

Exploring Driving Forces that Stimulate the Choice of Leadership Styles by School Heads in Private Secondary Schools in Tanzania

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Abstract

The study explored the driving forces that stimulate the adoption of leadership styles by top management in private secondary schools in Tanzania. The researcher was interested in conducting this study due to the variation in terms of private secondary schools' academic performance in the national examinations and ability of retaining qualified teachers. The study was guided by pragmatism philosophical paradigm and employed a mixed research approach adopting concurrent triangulation research design. The sample comprised teachers, heads of school, district education officer and quality assurance officer. The findings revealed that the driving forces that stimulated the adoption of leadership style were creation and nurturing good working environment to workers, enhancing interpersonal relationship, recognition and appreciation on the good performances of workers, enhancement of equality, job security and workers retention, readiness to learn and maintenance of the good status of the schools. The study concluded that the improvement of school working environment and empowering teachers and other workers raised the job satisfaction and retention of workers consequently enhancing job performance. The study recommends that all private secondary schools should create and develop a good school environment that enable smooth operationalization and provision of quality education.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, School Administrators and Private Secondary Schools.

Introduction

A successful learning in this millennium requires a leader who supports traits such as innovation and creativity and be ready to draw out the maximum potential of their subordinates and keep them satisfied (Hijazi, 2016). It has been argued that any

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organizational success i depends on employees' loyalty and hard working as well as the dedicated managers (Bushra, Usman & Naveed, 2011). A study by Yukl (1989) revealed that followers who perceive their leaders as effective are more confident in facing challenges, experienced greater job satisfaction, demonstrated higher levels of commitment to the organisation and displayed healthier psychological well-being. Thus, at the individual level, leaders who are able to influence, motivate and direct employees are often rewarded by loyalty and performance of their employees towards achieving organisational goals and objectives including secondary schools' institutions (Mosadegh & Yarmohammadian, 2006).

There has been a debate on leadership styles as key to why leaders of some organizations are successfully executing strategies that lead to excellent results while others fail to translate strategic intentions into desired outcomes (Lee & Hee, 2016). This has been responded that for effective attainment of organizational goals and objectives, the use of proper leadership style is essential because it motivates decrease job performance (Peter, 2019). Thus, the influence of leadership styles on organizational performance has been the subject of attention among academics and practitioners in the area of leadership. This interest has been triggered by research studies which have demonstrated that leadership style significantly affects performance in any organizations (Jing & Avery, 2016).

Studies have revealed the role of leadership style on enhancing employees' satisfaction. For instance, Herman and Chiu (2014) noted that in different organizations in China when a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) adopts the transformational leadership style, it impacts positively on organization performance. The CEO's empowering leadership also shapes top management behavioural integration and potency, thereby enhancing organizational performance (Carmeli et al., 2011; Yucel, McMillan & Richard, 2014). These positive traits of transformational leadership style by the CEO triggers key questions among scholars and researchers to understand the mechanisms through which it leads to performance improvement especially at senior management levels (Boehm, Dwertmann, Bruch & Shamir, 2015).

Studies on leadership style in Africa reveal that a leadership style impacts followers' performance positively. For example, a study by Ejere and Abasilim (2013) in Ethiopia established that transformational leadership style impacted organizational performance positively. In Ghana, Boateng (2014) observed that the proper selection of leadership characteristics that were measured through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration had a positive impact on performance of students. A study by Munirat and Nzelibe (2012) established that application of clear leadership style in management and executive positions facilitated corporate transformation of the schools.

Results from a banking sector study in Ghana held that leaders with transformational leadership behaviours are measured through idealized influence, intellectual

stimulation, individualized consideration and inspirational motivation they are likely to provide the structure in their followers for learning to take place. The followers, therefore, exert extra effort and engage in learning behaviours, such as seeking help, experimentation, discussion of mistakes and the willingness to take interpersonal risk, which in turn, facilitates performance improvement (Kumako & Asumeng, 2013). Mohamad (2012) ascertained that transformational leadership was significantly correlated with both job satisfaction as well as organizational commitment. Both studies imply that employees responded positively to transformational leaders by developing a strong attitude towards their jobs and organization.

In Tanzania, leadership style is regarded as a fundamental component of the Government's development agenda in different education institutions. Majority of workers are tasked to impart knowledge to students through teaching and offering outreach services to solve problems facing the society because they are the highest source of knowledge (Buberwa, 2015). In this case, high-quality academic staff are very important for the sustainable and successful development of organizations and the nation at large. The secondary school's leadership positions are dictated by the nature of the school, whether is public or private to meet the standards of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST, 2016). A report on teachers' turnover pointed out that, Tanzania is receiving increased attention on leadership practices due to the high-level turnover of employees estimated to be 19% in the year 2013 to 2017 (United Republic of Tanzania, 2013).

From 2016, Tanzania witnessed a drastic change in the operation of schools in whereby some secondary schools were nourished and improved, by being allocated with the budget for improvement (Njehu, 2012; Peter, 2017 & Mhando, 2020). This unveils that secondary schools institute is an important sector that requires leadership styles that will influence both the academic and administrative staff to perform their mandate and enhance the achievement of organizational goals and objectives (Hijazi, 2016 & Peter, 2019). In its process of secondary schools as an organization, leadership styles have been unveiled by different studies that are prerequisite factor to be considered for their success or failures (Bono & Patton, 2001; Rizwan & Noreen, 2014). Leadership styles permeate in all components of an organization including enhancing job satisfactions.

There is a limited research studies which have been done on this subject in Tanzania. The prevailing view is that African organizations are operating in a different environment or culture from that of developed countries, so that western-derived and tested arguments cannot be used to explain and understand the organizational problems in Tanzania (Aluko, 2003). In the light of the state of art on the operationalization of secondary schools in Tanzania particularly private secondary schools under umbrella of Private-Public Partnership majority of challenges like shortage of qualified teachers, double employment, quitting from the job, corona disease and unsecured contract were observed to affect majority of secondary schools.

The study explored the driving forces that stimulate the appropriate choice of a certain leadership styles by school heads in private secondary schools in Tanzania.

Reviewed Literature

In an attempt to study leadership, scholars have developed different theories to explain the factors that influence the choices of a certain leadership style. This has been originated from the evolution of leadership theories as traced back from the Great Man Theory (GMT) in the twentieth century where job performance among individuals depended much on the kind of leadership traits expressed by the leaders to their followers in the society (Akpapere, Jengre & Mogre, 2019). Other leadership theories emerged as a result of criticism of the GMT. The following are the factors that influenced top leaders in selecting the appropriate leadership style to be used in leading the organization.

The Great Man Theory postulates that leaders need to have individual traits that are unique. The theory assumes that leaders are always born, not made (Chowdhury, 2014). This theoretical perspective on leadership is the oldest and simplest one in the history of the evolution of leadership because it ignores the organizational achievements and promotes individual greatness in the organization. In other words, it assumes that organizational success depends on individual traits. It also emphasized that individuals with innate traits such as physical, personality and social background become natural leaders. Different studies conducted on this theory indicated that no individual traits have been proven to be crucial for a leader to be effective in the organisation. The GMT is criticized because different organizations require different leadership skills from a different employee than on the traits of great leaders.

The criticism levelled against the GMT led to the emergence of the trait theory and became the dominant theory of leadership during the first half of the 20th century (Chemers, 1997). The trait theory postulated that individual traits such as psychological and physical traits determine a strong leader in the organisation. The trait theory was criticized by Hollander and Julian (1969) in its failure to explain the most important traits that affect effective leadership. They argued that leadership effectiveness did not totally depend on personality traits but also on factors like situational factors. The Trait leadership theory assumed that individuals with certain innate traits are effective natural leaders in the organisation. Various scholars have indicated that no individual traits have been proven to be important for a leader to be effective (Christensen, 2010). In the early 1950s, many scholars changed their focus on studying the traits of leaders and started studying leader's observable behaviours.

This theory emerged in the 1950s when scholars started to focus on behavioural traits of leaders. They observed that the Trait theory did not explain adequately the effectiveness of leaders. This theory contended that leaders with particular behaviours were assumed to be effective leaders towards achieving specific goals. The composition of different individual behaviours is referred to as leadership style. Different scholars have come up with different types of leadership behaviours which

are associated with different leadership styles (Wageman, Nunes, Burruss & Hackman, 2008). The autocratic leadership style is a type where a leader demonstrates task-oriented behaviours versus a democratic type in which a leader demonstrates relationship-oriented behaviours, the task-oriented type where a leader demonstrates task-oriented behaviours and socio-emotional oriented type where a leader demonstrates socio-emotional oriented behaviours. The theory is criticized because it is very difficult to establish in advance which behaviours enable leaders to obtain the desired outcomes.

In the early 1960s, different scholars criticized behavioural theories for their insufficient evidence for enhancing effective leadership (Christensen, 2010). Situational or contingency theories postulate that there is no universal leadership behaviour that can be applied to all situations in an organisation. Researchers have recognized that situational factors like the nature of the task, group characteristics, characteristics of leaders and followers must be incorporated in all studies of leadership effectiveness in organizations. This implies that the situation is a fundamental determinant of successful leadership. The situational theory believes that the effectiveness of any group of individuals depends upon the good relationship between the leader's personality or style and the existing situation in the organisation.

Knowledge Gap

From the reviewed theories and other literature, majority of them supports the notion that transformational leaders who are honest and support open communication, employees become more motivated and satisfied with their jobs than leaders who practice transactional leadership style (Chang & Lee, 2007). In Tanzania, literature reviewed was conducted on leadership styles and job satisfaction in various areas such as business organizations, primary schools, higher learning institutions and teachers' colleges (Alonderni & Majauskaite, 2016; Aunga & Masare, 2017; Machumu & Kaitila, 2014; Nyamubi, 2017; Nyenyembe, Maslowski & Nimrod, 2016). There is a need to understand the knowledge of leadership behaviours for effective management of any organizations. Despite of its sensitization on proper use of leadership style and its importance for effective and smooth running of the organizations; still the reviewed studies have not shown the driving forces that stimulate the adoption of a certain leadership style by the top management to majority of private secondary schools in Mufindi district in Tanzania.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research approach by reflecting the pragmatism philosophical underpinning. The use of mixed methods enables the researcher to obtain the enriched and complementary data than when the researcher uses single research approach (Collins, Onwuegbuzie & Sutton, 2006). The study employed a concurrent triangulation mixed research design. This design helped the researcher to use data from quantitative then followed by the data from the qualitative approach. The study employed a purposive sampling technique to obtain a qualitative sample to select eight private secondary schools which in turn helped the researcher to

select eight heads of schools and to select one quality assurers and one district educational officer. Simple random sampling was employed to obtain quantitative sample from the teachers as respondents by assigning a unique number to the list of all staff in each of the eight selected private secondary schools. A table of random number was used to select 100 respondents who were the category of teachers.

This study used questionnaires and interviews to collect data from participants. This study used more than one source of data to capture diverse perspectives and experiences of participants in order to ensure both the credibility and validity of the study. The qualitative data gathered from interviews was jotted down in a note book and recorded in audiotapes. The text was transcribed from audiotapes and edited, coded and entered into the computer database (Denscombe, 2007). The data collected was coded and categorized; attaching concepts to the categories, integrating abstract concepts in order to explore the required finding. The content analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative information by reflecting the above procedures. For the context of this paper questionnaire data were analysed through descriptive statistics and it was presented in terms of table with frequency and percentage.

Results and Discussion

As per objective of this study the researcher intended to explore the factors that lead to the adoption of a certain leadership style by the top administrators in private secondary schools. The information to respond this objective was collected through questionnaire methods that were administered to teachers who their age ranged between 21 to 60 years and the interviews that were conducted to heads of schools and quality assurers who aged between 41-60 years. The finding from different sources of information revealed that there several factors such as the nature of working environment, interpersonal relationship, recognition and appreciation, equality and justice, job security among workers and the policy of the country. In the Likert scale that was administered to teachers presents the findings that show the driving forces which stimulated the adoption of a certain leadership style by the top management in private secondary schools.

Nature of the Working Environment

Findings indicate that, majority of teachers 85% indicated one among the important factors that enhance the adoption of a certain leadership style was the nature of school environment. The nature in terms of operant by including the financial positions, human resources, the governing board, the policy of the government on how to operationalize the private secondary schools are the key determinant factor that enhance the adoption of leadership style. In the same factor the researcher also conducted an interview with school heads and the results revealed that the school environment in terms of its characteristics have a great influence to the top managers and leaders to adopt the kind of leadership style that suit the operation of a private schools. This was noted in the interview with one school head who said:

The nature of school environment determines to the larger extent the choices of a kind of leadership style to operate. For example, some of the schools especially those managed by churches have a good working environment and good resources, with such nature it is clear that any leadership style may fit (Interview; July, 2021).

The quotation support that the nature of school environment determines to the great extent the adoption of a leadership style that suit to operate in a private secondary school. This finding has revealed to be a great determinant and a good factor that help schools' administrators to adopt a certain leadership style.

In light of Wretch's (2007) reveals that, we can suggest that the students' expectations and needs of workers acted as an incitement to enhance the explicit introduction of central concepts and ideas and the nature of school environment determines the proper choices of leadership style to be adopted. Also, in the study by Wilteck and Habib (2013) cemented that quality school delivery service depends on the surrounding environment and the nature of workers. The role of the administrators is to learn the culture of school environment which help them to situationally employ the proper leadership styles.

Interpersonal Relationship

Also, findings revealed that the interpersonal relationship among workers and the management is great factors that enable the adoption of a certain leadership style by the top management to majority of private secondary schools. Majority of respondents 74% agreed that the choice of leadership style have been influenced with the interpersonal relationship. The finding is supported by the data that were collected from the interview with quality assurers that noticed the interpersonal relationship have a great connection with the use of leadership style. The finding was quoted in the interview with one of the quality assurers who said:

The relationship between the teachers and the school heads has a great influence in adoption of a leadership style by the top managers in majority of private secondary schools. The nature of these schools sometimes involves different categories of teachers who may be sometime sisters, fathers, brothers especially in the seminary schools. So, the interpersonal relationship is among the factors that enhance the choices of the leadership styles (Interview; July, 2021).

The quotation implies that the interpersonal relationship to majority of private secondary schools has influenced the choices of a certain leadership style. The findings reveals that majority of school heads and other administrators in private secondary schools have been sometime guided by the workers relationship as determinants indicator of adopting a certain leadership style. The findings are supported with the argument Christensen (2010) who believes that; the effectiveness of any group of individuals depends upon the good relationship between the leader's

personality or style and the existing situation in the organisation. According to Christensen (2010) the favourable situations include following three components: effective relations between the leader and subordinates, the nature of the task which refers to the extent to which the organizational task requirements are clearly outlined and the position of the leader's power which refers to the extent upon which the leader has an authority to punish or reward employee.

Recognition and Appreciation

Teachers were asked through questionnaire to indicate the factors that influence the adoption of a certain leadership style in the school. Majority of respondents 86% agreed that the issue of recognition and appreciation by the top management to workers influenced them to adopt a kind of leadership style that help them to run the school. This aspect was cemented in the open-ended question that majority of school managers have been adopting the leadership style which has a positive response to workers because of the recognition and appreciation. The researcher also in the same aspect interviewed the head of schools and they mention that the issue of recognition and appreciation is among the good factors that influence them to adopt a certain leadership style. One head of private secondary school had this in his saying:

I normally find the leadership style that will provide the recognition of my position and also will show the appreciation to my teachers on various aspect that portray the positive results. For example, when students pass well in a certain subject in the zonal and national examination, I do normally twist my leadership style and find the appropriate leadership style basing on the style that are influential in providing the recognition and appreciation (Interview; July, 2021).

The above quotation implies that one among the factors that lead them to adopt the appropriate leadership style is the need of recognition and appreciation. Workers have different individual needs and organizational need that expect to get from the administrators and the school leaders as part of administrators depend something to be earned from the workers. The need of recognition and appreciation with intention of fulfilling the schools' goals and objectives were seen as a strategy that make the school administrators to adopt a proper leadership style. The findings are in agreement with the study of Altheeb (2020) who commented that Leaders motivate employees through setting in place structures aimed at taking full advantage of employee's potential, organization resources and providing direction. They can severely cause difficulty in inspiring confidence, buying into firm's goals, promoting alignment and fostering collaborative environment. In the same study it was noticed that the unique effects of each paternalistic, transformational and laissez-faire style on motivation was found to be positive and significant. The relationship between authoritarian leadership style and motivation was found insignificant. It is recommended that leaders in Saudi Arabia work environment must follow paternalistic and transformational leadership styles to enhance motivation, appreciation and recognition level of their employees.

Enhancing Justice and Equality

In the Likert scale where teachers as the respondents were asked to indicate whether equality and justice help the top management to select the appropriate leadership style. Majority of respondents 96% agreed that the issue of enhancing justice and equality is an indicator or factor that help majority of school management to adopt a certain leadership style. In the open-ended question item majority of respondents argued that most of private school managers adopt a certain leadership style with intention of maintaining the equality and justice to the workers including teachers. In supporting the above argument, the researcher interviewed quality assurer and the findings revealed that one among the factors that influence the adoption of a certain leadership style in private secondary schools is the need of maintaining and enhancing equality in terms of gender and justice. This was affirmed in the interview with one quality assurer and the researcher quoted him saying:

The adoption of a certain leadership style is influenced with a number of factors but the most important is as a leader you need to balance between men and women in assigning different positions and even allocating various daily activities. So, to me I think the good factors that enhance the adoption of a certain leadership style is to maintain the equality and justice (Interview, July, 2021).

The above quotation justifies that the need of maintaining equality and enhancing justice is among the factors that influence the adoption of a certain leadership style in private secondary schools. The finding is supported by suggestion of Wertsch (2007) who identified a good strategy of enhancing justice and equality as a means to be employed by the schools' leaders through adopting a good leadership style. In the study revealed a distinction between two main categories of mediating just to ensure security and justice. The first form is explicit mediation, whereby artificial stimuli are intentionally and overtly introduced into problem solving activities, for example when teachers introduce a specific theoretical model to their students.

Explicit mediation involves the intentional introduction of signs into an ongoing flow of activity while implicit mediation typically involves signs in the form of natural language that have evolved in the service of communication, and then harnessed in their forms of activity. In the context of education, implicit mediation can for example be specific ways of reasoning, procedures for finding the right answer or accepted ways of arguing within a scientific discipline. Implicit mediation is generally not consciously or intentionally introduced into a problem-solving setting. It often plays an important role as a meditational means used by participants of a particular culture especially for the newcomers as they start the important process of enhancing justice and equality of subordinates.

Enhancing Job Security and Teachers' Retentions

The respondents were asked to indicate whether the issue of enhancing job security and teacher's retention were among the factors that enhance the adoption of a certain leadership style. The findings revealed that majority of respondents 88% agreed that

most of private secondary schools' managers adopt a certain leadership style for intention of maintaining the job security of the workers and enhancing teacher's retention to their schools. In supporting the findings in the same questionnaires, especially in the open-ended question items, majority of respondent argued that most of the heads of schools and school managers of private secondary schools have been struggling in maintaining the job security of the workers and maintaining the teacher's retention due to the competition of human resources.

They have been working hard to retain those good teachers who have good experience and have been producing good results for the schools. The struggle of maintaining the retention of workers including teachers lead them to adopt the appropriate leadership style that used in the handling of different schools' functions including supervising teachers. On the same aspect the researcher also interviewed the heads of school and the findings revealed that majority of school mangers have been adopting different leadership style with intention of enhancing job security to workers including g teachers and enhancing the retentions of workers. In affirming this finding, the researcher quoted the saying from one head of school who said:

I always see the best leadership style that help me in enhancing job performances and completion of the school task and that will ensure job security of my workers. In doing that I am very sure that am retaining teachers and other supporting staff (Interview, July, 2021).

The saying from the heads of school implies that one factor that influence the adoption of a certain leadership style is to ensure good job security and enhance workers retention including teachers. In this aspect enhancing job security and retention was found to a great determinant of adopting a certain leadership style. The finding is in agreement with the study conducted in Uganda by Wakabi (2013) which revealed that an organization in all sectors is operating in highly competitive environment which requires that these institutions retain their core employees in order to gain and retain competitive advantage. Because of globalization and new methods of management, different organization has experienced competition both locally and globally in terms of market and staff. The role of leaders in employee retention was seen to be critical since their leadership styles impact directly on the employees' feelings about the organization. From the review of several empirical studies, it was established that leadership style was significantly influences intention to leave of staff and hence there is a need to embrace a leadership style that promotes staff security and retention.

Readiness to Learn and Maintenance of the Good School Status

The researcher was also interested to see if school administrators were ready to learn and maintain the status of school were among the determinant indicator of adopting a certain leadership style. The findings revealed that, majority of respondents 94% agreed that good relationship and learning on the leadership style used in the neighbouring schools that do well have influenced the adoption and choice of a

certain leadership style. This factor was seen as a turning point towards the adoption of a certain leadership style by majority of school manager because they tend to learn on how to operate the private secondary schools. The intention of learning from the schools that do better and this that did poorly were to maintain and improve operations of schools.

This finding is in line with the findings of Chowdhury (2014) who stated that there is no universal leadership behaviour that can be applied to all situations in an organization; factors like the nature of the task, group characteristics, characteristics of leaders and followers must be incorporated in all studies of leadership effectiveness in organizations. In the same study, it was commented that school leaders situationally should be capable in learning what other are doing in enhancing quality schools' operations which indeed will help in maintaining the good status of a school. This implies that the situation is a fundamental determinant of successful leadership. From the ground of this study school leaders are supposed to have a good relationship and being capable in learning the better ways in adoption of leadership style from the schools with good performance.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In general, it is concluded that, there are several driving forces such as the working environments, interpersonal relationship, recognition and appreciation, enhancing job security and teachers' retentions that have been influencing the adoption of a certain leadership style by majority of school managers and administrators. With improvement of the school working environment and empowering teachers and other worker to the school activities it raises the job satisfaction and retention of workers who enhance the job performances and completion to majority of private secondary schools. The study recommends that, private secondary schools should create and develop a good school environment in all aspects such as fiscal, physical and human resources that enable smooth operationalization of the schools. For the aim of developing quality provision of education, there is the need a clear follow up by the government organ on the quality of school managers and top management. The government should integrate all administrative matters in the national policy so as to smoothen the operationalization of the school's activities in the country.

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