LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ITS RELATION TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN SELECTED PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ILE-IFE, OSUN STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement in public secondary schools in Ile-Ife. Also, the study aims to examine the extent at which transformational and transactional leadership styles impact employee engagement. The study employed a descriptive survey design which measured independent and dependent variables. 20 public secondary schools were selected from a total number of 32 secondary schools in Ile-Ife through a convenience non-probability sampling technique as samples. Furthermore, 10 teachers were chosen randomly from each secondary school selected excluding the principals of those schools who occupies the leadership position. Out of the 200 questionnaire administered, 191 questionnaire were returned while 187 questionnaire were considered useful for the study. Data for this study was collected through a self-structured questionnaire. The questions were structured in five-point Likert type ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The data collected was analyzed using Correlation and Regression Analysis. The analysis revealed that There was a strong, positive correlation between employee engagement (EE) and transformational leadership style (TFLS) [r = .499, n=187, p<.001]. Also, there was a strong, positive correlation between employee engagement (EE) and transactional leadership style (TSLS) [r = .597, n=187, p<.001]. Furthermore, from coefficient table of regression model, the largest beta coefficient for TSLS is .468 at significance level 0.000 (p<.05), meaning that transactional leadership style (independent variable) makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining employee engagement (dependent variable) as compared to transformational leadership style .

Keywords: Employee engagement, Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Gaining and sustaining a competitive advantage in today's global economy is significantly associated with employee engagement. In any organization, the place of employee cannot be over-emphasized as they put in use other resources in achieving organizational goals. Buhler, (2006) stressed that having an engaged workforce is vital as research indicates that engaged employees help organizations reap benefits such as increased efficiency, higher levels of customer satisfaction, higher productivity and lower turnover rates. This implies organisation with high level of employee engagement stands a better chance of achieving positive organizational outcomes (Kular, *et al.*, 2008). Leadership is one of the fields in the social sciences that has received and attracted a great deal of attention from authors and researchers globally. It is a concept that carries weight in every walk of life related to business, politics, education and religion, etcetera. Leadership is a complex concept, attracting different definitions placed on the theoretical basis whereby one individual has the ability to influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. In short, it is the ability to get other people to do something significant that they might not otherwise do (Devi and Narayanamma 2016).

Leaders are agent of change saddled with the responsibility of influencing the followers in achieving organization goals. Masood, Dani, Burns & Backhouse, (2006) assert that leaders are tasked to cope with many challenges resulting from globalization, economic turmoil, volatile business markets, continuous consumer changing needs and complex technology impacting the commercial industry. Coping with these challenges places a necessity on leaders in adopting appropriate leadership style capable of engaging employee effectively. Reviewing from the point of view of Douglas McGregor (1960) as stated in his book "The Human Side of Enterprise" employee within an organization can be categorized into two groups (X and Y). Group X employee dislikes work and always attempts to avoid it; have no ambition; preferred to follow

than to lead; they self-centered; and always like to resist change. On the other hand, employee under group Y sees work as natural as play and rest; self-directed; seeks responsibility; and committed to their objectives. The presence of these two groups within an organization established the facts that the success of any organization depends largely on the style adopted by the leader since employee were differs in characters and attitudes. In Nigeria, deplorable conditions in our public secondary schools most especially in terms of low level of employee engagement has paved way for so called private secondary schools to grow rapidly. We always hear that the public schools are not up the expected standard or effective. One of the reasons could be leadership problem in terms style adopted. Stressing more on this, Alt & Peter (2002) and Akpan *et al.*, (2005) revealed that Private Secondary school administrators are more effective in maintaining discipline than their counterparts in Public schools.

Akomolafe (2012) observed that many parents and guardians seem to prefer private schools because they thought they were more efficient and effective on their job. She further stressed that personnel in private schools were more dedicated on their job. Also, observations shown that lot of people in our society prefer to send their children to private schools. It was believed that teachers in those schools show much dedication and are more engaged than their counterpart in public school. It was being speculated that the leadership style used by principals in those private schools were effective leading to high level of employee engagement. In light of the above, this study aim to investigate the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership style and employee engagement in public secondary schools in Ile-Ife. Also, the study aim to examine the extent at which transformational and transactional leadership styles impact employee engagement in public secondary schools in Ile-Ife.

LEADERSHIP

Regardless of the type of organization be it families, churches, institutions, government agencies, small and medium enterprises, etcetera, leadership has been considered as most effective factor

required in enhancing the use of human resources (Hussein and da Costa (2008), citing Bennis and Nanus (2003)). This implies that, leadership is an antecedent to employee behaviour. Kouzes and Posner (2007) sees leadership as an interaction between two or more people that result in some kind of action leading to an output to satisfy a set agreement or criteria. Furthermore, Nelson (cited in De Lacy, 2009) termed it as the process of guiding and directing the behaviour of people in the work environment. Adair (2002) maintained that leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. It is the human factor which binds a group together and to improve their performance and to direct them towards goals. Singapore Productivity Association (SPA, 2010) posited that leadership is a social influence which individual exhibits and gets the support of other persons in the accomplishment of a common goal. Based on the few definitions of leadership stated above and host of others, there is a consensus in leadership assumption describing the concept as a process through which a person called "leader" influences other people called "followers" so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement of group goals. With this view, leadership can defined as a process by which a leader influences the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of others. It is the ability to get other people to do something significant that they might not otherwise do.

Leadership Style
In the work situation, greater attention is being drawn to the importance of leadership style because it has become increasingly clear that managers/leaders can no longer rely solely on the use of their hierarchical position as means of exercising their leadership functions. Leaders are expected to study the behavior, character and attitude of his/her followers so to put in place appropriate style capable in altering follower's behavior towards the actualization of organizational goals. Nahavandi (2002) assert that different leadership styles may affect organizational effectiveness or performance. It is further affirmed by Oladipo *et.al.,*(2013) that the success or failure of proper organizations, nations and other social units has been largely credited to the nature of their leadership style. Koech and Namusongo (2012); Thamrin (2012) in

the same view opined that leadership style is a necessary pre-requisite for effective accomplishment of organizational goals and objectives. Leadership style adopted by management often determines the level of employees' participation and the way an organization is run administratively (Uchenwangbe, 2013). DuBrin (2001) defines leadership style as the relatively consistent pattern of behavior that characterizes a leader. It is the manner and approach adopted by a leader in providing direction, implementing plan and motivating subordinate towards goals accomplishment (Bamisaye, 2005). Sharing the view of Marturano and Gosling, (2008) and Jeremy *et al.*, (2011), leadership style is the combination of traits, characteristics, skills and behaviours that leaders use when interacting with their subordinates. It is a pattern of behaviour engaged by the leader / manager when dealing with employees (Gono and Gallo, 2013; and Omolayo, 2007).

Leadership style should be dependent on four major factors: the task, people being led, the environment, and the leader initiative. Furthermore, a critical review of literature on leadership shows that several styles of leadership abound such as autocratic, democratic and laissez-fair styles (Bamisaiye, 2005; Gono and Gallo, 2013); transactional and transformation (Lee and Liu, 2008; Long and Mao, 2008) participative, supportive and instrumental (Rejas, *et al.,* 2006). Irrespective of these different types of styles that exist, Srithongrung (2011) opine that the contemporary leadership literature divides leadership styles into two main types: Transformational and transactional which Robbins and Judge (2009) have indicated to be the best form of leadership style. Some researchers have also suggested that for effective leadership, there should be a balance between transformational and transactional leadership (Chandan and Devi, 2014). At this juncture, it is pertinent to examine briefly the most often use leadership styles (transformational and transactional) considered by Robbins and Judge (2009) as the best form of leadership style.

Transformational Leadership styles
Transformational leadership style concentrates on the development of followers as well as their needs. Kent, Crotts and Aziz (2001); and Jong

and Hartog (2007) stressed that, transformational leaders are able to stimulate followers to see problems in new ways and help them to develop their full potential and resulted in enhanced creativity of their followers. In addition, Ismail (2009) affirmed that managers with transformational leadership style concentrate on the growth and development of value system of employees, their inspirational level and moralities with the preamble of their abilities. Northouse, (2013) viewed that a transformational leader pays attention to the needs and motives of their followers and helps them to reach their highest potential. According to Bass and Riggio (2006,), "transformational leaders get followers involved in envisioning attractive future states, they create clearly communicated expectations that followers want to meet and also demonstrate commitment to goals and the shared vision." In addition, transformational leadership changes the way followers see themselves-from isolated individuals to members of a larger group (Kaiser, *et al.*, 2008). When the followers see themselves not alone but as a team, they peruse team values and this get them more engaged.

Transactional Leadership Styles
Transactional leadership style focuses on relationship building between leaders and subordinate based on contract. Russel (2008) asserts that this leadership style has a large focus on clarifying subordinate role and tasks that must be performed. Howell and Avolio (1993) define transactional leadership style as the exchange of rewards and targets between employees and management. In buttressing this view, Humphreys (2002) opined that transactional leaders fulfill employee needs of rewards when targets are met. In their own submission, Trottier *et al.*,(2008) affirmed that transactional leadership relies more about "trades" between the leader and follower by which followers are compensated for meeting specific goals or performance criteria. This type of leadership style hangs on two factors (contingent reward and management-by-exception). Contingent reward offers rewards for effort and also recognizes good performance while Management-by-exception maintains the status quo, intervenes when subordinates do not meet acceptable performance levels, and initiates corrective action to improve performance.

Employee Engagement

Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, (2002) described engagement as individual's involvement and satisfaction with as well as enthusiasm for work. Employees differ greatly in terms of their engagement levels at work and the amount of intensity and attention that they put forth in their jobs. Rafferty, *et al.,* (2005) asserts that employee engagement is a relative concept that has come into play over the past two decades. Perrin, (2003) define employee engagement as the employee willingness and ability to contribute to company success, through putting extra time, brainpower and energy to their work. It is a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his or her organization, manager, or coworkers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work (Gibbons, 2006) Employee engagement has three components: psychological, emotional and behavioural.

Psychological Engagement

This component of engagement described employee's beliefs about the organization and work conditions. It holds that employee's belief towards his/her organization and work conditions contribute immensely to his/her engagement. Kahn (1990) asserts that, the presence three psychological elements (meaningfulness, safety and availability) influenced people to be personally engaged and that their absence leads to disengagement. Stressing further, Kahn emphasized that people are more likely to engage in situations that are high on meaningfulness. Meaningfulness in this context represents the sense of return on investing the self and exerting energies into a task and occurs when people feel they are valued and making a difference. Whenever employee perceive safe environment and understand the boundaries surrounding acceptable behavior, such employee get more engaged. In contrast, an unsafe environment characterized by ambiguous, unpredictable and threatening conditions, are likely to disengage employee from their work and be wary of trying new things (May *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, employees who perceive higher organizational support are more likely to pay in return with greater level of engagement in their job (Saks, 2006). Employee's belief on the provision of tools and

resources for stress management helps them become more in tune; promote well-being; reduce workplace stress; and strengthening employee performance. Macey and Schneider (2008) affirmed that an employee's trust in the organization, the leader, the manager, or the team is essential to increasing the likelihood that engagement behaviour will be displayed.

Emotional Engagement

This is the emotional component of engagement that focuses on how employees feel about the organization, its leaders and work conditions. Holbeche and Springett,(2003) observed that high level of engagement manifest where there is a common and shared sense and feeling of destiny and purpose that connects emotional level and raises their personal aspirations. Also, employee's feeling about the organizational fairness and interpersonal justice of treating employees with respect and dignity influences the level of employee's engagement. In buttressing this, Erkutlu, (2011) emphasized that when employees perceive that leaders are fair and that leader's behaviours are attributed to benevolent intentions, employees tend to conclude that the leaders are committed to them thus resulting in high-quality-leader member exchanges. Also, Devi, (2009) opined that any organization that assist their employee to work in a way which best supports them in balancing their work and home environment stands of having high level engaged employees.

Behavioural Engagement

This component focuses on organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). OCB refers to anything that employees choose to do, spontaneously and of their own accord, which often lies outside of their specified contractual obligations. It consists of the discretionary effort engaged employees bring to their work in the form of extra time, brainpower and energy devoted to the task and the organization (Kahn, 1990). Organ (1988) submits that the spirit of OCB is that individual should voluntarily help or assist others in the workplace and promote the excellence of their employer without either an explicit or implicit promise of reward for such behavior. It demonstrates voluntary action and mutual aid without a direct reciprocal monetary reward or formal recompense (Jain *et al.,*

2013) and measure the willingness of employee to act in certain ways, skill which employee offer and willingness to go the extra mile (Perrin 2003).

Leadership Styles and Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a concept that cannot be over-look as past studies demonstrate its relationship with positive work outcome including high performance, low turnover and positive business result (Harris, 2007; Hallberg and Schaufeli, 2006). There are various studies establishing the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement. Jessica and Helena (2011) in the findings of their study established that transformational leadership style is positively correlated with follower job satisfaction, follower motivation and organizational commitment. Also, the report of Hayati *et al.*,(2014) study established a positive and significant relationship between transformational style and work engagement. Marmaya *et al.*,(2011) found from their study that both transformational and transactional style of leadership have positive relationship with employees' organizational commitment. Furthermore, Paracha *et al.*,(2012) carried out a survey to assess the impact and influence of transformational and transactional style on employee performance. They found that there is a significant positive association between the styles leaders adopt and employee performance. In contrast, Khuong and Hoang (2014) in their study found that transactional leadership style was negatively correlated with employee engagement

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Research design

This study employed a descriptive survey design which measured two variables: independent variable and dependent variable. In this study, the independent variable (leadership styles) was captured by two sub-variables (transformational and transactional) and the dependent variable is employee engagement with psychological, emotional and behavioural as its components. Survey design was adopted because it is appropriate for this type of study. It enables the researcher to have direct contact with the respondents.

Population/Sample/Sampling Technique

The population for the study consists of all public secondary school teachers in Ile-Ife, Osun State. Samples of 20 public secondary schools were selected from a total number of 32 secondary schools in Ile-Ife through a convenience non-probability sampling technique. Furthermore, 10 teachers were chosen randomly from each secondary school selected excluding the principals of those schools who occupies the leadership position. This led to a total number of 200 teachers constituting total sample size of the study.

Research Instrument and Method of Data Collection

Data for this study was collected through a self-structured questionnaire. The instrument is in two parts. Part I contains demographic information of the respondents while part II focuses on questions relating to the independent variable (leadership style) and dependent variable (employee engagement). Ten of the items measured transformational leadership style, another ten measured transactional leadership style while the remaining ten measured level of employee engagement. The questions were structured in Five-point Likert type ranging from strongly disagree (1)", "disagree (2)", "undecided (3), "agree (4)", and "strongly agree (5)" so as to reduce the statistical problems of extreme skewness. The face and content validity of the instrument were ascertained by presenting it to two senior colleagues. Also, in ensuring the reliability of the instrument, the study adopts test-retest method. The instrument has a reliability coefficient of 0.72 at 0.05 level of significance. This value was considered reasonably high enough to support the reliability of the instrument in measuring the variables of interest. Out of the 200 questionnaire administered by the researcher and his three research assistants. 191 questionnaire were returned while 187 questionnaire were considered useful for the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the focus of this study:

1. Is there any relationship between transformational and transactional leadership style and employee engagement in public secondary schools in Ile-Ife.?

2. Does transformational and transactional leadership style have any impact on employee engagement?

Research Hypotheses

H_o1: There is no significant relationship between transformational and transactional   leadership style and employee engagement in public secondary schools in Ile-Ife.

H_o2: Transformational and transactional leadership styles have no impact on employee engagement in public secondary schools in Ile-Ife.

RESULT

The first objective of the study was to examine if there is significant relationship between leadership style and employee engagement. In order to examine this, correlation analysis was used and the result obtained is presented below.

Table 1: Correlation between TFLS, TSLS and EE

	Employee Engagement	Transformational Leadership Style	Transactional Leadership Style
Employee Engagement (EE)			
Pearson Correlation	1	.499**	.597**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
N	187	187	187
Transformational Leadership Style (TFLS)			
Pearson Correlation	.499**	1	.447**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
N	187	187	187
Transactional Leadership Style (TSLS)			
Pearson Correlation	.597**	.447**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
N	187	187	187

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

Table 1 above shows the result of the investigation on the relationship between employee engagement and the leadership styles (*transformational and transactional*) using Pearson product-moment

correlation coefficient. There was a strong, positive correlation between employee engagement (EE) and transformational leadership style (TFLS) [r = .499, n=187, p<.001]. Also, there was a strong, positive correlation between employee engagement (EE) and transactional leadership style (TSLS) [r = .597, n=187, p<.001]. From the results of correlation table above, it is concluded that there is strong relationship between TFLS and EE, and TSLS and EE. TSLS shows more strong relationship with EE as compared to TFLS. The second objective of the study was to examine the extent at which transformational and transactional leadership styles impact employee engagement. In order to examine this, Multiple Regression Analysis through a developed regression model was used and the result obtained is presented below.

The regression model of the study is: $Y = \alpha + \beta1X_1 + \beta2X_2 + U$.................. (1)

Where   Y =   Employee Engagement (dependent variable)

α = Constant

X_1=   TFLS (Transformational leadership style) (independent variable)

X_2=   TSLS (Transactional leadership style) (independent variable).

β =   Regression Coefficient

U =   Stochastic Error Term

$Y\ EE = \alpha + \beta1\ TFLS + \beta2\ TSLS + U$.. (2)

Table 2: Summary of regression model
Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.651[a]	.424	.418	2.405

a. Predictors: (Constant),   Transformational   Leadership   Style, Transactional Leadership Style

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

From the above model summary, the value of r square (regression coefficient) is .418 (41.8 percent) indicating that how much of the variance in the dependent variable (EE) is explained by the model (which includes TFLS and TSLS).

Table 3: ANOVA table for regression model
ANOVA[b]

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig
1 Regression	784.123	2	392.061	67.798	.000[a]
Residual	1064.038	184	5.783		
Total	1848.160	186			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational leadership style, Transactional Leadership Style.
b. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

From the above table**,** the higher F -value and less significance value (p<.0005) indicate that the model reaches statistical significance and this tests the null hypothesis that multiple R in the population is equal to zero.

Table 4: Coefficients table of regression model
Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig
1 (Constant)	-.843	1.024		-.822	.412
Transformation Leadership Style	.240	.052	.290	4.646	.000
Transactional Leadership Style	.344	.046	.468	7.477	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

From the above coefficient table of regression model, the largest beta coefficient for TSLS is .468 at significance level 0.000 (p<.05), meaning that transactional leadership style (independent variable) makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining employee engagement (dependent variable) as compared to transformational leadership style .

DISCUSSION

This study examined leadership style and its impact on employee engagement in selected public secondary schools in Ile-Ife. This study was carried out from teachers' perspective. The research work based its conclusion on the two hypotheses set and tested. From hypothesis 1, it was found and concluded that there was a strong relationship between TFLS and EE, and TSLS and EE. TSLS shows more strong relationship with EE as compared to TFLS. This means that a principal using transactional leadership style get followers engaged physiologically, emotionally and behaviourally than principal using transformational leadership style. Also, a statistical test on hypothesis 2 of the study indicates that both transformational and transactional leadership styles have some impact on employee engagement. Transactional leadership style (independent variable) makes the strongest unique contribution in predicting employee engagement (dependent variable) as compared to transformational leadership style. In light of this, it is concluded that both transformational and transactional leadership style impact employee engagement.

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