

REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP STYLES AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG A SAMPLE OF NIGERIAN HEALTH PERSONNEL

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated perceived leadership styles as predictors of organizational commitment among 64 participants comprising 27 male and 37 female personnel with mean age of 42.23 and standard deviation of 2.74 drawn from University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital and Enugu State University of Science and Technology Teaching Hospital, Park-lane Enugu using Multi-stage sampling technique. Eighteen (18)-item perceived leadership styles questionnaire was and 27-item questionnaire on organizational commitment were administered. A Cross-sectional survey design was used. Result from multiple regression analysis revealed that perceived leadership styles jointly predicted organizational commitment $R^2 = .869$, $F(3, 63) = 132.65$ at $P < .01$. Democratic style contributed significantly to the prediction of organizational commitment ($\beta = .502$), while authoritarian ($\beta = .206$) and laissez-faire ($\beta = .269$) did not show any significant prediction.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Organizational Commitment, Health Personnel

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Introduction

Organizational commitment includes the description of an individual's psychological bond to the organization, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the value of the organization (O'Reilly, 1989) and employee's acceptance of organizational goals and their willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization (Miller & Lee, 2001). Organizational commitment is a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organization (Miller & Lee, 2001). Organizational commitment is characterized by affective, continuance and normative commitment. Affective commitment involves positive feelings of identification with attachment to and involvement in the work organization while continuance commitment is the

extent to which employees feel committed to their organization by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving (Meyer & Allen, 1997). And normative commitment is the employee's feelings of obligation to remain with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Job-related factors such as employment opportunities, personal characteristics, positive relationships, organizational structure, and leadership styles shape organizational commitment (Miller, 2003). Leadership can be defined as the process by which an individual influences another individual or a group to achieve a common goal (Bass & Bass, 2008) and involves the use of interpersonal approaches or techniques with the intention to persuade followers to accept a goal (Bass & Bass, 2008). Different types of leadership styles such as laissez-faire, autocratic and democratic exist in work environments, and culture/goals of an organization determine which leadership style fits the organization best (Johnson, 2009). A laissez-faire leader lacks direct supervision of employees and fails to provide regular feedback to those under his supervision which can lead to poor production, lack of control and increasing costs (Bass, 1990). Autocratic leadership style allows managers to make decisions alone without the input of others, thus managers with autocratic style possess total authority and impose their will on employees (Johnson, 2009). Participative or democratic leadership style boosts employees' morale because employees make contributions to the decision-making process and feel as if their opinions matter (Johnson, 2009) leading to organizational commitment (Lodahl, 1978, Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003). Considering leadership as the influence of managers on employees in order to achieve common goals of the organization, it is pertinent to understand how employees' (especially health workers whose jobs require high level of commitment in order to save lives) perception of the leadership styles of their managers' influence their commitment to the organization, hence this present study.

Related literature

Theoretically, behavioural leadership considers leadership in terms of what leaders' do, not what trait they possess (Fleishman, 1979). The performance of effective leaders can be differentiated from ineffective leaders on the basis of their behavior or performance. For example, there is a difference in the behavior of a supervisor who publicly reprimands and punishes employee for poor work performance (autocratic style) and a supervisor who listens and shows a new employee how to use certain equipment (democratic style), thus influencing the perception and commitment of the employees to their organizations (Muchnisky, 1998). Similarly, a manager's choice of leadership style stems from his theories (X and Y) about how his subordinates behave (McGregor, 1966). Theory X stresses that the average human inherently dislikes work and will avoid it if he can. Thus, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, and threatened with punishment to make them put forth adequate effort towards the achievement of organization objectives (McGregor, 1966). In contrast, theory Y argues that people like to work, hence emphasizes

independence (McGregor, 1966). Thus, a manager who operates on a theory X basis will closely direct and control workers and will operate through specific instruction and detailed control (autocratic), while theory Y based manager will naturally delegate and develop his or her staff and encourage them to take greater responsibilities (democratic).

Empirical evidence (e.g. Walumbwa & Lawler, 2003) has shown that leaders with democratic style include employees in the decision-making process, encourage them to be critical and use different approaches to solve problems, recognize and appreciate the need of each employee to develop their potentials thereby enhancing their commitment to the organization. In a related study, Foels, Driskell, Millen & Salas (2000) found that group members experiencing democratic leadership were more satisfied and committed to their organizations than group members experiencing autocratic leadership. Geijsel, Sheegers, Leithwood & Jantazi (2003), in a study conducted with teachers found that transformational leadership has an effect on teachers' commitment to school reform. A study by Meyer, Stanley, Heroscvitch and Topolnytsky (2002) demonstrated that perceived organizational support (democratic leadership style) has the strongest positive correlation with affective commitment. A study by Finegan (2000) suggests that affective commitment correlates with an organization perceived to value humanity (democratic leadership style), while the value of convention is correlated with continuance commitment. Lodahl (1978) found that employees under democratic leadership style in industrial firm felt more comfortable and had higher commitment to the organization than when influenced by the autocratic leaders. Considering the available related theoretical and empirical evidence, democratic leadership style tend to support organizational commitment more than autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles, hence this present study hypothesized that democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles will jointly and independently predict organizational commitment (with democratic style having the strongest positive prediction).

Method

Participants

Sixty-four (64) participants comprising 27 male and 37 female personnel with mean age of 42.23 and standard deviation of 2.74 drawn from University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital and Enugu State University of Science and Technology Teaching Hospital, Park-lane Enugu using Multi-stage sampling technique (cluster and systematic sampling techniques).

Instrument

Data were collected using 18-item perceived leadership styles scale with three major subscales measuring democratic/autocratic/laissez-faire dimensions and Buchanan (1974) 23-item organizational commitment scale.

Demographic Information

This specifically collected the health workers demographic information such as their age, educational qualification, rank, years of experience on the job, job designation and name of hospital.

Perceived Leadership Scale

This comprised three major subscales measuring perceived democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. Item-total correlations from item analysis of these 18 items ranged from 0.41 to 0.79 and their item loadings ranged from 0.63 to 0.81 and were considered acceptable since Mitchel and Jolley (2004) noted that item loading of 0.30 is good and 0.70 very high. Cronbach Alpha of 0.84 was reported for the 18 items. Cronbach Alpha of 0.89 was accepted as a good index of the 18-item perceived leadership scale's internal consistency since Mitchell and Jolley (2004) noted that an index of 0.70 (and preferably above 0.80) is needed to say that a measure is internally consistent. The 18-item scale was in Likert form and had direct scoring for all the items. Therefore, a response of strongly agree = 5, agree = 4, undecided = 3, disagree = 2 and strongly disagree = 1.

Organizational Commitment Scale

Buchanan (1974) 23-item was administered to measure organizational commitment. Buchanan (1974) reported Coefficient Alpha of 0.94 using British sample while Mogaji (1997) provided the Nigerian norm of 95.48 and the researchers in a pilot study reported Coefficient Alpha of 0.77 using Nigerian sample.

Procedure

A total of 75 copies of the questionnaires were distributed to the target population (health personnel) within a period of one week. The researchers assisted by research assistants (personnel staff) applied systematic sampling (making use of every 3rd case) in each cluster (hospital) in order to draw the participants. Following this, a total of 64 copies (85.3%) that were properly filled and returned were analyzed to test the hypothesis.

Design/Statistics

Cross-sectional survey design was used. Multiple regression was used as a statistical test for data analysis and testing the hypothesis.

Results: Table 1

Multiple regression on the perceived leadership styles as predictors of organizational commitment.

Criterion Variable	Predictor Variables	b	Beta	T	p	Confidence Limit		R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	p
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound					
Organizational Commitment	Authoritarian	-1.90	-.206	-1.63	>.01	-0.026	0.543	0.93	0.86	0.86	132.65	<.01
	Democratic	2.59	.50	4.88	<.01	-0.132	0.471					
	Laissez-Faire	1.69	0.26	0.27	>.01	-0.185	0.465					

As shown in table 1, perceived leadership styles (authoritarian+ democratic+ laissez-faire) jointly predicted organizational commitment, $R^2 = 0.86$, $F(3,63) = 132.65$, $p < .01$. These significant results indicated an association between the predictor variables (perceived leadership styles) and the criterion variable (organizational commitment), $R = 0.93$. Together, perceived leadership styles accounted for 73.96% of the variation in organizational commitment (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.86$). Moreover, democratic leadership independently significantly predicted organizational commitment positively (beta = .502) at $p < .01$ while authoritarian (beta = .206) and Laissez-faire (beta .269) independently did not show any significant prediction. In addition, democratic leadership independently accounted for 25% variation in organizational commitment.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the hypothesis tested which stated that perceived leadership styles will jointly and independently predict employees' organizational commitment (with democratic leadership having the strongest positive prediction) was confirmed. This outcome has shown that the perceived leadership styles (authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire) jointly predicted employees' organizational commitment with democratic style having the most significant positive prediction while authoritarian and laissez-faire did not show any significant prediction of organizational commitment. These present findings support

previous findings (e.g. Foels, Driskell, Mullen & Salas, 2000) which found that group members experiencing democratic leadership were more satisfied and committed to their organizations than group members experiencing autocratic leadership, and commitment to the organization higher when influenced by democratic leadership (Lodahl, 1978). Democratic leadership style positively predicting employees' organizational commitment could be attributed to democratic leadership style of allowing subordinates to participate in decision-making processes in the organization. This creates sense of belonging and attachment resulting in higher commitment to the organization.

Implications and Conclusion

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications for industrial/organizational psychologists, human resource managers, public administrators, business managers and other policy makers in both government and private institutions. In view of this, therefore, they will learn that employees whose leaders adopt democratic leadership style tend to be more committed to their organization than their counterparts whose leaders adopt authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership styles. In order to enhance employees' efficiency, effectiveness and productivity, authoritarian leadership style which enhances organizational commitment should be adopted.

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