

EFFECT OF PROCESS-ORIENTATION BEHAVIOURS OF LEADERSHIP ON COMMITMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

Besides establishing the effect of process leadership behaviours on employee commitment, this paper also, extends the argument that process oriented leadership behaviours can be operationalized in terms of Modelling, team building and shared decision. Such kind of operationalization is vital for deepening the scholarly understanding of given concepts and facilitate the extension of knowledge by future scholars. The study also shows that process orientation behaviours of organisational leaders, impact the level of commitment of employees. It shows that after controlling for other salient leadership behaviours, a unit increase in the leaders' process orientation, leads to 0.19 unit improvement in the commitment of the workforce. At last, the study raises implications for practice and further research.

Keywords: Modelling, team building, shared decision making, process-orientation behaviours, leadership, commitment

INTRODUCTION

Behaviours of organisational leadership play a key role in the success or failure of organisations. Leadership behaviours principally propel organisational prosperity through their influence on others (Kotter 1985; Folkman 2010; Krog & Govender, 2015). It is thus not

surprising that efficient leadership is often oriented towards enhancing the ability of getting results through others. One approach through which leaders get results through others, is by ensuring the efficiency of organisational processes (Ha-Vikstrom 2017; Harrington 2011). This approach to leadership behaviour is also known as process orientation and it is broadly studied in terms of modelling, team building and shared decision making (Page and Wong, 2000). If well embraced, leadership behaviour generates a positive impact on the commitment of workforce in the organisation.

While it is well known that changes in leadership behaviour strengthen or weaken commitment of organisational workforce (Liden, & Meuser 2014; Sendjaya 2015), the direct effect of key behavioural orientations like process orientation behaviours on employee commitment are yet to be established. This if not addressed, stands to stifle the furtherance of leadership knowledge and practice. As a result, organisations may only continue to sub optimally benefit from the leadership as a strength upon which to leverage industry competition. Worse still, any organisational diagnosis of leadership-weaknesses could be less informative with inherent inaccuracies because of not being founded on any particular objective findings to support inference and replication. The purpose of this study is thus to bridge the identified gap in Knowledge by establishing the effect of process-orientation behaviours of organisational leadership on the commitment of its workforce.

The remaining sections of this article comprise a theoretical underpinning of the study, a review of empirical literature on Process-orientation behaviours of leadership and Employee Commitment, methodology of the study, presentation and interpretation of study findings, Discussion of findings, conclusion, Contribution of the study to Practice and knowledge and Suggested areas for research.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING OF THE STUDY

This study uses the social cognitive theory by Bandura (1986) to explain interaction of the independent variable (leaders' process orientation behaviours - as operationalized in terms of modelling, team building & shared decision making), with the dependent variable (employee commitment). Generally Social cognitive theory (SCT) is useful in considering the unique processes by which individuals acquire and maintain behaviour. Thus, it is well placed to offer a basis upon which modelled behaviours of leaders can be taken up by other employees (followership). With particular focus to this study, the 'observational Learning' construct of SCT, is instrumental in backing the argument that behaviours of organisational leaders can be modelled and passed on to followers. The SCT constructs of self-efficacy and reinforcement also integrate to reveal that employee commitment is strengthened through working in teams

and participating in decision making (Bandura 1986; Namiyingo et. al., 2016;Krog and Govender, 2015). The construct of reciprocal determinism is useful in informing that when employees perceive actions of leaders as generously oriented towards encompassing interests of wider community rather than to selfishly profit the individual in leadership, then they will expound more effort to pursuing the shared organisational goals.

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Process-orientation behaviours of leadership and Employee Commitment

Process-orientation behaviours of leadership are concerned with increasing the efficiency of the organization, focusing the leader's ability to model and develop a flexible, efficient and open system through Modelling, Team building and Shared decision-making (Page and Wong, (2000). On the other hand, the phrase 'employee commitment' has many definitions, this study uses the same phrase to mean the degree to which the employee feels devoted to their organization. A comparable definition by Hashmi & Naqvi (2012) holds that it is the employee's emotional attachment, identification with, and involvement in a particular organization. The effect of Process-orientated behaviours of leadership on the commitment of employees is traceable from the broad components of Modelling, Team building and Shared decision-making as elaborated below;

Firstly, the ability of leaders to model the desired organisational behaviours for followers, enhances the devotion of employees to practicing the exemplified behaviours (Greenleaf 1970). According to Olesia *et al.*, (2014), the best way to channel desired behaviours to followers, is through observable actions more than through words (Page and Wong 2000). Thus, based on this component of process leadership behaviour, it is the modelled actions of the leader that offer direction to employees about how to remain engaged emotionally, physically and cognitively during work performance (Wang *et al.*, 2014; DePree, 2002; Russell & Stone, 2002). This component requires that leaders work as stewards and operate in the interest of the overtly shared goals of the organisation.

The second component of Process-orientated behaviours that forms a basis for the effect of leaders' process orientation on employee commitment is teamwork. Team work encourages good relations among the individuals in the organisation and it transcends hierarchies. Thus followers and the leadership both leverage on the competencies of each other so as to harvest the synergetic benefits inherent in efficient teams. Research by Lim and Desa (2013) has particularly indicated that healthy social relations at work, boost employee commitment by reducing the rate of turn over. Krog and Govender (2015) further show that a healthy relationship between leader and employee sustains teamwork and collective decision

making which in turn enhances the commitment of employees to the organization. Generally, as the level of potency of team members increases, their level of loyalty and attachment to the team increases too. As such, it is arguable that the team building ability of servant leadership has the effect of enhancing affective employee commitment (Redick *et al.*, 2014).

Lastly, when leaders allow their followers to take part in decision making, it makes employees feel that they have some degree of control over their Jobs. In one study that was conducted amongst surgeons in Denmark, findings indicated that having influence on the job is one of the key factors that leads to employee commitment (Kähler *et al.*, 2012). Generally, shared decision making leads to enhancement of employee's affective commitment. This is due to the fact that as team members share information, they deliberate on issues; and end up collectively resolving on the most feasible alternatives, which generates the feeling of being trusted by the leader (Kim & Lee, 2006). As a result, the intention of team members to continue working in the organization increases. Shared decision making propels employees to perceive that congruence exists between their personal values and agreed upon goals (Dale & Fox, 2008). Also, the ability to have clear strategic plans that are crafted collectively in the organization help in ensuring enhanced commitment of workforce (Blondeau & Blondeau, 2015). The above analysis of literature thus posits that Leaders' Process Orientation leads to enhanced employee Commitment.

METHODOLOGY

This study assumes a positivistic research paradigm and thus is concerned with observable phenomena which emphasizes objectivism in putting forward explanations (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007; McNeill & Chapman, 2005). The research used an explanatory Causal research design (Neuman, 2011). The independent variable of this study, leaders' process-orientation behaviour, was correlated and regressed against employee commitment which was the dependent variable of the study. On the basis of time categorization, Cross-sectional design was used. According to Neuman (2011), when executing explanatory research cross-sectional design is sufficient to understand what has happened or been happening. Data that was used for drawing inferences was collected from all the three categories of employees working in public hospitals in Uganda. These public health institutions have one of the most well developed management systems in the Country's health sector system that provided a suitable study ground for investigating the interaction of the chosen variables.

A study sample of 576 was derived from a target population of 14,082 hospital employees and used in the study. The study sample was deemed adequate and in a reasonable comparison with earlier studies conducted under similar conditions (see e.g. Nabirye 2011).

Simple random sampling was used. The unit of analysis was the individual employees who entailed both those serving as leaders and those serving as followers. This was meant to provide a holistic view of leaders' process-orientation behaviour from both the perspective of the leader and the follower. Data was collected using questionnaires and responses were collected on a likert scale with five verbal anchors as follows; 1 – “Strongly disagree”, 2 – “Disagree”, 3 – “I am not sure”, 4 – “Agree”, and 5 – “Strongly agree”. The independent variable was measured using an abridged form of the servant leadership Profile (SLP) developed by Page and Wong (2000). This is because it pays particular attention to the intended concern of leadership to organisational processes.

The Content Validity Index (CVI) was used to assess content validity. Only those items that scored an I-CVI of 0.8, 0.9, or 1.0, were retained in the questionnaire while those that scored I-CVI below 0.8 were deleted. Also, Reliability was assessed using the Cronbach Alpha test and those items that were found to have an alpha coefficient of 0.7 and above were accepted (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23. Prior to conducting correlation and regression analysis, data was cleaned, and subjected to necessary tests of multiple regression analysis in terms of normality, Linearity, Homoscedasticity, Multicollinearity and the test of independence of errors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The preliminary analysis showed that the data conforms to all the conditions that allow the data to be used for regression analysis.

Factor analysis was conducted to reveal the underlying factors that comprise the leader' process orientation behaviours. In establishing the effect of leaders' process orientation of employee commitment, the equation $Y = Y_1 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon_1$ was executed where; Y means employee commitment, Y_1 means the Y intercept, β_1 means the effect of slope coefficients denoting the influence of X_1 on Y. X_1 means leaders' process orientation behaviour and ε_1 means the error term in the measurement of Y using X_1 . Rejection or failure to reject the interpretation of the beta value was based on significance or non-significance of the p-Value. Subsequently, the magnitude of the interaction and the direction was based on the value of beta and the sign of the integer associated with the beta value in terms of positive or negative

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The data that was gathered from respondents was cleaned through deleting outliers and missing values after which only 459 questionnaires, were deemed usable for further analysis. The study demographics showed that 42.7% of the respondents had ever served the organisation in leadership roles while 57.3% of the respondents were yet to hold a leadership

position. This implied that the data collected accommodated both the views of those who are leaders and those who are the led.

Factor analysis for Leaders Process Orientation

After executing Factor analysis on leader's process orientation, three underlying factors were extracted using principal component analysis method. The rotation method used was varimax with Kaiser Normalization and the findings are as seen in Table 1 below;

Table 1. Factor analysis for Leaders Process Orientation

Questionnaire Item	Modelling behaviours	Team building	Shared Decision making
<i>Our supervisor....</i>			
Behaves in the way he/she tells others to behave		0.686	
Shows his/her group how to facilitate the process of group success		0.619	
makes it a priority to develop relations with those who model servant leadership		0.533	
Promotes values that transcend self-interest and material success		0.655	
encourage cooperation among team members	0.745		
Values everyone regardless of status and always acts objectively	0.786		
actively seeks ways to utilize people's different skills to benefit the team	0.506		
Communicates with passion and confidence to cheer up team spirit	0.551		
tries to build consensus during decision making			0.733
Consults and welcomes ideas from others, including critics and detractors			0.667
Tries to remove barriers so that others can freely participate in decision making			0.688
Ensures that the affected persons, take part in the decision-making process			0.749
Willingly shares information with others			0.811
Total Initial Eigenvalues	% of Variance	Cumulative %	
3.114	23.956	23.956	
3.021	23.242	47.197	
2.499	19.226	66.423	
KMO and Bartlett's Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.935	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi- Square		3297.692	
df		78	
Sig.		0.001	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

The findings in Table 1 above show that all the items used to measure leader's process orientation were presented under three operational factors, namely; 'modelling behaviours', 'team building' and 'shared decision making'. All the factors that were used to measure leader's process orientation were significantly loaded on the extracted three operational factors and thus all were retained for analysis. The findings show that the leaders propensity to model desired behaviours in the organization, account for 23.956% of the changes in leader's process orientation, while Teambuilding potential of the leaders accounts for 23.242% and shared decision making accounts for 19.226% of the variations in leaders' process orientation. The results indicate that the sample used to arrive at the findings was adequate with Kaiser- Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of (0.935) which is greater than the threshold of (0.5). The findings are also significant as seen by the Bartlett's Test ($\chi^2 (78) = 3297.692$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$). The results imply that variations in leader's process orientation can significantly be studied using the three features of the leaders potential to model desired behaviours, the leaders ability to build teams and his/her ability to embrace shared decision making.

Correlation Analysis tests

The purpose of conducting correlation analysis was to measure the linear relationship between employee commitment and leaders' process orientation behaviours. As seen in table 2 below, findings show that the leader's process orientation has a positive and significant relationship with employee commitment (0.708, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$). This suggests that an increase in leader's process orientation is associated with a 70.8% chance of increasing employee commitment. This finding points to the fact that there is a possibility of a causal effect between leaders' process-orientation, and employee commitment which can only be confirmed after running a regression analysis (Tabachnick&Fidell, 2013; Hair et al., 2013).

Table 2. Correlation Output

Variable	Employee Commitment	Leaders Process Orientation
Employee Commitment	1	0.708**
	0.000	0.000
Leaders Process Orientation	0.708**	1
	0.000	0.000

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

Regression analysis tests

The aim of the regression test was to address the main objective of the study that was to establish the effect of leaders' process-orientation on employee commitment. The findings in table 3 below, reveal that leaders' process-orientation has a significant and positive effect on employee commitment with a beta value of 19.0% at a level of significance which is below the targeted threshold of 05% (0.190, $p < 0.001$). The results were controlled for the confounding effect of other key leadership behaviours including Leaders' task-orientation behaviour, Leaders' follower-orientation and Leader's authenticity behaviour. As further seen from table 3, multicollinearity was not a problem in this study as the VIF value was 3.705 which is far below the cut off of value ten, and the tolerance level was 0.27 which is well below the threshold value of 1.0 above which multicollinearity would be deemed to exist (Stevens, 2002; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The major implication of the above findings, is that, with each unit increase in leaders' process-orientation, employee commitment increases by 0.19 units. It also shows that the modelled variables significantly explain 60.2% of the changes in the commitment of employees.

Table 3. Regression analysis test results

Coefficient estimates	B	S.E	β std	t	Sig.	VIF	Tolerance
(Constant)	0.939	0.103		9.176	0.000		
Leaders Process Orientation	0.156	0.047	0.190	3.342	0.001	3.705	.270
Model Summary Statistics							
R		0.778					
R Square		0.606					
Adjusted R Square		0.602					
Std. Error of the Estimate		0.47020					
Sig.		0.001					

a Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results established that leader's process orientation has a positive and significant effect on employee. These results suggest that promoting team work and shared decision making, cause improvements in employee commitment. The results also show that employee commitment is improved by encouraging cooperation among team members, valuing employees regardless of their status, cheering up team spirit and willing sharing information with staff.

The results are in agreement with past literature by Blondeau and Blondeau (2015) to the effect that the ability to have clear strategic plans that are crafted collectively in the organization help in ensuring enhanced commitment of workforce. Furthermore, Krog and Govender (2015) also showed that a healthy relationship between leader and employee encourages team building, and collective decision making which also leads to increased affective employee commitment to the organization.

The results show that leaders' process-orientation is composed of Modelling, team building and shared decision making and all these contribute to the level of employee commitment. Similarly, the social cognitive theory inherently supports the existence of a process that allows a person to be able to interact with his role model and that the transparency of the interaction is enhanced by self-appreciation, which is dependent on the self-efficacy as put forward by the SCT. Therefore this study clarifies more on the need for an interactive mechanism between mentor and mentee that propels collaborative shaping of behaviour. This argument is aligned to both the results and the SCT theory as earlier submitted in this research paper.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY TO PRACTICE AND KNOWLEDGE

The study contributes to practice by re-echoing to organisational leadership that efforts (in terms of money, physical energy and time) that are spent on improving processes in the organisation do contribute to the success of the organisation by enhancing employee commitment. The above warning is important since, with the growing pressure of organisational resources, some managers may be tempted to rule out spending money on procedural activities like parties (which is an avenue for enhancing team spirit), trainings (which is an avenue for enhancing decision making abilities of individuals), physical involvement of leader in task execution (which is an avenue for modelling behaviour) yet these enhance the spirit of teamwork which in turn affect commitment. Yet, these present ripple effects on level of organisational productivity and organisational success. The research also contributes to existing knowledge by providing evidence from public hospitals in Uganda to support the existing literature from earlier studies carried out in other global settings. This is important as it enhances the robustness of the findings and their applicability in a wide spectrum of situations.

SUGGESTED AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Future studies could also extend this work by finding out the impact of other behavioural orientations to the commitment of employees, to the efficient acquisition and utilisation of resources, to the sustainability of organisational competitiveness among other dependent

variables of interest. A longitudinal study could also be conducted to provide a comparison of results with those obtained through a cross section study so as to provide a more robust basis for policy making.

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