
The Role of Leadership Styles in Determining Employee Performance: Study of Divisional Secretariats in Mannar District

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Abstract

Managers and leaders play a critical role in achieving productivity in organizations, as they are in charge of setting direction and executing, on behalf of all employees to achieve organizational goals. The present study attempts to investigate the effect of leadership styles on employee performance. Survey method was used, and a sample of 137 employees was selected from the combined services grade employees working in the divisional secretariats in Mannar District. Leadership styles were measured using a Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), form 5x – rater form, and employee performance was measured using Role Based Performance Scale. The results of the study revealed that the transformational leadership style significantly and positively influences employee performance, while the transactional leadership style has no significant influence on employee performance. The results of the study would be useful for the leaders and administrators of the divisional secretariats to gain insight about the need to adopt the transformational leadership style to improve performance among employees.

Keywords: Divisional secretariats, employee performance, transactional leadership and transformational leadership

1. Introduction

The pattern of leadership in various contexts requires a deeper understanding of these factors, and the role of leadership in the public sector needs further investigation. Researchers have paid much attention to the concept of leadership over the years. Attention is directed to transformational leadership and transactional leadership as the styles are believed to help organizations succeed. Encouraging followers is a main responsibility of any leader to achieve desirable outcomes.

Further, in today's highly complex, turbulent environment, public sector organizations must take into consideration three aspects in order to provide better service to the community. These include the knowledge possessed by the organization and its employees, the leadership style adopted by the leaders, and the job performance of employees. These three factors are vital for the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations.

There has been considerable empirical research (Basham, 2012; Bolden et al, 2012; Herbst, & Conradie, 2011; López-Domínguez, Enache, Sallan, & Simo, 2014; Sani & Maharani, 2012; Vinger, 2009) on leadership in higher education and other sectors in various countries. However, these studies have varied widely in terms of context, purpose and methodology. Furthermore, previous researchers have applied separately different types of leadership theories such as autocratic and democratic leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership and, task and people-oriented leadership theories to examine the variables of interest. Although the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership in the private sector have received increased attention from the research community over the past few decades, the public sector has been largely neglected. Several researches indicate that there are strong interconnections between leadership and employee outcomes/ output. However, in Sri Lanka, especially in the Mannar District, the work on this subject is very limited in its scope. Therefore, there is a need for studies on the subject of leadership in the public sector organizations in Sri Lanka, where people's cultural aspects such as values, attitudes and behaviors differ noticeably. Thus, there is a gap in the current research literature examining the effects of transformational and transactional leadership styles on employee outcomes/ output/ performance in the Sri Lankan context, particularly in Mannar District.

The main objective of the study is to investigate the impact of perceived transformational and transactional leadership styles on the job performance of employees in the divisional secretariats in Mannar District. The results of the study would equip the organizational leadership to determine which style to adopt, so that the employees are more committed and motivated, and would, in turn, perform better.

Based on the theoretical notions and findings described above, this research has been designed to address the following question.

“Do perceived transformational and transactional leadership styles influence employee performance in the Divisional Secretariats in Mannar District?”

2. Review of Literature

4.1 Leadership

Leadership is a key factor that determines the productivity and success of organizations. It has been studied extensively in the past century in the management field (Bass & Avolio, 1997). According to Bass and Avolio (1997), leadership behaviors can be categorized into two main styles: transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Transformational leaders motivate followers and appeal to their ideas and values by creating and representing an inspiring vision of the future (Bass & Avolio, 1997). This type of leadership involves creating an emotional attachment between leaders and employees. Transformational leaders give more importance to the well-being of their employees. As suggested by Jin (2010), transformational leadership integrates empathy, compassion, sensitivity, relationship building, and innovation. It creates a climate of trust, confidence, and encourages individual development.

Nel et al. (2004) define leadership as the process whereby one individual influences others to willingly and enthusiastically direct their efforts and abilities toward attaining defined group or organizational goals. According to Cole (2005), leadership is a dynamic process, whereby a person influences others to contribute voluntarily to the attainment of goals and objectives. There are various styles of leadership; however, in the present study, transformational and transactional leadership styles were focused.

4.2 Transformational Leadership

Transformational style of leadership comprises the components, namely, idealized influence, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. The style has been suggested widely as the most favorable style of managing change. Bass, Waldman, Avolio, & Bebb (1987) discovered that transformational leaders have followers who display higher levels of transformational behaviors. Researchers have proposed five dimensions of transformational leadership based on empirical research (Bass, 1985; Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Hater & Bass, 1988). Inspirational motivation of transformational leadership is the articulation and representation of a vision by the leader; thus, followers are motivated. Idealized influence (attributes) refers to the attribution of charisma to the leader. Because of the leaders' positive attributes, followers develop an emotional attachment to the leader. In this style, trust and confidence are likely to be built in followers. Idealized Influence (behavior) creates a collective sense of mission and values. Idealized influence and inspirational motivation are often conceptualized as charismatic leadership dimensions in much research on transformational leadership. Intellectual stimulation includes challenging

the assumptions of followers' beliefs, their analysis of problems they face, and the solutions they generate. Individualized consideration is related to considering the individual needs of followers and developing their strengths.

4.3 Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is an exchange process. In this style, the reinforcement of employees is contingent on the performance of employees. Transactional leadership motivates subordinates by alluding to their personal desires, based on economic transactions. Transactional leaders use organizational power and authority to maintain control, and this style of leadership is sometimes referred to as authoritative (Bennet, 2009). Researchers (Bass, 1985; Avolio et al., 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Hater & Bass, 1988) hypothesized three behavioral dimensions of transactional leadership: contingent reward, management by exception- active, and management by exception- passive.

4.4 Employee Performance

Befort & Hatstrup (2003) view employee performance as a multidimensional construct. This has induced both practitioners and researchers to identify the dimensions of employee performance with the aim of managing employee performance in organizations. A widely accepted method of conceptualization of employee performance is the role-based model of performance (Welbourne, Johnson, & Erez, 1998). A role is generally defined as the total set of performance responsibilities associated with one's employment (Murphy & Jackson, 1999 as cited in Dammika, 2013).

4.5 Effect of Transformational and Transactional leadership on employee performance

Findings of Pradeep & Prabhu (2011), Kehinde & Banjo (2014), and Ejere & Abasilim (2013), Tsigu & Rao (2012) and Gimuguni et al. (2014) confirm that there is a significant positive relationship between both transformational and transactional leadership styles and employee performance. Rassol et al. (2015) found that the impact of transactional leadership on job performance was not much stronger when compared with transformational leadership. Pradeep & Prabhu (2011) found that transformational leadership behaviors and transactional contingent reward leadership behaviors to be positively related to employee performance. Kalsoom, Khan & Zubir (2018) surveyed 318 employees in the FMCG industry of Pakistan and concluded that both transformational and transactional leadership styles had a positive relationship with employee performance. They also reported that transactional leadership style had a strong positive correlation with employee performance.

Elgelala & Noermijatib (2014) found that transformational leadership had a significant positive impact on employee motivation and employees' job satisfaction, but had no significant effect on employee performance. The study of Andreani & Petrik (2016) also showed that there was a significant impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction, as well as on employee performance. Cavazotte, Moreno & Bernardo (2013) reported that perceived transformational leadership was associated with higher levels of task performance, and helping behaviors. A recent study by Torlak & Kuzey (2019) revealed that all of the components of transformational leadership had a significant positive association with employee performance. Naeem & Khanzada (2018) reported that transformational leadership positively influenced employee performance in the Pakistani health sector. Manzoor et al. (2019) having investigated the impact of transformational leadership on job performance of employees working in the small and medium enterprises of Pakistan, had found that transformational leadership positively influenced employee performance. The same results have been reported in several studies (Sparkling, Mollaoglu, & Kirca, 2016; Andreani & Petrik, 2016; Yammarino, & Dubinsky, 1994; Jiang, Lu, & Le, 2016; Spangler & Braiotta, 1990).

A study conducted by Howell & Avolio (1993) confirms that contingent reward leadership has a negative impact on the followers' performance. The contingent reward is viewed as an exchange between leaders and followers, and followers are rewarded for accomplishing an agreed upon objective. An organization undergoing change might suffer from a transactional leadership style. According to Jayasingam, Ansari & Jantan (2009), coercive power is linked with ineffective leadership. A recent study by Torlak & Kuzey (2019) reveal that among the transactional leadership components, management by exception positively impacts employee performance, and contingent rewards have a weak positive association with employee performance.

Based on the review of literature, the following hypotheses were formulated for the present study:

- H1: Transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on perceived performance of employees.
- H2: Transactional leadership has a significant positive impact on perceived performance of employees.

3. Methodology

The study employed the quantitative survey method to determine the answers to the research questions. The full range leadership model by Avolio & Bass (2000) consists of three main styles: transformational, transactional and laissez-faire. However, for this research, only the

transformational and transactional leadership styles were considered. Employees' performance involves self-rating of their own performance, which includes job role, career role, innovator role, team role, and organization role.

The targeted population for the study is the full-time employees who are employed in the divisional secretariats in Mannar District. The samples were selected from employees of the combined services category based on the random sampling method. Further, only employees who have been employed under the present superior/ leader for at least one year were considered for this study. It was assumed that at least a period of one year is necessary to better understand the superior's leadership style. A sample of 137 employees was selected from the divisional secretariats operating in Mannar District. The study employed the survey method, and questionnaires were used to collect data from the participants. Transformational and transactional leadership styles were measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5X - rater form, developed by Bass & Avolio (2000). Employee performance was measured using the Five Factor Performance Scale developed by Welbourne, Johnson & Erez (1998). The instruments were pretested before administration.

Samples were selected using random sampling method. In the sample, the majority of the participants are in the age group of 26-35 years (44%), are female (64%), married (76%), has degree qualification (69%) and have less than ten years' work experience (61%). The age group of below 25 years has the least number of participants (4%).

4. Results

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 20.0 for Windows. To determine the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable, regression analysis was used. The instruments used in the study were reliable; thus, it was decided to proceed with the said instruments. Table 2 shows the reliability of the variables studied. The Cronbach's alpha of the items of each component ranges from 0.628 to 0.899, indicating inter-item consistency. As the alpha coefficient fulfills the minimum requirement of 0.6 (Malhotra & Peterson, 2006), the data are reliable; thus, it was decided to continue the analysis.

The study employed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to identify the factors of transformational and transactional leadership, and employee performance with principal component analysis (PCA) extraction method and Promax rotation method. The EFA was run for the exogenous constructs (transformational and transactional leadership), and endogenous construct (employee Performance) separately. The inter-item correlation revealed that few pairs of items were highly correlated, and thus, one item of each pair, which had high inter-correlation, was removed as they were redundant, and could result in

a multi co-linearity issue. Then, the items with low factor loadings were dropped, and the factors were extracted for each construct. The factors extracted through EFA for the latent constructs transformational leadership, and transactional leadership are shown in Table 3, and factors extracted for employee performance are shown in Table 4. Accordingly, four factors were extracted under transformational leadership; namely, idealized influence (attributes and behavior were loaded together), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Factors extracted under transactional leadership include contingent reward, management by exception-active, and management by exception-passive. Under performance, the five roles; job, career, innovator, team and organization were extracted. When running EFA, as few items were not loaded according to the theory, and were loaded into irrelevant factor, the problematic items also were dropped to comply with the theory.

In EFA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) is .88 for exogenous constructs and .87 for endogenous construct (performance). The KMO value exceeds the minimum recommended value of 0.7, and thus, the sample is adequate. The value of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity for exogenous and endogenous constructs are 1374.5 and 1992.7 respectively, and the values are significant ($p=.000$). No multicollinearity exists between the items as the determinant value is 0.00003, which is greater than the required value of 0.00001.

Moreover, the results reported in Table 3 indicate that the loadings of measurement items of transformational and transactional leadership subscales exceeded 0.5. The cumulative percentage of variance explained by the extracted sub-constructs of transformational and transactional leadership is 68.6%. In addition, the results reported in Table 4 indicate that the cumulative percentage of variance explained by the extracted sub-constructs of employee performance is 74.6%. The loadings of measurement items of employee performance subscales also exceeded 0.5. In the current study, the accumulated variance explained by the sub-constructs exceeded the minimum requirement of 50%. This confirms the validity of the constructs, and thus, further analysis could be carried out to examine the relationship between the constructs. After the factors were extracted through EFA, the mean value of each construct was derived, and Regression analysis was carried out to determine the impact of leadership styles on employee performance.

Table 3: Factor loadings for transformational and transactional leadership

	ID- IN	IN- MO	IN- ST	IN- CO	C- REW	MB E-A	MBE -B
Displays a sense of power and confidence	.829						

Goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group	.768
Emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission	.746
Acts in ways that builds my respect	.653
Talks about their most important values and beliefs	.651
Instills pride in me for being associated with him/her	.649
Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions	.582
Specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose	.521
Articulates a compelling vision of the future	.950
Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved	.911
Talks optimistically about the future	.873
Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished	.855
Re-examines critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate	.814
Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems	.729
Gets me to look at problems from many different angles	.723
Suggests new ways of looking at how to complete assignments	.628
Treats me as an individual rather than just as a member of a group	.932
Considers me as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others	.725
Helps me to develop my strengths	.633
Provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts	.917
Discusses in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets	.588
Makes clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved	.587

Concentrates his/her full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures								.836
Demonstrates that problems must become chronic before taking action								.656
Keeps track of all mistakes								.720
Waits for things to go wrong before taking action								.531
Eigenvalue	9.07	2.11	1.60	1.49	1.22	1.19	1.01	
% Variance explained	36.28	8.43	6.38	5.16	4.76	3.92	3.68	
Cumulative % variance explained	36.28	44.71	51.09	56.25	61.01	64.9	68.61	

Notes: ID-IN: Idealized influence (attributes and behavior); IN-MO: Inspirational motivation; IN-ST: Intellectual stimulation; IN-CO: Individualized Consideration; C-REW: Contingent reward; MBE-A: Mgt by exception-active; MBE-B: Mgt by exception-passive

Source: Survey Data (2018)

Table 4: Factor loadings for employee performance

	Innovator role	Team role	Job role	Organization role	Career role
Coming up with new ideas.	.919				
Working to implement new ideas.	.791				
Finding improved ways to do things.	.788				
Creating better processes and routines.	.595	.494			
Working as part of a team or work group.		.814			
Seeking information from others in his/her work group.		.813			
Making sure his/her work group succeeds.		.742			
Responding to the needs of others in his/her work group.		.557			
Quantity of work output.			.896		
Quality of work output.			.876		
Accuracy of work.			.760		
Customer service provided (internal and external).			.566		
Doing things that helps others when it's not part of his/her job.				.853	
Working for the overall good of the company.				.710	

Doing things to promote the company.					.669
Obtaining personal career goals.					.749
Seeking out career opportunities					.689
Eigenvalue	7.49	1.63	1.51	1.36	1.02
Variance explained	44.05	9.57	8.87	6.83	5.26
Accumulated variance explained	44.05	53.62	62.49	69.32	74.58

Source: Survey Data (2018)

4.1. Regression Analysis

Table 6-a: Anova and R square

Model	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R Square	R Square
Regression	3228.673	1614.337	11.239	.000 ^b	.144	.131
1 Residual	19247.575	143.639				
Total	22476.248					

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Survey Data (2018)

The objective of the study is to identify the impact of transformational and transactional leadership styles on employee performance. To achieve the objective, regression analysis was performed and the results are reported in Tables 6-a and 6-b.

Table 6-b:RegressionCoefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	35.854	7.500		4.781	.000
1 Transformational leadership	.517	.177	.370	2.917	.004
Transactional leadership	.022	.256	.011	.086	.932

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Survey Data (2018)

As can be seen in Table 6-a, which shows the results of regression analysis, the R² value of .144, illustrating that 14.4% of the variation in employee performance is explained by the

variation in leadership styles, and the remaining 85.6% of the variation is attributed to other factors. According to the ANOVA test results shown in Table 6-a, the F value is significant at 0.01 level. Table 6-b shows the regression coefficients for the impact of leadership styles on employee performance. Accordingly, transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on employee performance ($B=0.517$), and the relationship is significant at 0.01 level ($p<0.01$). Based on the results of the study, the hypothesis H1 "Transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on the performance of employees" is supported. The results show that the impact of transactional leadership on performance is not statistically significant ($p=0.932$). Thus, the hypothesis, H2: "Transactional leadership has a significant positive impact on Performance of employees" is not supported.

5. Discussion

This study is based on divisional secretariat employees, and it was revealed that transformational leadership style positively impacts employee performance. The significant positive impact of transformational style on employee performance was reported in Butler (1999), Suharto (2005), Elgelala & Noermijatib (2014), Cavazotte, Moreno & Bernardo (2013), etc. On the other hand, transactional leadership style does not significantly impact employee performance. The result is consistent with the results reported in Jayasingam, Ansari & Jantan (2009), where coercive power has been linked with ineffective leadership.

The impact of transactional style on performance is not significant. This finding is consistent with the results reported in Jayasingam, Ansari & Jantan (2009), but is inconsistent with the results reported in Pradeep & Prabhu (2011), Kehinde & Banjo (2014), and Ejere & Abasilim (2013), Tsigu & Rao (2012) and Gimuguni et al. (2014). A transactional leader relies heavily on power and authority to lead his members, and the use of a 'reward and penalty' system is an integral role in such a leadership style. As per various researches, transactional leadership is not very effective and can de-motivate employees. The effects of transactional leadership styles on employee performance are dependent on the organizational context and situations. Howell & Avolio (1993) have mentioned that an organization undergoing change might suffer from a transactional leadership style. Since transactional leadership is based on a system of rewards and penalties, it does not give the inspiration to motivate people. The followers of transactional leaders might display a tendency only to achieve minimal expectations that would help them avoid penalties (Bass 1990). The leader and the follower are in agreement on what the follower would receive upon achieving the agreed level of performance. Working in fear of losing one's job, fear of demotion or fear of disciplinary transfer makes an employee worry about the consequences if the expectations of the leaders are not met, and thus, would work towards satisfying the job demand rather than working enthusiastically. Thus, the

positive effect of transactional leadership on employee performance does not seem to be applicable to all contexts and situations.

6. Conclusion, implications and directions for future research

The public service, regardless of its size and composition, must remain contemporary in its approach to management systems and procedures in line with those of other large private sector organizations in Sri Lanka. In this context, it is believed that effective leadership by the administrators and managers is one of the most important aspects in improving the performance of employees. In order to undertake this, capabilities of managers and leaders have to be systematically developed, and it would help to strengthen the productivity of the organizations.

The primary focus of this study was to examine the impact of transformational and transactional leadership on employee performance. The findings reported by this study bring a greater understanding of the relationship between the variables. From this study, it becomes evident that transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on employee performance. However, the influence of transactional leadership on employee performance is not statistically significant.

The findings of this research will be useful for future researchers, students and academics to comprehend the effects and importance of different leadership styles on employee performance. After determining the impact of leadership styles on employee performance through the present study, the administrators of divisional Secretariats will be able to use the findings of this research to develop leadership programs that will help the leaders acquire relevant leadership skills for effective management and organizational performance. This study's findings will further assist different leaders in identifying the best and the most appropriate leadership style to use in relevant situations for increased employee job performance.

This study helps managers better understand the need for adopting a transformational leadership style to increase employee performance. The findings could add knowledge to the existing literature. It also gives a foundation for future researchers to expand the study to other public sector organizations to generalize the findings to the public sector in Sri Lanka. The most significant limitation of the study is the sample size. The study was conducted with a limited sample, and thus, further study with a larger sample would be necessary to reaffirm the findings of this study. In addition, the divisional secretariats in Mannar District were covered in the study. Thus, future researchers may expand the study to other regions in Sri Lanka to reassert the relationship

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