

The Effects of Leadership Style and Organizational Culture on Employees' Organizational Commitment

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ABSTRACT This paper investigated the effect of leadership style and organizational culture on employees' commitment at Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority. It adopted a quantitative research design and data was collected through self-administered research questionnaire. A sample of 250 respondents was selected using simple random sampling. The results reveal that leadership styles and organizational culture have significant positive effect on organizational commitment, and that transformational leadership style has more positive influence on employee commitment than transactional leadership style. The paper also revealed a significant positive relationship between organizational culture and organizational commitment. However, the paper recommends that organizations should not focus only on one leadership approach; a combination of both transactional and transformational leadership should be implemented. The paper also recommends that organizational leaders should be equipped with the best leadership practices to assist in boosting employees' commitment to work and their overall organizational performance.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of leaders as the essential part of every organization cannot be denied (Adeel et al. 2017). Effective and efficient leadership are vital to the success of an organization (McCleskey 2014). Similarly, Adeel et al. (2017) posited that effective leadership plays a crucial role in motivating and satisfying employees with their jobs in order to achieve organizational goals efficiently and effectively. Mintzberg (2010) indicated that leaders are important tool of the organization which help to enhance production and profitability and nurture innovation in the organization, but the success of the organization depends upon the leadership style and the supportive culture of the organization that are created for employees to enable them perform well to cope within a competitive environment.

Lumley (2010) argues that talent mobility and labor turnover within organizations have resulted in several researchers accentuating the significance of revisiting those factors that influence organizational commitment within the work environment. Thus, Kargar (2012) posited that employee commitment is vital as it determines employees' attitude towards the organization. However, Dahie et al. (2017) indicate that ensuring

the well-being of employees for them to remain committed to their organization poses a serious challenge to many organizations today.

Johnson and Chang (2008) confirm that there are high costs associated with employee turnover and in order to deal with these costs organizations have to strive to create a bond between employees and the organization.

Randaree and Chaudhry (2012) reiterated that "leadership and organizational culture are keys to improved employee commitment in the organization." Therefore, it is crucial for every organization to understand its leadership behavior and culture in order to benefit from the outcome of effective leadership and cultural practices in the organization (Naicker 2008).

Adeel et al. (2017) argue that several studies have been conducted on leadership styles globally which explains leadership styles such as autocratic, bureaucratic, laissez-faire, democratic, situational, transactional, participative and transformational leadership but transactional and transformational leadership styles are the most important and more related with employees' commitment. Javeed and Farooqi (2013) argue that "transformational leadership asserts influence on the attitude and behaviours of em-

employees and inspires them for the well-being of organization and also for their interest and building of commitment towards organizational goals and objectives.” Vito et al. (2014) argue that in transactional leadership style, leaders focus on achievements and completion of work and clarifies to the subordinates what they want from them and what they will receive in return. It expounds on the relationship between leaders and followers, within which they exchange economic, political and psychological values in exchange for standards of performance (Ravichandran and Gilmore 2007).

On the other hand, Mathew (2010) defined organizational culture as the knowledge which defines the standard through which people perceive, believe and evaluate things and it is an act that serves to relate human communities to their environment settings. Nair and Somerville (2017) defined organizational culture as the reflection of how the things will be functioning within the organization. Schein (2010) added that “organizational culture comprises the values, beliefs and assumptions shared or relayed among organization members.” Alvesson and Svenningsson (2005) argue that “organizational culture work as guidance of behavior and facilitate shared understanding.”

Nevertheless, no single study has combined leadership styles and organizational culture in order to determine their effects on employees’ commitment. Therefore, this paper sought to investigate the effect of leadership styles (transformational and transactional) and organizational culture on the commitment of employees working at the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority which Chiboiwa et al. (2011) revealed that was characterized by high staff turnover due to poor leadership styles and organizational culture with limited career progression, training and development as well as acknowledgement of skills and abilities of employees. This gave room for workers to be dissatisfied with their job which resulted in poor commitment among the employees.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to determine effects of leadership style (transformational and transaction) and organizational culture on organizational commitment among employees at Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority in Harare Zimbabwe.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Leadership

Leadership is defined as a process whereby a leader uses an interactive manner to influence or direct followers to the attainment of a common goal in an organization (Northouse 2007). DuBrin (2004) opined that the combination of attitude and behaviour that the leader implements in influencing followers is regarded as leadership style. Although researchers like Davies (2003) and Spears and Lawrence (2003) have pointed out several leadership styles that can be implemented in organizations. Martin (2006) argued that transactional and transformation leadership behaviors are the more prominent leadership styles, and they are discussed here.

Transformational Leadership

The concept of “transformational leadership” was originally advocated by Burns (1978) and was further expanded by Bass (1985, 1990). Transformational leaders are regarded as people oriented (Watson and Hoefer 2013). Watson and Hoefer (2013) posited that transformational leaders focus more on employee personal development and growth. They also want to attain employee intrinsic motivation by aligning employees’ needs with organizational goals. As a result, Miia et al. (2006) are of the opinion that transformational leaders are able to enhance employee commitment and inspire subordinates to perform beyond average performance due to their characteristics.

Transactional Leadership

In contrast to transformational leadership, transactional leaders are regarded as job oriented (McCaffery 2013). They gain validity through satisfying employees’ immediate needs. This can be attained through the use of rewards, praises and recognition (Northouse 2010). Transactional leaders enhance employee commitment through the offering of rewards in exchange for goals attained (McCaffery 2013). The offering of immediate rewards enhances employee commitment through rewarding good performance

instantly. However, if leaders are to enhance employee commitment mixture, both of the two leadership behaviors should be implemented.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture can be referred as the glue that binds people to an organization or a factor which can drive them away (Ray and Chakraborty 2014). As posited by Watson (2006), culture is something that should always be cultivated in an organization through appropriate leadership styles so as to enhance employee commitment. Defining organizational culture is very vital in understanding its effects on organisational commitment. Martin and Martins (2003) argue that culture is an organisational distinguishing feature that separates one organisation from another due to its shared meaning and shared values. In another view, Hellriegel et al. (2004) argue that organizational culture can be equated to personality of the organization as it determines an employee's actions where no guideline exists. The above definitions reveal that culture differentiate one organisation from another and it is a vital element of the organisation.

Werner (2007) argued that organizational culture as an important element of the organization, leaders of organisations should determine the most appropriate culture for the organisation and develop strategies to instil the culture across the organisation so as to enhance employee commitment in the organisation. However, unlike employee commitment which has proved to be an area of interest in management, organizational culture has received little attention (Meyer et al. 2004). Studies by Taylor et al. (2008) and Mathew and Ogbonna (2009) seconded that culture has received low level of empirical investigation. This makes organizational culture an ideal variable for research.

Organizational Commitment

Cohen (2003) underscored the importance of conducting research on commitment in order to have a better understanding of the psychological process people undergo in developing attachments with object in their environment and finding purpose in life. Organizational commitment involves an attachment of members to an

organization (Abbott et al. 2005). In addition, Meyer et al. (2013) defined organizational commitment as the degree to which employees of an organization see themselves attached and belonging to an organization.

From the above definitions, it can be deduced that commitment involves an affective membership to the organization or a psychological state that binds employees to the organization, it also reveals discretionary energy whereby an individual develops an attachment with the organization and is willing to give the best out of himself for the wellbeing of the organization (Ulrich and Smallwood 2013). Committed employees are usually content with their job and are not tempted to look for other jobs or opportunities somewhere as a result of the satisfaction they get from the organization (Lok et al. 2007). However, Aghdasi et al. (2011) was of the view that apart from having low level of acceptance of organizational values, uncommitted employees also feel alienated from the organization which makes them uncommitted to the organization.

Empirical Literature

The Relationship between Leadership Style and Organisational Commitment

As organisations continue to face complex challenges from their internal and external environment, researchers are now keen to know more or are turning their attention to the relationship between leadership style and organisational commitment. Researchers like Rad and Yarmohammadian (2006) are of the opinion that employers who implement effective leadership styles have committed employees. Similarly, the results of other study by Bolland et al. (2015) have shown that transformational leadership helps to amplify organisational commitment. Furthermore, study by Dover et al. (2014) showed a correlation between the two variables.

In addition, very few studies have examined all variables found in transformational and transactional leadership. This highlights that more research is still needed. However, apart from leadership Behavior, other researchers have found organisational culture as another important factor in nurturing organisational commitment among employees.

Relationship between Organisational Culture and Organisational Commitment

Organisational culture acts as a control mechanism that guides or shapes the way employees behave in organisations (Nayager and Van Vuuren 2005). This results in culture having a significant influence on organisational commitment. Organisational culture influences the effectiveness and efficiency of organisations. Miroschnik (2013) argued that organisational culture creates high level of commitment and performance in organisations.

Study by Krishna (2008) showed a positive relationship between culture and leadership style practised in the organisation. Similarly research findings from Flores (2008) study confirmed that organisational culture is an essential element for employees' commitment in an organisation. Further studies by Brown (2003) was of the speculation that managers and employees in organisations do not just behave anyhow but they are guided by certain norms, values and beliefs which in turn determine whether employees will be committed to the organisation or not.

However, Jung et al. (2003) argued that several researches had been conducted on culture and commitment; there has been limited evidence to unveil the effect of organisational culture on employee commitment. Therefore, with the interdependency between culture and human behaviour such as commitment, it is worthy analysing how culture of the organisation influence employee commitment in organisation.

Relationship between Leadership, Organisational Culture and Organisational Commitment

Leadership behaviour and organisational culture are commonly perceived as intervening variables in the organisational commitment process. These factors are regarded as best in predicting employee commitment in the organisation.

According to a study by Taylor et al. (2008), a positive relationship was found between employee commitment, leadership and organisational culture. Similarly, in another study by Nacker (2008), a positive correlation was found between culture of the organisation, supportive leadership style and commitment. Furthermore, participative and supportive leadership styles had high correlation with organisational commitment among employees (Huang et al. 2011).

In view of the previous empirical literature on organisational culture, leadership and organisational commitment, the paper raised several hypotheses. The following hypotheses were formulated.

- H0** There is no significant positive relationship between organizational culture, leadership style and employee organizational commitment.
- H0** Transformational leadership has no more positive influence on employee commitment than transactional leadership.
- H0** There is no significant positive relationship between organizational culture and organizational commitment.

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopted a survey research approach using quantitative research design. The population of this research comprised 800 employees drafted from the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority in Harare Zimbabwe. In order to achieve to achieve an accurate result for this research, a margin error of five percent, confidence level of ninety-five percent and a response distribution of fifty percent was taken into consideration; a Raosoft sample size calculator was used to determine a sample size of 250 participants for this research. The paper adopted a simple random sampling due to the availability of the sample frame. A self-administered questionnaire was used in this research because of its tendency to yielding most satisfactory range of reliable data. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire was culled from three instruments namely: The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Organizational Culture Index Questionnaire and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. These instruments were integrated to form the research instrument for this paper. The questionnaire was distributed to experts to test the validity before it was administered on the participant. In testing the reliability of the instrument used in this paper, a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.89 was received.

Data Collection Method

The research data was collected through questionnaire administration on the participants that were selected from different levels and de-

partments of the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority. The questionnaires were duly distributed to the participants, and their names and phone numbers of some of them obtained to follow up on the completion of the questionnaires.

Data Capturing and Analysis

Data was coded and captured into Microsoft Excel. All the proposed hypotheses were tested and analysed using statistical methods such as descriptive statistics, Chi-square test and Independent t-test. The data was imported into SPSS for statistical analysis to take place. When the data was imported into SPSS, chi-square test and independent t-test were conducted to discover if there was an association between the tested variables.

RESULTS

In this section, the key findings of this paper such as the demographic information of the sample are presented. Subsequently the main findings and results relating to the hypotheses of this paper are also presented.

Biographical Information in Percentages

The following descriptive statistic provides the demographic profile of the participants in terms of age, gender, highest qualification, tenure and ethnicity. As presented in Table 1, 8.8 percent of the participants were within the age of 16-25 years, 34.4 percent of the participants fall within the age group of 26-35 years and 29.6 percent were in the age group of 36-45 years while eighteen percent falls within the age group of 46-55 years. The table also illustrates that, 7.2 percent was within the age of 56-65 years while two percent of the participants were within the age group of 66 years and above. Furthermore, Table 1 shows that more male participated in the research than their female counterpart with sixty-six percent of male participants and thirty-four percent of female participants. Finally, the table shows that majority of the participants that is, ninety-eight percent were Africans and two percent was Coloureds.

Demographic Profile of Educational Level and Tenure of Participants

The results in Table 2 show that 4.8 percent of the participants possess high school certifi-

Table 1: Biographical information in percentages

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Cum %</i>
<i>Age</i>			
16-25yrs	22	8.8	8.8
26-35yrs	86	34.4	43.2
36-45yrs	74	29.6	72.8
46-55yrs	45	18.0	90.8
56-65yrs	18	7.2	98.0
66+yrs	5	2.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	165	66.0	66.0
Female	85	34.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	
<i>Ethnicity</i>			
Africans	245	98.0	98.0
Coloureds	5	2.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

cates, thirty-four percent possess diploma certificates, 32.8 percent had degree certificate while 20.4 percent possess postgraduate certificates. The also depicts the participant's tenure in the organization. This shows that majority of the employees 40.4 percent have remained in their position for 11-20 years, 28.8 percent have been working for 21-30 years while 17.2 percent have worked for 1-10 years. The remainder of the participants 13.6 percent has worked for 31 years and more.

Table 2: Educational level and tenure of the participants

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Cum %</i>
<i>Education Level</i>			
High Schoo	12	4.8	4.8
Diploma	88	34.0	38.8
Degree	82	32.8	71.6
Postgraduate	52	20.4	92.0
Total	250	100.00	
<i>Tenure</i>			
1-10yrs	43	17.2	17.2
11-20yrs	101	40.4	57.6
21-30yrs	72	28.8	86.4
31+	34	13.6	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

Correlations for Organizational Culture, Leadership and Organizational Commitment on Demographics

The result in the Table 3 shows that no correlation was found between demographics and organisational commitment. The results showed that no relationship existed between the two variables. This shows that regardless of demo-

Table 3: Correlation between study variables and demographics

		<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Ethnic</i>	<i>Tenure</i>
<i>Organisation commitment</i>	Pearson correlation	-.079	.057	-.050	-.065	.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.214	.369	.433	.308	.736
	N	250	250	250	250	250
<i>Leadership</i>	Pearson correlation	-.046	-.066	-.084	-.012	-.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.466	.298	.185	.844	.850
	N	250	250	250	250	250
<i>Organisation culture</i>	Pearson correlation	-.067	-.012	-.082	-.047	-.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.292	.849	.194	.456	.406
	N	250	250	250	250	250

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

graphics such as gender, tenure, age or qualifications, factors such as the type of leadership practised in the organisation as well as culture have the same effect on employees. One does not need to be more educated or to be a man or female to feel the impact of certain leadership style or culture in the organisation.

Results from the Tested Hypotheses

Tested Hypothesis One

H0: There is no significant relationship between organisational culture, leadership style and employee organisational commitment.

H1: There is a significant relationship between organisational culture, leadership style and employee commitment.

The result in Table 4 shows the correlations between study variables. The results show that there is a significant positive relationship between organisational commitment, leadership styles and organisational culture. Organisational culture has a positive correlation with leader-

ship styles ($r=0.466$; $p=.000$) and organisational commitment ($r=0.536$; $p=.000$). Leadership styles have a significant positive correlation with organisational culture ($r=0.466$; $p=.000$) and organisational commitment ($r=0.612$; $p=.000$). Organisational commitment has a significant positive correlation with leadership styles ($r=0.612$; $p=.000$) and organisational culture ($r=0.536$; $p=.000$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis as there is a significant relationship between organisational culture, leadership style and employee commitment.

Tested Hypothesis Two

H0: Transformational leadership does not have more positive influence on employee commitment than transactional leadership.

H2: Transformational leadership has more positive influence on employee commitment than transactional leadership.

A multiple linear regression was employed to test whether “transformational leadership”

Table 4: Correlations between study variables

		<i>Organisation culture</i>	<i>Leadership</i>	<i>Organisation commitment</i>
<i>Organisation Culture</i>	Pearson correlation	1	.466**	.536**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	250	250	250
<i>Leadership</i>	Pearson correlation	.466**	1	.612**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	250	250	250
<i>Organisation Commitment</i>	Pearson correlation	.536**	.612**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	250	250	250

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

had positive influence on employee commitment than “transactional leadership.” The results in Table 5 showed that multiple regression analysis was applied in testing the hypothesis. The regression produced one model with “employee commitment” as the dependent variable and “transformational leadership and transactional styles” as the independent variables. This model produced an R² value of forty percent which represents a measure of how much of the variability in employee commitment, is accounted for by the independent variables. This means that “transformational and transactional styles of leadership account for forty percent of the variance in employee commitment.”

Furthermore, the model F-ratio is 84.723 ($p < 0.0001$) illustrates the model is significant. The β value represents the contribution of the independent variables to the model. A β value of 1.713 ($p < 0.0001$) is an “indication of a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment.” These findings are “consistent with the correlation test which found that transformational leadership is significantly and positively associated with employee commitment.” Moreover, transactional leadership style has a significant positive correlation with employee commitment but has a β value of -0.854 ($p < 0.0001$). This indicates that “transactional leadership style has a significant negative impact on the model’s ability to

predict employee commitment.” Thus, the researchers reject the null hypothesis and conclude that “transformational leadership style has a more positive influence on employee commitment than transactional leadership style.”

Tested Hypothesis Three

H0: There is no relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment

H3: There is a relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment.

The Table 6 result illustrates the correlation between organisational culture and organisational commitment. It shows that organisational culture has a significant positive correlation with organisational commitment ($r = 0.536$; $p = 0.000$). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis and it can be concluded that there is a relationship between organisational culture and organisational commitment.

DISCUSSION

First Hypothesis

The result from the first hypotheses tested revealed that a strong positive relationship exists between leadership, organisational culture

Table 5: Multiple regression analysis on the effect of transformational leadership and transactional leadership on employee commitment

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
1	Regression	74.411	2	37.206	84.723	.000b
	Residual	108.469	247	0.439		
	Total	182.88	249			

		Organizational commitment	Transformational leadership	Transactional leadership
Organizational Commitment	Pearson correlation	1	0.612	0.537
	Sig.(2-sided)		0.000	0.000
	N	250	250	250
Transformational Leadership	Pearson correlation	0.612	1	0.96
	Sig.(2-sided)		0.000	0.000
	N	250	250	250
Transactional Leadership	Pearson correlation	.537**	.960**	1
	Sig.(2-sided)		0.000	0.000
	N	250	250	250

Table 6: Correlation for organisational culture and organisational commitment

		<i>Organisational culture</i>	<i>Organisational commitment</i>
<i>Organisational Culture</i>	Pearson correlation	1	.536
	Sig.(2-sided)		.000
	N	250	250
<i>Organisational Commitment</i>	Pearson correlation	.536	1
	Sig.(2-sided)	.000	
	N	250	250

and organisational commitment. This result is in consonant with Bayram and Dinc (2015) study on leadership styles and employee job satisfaction which revealed that employee job satisfaction and leadership styles had a strong positive relationship. Similar study by Belias and Koustelios (2014) revealed that leadership styles and employees' job satisfaction has an interactive relationship, that leaders create such an environment which is supportive for employees to motivate them for their jobs. Taylor et al. (2008) in their research found a positive relationship between leadership styles, organizational culture and employee commitment. Naicker (2008) also found a positive correlation between organizational cultures, supportive leadership style and employee commitment. Further, Huang et al. (2011) added that participative and supportive leadership styles had high correlation with organizational commitment among employees.

Second Hypothesis

Having tested the second hypothesis, the result revealed that transformational leadership style has more positive influence on employee commitment than transactional leadership. This is in consonance with the assertion by Watson and Hofer (2013), who posited that transformational leaders focus more on employee personal development and growth. They also want to attain employee intrinsic motivation by aligning employees' needs with organisational goals. However, study by Bruch and Walter (2007) and Keskes (2014) revealed that transformational leadership could result in positive relationships with employees, performance motivation, commitment and effective leaders. In addition, Ivey and Kline (2010) argue that "transformational leadership is robust throughout conditions and can be applied in various cultures unlike transactional leadership or other leadership styles. Furthermore, transformational leadership is also

associated with individual outcomes that are of significance to the running of organizations such as creativity, satisfaction, performance, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behaviour (Cheung and Wong 2011; Omar 2013).

Third Hypothesis

The findings of the third hypothesis tested revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between organizational culture and organizational commitment. This result is in consonant with Abdullah et al. (2014) study which revealed the significant role of organizational culture as a compass and level guiding behaviour of the organizational members. Miroshnik (2013) added that organizational culture influences effectiveness, efficiency, high level of commitment and performance in the organization. Moreover, the result is related to Lee and Yu (2004) study on organizational culture types in terms of their relationships in the context of Singaporean firms and revealed that the organizations cultural strength is interconnected to their commitment and performance. Their findings also revealed that "the cultural elements differentiating organizations from one another positively impact their performance. In addition, study by Tajeddini and Trueman (2012) which involved 96 businesses in the Swiss hotel industry found that "the dimensions of national culture (power distance, long-term orientation and individualism) positively relates with innovation and customer orientation, and innovation and customer orientation positively are related to employee commitment and organizational performance."

CONCLUSION

The paper investigated the effects of leadership styles and organisational commitment on

employees' commitment among employees at ZESA Harare Zimbabwe. The paper findings are of great importance as it would help researchers to have a better understanding of the relationship between leadership culture, organisational culture and employee commitment. The paper also provides a new direction on literature and research on organisational commitment as it opens a new horizon on the effect that leadership style and organisational culture implemented in the organisation has on employee organisational commitment.

In addition, the statistically proven significance between organisational culture, leadership style and organisational commitment provides a better understanding of how these variables can be instrumental in enhancing the commitment of employees in an organisation. The paper revealed how important the type of leadership style implemented as well as the culture in place is to the organisation. Finally, the fact that demographics proved to have no significant relationship with organisational commitment is also of importance as that will help management to focus on more vital elements of the organisation such as leadership style in practice as compared to directing all the attention on demographics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper provided vital recommendations for organisations, government and policy makers on the need to ensure supportive work environment for their employees or workers. Supportive work environment can be of more importance in a country like Zimbabwe where external factors like political and economic instability are also affecting employee commitment. The paper recommends that organisations should not stick to just one leadership approach; a combination of both transactional and transformational leadership style should be implemented. In a situation that requires transactional leadership to be implemented, it should be implemented and where transformational leadership is required it should also be implemented. The paper recommends that organisations should adopt managerial approach which involves sharing of ideas, demonstration of concern for employee welfare and equitable rewards are vital in enhancing employee organisational commitment. The paper also recommends that a two-way communication should be established between the management and

employees. This communication should be open and accurate which helps to create an impression that the organisation cares for the employee thereby enhancing employee commitment.

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