Managers' Commonly Apply Leadership Styles to Empower and Motivate Subordinates

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Abstract: Leaders always seek to motivate subordinates to perform the tasks at hand. The study of leadership has been an area of research for many years, and there has never been one universally accepted leadership type. One of the biggest problems in the study of leadership is that there is unprecedented emphasis on the character and behaviour of the leader. The assumption with that approach is that the role played by the leader negates the impact of the subordinates as the final product of the leader's behaviour impacts the performance of the subordinates, positively or negatively. This research focuses on the role played by subordinates because they need to understand what motivates them. A leader's effectiveness is based on the ability to mobilise the followership to cooperate and deliver on the objectives of the undertaking. Using mixed methods, the study examined leadership behaviour and subordinates' expectations as motivating factors for subordinates to perform. The findings assist leaders in getting the best out of their subordinates and understanding their leadership style. A questionnaire was used to collect the necessary data based on which illustrations were constructed, which assisted in interpreting the relationship between the variables. The questionnaire was divided into a biography, a Likert scale, and an open-ended section. The open-ended section assisted in getting to other aspects that might have been left out in the structured part of the questionnaire. From the findings, it can be concluded that the subordinates prefer leaders who show empathy, are responsive, and allow for subordinate participation. Sharing with workers' problems instils loyalty to the leader and organisation. Well-informed employees know what to do and how to solve problems. Empowered employees also become engaged employees and assume ownership. Together with this is the implied consideration for a firm leader who is task-focused and understands the importance of relationships.

Keywords: Leader, Leadership style, Motivation, Performance and subordinate preferences

1. Introduction

Global financially successful organisations are based on specific decisions made to move the organisations to meet their profit objectives (Asrori, Kiswanto and Amal,2020). Amongst the critical decisions made is inevitably the choice of contingent and strategic leadership that has propelled the organisations to new heights. Chatman, Johnson and Bell (2020) affirm that selecting a manager in an organisation requires effectiveness as the principal quality for the appointment. A leader's effectiveness is measured based on the leader's ability to influence the "followership" to perform and reach the goals. Different people have different leadership styles, which are patterns of behaviour learnt by the incumbents, formally or informally. Studies on leadership styles have been summarised mainly between the transformational and transactional styles of leadership (Ramadhini and Manafe, 2022). Charismatic leadership styles have also been referenced as positively impacting followership and appealing to the followers' emotions (Kuzmin and Keates, 2021).

This research is relevant in evolving workplace dynamics, where leaders face unique challenges in motivating employees. By exploring effective leadership practices, this study provides insights to help managers adapt and thrive in today's complex business environment (Kim, Yammarino and Park, 2020). This research aimed to investigate how managers apply various leadership styles to empower and motivate subordinates, ultimately enhancing organisational performance.

2. Background

Crossan and Crossan (2023) define leadership as a multifaceted social method based on merit, intelligence, skill and the capacity to reason or think. Boeske (2023) states that leader effectiveness is the capacity to exercise the influence which leads to desired outcomes within the organisation. Transformational leadership involves encouraging subordinates or followers to manage and develop their tasks and capacities with little interference from the leader. This focuses on coaching and empowering the followers to self-manage and enables them to decide on achievement for themselves (Yam, Reynolds and Su, 2022). Creativity and effective performance are two critical attributes found at the organisation's heart among employees. Executive management, having the eyes to oversee and influence the employee's performance, can encourage the increase of productivity and hold a key that promotes competitive advantage in the organisation. Astuti, Datrini and Chariri (2023) say that creating sustainable competitive advantage implies the capacity of leaders to effectively work for their organisation to maintain efficiency and vitality for a long-term future in the

organisation. Developing leaders' competencies are required to match the organisation's strategy to its strong points and market opportunity. This requires a deliberate decision to correct the organisation's weak points, which results in the protection of employees against external threats (Figueiredo, Sousa and Tomé, 2023). This, in turn, is likely to expand the productivity capacity as well as the level of performance of the employees. Doornenbal, Spisak and van der Laken (2022) affirmed that the way the individual demonstrates leadership traits depends not only on the leader's characteristics and personal capabilities. The characteristics of the situation and environment in which a leader finds themselves are critical to what constitutes an effective or ineffective leadership style. Leadership is a leader's style of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people (Hoque and Raya, 2023). Leaders in the political, business, or other fields can exhibit many different leadership styles.

Le-Blanc, González-Romá and Wang (2021) define the term team as a group of people with skills and experiences who come to work together to reach specific goals. The operations of the team members are characterised by a high level of mutuality between the members. They are responsible for working in one accord by sharing the same rewards and assuming accountability for the collective performance. According to Brown, Sparapani, and Olson (2023), a team can be considered a collection of people when there is a combination of efforts between the participants. When working together, the team's efforts allow them to obtain better results, which are impossible to get alone. There is always a probability that things may not happen as expected in the organisation; however, acknowledging this thought is not in the same context as admitting it as bound to happen. Schuldt and Gomes (2020) say that organisational performance refers to the ability of an enterprise to achieve such objectives as high profit, quality product, significant market share, good financial results, and survival at a pre-determined time using a relevant strategy for action. Budianto, Susanto and Kismono (2020) say monitoring and maintaining team performance is key to leading a team. The researchers identified four critical dimensions of effective team leadership: the collective effort of the team members, team member strategies and group dynamics, knowledge and skill. By concentrating on these four points, weaknesses can be identified and corrected, and strengths fortified and improved. Followers harness the organisation's resources depending on how well the leaders value and embrace appropriate leadership approaches. Wang, Yang and Yue (2022) surmise that efficiency in resource mobilisation, allocation, utilisation, and enhancement of organisational performance depends largely on leadership style. There are different proponents for the various leadership styles, even though it has been challenging to develop a one-size-fits-all leadership style over the years. Other types of leadership styles are illustrated in Figure 1 below.

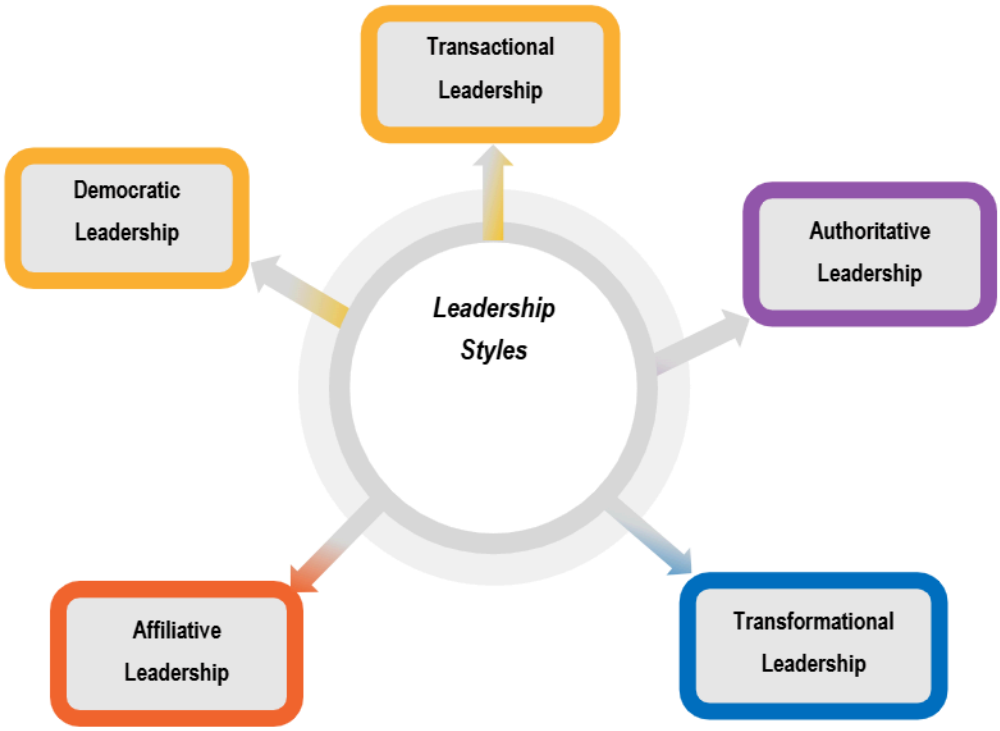


Figure 1: Different types of leadership styles (Source: Authors' construction)

Before concluding on the effectiveness of a leadership style, consideration should be made of the importance of the type of followership. Leadership may not be considered adequate without aligning the followers to the tasks. Nurani, Hartati and Pratiwi (2020) state that effective communication increases team performance by empowering, providing direction, and encouraging accountability to those working in the organisation. Team performance decreases in many organisations due to simple misunderstandings and communication breakdowns (Ataguba and Ataguba, 2020). Riyanto, Endri and Herlisha (2021) stipulate that the employees in the organisation desire to generally obtain more say in day-to-day operations from the managers (leaders). A leader who understands and accommodates the followers' expectations is most likely to be effective and successful if the leader addresses the followers' concerns. The author suggests that a visionary organisation invests in employee training to enhance employee skills, leading to better performance. A leader makes footprints others will want to follow; this goes beyond a manager – typical managers always maintain the status quo. Leaders generally bring about changes and allow for developing other innovative minds and intrapreneurship (Sewchurran, Zaina, McDonogh, 2020). Leaders have specific virtues, and these are illustrated in Figure 2.

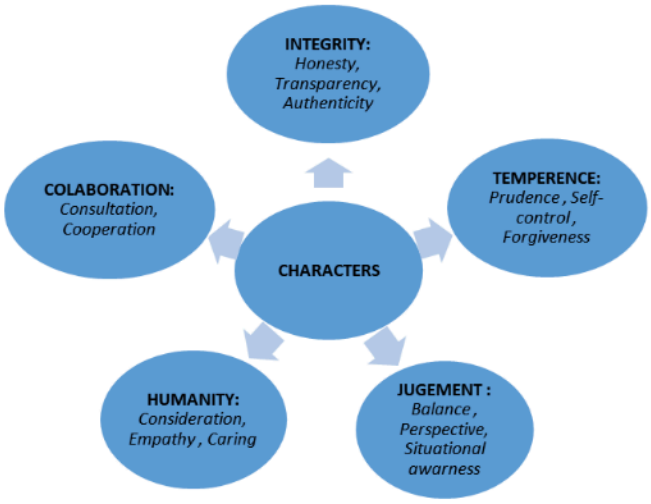


Figure 2: Leadership virtues (Source: Author's construction)

Leadership expectancy can be comprehended as a mental representation explaining how people recognise new information based on the values and perceptions of individuals who need to be led. These values and experiences present the best example of leadership styles that subordinates must focus on and consider. Rani, Shauki, and Prijadi (2020) assert that the long-lasting performance of the organisation represents the fruits of effort generated by the leader in providing specific measures that encourage productivity. The influence of a leader is meaningless if the performance is not at the organisation's heart. The more you rise in power, the more you rise in influence. This is realised when the organisation's vision and goals have been accepted and implemented by all the team members, accompanied by the strong attitude and personality of the leaders (Hearn and Louvrier, 2016). Olley (2021) suggested that a way to enhance organisational productivity is by setting a development plan for the employees consisting of training and the constant evaluation of the team's performance. Fossheim and Andersen (2022) think the leader needs to be aware of followers' situations as an impeccable process of solving problems and identifying opportunities to be effective. Leaders must know how employees think (Tibugari and Jowah, 2014). Only then can they plan on a leadership style that fits into the employee or follower's implicit leadership theory. Sanz and Gómez (2021) posit that successful organisations will focus on employee welfare to improve productivity, which leads to organisational success.

3. Research Approach

Using a quantitative approach, the study examined leadership behaviour and subordinates' expectations as motivating factors for subordinates to perform. The study used purposive sampling to ensure diverse perspectives on leadership styles. The sample size involved 100 respondents, consisting of 20 managers and 80 subordinates. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire (quantitative data), which assisted in assessing the impact of leadership style on motivation, job satisfaction and performance. The questionnaire included Likert-scale questions focusing on leadership behaviour and employee motivation. The interviews (qualitative data) were also conducted with managers and subordinates to gather detailed insight into

leadership challenges and best practices. Questionnaire data were analysed through descriptive statistics to determine the relationship between leadership styles and employees' outcomes.

4. Results

4.1 Number of Subordinates

Results also revealed that 32% of respondents represented are responsible for 6 to 10 people, 18% of managers are responsible respectively for 0 to 5 people and 16 to 20 people, 12% and 16% of managers are responsible respectively for 21 to 30 people and 11 to 15 people and only a small number of 4% of managers responsible of 31 to 50 people.

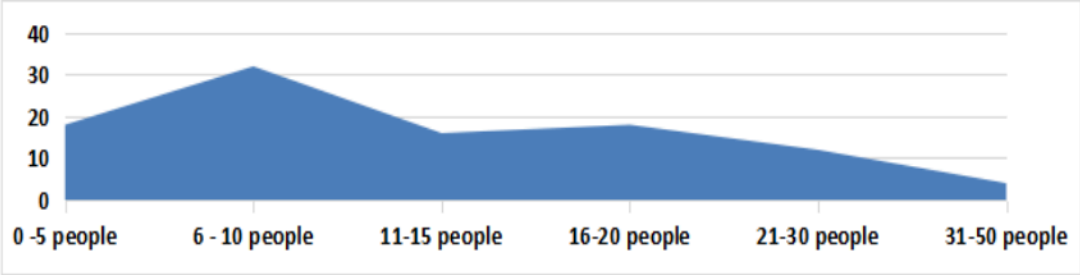


Figure 3: People under you as a manager (Source: Author's construction)

From the graph above, the mean scored an average of 7.18; the variance was 25.29, and the standard deviation was 5.03. The mean represents the average of the central point distribution, showing the number of people placed under a manager. The variance and standard deviation show moderate data spread around the mean as the standard deviation is seated at the rate of 5.03. The Coefficient Variance in this research is presented at 69.10**%**, meaning that the data's variability is relatively high relative to the mean.

4.2 Skills of Subordinates

44% of employees have technical skills such as mathematics and information technology skills. etc., 14% have mathematic skills, and 6 % of employees possess other skills. And 36% of employees have no specific skills, meaning the university has employees with no critical skills.

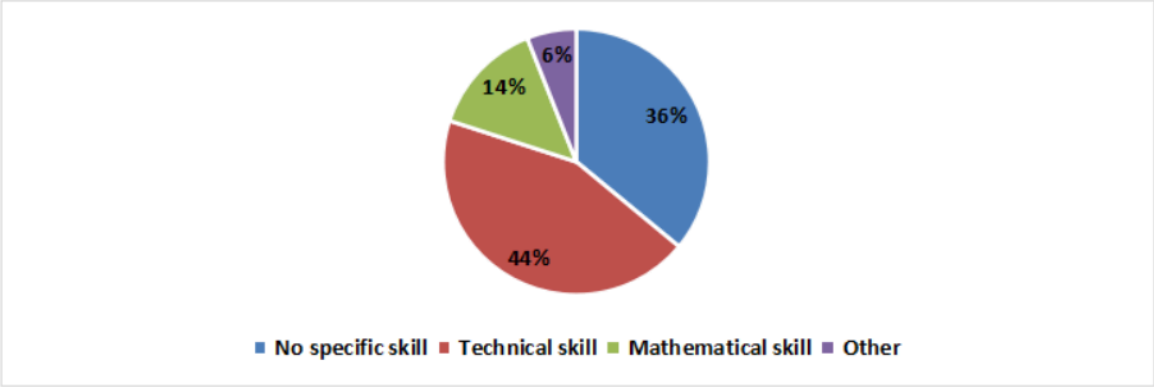


Figure 4: The skills of people who report to you have (Source: Author's construction)

From the graph above, the mean presents a score of 1.9, below technical skill; the variance is at 0,73, spreading out the data from the mean. When there is a low variance, the distribution will be concentrated around the low category as it shows lower variability. The standard deviation is at the rate of 0.85, which is low, presenting that most people's skills are close to the mean. The coefficient variance is at 44.74, demonstrating a level of variability in the skill level relative to the mean.

4.3 Transformational leadership

Table 1: Leaders use transformational leadership to enhance employee performance

Factors	SD	D	N	A	SA	U	Mean score
	1	2	3	4	5		3.30
Frequency (%)	12.0	18.0	14.0	40.0	16.0	0	

A standard deviation of 11.93 indicates a moderate variability in responses, suggesting some differences in opinions among respondents. The variance of 142.22 further supports the moderate variability in the data. Transformational leadership motivates employees by creating a shared vision. 40 % of the respondents agree, and 16% strongly agree that transformational leadership enhances employees' performance. 14% of respondents remained indifferent, and 30% disagreed (18% disagreed and 12% strongly disagreed). It can be generalised that transformational leadership will increase the performance of the employees. The results present a mean of 3.30, which shows that the responses are primarily neutral and agreeable. This demonstrates that most leaders use transformational leadership to innovate and change organisational and employee performance. Variance indicates 1.61, showing a moderate spread in responses. The coefficient variation is at 38.48, showing diverse responses (responses are mixed, not extreme).

4.4 Transformational Leadership Versus Transactional Leadership

Table 2: Transformational leadership versus transactional leadership in a business environment

Factors	SD	D	N	A	SA	U	Mean score
	1	2	3	4	5		2.54
Frequency (%)	0.0	14.0	26.0	40.0	12.0	0	

The weighted mean score of 2.54 reflects the average score when considering the frequency of each response category. A standard deviation 14.17 indicates a high response variability, suggesting differing opinions among respondents. The variance of 200.89 further supports the high variability in the data. 52% (40% agreed and 12% strongly agreed) believe that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership in business; 26% were hesitant. Those in disagreement comprised 14%, allowing a generalisation that transformational leadership is more effective and encourages employees' performance. The results above present a mean with a rate of 3.26, showing that respondents tend to agree mostly, and there is also neutrality.

4.5 Employees who are accountable and reliable

Table 3: Employees who solve problems are more accountable and reliable

Factors	SD	D	N	A	SA	U	Mean score
	1	2	3	4	5		3.22
Frequency (%)	0.0	2.0	6.0	60.0	32.0	0	

The weighted mean score of 3.22 reflects the average score when considering the frequency of each response category. A standard deviation 22.35 indicates a high response variability, suggesting differing opinions among respondents. The variance of 499.56 further supports the high variability in the data. The highest score to date, 92% (60% agreed and 32% strongly agreed), allows for a generalisation, and it can be concluded that any leadership that empowers workers is most appreciated. Indifference is at 6%, with 2% in disagreement. The results show that most respondents answered between agreeing and strongly agreeing. The variance is at 0.41, showing that the responses are moderately clustered around the mean.

4.6 Informed Employees

Table 4: A well-informed employee finds easy, better ways of solving problems

Factors	SD	D	N	A	SA	U	Mean score
	1	2	3	4	5		3.02
Frequency (%)	0.0	10.0	14.0	54.0	36.0	0	

The weighted mean score of 3.02 indicates a general agreement that well-informed employees find easier and better ways of solving problems. A standard deviation 19.76 indicates a high response variability, suggesting differing opinions among respondents. The variance of 390.33 further supports the high variability in the data. Well-informed employees know what to do and how to solve problems, in agreement, 90% (54% agreed and 36% strongly agreed). This allows for a generalisation or conclusion that leadership that provides adequate and appropriate operational information reduces management pressure to supervise. The results present the mean at 4.8, indicating that most respondents agree and strongly agree to solve problems based on the information at their disposal—standard deviation indicating that the responses are 1.12 points away from the mean.

4.7 Empower Employees

Table 5: Empowering employees to think is like giving them ownership

Factors	SD	D	N	A	SA	U	Mean score
	1	2	3	4	5		3.08
Frequency (%)	0.0	12.0	12.0	32.0	44.0	0	

The weighted mean score of 3.08 reflects the average score when considering the frequency of each response category. A standard deviation of 16.23 indicates a moderate variability in responses, suggesting some differences in opinions among respondents. The variance of 263.56 further supports the moderate variability in the data. Empowered employees become engaged employees and assume ownership (full responsibility) as evidenced by 76% confirmation (32% agreed and 44% strongly agreed), only 12% were indifferent, and the other total of 12% disagreed. It can be generalised that employees can think independently and solve problems without consulting; transformational leadership is implied here. The results in the table present a mean of 4.08, showing the respondents' level of agreement. Variance is at the rate of 1.03. The standard deviation is 1.02 points away from the mean. There is some spread in responses, but not very high. Standard deviation explains how far responses deviate from the mean. The coefficient of variation is at 24.92%, showing moderate variability in response. When a CV is below 30%, this indicates that data are not too dispersed but consistent.

5. Summary of Finding

Specific responses stood out, which are worth mentioning, only where generalisations can be made. The implication is that where the scores are higher, the respondents felt strongly about those issues. The issues outstanding in this research are listed from the least to the most important according to the percentage scores. A high 62% of the managers believe that a good manager must think for workers and give them direction. A good portion (76%) of the managers believe empowering employees to feel is like giving them ownership. A good 76% of the managers think that because each one has their task, they have to perform it with no excuse – no room for personal problems. 78% believe an employee left to work alone is empowered and performs well. Many managers (80%) believe that setting tasks makes people perform because they know what to do. A majority of 84% of the managers/supervisors have a diploma or degree as their highest qualification.

Conclusion

This research seeks to bridge gaps in understanding the application of leadership styles to motivate and empower employees in diverse organisational settings. By providing actionable recommendations, this study can help managers adapt their leadership approach to meet the evolving needs of today's workforce. No clear leadership style is portrayed primarily for numerous reasons, such as the fact that leaders are different individuals dealing with others who have different expectations from the leader. The tasks cannot be ruled out, including the organisational culture and the type of power of both leader and follower, as that impacts leader-follower exchange. Two leadership styles stood out at different times, namely transactional and transformational, with transactional appearing more prominent. Effective leaders should, therefore, be those who respond and act according to the situation, the tasks, the subordinates concerned and within the cultural paradigm of the organisation.

Ethical Declaration: The paper is derived from a master's research at a local University. The Ethical Committee from the University issued a certificate of clearance granting permission for the research to be undertaken.

AI Declaration: Grammarly was used to assist with editing the paper's language. Besides that, there was no other use of AI in the paper.

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