

INFLUENCE OF GENDER AND LEADERSHIP STYLE ON CAREER COMMITMENT AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF SUBORDINATES

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of gender of supervisors and leadership style on career commitment and job performance of subordinates. The participants used in this study are 140 employees working in two breweries in Edo State. Sixty –seven (67) of the respondents were directly working under female supervisors while seventy - three (73) were working under male supervisors. The instrument used was a questionnaire with already validated items. The independent variables are gender and leadership styles, while the dependent variables are career commitment and job performance. A 2-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), was used to analyse the data collected. All the hypotheses were supported in the predicted direction, as shown, males who work under democratic female leaders had higher mean score on job performance than females working under autocratic female leaders (28.37 vs 18.24). Males who work under autocratic female leaders had a higher mean score on career commitment than females working under democratic female leaders (41.34 vs 34.12). In the light of these findings, the researchers recommended that management in various organizations should provide suitable conditions for the growth and development of the organization. Also, organizational members should learn to put off gender biases and concentrate on effectiveness and productivity.

KEY WORDS: Gender, Leadership style, Career commitment, Job performance, Subordinates

INTRODUCTION

The view that the immediate socio-economic environment is critical in career commitment and job performance has been a potent force in the development of ideas on job performance and career commitment. Human relationships at work particularly friendly superior and congenial work-mate were considered by the human relation school to be critical in career commitment and job performance. In this study, we conceptualized Career Commitment to mean the extent to which an employee is involved and devoted to his job. While, Job Performance is used here to refer to the extent to which an employee is productive and achieves organizational goals.

Whether one is a male or female would not have been an important socio-psychological issue, except that, for some decades now the presence of women alongside their male counterparts in the industrial society has raised series of debates as to the way women and men lead, their differences and their effectiveness. The term gender has been variously used to refer to a collection of the characteristics that are culturally associated with maleness and femaleness. Although, in our daily communication with people, and even in law, the term “gender” and “sex” are used interchangeably but they have different meanings. Sex is used to refer to a person's biological or anatomical identity as male or

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female. Naturally, one's gender identity matches with the anatomical sex.

Leaders are agents of change, persons whose acts affect other peoples more than other peoples' acts affect them. Bernard, (1990) asserted that leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competences of others in the group. Leadership is defined as "an attempt to use non coercive types of influence to motivate individuals to accomplish some goals. That is, when one individual attempt to affect the behavior of others in a group without using the coercive form of power. Leaders are agents of change, persons whose acts affect other peoples more than other people's acts affect them. Bernard, (1990) has observed that leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation or competences of others in the group. The effective leader may have to deal with individual, group and organizational goals. Leader effectiveness is typically a combination of these goals. Individuals may view the leader as effective or ineffective from the total work experience. In fact, acceptance of a leader's directives or requests rests largely on the followers' expectations that a favorable response can lead to an attractive outcome. Leadership results when a person influences followers to accept his requests without any apparent exertion of power. Through an ability to influence, the leader creates and uses the power and authority he receives from followers.

The effectiveness of a leader is measured by the performance of his or her followers on the job and the extent to which such followers are committed to the line of business done by the organization. The view that the immediate socio-economic environment is critical in career commitment and job performance has been a potent force in the development of ideas on job performance and career commitment. Human relationships at work, particularly, friendly superior and congenial work-mate were considered by the human relation school to be critical in career commitment and job performance.

The nature of supervision used by leaders in an organization in the process of the daily affairs and running of the organization can have considerable effects on an individual's job performance and career commitment. One of the major distinctions made in discussing leadership style is that between democratic (employee-oriented) and autocratic (task-oriented supervision).

Democratic employee-oriented style of leadership is one that establishes a good personal relationship with subordinates. The leader using this style of leadership takes an interest in the subordinates and likes to ensure that they achieve their goal. This approach therefore involves consultation and balancing the needs of the organization against the needs of the individual. On the other hand, an autocratic task-oriented leader regards his group as instrumental in achieving objects set by the organization and regards his function as ensuring that the group is organized in such a way as to achieve this aim.

Fleishman and Harris (1962) noted that the autocratic task-oriented leader's behavior is one in which the leader organizes and defines the group activities. Thus he/she defines the role that each member is expected to assume, assign task, plans ahead, establishes ways of getting things done and pushes for production while on the contrary, democratic leader behavior was described under the concept of responsibility without string. The leader helps in defining problems and making resources available to the subordinates.

Many studies have in fact shown that subordinates prefer employee-oriented leaders. Warr and Wall (1975), found that employee-oriented leadership related positively to job performance and commitment. This is so because employee oriented leadership involves notions of consideration and pleasantness and most people prefer others to be considerate and pleasant to them. Though not every individual prefer employee-oriented leaders, some regards their supervisor as a decision maker and they feel it is inappropriate that employees should have to take decisions for which they are not paid. Such individuals regarded participation in decision-making, as part of Herzberg's (1969) hygiene factors, which does not necessarily increase commitment and job performance, rather they prefer task – oriented supervision.

The 1990's are headed in the direction of becoming the decade of women in leadership. Twenty years ago, women managers and executives were decided in the minority, but the 1990's are part of a new era. Today, women are starting new business at twice the rate of men. Women hold about 39 percent of the 14.2 million executive, administrative and management jobs (Wall Street, 1992). Women are emerging in traditionally male-dominated business, political, medical, religious and social activist settings more rapidly than ever before. According to

Patricia and John (1992), today, women owned businesses employ as many people as the Fortune 500 companies put together.

Each woman, like each man, has her own personal style. The personal style, may be any of autocratic, democratic, charismatic, or transformational. The one billion dollar question which is yet to be answered however is if: Women leaders are different from their men counterpart?. Thus far, research suggests some differences, but none stands out. In most cases, a good female leader appears to lead in a manner similar to a good male leader. To have a productive organization, competent leaders are needed regardless of gender. Leaders that can effectively motivate followers to achieve organizational goals by improved job performance and higher sense of career commitment.

Gruneberg (1984) in a study showed that the immediate social environment of a worker, that is, the nature of supervision he/she receives from his/her leader plays an important role in determining career commitment and job performance, and indeed productivity. The proposition that career commitment and job performance has a relevant impact in the level of productivity of an organization has been promulgated for at least half of a century. When the level of commitment and performance of a worker in an organization is low, then the level of productivity will also be low. But on the other hand, if the level of commitment and performance of the worker is high, then the productivity rate will also be high.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether gender and leadership styles of supervisors in an organization has a significant influence on the career commitment of subordinates and the extent to which they perform either high or low on the job. According to Steale and Hubbard (1985), leadership style has been found to have a correlation with career commitment and job performance. Stogdill (1974) review suggested that the relationship between leadership styles and career commitment and performance of subordinates indicates that person-oriented patterns of leadership tend to enhance employees satisfaction. Hose and Mitchell (1944), investigated the relationship between the leaders participation, subordinate authoritarianism, task type and satisfaction. It was found that authoritarian methods and staff educational diversity and adequate collection resources linked to a participative management style

enhance staff performance and commitment to the job. In a survey of 321 community college faculty comparing reported job performance with their perception of the leadership style of their college's president. Mckee (1991) found high correlation between job performance and high relation, low task leadership style.

It is worthy of note that there is no one right way to lead different leadership behaviors can result in the same level of perceived effectiveness in the management role. What is also known is that the demands on leaders are growing as the world becomes a more complex place, markets become more competitive, and the worldwide war for talent and expertise heats up. The wider the range of leadership skills and abilities an individual can bring to their organization, the more certain they can be of successfully overcoming the obstacles and exploiting the opportunity that today's managers must meet on a day to day basis. There is the need to step back and investigate whether there are differences in how women and men lead in organizations. Gender and leadership styles can be responsible for differences in job performance and career commitment among subordinates. This therefore leads to the following four hypotheses postulated in this study.

Hypotheses

1. There would be a statistically significant difference between males and females on career commitment.
2. There would be a statistically significant difference between Autocratic and Democratic styles on career commitment.
3. There would be a statistically significant difference between males and females on job performance.
4. There would be a statistically significant difference between Autocratic and Democratic styles on job performance.

METHOD

Participants

The first step in obtaining a sample is to identify the population of interest. The population for this study was drawn from two brewing companies in Benin City, Edo State. They are the Nigeria Bottling Company (Makers of Coca-Cola) and the 7^{up} bottling company (makers of 7^{up}). Eighty – two (82) participants were drawn from the Nigerian Bottling Company, while the other 65 participants were drawn from the 7^{up}

bottling company. Out of about 160 questionnaires that was administered, only 147 was returned out of which only 140 were found useful for data analysis, this is because 7 respondents did not either fill the questionnaire correctly or did not complete them. From the sample, 89 (63.3%) were males, 44 (31.4%) were females, while 7 (5%) did not indicate their sex. The ages of the respondents were as follows, 37 (26.4%) were 25 years and below, 31 (22.1%) were between 26 – 35 years; 21 (15%) were between 36 – 45 years; 32 (22.8%) were 55 years and above. Based on educational qualification, 83 (59.3%) had OND and below, 47 (33.6%) had degrees (HND, B.sc, B. A, B.Ed., etc.), the rest 10 (7.1%) did not indicate their educational qualifications. Besides this, 70 (50%) indicated that they were single, 48 (34.2%) were married; 10 (7.1%) were separated while 12 (8.5%) were widowed. Also 87 (62.1%) were Christians, 23 (16.4%) were Muslims, 13 (9.3%) were practices traditional religion, while 7 (5%) belong to other religious groups. Lastly, 67 (47.8%) respondents indicated that their supervisors were females while 73 (53%) have male supervisors.

Instruments

The instrument used was a questionnaire, which tapped different measures like demographic information, gender, leadership style, and career commitment and job performance. The questionnaire was divided into five (5) sections. Section A measured demographic information like age, sex, education qualification and so on. Gender was measured by respondents indicating whether they are males or females. Leadership style was measured by using a 30-item scale by Ahmen (1983). Items 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29 measured autocratic leadership style, while items 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 measured democratic leadership style. The scale has a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.71 and a 0.76 validity coefficient among the samples. Career Commitment was measured with a 15-item scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990). The scale was found to have split-half reliability coefficient of 0.66 and a validity coefficient of 0.71. Job

Performance information was tapped using a 19-item scale developed by Helen, (1990). The scale has a split-half reliability coefficient of 0.70 and a validity coefficient of 0.78. Gender of Supervisors was measured by respondents indicating whether they are males or females.

Design /Statistics

The design used for this study was the randomized design. Subjects were randomly selected with special emphasis on workers under either a male supervisor or a female supervisor. There two independent variables of interest in this study and each also in two levels namely; gender (male and female), leadership style (autocratic and democratic). The dependent variables were two, also having two levels namely; career commitment (high and low), and job performance (high and low). The statistical analysis used for the analysis of the collected data is the 2 x 2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Procedure

The following procedure was adopted to achieve the cooperation of the respondents. At the beginning, the researcher obtained permission from the management of the organization after they were referred to the human resource manager who was directly in charge of the workers who thereafter granted permission to administer the questionnaire. At the point of administration, respondents were given information as to the nature and purpose of the study. A guarantee of confidentiality of information and an appreciation of respondents' time was also expressed. Instruments were given the respondents to guide them in the process of filling the items in the questionnaire. Since the findings of the study are based on subjects' response to items on the questionnaire, various steps were taken to ensure good response. Such step included the use of simple and concise statements and questions.

RESULTS

The table below shows the mean performance of Gender and Leadership style on career commitment.

Table I: Means of Gender and Leadership Style on Career Commitment

<u>Leadership style</u>		Autocratic	Democratic	
<u>Gender</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Mean</u>	Total
Male	33.90	34.34	34.12	34.12
Female	51.24	31.44	41.34	41.34
Total	42.57	32.85	75.46	75.46

From the table above, the mean table further revealed that males under democratic performance for females was found to be higher than leadership had a higher mean score than males that of males on career commitment (34.12 Vs. working under Autocratic leadership (34.34 Vs. 41.34). The table of means also revealed that 33.90), while females working under Autocratic workers under Autocratic Style had a higher mean leadership were found to have higher mean scores score when compared with their counterparts under on career commitment than their counterparts under democratic leadership (42.57 Vs. 32.89). The mean Democratic leadership (51.24 Vs. 31.44).

Table II: Summary of 2x2 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) Showing the influence of gender and leadership style on career commitment.

Source	SS	df	Ms	F	p
Factor A	101.32	1	101.32	3.34	ns
Factor B	317.70	1	317.70	10.47	**
A Vs. B	91.04	1	91.04	3.00	ns
Error	4126.84		136	30.34	
Total	4341.39		139		

Note : Factor A = Gender; Factor B = Leadership Style; **significant at p<.01

The results of a 2-way ANOVA show that there was a statistically significant influence of gender on career commitment (F(1,136) = 3.34; ns). Leadership style also has a significant influence on career commitment [F(1,136) =

10.47; p<.01]. Further, analysis also reveals a statistically significant joint influence of gender and leadership style on career commitment [F(1,136) = 3.00; p<0.5].

Table III: Means for gender and leadership style on job performance.

		<u>Leadership style</u>		
		Autocratic	Democratic	Total
<u>Gender</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Mean</u>	Total
Male	20.36	24.76	24.16	22.56
Female	16.12	31.98	24.05	24.05
Total	18.24	28.32	46.61	46.61

When the Job Performance of male and females were compared, table III reveals that females had a higher mean score than the males (24.05 Vs. 22.56) on job performance. On the other hand, the means on leadership style reveals that workers under Democratic leadership perform better than those under the Autocratic leadership

(28.32 Vs. 18.24). Conversely, male working under Democratic leaders had a higher mean performance than male working under Autocratic leaders (24.16 Vs. 20.36), while females working under Democratic leadership were found to have scored higher than females under Autocratic leaders (28.32 Vs. 18.24).

Table IV: Summary of 2 x 2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing the influence of Gender and Leadership Style on Job Performance.

Source	SS	df	Ms	F	p
Factor A	144.93	1	144.93	1.46	ns
Factor B	891.27	1	891.27	9.0	**
A Vs. B	2312.21	1	2312.21	23.35	**
Error	7526.37	36	99.03		
Total	8564.89	139			

Note: Factor A = Gender; Factor B = Leadership Style; **significant at <.01

The 2 x 2 ANOVA summary table reveals that there was no significant main effect of gender on job performance [$F(1,136) = 1.46$; n.s].

However, it was found that leadership style had a significant influence on job performance. [$F(1,136) = 9.0$; $p < .01$], Thus the researcher accepts the hypothesis in line with the Prediction of this study. The result also showed the joint influence of gender and leadership style on job performance of subordinates [$F(1,136) = 23.35$; $p < .01$].

Discussion

In line with the predictions of the study hypotheses two and four were confirmed, however, hypotheses one and three were not confirmed. The first hypothesis which predicted that there would be a significant difference between males and females on career commitment was not confirmed. However the second hypothesis which predicted a difference between autocratic and democratic styles on career commitment was confirmed. The participants in this study showed higher commitment measure under the autocratic leadership style than under the democratic style. This finding reveals that the autocratic style led to more commitment, this finding however did not support most previous studies on leadership style which had usually had been in support of the democratic style (Warr and Wall, 1975; Eze, 1994 and Gouldner, 1960) in most of this studies commitment from subordinates is viewed in terms of an exchange of reward-cost notions, this exchange or bargaining relationships between the individual and the organization means that the more favourable it is from the participant's view point, the greater his commitment. Lurthar, (1996), in a previous study showed that democratic leaders overall are considered as better agents of higher performance. The finding in particular, gains

support from previous study by Hoppock and Mitchell (1974) who found that the authoritarian methods staff performance and participative management style enhance staff performance and commitment to the job.

The third hypothesis which predicted a significant difference between males and females on job performance was also not confirmed by the findings of the study.

Another finding from the study was the confirmation of hypothesis four which stated that there would be statistically significant difference between autocratic and democratic styles on job performance. In this study participants' under the democratic leadership style were found to have performed better on the measure of job performance. Thus, War and Wall (1975), lend credence to this finding in they found that employee- oriented leadership relate positively to job performance. Furthermore, it was found that employee oriented leadership involves notions of consideration and pleasantness, and most people prefer others to be considerate and pleasant to them, however it is not all individuals that prefers employee-oriented leaders. According to Eze (1994) the result in support of the better performance under the democratic leadership led to more commitment from the employees. The argument however points in the direction of the fact that this style encourages cordial interpersonal relationship between the employees and the people – oriented leader who motivates subordinates to perform on their jobs by means of positive exemplary show of influence.

Among the various findings of this study, it was found that employees' career commitment is greater under the autocratic styles than under the democratic style. This reveals that employees are made to have a strong sense of belonging and also perceive their autocratic leader with his insistence on the task as psychologically rewarding in terms of their

commitment to their chosen career. The additional explanation was the significant joint influence of gender and leadership style that was found, this result depicts that if we make the favourable organizational environment to prevail for both male and female subordinate without discrimination, gender bias or differential expectations both male and female subordinates are capable of performing optimally if the right organizational environment is made to prevail.

In a similar vein the study confirmed a significant influence of leadership style to job performance as the democratic style contributed more to the job performance measure than the autocratic style. It is therefore suggested that supervisors and managers in both private and public organizations should endeavour to foster more people – oriented leadership style in order to stimulate more positive performance on the job by the subordinates.

Finally, this study shows clearly that gender and leadership styles of supervisors in an organization have an impact on the way we do our work. It shows that the way employees perceive their leaders whether as autocratic or democratic plays a vital role in determining how they will perform on the job and how much they will be committed to their career and also how they will perform on the job. A positive step must be taken to create a working environment of effective leaders whether the task oriented type or people – oriented, as well as effective subordinates. It is said that the implications for business application is for supervisors and managers to adopt a more effective style of leadership. Managers should be sensitive to the differences that are to be expected if an autocratic style of leadership is used instead of democratic and vice-versa.

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