

## The relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction of subordinate faculty members: A study of selected Ethiopian public Universities

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### Abstract

Effective leadership and academics job satisfaction are two factors that have been considered as fundamental requirements for universities success. By using appropriate leadership style, academic leaders can influence their faculty's Job satisfaction positively. The major purpose of this study is, therefore, aimed to examine the relationship between leadership style and faculty's job satisfaction at five selected Ethiopian public universities. Accordingly, primary data was collected from 402 faculty members using self-administered survey questionnaires. The instruments used to collect data were adapted from Multifactor Leadership Questionnaires (MLQ) "rater form" to measure the leadership style exercised by Heads of departments and deans and Spector's job satisfaction survey (JSS) nine facets measures of Job Satisfaction. Primary data was collected from faculty members and department heads at five public higher education institutions. By design, the study is both descriptive and quantitative correlational research using deductive approach. The descriptive statistics results of the study showed that heads of the departments and deans exhibited combination of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles as perceived by subordinates. The study revealed that transformational leadership style was found to be the major behavior practiced by both heads of the department and deans as perceived by faculty members, followed by transactional leadership style and lastly Laissez-faire leadership behavior was practiced with least frequency. The results of Correlation analysis indicated that subordinate perceived inspirational motivation behaviors displayed by deans and heads of the department and faculty job satisfaction was correlated higher than other transformational leadership style components and the correlation is moderate. From the transactional leadership components, contingent reward was positively and significantly related with job satisfaction. The findings of this study proves that transformational leadership is perceived the most effective leadership style in Ethiopia and affirm that the full range leadership theory is supported in Ethiopian settings.

**Keywords:** Faculty, Transformational, Transactional and laissez-faire, Job satisfaction

### Introduction

Leadership has played an important role in human development and has been considered the single most important factor in the success or failure of an organization (Bass & Avolio, 1990 <sup>[10]</sup>; Day & Lord, 1988) <sup>[19]</sup>. It is often considered as the solution to most organizational problems (Daft & Marcic, 2006) <sup>[17]</sup>. Effective leadership in the public sector is considered to be imperative because it determines citizens satisfaction, trust and organizational reputation (cited by Aziz *et al.*, 2012) <sup>[6]</sup>.

Since leadership plays a critical role for improving organizational performance, identifying and developing leadership behavior continues to be vital to organizations (Manning & Robertson, 2011, p. 88) <sup>[29]</sup>. Organizational success lies within the leadership styles of their leaders because they are responsible for the efficacy and performances of subordinates (Saeed, *et al.* 2013) <sup>[31]</sup>. Leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, innovation and organizational loyalty of employees (Tsai & SU, 2011) <sup>[39]</sup>.

As far as leadership academic work is concerned, over 15000 books and articles have been produced and published on the subject leadership and at least 50 billion U.S dollars a year is spent on the training & development of leaders (Burke, 2006) <sup>[15]</sup>. Organizations spend large amount of dollars on leadership

training to equip leaders at various levels; in 2003 alone, the United states training Industry study revealed that 85% of US companies offer leadership training to their employees (Gavin, 2003) <sup>[23]</sup> while in 2007 also, USD 821 million was estimated to be allocated to leadership related training in the United states of America (Anderson, K 2008) <sup>[1]</sup>. These statistics highlight the outward significance that organizations attach to the role of leadership in creating organizational success. High – performing leadership is essential for organizations to create and sustain competitive advantage. Despite this huge dollar is invested on leadership development, research results indicated that as many as 50 to 70 percent of the leaders perform their jobs poorly; (Burke, 2006) <sup>[15]</sup> added that ineffective leaders demonstrate poor interpersonal skills, fail to meet organizational objectives, possess inadequate team building skills, or are unable to deal effectively with change (Hogan & Hogan, 2001) <sup>[26]</sup>.

In the same way, Yukl (2002) <sup>[44]</sup> and described also that the major line share of empirical research on the subject leadership for the past 50 years has been conducted in western countries particularly in America & Western Europe (yukl, 2002 <sup>[44]</sup>). It was also cited that the majority of the developed leadership theories possess a distinctive American/ western favor with 98 percent of the empirical data based around American research (House& Aditya 1997 in Rymer, CS, 2008, p. 12) <sup>[16]</sup>.

Nevertheless indicated that leadership has been and remains to be one of the most studied subject but there are great differences in opinions, theories and research results.

In higher education, faculty job satisfaction, based on Fryer and arguments, results from the perceptions faculty members hold regarding their value to their immediate supervisor. Employees with high job satisfaction are likely to exert more effort in their assigned tasks and pursue organizational interest; organizations that promote high employee job satisfaction is also more capable of retaining and attracting employees with the skills that it needs (Voon, *et al.* 2011) <sup>[40]</sup>.

One of the major factors that affect the level of job satisfaction is the leadership behavior of the leader in the universities under investigation. In response to this, in his pieces of work suggested that transformational leadership is required in higher education institutions where the leader creates inspiration, engage and motivate employees to work effectively and to respond positively to the required changes that institutions are aspiring to become successful. Empirical research findings have consistently linked the transformational leadership style to high levels of followers effort, attitude, performance and satisfaction when working with such type of leaders (Yukl, 2006 <sup>[45]</sup>; Bass & Avolio, 1994) <sup>[7]</sup>.

### Statement of the problem

Empirical research on leadership or leadership styles is confined to the western world rather than the developing countries (Shaw, 2005) <sup>[32]</sup>, which includes Ethiopia. More specifically, leadership research based on the transformational and transactional approach in higher educational institutions comes only from the “western world”. Particularly, the research conducted using the transformational and transactional, laissez faire leadership approach in the higher educational context is limited and most of it is focused on the American context: consequently, the findings are originated in the American societal culture and belief system (Dimmock, 2000a) <sup>[21]</sup>. Ethiopian is an East African country and has its own norms, values and traditions, which makes its cultural context significantly different from those of American & western culture. Therefore this calls for an investigation to which leadership style is predominantly practiced in Ethiopian public universities.

Research findings confirmed that transformational leadership is more highly related to perceived satisfaction and effectiveness than is transactional leadership (Yammarino and Bass, 1990) <sup>[43]</sup>. The majority of literatures on transformational and transactional leadership does not focus on higher educational context (Bents and Blank, 1997; Bogler, 2001; Fields and Herold, 1997; Barnett & McCormick, 2004) <sup>[13, 22, 8]</sup>. Studies which were done on the higher education context such as (Grosso, 2008; stumpf, 2003; Levine, 2000) <sup>[24, 36, 28]</sup>, from the American Higher education institutions. Besides (Sung, 2007; Dastoor *et al.*, 2003) <sup>[37, 18]</sup> conducted a study in Thailand higher educational institutions and tried to study on the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction of higher education faculty. In all these studies the transformational and transactional leadership style model was adapted to measure the faculty job satisfaction in the educational context. However, such studies cannot be considered to be applied in Ethiopian context, so it requires an investigation on whether this relationship exists in Ethiopian

higher education context and it helps to enhance the validity of concepts and add knowledge to the literatures.

### Related literature Review

#### Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership style is a leadership approach defined as “leader behaviors that transform and inspire subordinates to do beyond expectations while transcending self-interest for the good of the organizations.” (Avolio, *et al.*, 2009) <sup>[4]</sup>.

#### Charismatic or Idealized Influence

Charismatic leaders display conviction, take stands, and appeal to followers on an emotional level (Timothy, *et al.* 2004, 755) <sup>[38]</sup>. Transformational leaders show such behaviors’ which makes them role models to their followers. These types of leaders due to their extraordinary competence, persistence and willpower are appreciated, recognized and believed to be trustworthy.

#### Inspirational Motivation

This is also considered as one major component of charismatic leadership. Where leaders encourage their subordinates by means of emotional appeals and attractive vision of upcoming circumstances, raising subordinates aims & showing passion & hopefulness (Northouse, 2010) <sup>[30]</sup>.

#### Intellectual stimulation

According to Bass (1985) intellectually stimulating leaders arouse followers to recognize their own beliefs and values. They emphasize problem solving and promote intelligence and rationality. Transformational leadership not only challenge the status quo, they also encourage creativity, new ways of doing things, and new opportunities to learn

#### Individualized consideration

Individualized consideration refers to a leader who provides a supportive environment (Bass, 1985) <sup>[9]</sup>. Transformational leaders will show concern for their followers and give personal attention to their followers on a one to one basis. Such leaders treat their subordinates with respect and they provide continuous follow up and feedback. Transformational leaders emphasize upon subordinates’ success and development to their highest level by performing mentoring.

#### Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership is based on the exchange of rewards contingent on performance (Avolio, *et al.*, 2009) <sup>[4]</sup>. Using a “Carrot and stick approach”, transactional leadership is usually characterized as instrumental in followers goal attainment. There is an element of power and influence within the transaction leadership style indicating that this leadership style is more applicable in management.

**Contingent reward-** contingent reward represents a form of leadership that is active and focusing on planned positive exchange relationship between leaders and followers.

#### Active Management by Exception (MBEA)

Management by exception (MBEA) is a role discharged by transactional leaders to interfere in the responsibilities given to subordinates (Avolio & Bass, 2004) <sup>[5]</sup>.

**Passive Management by Exception (MBEP)** - leaders fail to intervene until problems become serious. They wait to take action until mistakes are brought to their attention.

**Laissez-faire leadership style**- Laissez faire is the most passive and considered to ineffective form of leadership (Antonakis, *et al.*, 2003) [12].

**Job Satisfaction**- Positive and favorable attitudes towards the job indicate job satisfaction whereas negative and unfavorable attitudes towards jobs indicate job dissatisfaction (Armstrong, 2006, p.264) [13]. Defined job satisfaction as the extent to which a worker is satisfied with the rewards he/she gets out of his/her job, specifically in terms of intrinsic motivation. several factors can influence employee job satisfaction including salaries, fringe benefits, achievements, autonomy, recognition, communication, working condition, job importance, co-workers’, degree of professionalism, organizational climate, supervisory support job security, workplace flexibility, working with team environment.

**Research Objectives**

Keeping in view the focus and significance of the study, the objectives of the study are the following:

1. To describe the leadership style of the leaders as perceived by subordinate academic staffs.
2. To investigate the relationship between leadership styles and subordinate academic staffs job satisfaction.

**Methods of the study**

A survey-based descriptive and quantitative correlational research design was used. The survey was carried on teaching faculty working at five selected public universities in Ethiopia. A survey design is appropriate when the study is focused at providing data of the current state of affairs and examining the relationships among two or more constructs (Wu and Forza, 2003) [41].

**Sampling Technique**

Stratified sampling technique was employed in dividing the population in to groups, or strata, then samples were taken

using a simple random sample from each stratum (Dawdy, 2004) [20]. Proportional Stratified random sampling was employed to select faculty members from each college and while heads of departments were selected using purposive sampling technique.

**Sample size Determination**

By using the following formula it is possible to determine the appropriate sample size which was developed by Yamane Yaro (1964) [42]:  $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ ; Where: N=total population; n=sample size, e=error rate (.05) or that the chance of samples to be representative of the population is 95 percent confidence level.  $n = \frac{4558}{1 + 4558(0.05)^2} = 367$ . The sample consisted of 367 academic staffs who were asked to rate their heads of the department leadership behaviour and 150 department heads were purposively included to evaluate their deans’ leadership style. From 517 Questionnaires distributed to subordinate department members and heads of the departments simultaneously, 430 were filled and returned. After all the screening process and the elimination of outliers was performed, only 402 usable questionnaires were used to analyse the data.

**Data Collection Instruments**

In this survey study, two self-administered Questionnaires were prepared in five and six point likert scales and distributed to faculty members and department heads simultaneously. The first one was adapted from Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ SX –short form) to examine the level of subordinate academic staff members perception about their heads and deans leadership style consisting of 36 items and the Spector’s job satisfaction survey questionnaire (JSS) was designed to measure faculty perceived level of job satisfaction containing 36 items.

**Method of Data Analysis:** After collecting the necessary data, the researcher used both descriptive statistics such as means and inferential statistics like Pearson’s correlation methods for quantitative data analysis using SPSS version 20 software.

**Results and Discussion**

**Table 1:** Reliability statistics (Cronbach Alpha) for perceived leadership styles

Variables	HODs’ LS	Deans LS	Overall	No of items	Consideration
Transformational	0.911	0.908	0.902	20	Very good
Transactional	0.664	0.715	0.688	12	Acceptable
Laissez faire	0.605	0.734	0.64	4	Acceptable
Overall leadership style			0.886	36	Preferable

Source: Survey Data (2016)

According to Zikmund *et al.*, (2010) [46] scales with coefficient alpha between 0.6 and 0.7 indicate fair reliability. Thus, for this study, a Cronbach’s alpha score of 0.60 or higher is considered adequate to determine reliability. The reliability of transformational leadership is very high whereas the reliability of both transactional and laissez-faire leadership style as it is perceived by heads of the department regarding dean’s leadership style is acceptable. Besides, Cronbach’s alpha of overall leadership style is found to be 0.886 so that the questionnaires used to measure leadership constructs was found to be reliable.

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics and Reliability Analysis of Faculty Job satisfaction

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.709	36

As can be seen from table 2, the Cronbach alpha( $\alpha$ ) of faculty job satisfaction questionnaire is found to be 0.709, which is accepted to undertake further analysis. Respondents were asked to describe their job satisfaction

**Table 3:** Comparison between the Present study means with MLQ, USA & SA Norms

leadership styles	Dep't heads mean	Deans mean	combined study mean	MLQ Norm	U.S.A Norm	SA mean
<b>Transformational</b>	2.633	2.716	2.65	2.85	2.83	2.76
1. Idealized influence attribute (IIA)	2.645	2.682	2.65	2.94	2.93	2.88
2. Idealized influence behaviour(IIB)	2.699	2.861	2.74	2.77	2.73	2.76
3. Intellectual stimulation	2.531	2.684	2.57	2.78	2.97	2.71
4. Inspirational motivation	2.80	2.866	2.81	2.92	2.76	2.88
5. Individualized consideration	2.491	2.486	2.49	2.85	2.78	2.58
<b>Transactional leadership</b>	2.243	2.315	2.26	1.86	1.84	2.10
1. Contingent reward	2.680	2.732	2.69	2.87	2.84	2.80
2. MBE-Active	2.110	2.273	2.15	1.67	1.67	2.37
3. MBE-Passive	1.939	1.941	1.94	1.03	1.02	1.14
1. Laissez-faire	1.813	1.770	1.80	0.65	0.66	0.83

Source: Survey Data (2016)

As can be seen from table 3, transformational leadership exercised by heads of the departments and Deans are predominantly high (mean=2.66) as compared to other two leadership styles as perceived by faculty members. However, when it is compared to MLQ norms, this leadership style practiced has not been displayed by leaders in sound manner. Concerning the transactional leadership style, faculty members perceived that transactional leadership exercised by Public University leaders are beyond the norm expected by MLQ Norms developed By Bass & Avolio. Laissez-faire leaders avoid making decisions, give no feedback, give up responsibility, make little attempt to help followers.

Although the norm allowed by Bass & Avoilo (2004) [5] for Laissez faire leadership as mean is 0.65, the present study mean is found to be 1.80 which is much more practiced by public university leaders in five selected public universities. This highlights that deans and department heads showed less effectiveness in leading their institution. when head of the department and deans used this leadership styles, they do not call for faculty meeting, make little contact with them, avoid decision's that are important to faculty, procrastinate any questions raised by faculties.

Concerning idealized influence behavior leaders focus on values, beliefs and sense of mission (Antonakis *et al.*, 2003). [2] Using inspirational motivation behavior leaders motivate their subordinates by making ready to face challenges and give meaning for the task given. They focus on making ambition goals, tell optimistically about their future and inspire followers to achieve an optimal level of performance (Antonakis *et al.*, 2003) [2].

Showing intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration less than the MLQ norm indicate that heads and deans of public universities do not have sufficient knowledge about these leadership style. By exercising intellectual stimulation behaviors, followers think about old organizational problems and rethink with new perspective and can motivate followers to be creative and innovative. By giving individualized consideration, delegating authority to the faculty members and meeting their needs are vital for leaders and the mentoring followers are expected from leaders. It is possible to conclude that the mean score of this study is lower in all transformational leadership dimensions as compared to MLQ norms, USA norms and even South African Norms. This leads to the conclusion that public university leaders lack knowledge and skill about transformational leadership styles.

**Table 4:** Correlation between Transformational, Transactional leadership components, laissez-faire leadership style and Faculty Job satisfaction

Transformational leadership components	R
Idealized influence Attribute	0.258**
Idealized influence Behaviors	0.259**
Intellectual stimulation	0.295**
Inspirational motivation	0.309**
Individualized consideration	0.235**
<b>Transactional</b>	
Contingent reward	0.320**
MBE- Active	0.043
MBE -passive	-0.126**
Laissez faire	-0.156**

\*\* . Correlation

The results of Pearson correlation analysis in table 4, indicated that idealized influence attribute and Behaviors practiced by heads of the departments and deans is positively and significantly related with faculty job satisfaction (r=0.258 and 0.259, P<0.01). Besides, faculty perceived intellectual stimulation behavior displayed by deans and heads of the department and faculty job satisfaction are positive related (r=0.295, P<0.01).

When faculty members perceived public university leaders exercise behaviors such as reexamining critical assumption, seeking different ways to solve problems, suggesting news ways to complete an assignment, subordinate faculty members will get satisfied. Besides, the correlation coefficient shows that when public university deans and heads of the department exhibit inspirational leadership behavior, subordinate faculty job satisfaction can also be enhanced (r=0.309, P<0.01). Likewise, Subordinate faculty perceived individualized consideration behavior of leaders and faculty job satisfaction is positively and significantly correlated (0.235, P<0.01). When public university leaders exhibit behaviors like spending time teaching and coaching, treats faculty members as having different needs, abilities and aspirations, subordinate faculty members' job satisfaction will be increased.

Furthermore, Inspirational motivation behaviors displayed by deans and heads of the department as perceived by subordinates and faculty job satisfaction was correlated higher than other transformational leadership style components and the correlation is moderate (r=0.309, P<0.01).

From the transactional leadership components, contingent reward was positively and significantly related with job

satisfaction ( $r=0.320$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). In the same way, Management by exception Passive (MBEP) was negatively and significantly related with faculty job satisfaction. This indicates that MBE passive results in job dissatisfaction. Finally, Laissez faire leadership style which was practiced by Heads of the departments and Deans was negatively and significantly related.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Transformational leadership styles are the dominant leadership style exercised by heads of the departments and faculty deans at the five selected public universities as perceived by the subordinates. It has been disclosed that the heads of departments and deans showed that transactional and laissez faire leadership style was practiced beyond the norm allowed by Bass & Avolio. The finding of this study showed that Public university leaders (Deans and heads of the departments) displayed a combination of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership behaviours. Transformational leadership styles are the dominant leadership style exercised by heads and deans of the public universities under this study yet it is not optimum when it is compared with MLQ Norm. It has been indicated that the university heads of the department and deans showed the transactional and laissez faire leadership style beyond the norm allowed by Bass & Avolio.

Although the norm allowed by for MBE- Passive behavior as the mean score is 1.03 while this study mean is found to be 1.94 which is by far higher. Besides, the MLQ norm for Laissez faire leadership behavior demonstrated by leaders should be (mean= 0.65), the present study mean is found to be (mean= 1.80) which is much more exercised by public university leaders at the five selected public universities in Ethiopia. This highlights that deans and department heads showed less effectiveness in leading their institutions. Public university leaders (Heads of the departments and deans) need to be more transformational, less transactional and avoid too much laissez faire leadership behaviors. Due to lack of leadership training, leaders at the Ethiopian public universities lack knowledge and skills on how to lead their subordinates.

The results of Correlation analysis indicates that subordinate perceived inspirational motivation behaviors displayed by deans and heads of the department and faculty job satisfaction was correlated higher than other transformational leadership style components and the correlation is moderate. The findings of this study proves that transformational leadership is perceived the most effective leadership style in Ethiopia and affirm that the full range leadership theory is supported in Ethiopian settings.

Based on the findings obtained in this study, the following suggestions are forwarded:

- To be effective leaders, the public university leaders such as deans and heads of the department should have more knowledge and skills to build competence about leadership styles so that universities are required to offer training constantly. Therefore, the ministry of education, university boards and top management should establish the leaders' capacity through sufficient training on Full range leadership model or leadership training is highly crucial to improve the leadership in higher education.
- The university leaders are advised to enhance the transformational leadership by being a role model through promoting a broad, inclusive vision, leading by examples,

showing strong commitment to the goals and creating trust and confidence upon subordinate academic staffs.

- Public University Leaders are recommended to improve the motivation of subordinate academic staffs by setting high standards and encourage creativity in the teaching learning process in Ethiopia.
- Public University leaders are advised to lessen the transactional leadership especially, MBE -Passive behaviors and drastic reduction in utilizing laissez-faire leadership are recommended to be applied by deans and department heads to improve effective leadership at higher educational institutions in Ethiopia.
- Public university leaders should show genuine compassion to academic staff members and support constant professional development and personal growth though facilitating training and mentoring them in order to enhance their level of job satisfaction.

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