Laissez faire Leadership, TFL = Transformational Leadership, TL = Transactional Leadership, AC = Affective Commitment, CC = Continuance Commitment, NC = Normative Commitment, OC = Organizational Commitment

Note. **. = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), * = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows that the relationship between transformational leadership style and overall organizational commitment was not statistically significant ($r = 0.015$, $p > .05$). Transactional leadership style was also not statistically significantly related to teachers' overall organizational commitment ($r = .049$, $p > .05$). Again the relationship between laissez faire leadership style and teachers' organizational commitment was not statistically significant ($r = 0.05$, $p > .05$).

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Correlation analysis established non-significant relationship between laissez faire leadership and organizational commitment. However, a significant weak positive correlation existed between laissez faire leadership and affective commitment, while non-significant positive weak correlation existed between laissez faire leadership and continuance commitment, and a negative weak correlation existed with normative commitment. Laissez-faire leadership behavior entails avoiding getting involved when problems arise, avoiding making decisions, and ignoring problems and subordinates' needs. This result is almost consistent with research by Awan and Mahmood (2009) that showed that laissez-fair leadership style had no effect on organizational commitment. The result is though incongruent with those of studies by Aboodi, Javadi, and Kazemian (2013); Garg and Ramjee (2013); and Saqer (2009) who established that laissez-faire leadership behaviors had negative relationship with followers' organizational commitment.

This study further established a non-significant correlation between transactional leadership styles and organizational commitment, while a non-significant correlation was established between transactional leadership and affective and continuance commitments. However, there was a weak significant negative correlation between transactional leadership and normative commitment. The study is in agreement with Lee (2004) who established that transactional leadership does not have significant relationship with organizational commitment. However, the findings are not in agreement with those of Barbuto (2005) and Ibrahim et al. (2010) where transactional leadership had positive and significant association with organizational commitment. Transactional leadership behavior includes what subordinates would receive in exchange of performance targets,

expressing satisfaction in the event expectations are met, not seriously focusing attention in event when irregularities, mistakes, exceptions and deviations from standard are made and interference before problems became serious among others.

In this study transformational leadership style had a non-significant relationship with organizational commitment. However, a weak negative significant correlation existed with affective commitment while a weak non-significant correlation existed with normative and continuance commitments. These results are in agreement with the findings of Avolio et al. (2004); Marmaya et al. (2011); and Walumbwa and Lawler (2003) who established that transformational leadership was positively correlated with organizational commitment. While these findings do not agree with those of Barbuto (2005); Ibrahim et al. (2010); Lee (2004); Mert et al. (2010) where it was established that transformational leadership correlates significantly with organizational commitment. The results further contradicts Hayward et al. (2004) who established that transformational leadership had moderate positive correlation with affective commitment.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The leadership styles were not significantly correlated with overall organizational commitment. Similarly, the leadership styles generally had no statistically significantly correlations with the sub-scales of organizational commitment. However, there was a significant positive correlation between laissez-faire style and affective commitment; a significant negative correlation between transformational style and affective commitment. The current study findings do not support Bass and Avolio's (1994) Transformational Leadership Theory. This implies that the headteachers in Tororo Municipality Secondary schools did not inspire their teachers to commit to a shared vision and goals for their schools, and did not challenge them to be innovative problem-solvers.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this research have revealed that headteachers were not displaying ideal level of transformational leadership behaviors. It is imperative that school stake holders like the board of governors, education officers and inspectors, prepare and implement leadership development program so as to provide knowledge and awareness about transformational leadership behaviors. The schools need to set different leadership development initiatives to improve the leaders' present ability and prepare them for highest level of transformational leadership behaviors. Leaders can play a major role in developing and improving organizational commitment through orientation of employees to the organization vision, goals and values. It is recommended that headteachers should display their commitment to the teachers by a strong acceptance of organizational vision, goal and values and exert efforts to remain with the school.

Since both transformational leadership behavior and transactional leadership behavior had non-significant relationship with organizational commitment, school leaders should work towards establishing positive relationships through building high level of trust and confidence, developing strong sense of loyalty to teachers, inspiring shared vision, encouraging creativity, clarification of goals, and exchange of rewards in order to meet agreed upon objectives. The headteachers should be able to give more attention to exercise transformational and transactional leadership behaviors in order to develop and improve teachers' organizational commitment in secondary school.

There is need for headteachers to embrace full range leadership style especially transformational and transactional leadership style, since it significantly affects organizational commitment. Organizational commitment has been associated with high results and excellent organizational performance. Taking on these leadership styles would by extension increase organizational performance, results, and effectiveness. In order to increase organizational commitment, headteachers should employ both transformational and transactional leadership styles since they are complimentary to each other. It is recommended that less of laissez-faire leadership style should be embraced as it has a low impact on teacher organizational commitment.

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