

Influence of Followership Behaviors on Employee Job Performance in Some Selected Public Universities in Ghana

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Abstract: This study describes the followership behavior and job performance of employees in some selected public universities in Ghana. Over the years, Ghana's public universities have placed emphasis on building leaders as compared to followers whose contribution to organizational success form eighty percent. In order for the heads of these institutions to effectively achieve their set goals and objectives, there is the need for them to rethink followership. Specifically, the objectives were to determine the extent to which followership styles and followership styles dimensions predict employees job performance. Using the quantitative research approach, a total of 160 employees were conveniently selected from two public universities and completed the followership and job performance questionnaires. The findings revealed that although all the followership styles were exhibited by the employees, only exemplary and pragmatist followership styles were dominant. The data analyses also revealed that, whereas both exemplary and pragmatist followership styles were positive and significantly related to job performance, the exemplary followership style was highly significant. Furthermore, there was no difference in the job performance of employees who exhibited exemplary followership style and those who exhibited pragmatist followership style. The study however suggested that heads of departments of the various public universities should not only encourage employees to be exemplary, but also to consciously put measures in place aimed at transforming non-exemplary followers to become exemplary followers.

Keywords: Followership Styles, Job Performance, Public Universities

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent times, organizational hierarchies that encouraged high power distance culture between leaders and followers are on the decline due to decreased management levels and flatter organizations, exposing unethical practices of leaders, and the use of social networks in facilitating business transactions (Mohamadzadeh, Mortazavi, Lagzian & Rahimnia, 2015). Also, the advent of information technology and the dynamics of modern organizations have led to the decentralization of information thereby giving followers easy accessibility to some information that hitherto would have been accessible only by leaders

(Bjugstad, Thompson, & Morris, 2006). These developments have empowered followers causing them to become more courageous than before. The educational field has also experienced these changes with many leaders of international universities laying more emphases on the need to reconsider the high attention placed on leaders as compared to followers (Ye, 2008). There is therefore the need for employers and employees alike to recognize and harness the influence that followers have on modern organizations because without followers, organizational change is impossible; it takes the acceptance and commitment of followers for organizational change to occur (Baker, Mathis, & Stites-Doe, 2011).

In Ghana, leadership has been the main vehicle of groups and social interactions in every institution (Chazan, 1983). As compared to leadership, followership has not attracted much debate because majority of Ghanaians still hold poor conception about followership (Tagoe, 2010) whereas others associate the term 'follower' with inferiority. With Ghana being a country with high power distance culture, followers often look up to leaders for direction, foresight and vision making leaders Lords over followers (Hale & Fields, 2007). However, this may not be so in institutions of higher learning. This is because most of the people who work in the universities are presumed to be informed and knowledgeable which give them some amount of courage to be able to effectively work hand-in-hand with their leaders thereby enhancing the leader-follower relationship.

The work environment of employees in Ghana's public universities is formally structured but as a country with a high-power distance culture, employees in such formalized business environment are required to be totally obedient to the orders of superiors. This could result in certain unacceptable group behaviours such as strike actions, admission and grade corruption which negatively affect job performance (Hinic', Grubor & Brulic, 2016). For instance, the Federation of University Senior Staff Association of Ghana (FUSAG) and the Teachers and Education Workers Union (TEWU) has embarked on several strike actions since the year 2012. Given that these strike actions largely consist of followers who are the majority in any organization, and whose contribution to organizational success form 80 percent (Kelly 1992), productivity is always negatively affected anytime they engage in such group behaviours. Since followers are becoming more courageous and powerful, it is essential to investigate how their followership behaviour influence their job performance and that is what this study seek to do.

The main objective of this research therefore is to examine the influence that followership behaviors have on job performance. A typical research question is, what is the dominant followership style exhibited by employees of the selected public universities? Is there a significant relationship between followership style and job performance of employees of the selected public universities? Do followership styles significantly affect job performance? Is there a significant difference in job performance due to followership styles?

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Kelly's Followership Model

Kelly (1992) proposed a model made up of two behavioral dimensions which explains why one follower is more or less effective than the other. One dimension measures the degree of critical/ uncritical thinking and independence of followers while the other dimension ranks them on a scale of active or passive engagement. Exemplary, pragmatist, conformist, passive and alienated followers are the basic followership styles which are determined by the two behavioral followership dimensions (Kelly, 1992).

Alienated Follower

This group of followers are people who although are independent and critical in their way of thinking yet very passive in putting their thoughts into action. Kelly (1992) states that, almost all alienated followers were once exemplary followers, they later become indifferent when something in the organisation or about the leader somehow displeases them. This causes them to focus their strength on confronting those entities rather than their work.

Conformist Follower

Conformist followers are actively involving but passive on independent thinking and taking of initiatives. The conformist sees decision making and critical thinking as the sole responsibility of the leader but are eager to take orders. Kelly (1992) attributes the cause of the conformist behaviour to their difficulty to bear the burden that comes with freedom. They become anxious when left to make or live with a choice. As a result, they would at all times try to escape the uncomfortable feeling that comes with making choices by transferring them totally to the leader.

Pragmatist Follower

Pragmatist followers fall in between both active and passive independent critical thinking and dependent uncritical thinking. Though less critical, Pragmatists do exercise their independent critical thinking by questioning certain decisions made by leaders. They are actively engaged in any task assigned to them but rarely go beyond them. In Kelly's (1992) opinion, their decision to be in the middle-rather than the extreme is because they want to be able to cope amidst unstable situations that could arise from either within the organisation or the external environment.

Exemplary Followers

Exemplary followers score high on both dimensions underlying Kelly's (1992) followership behaviour. They are actively engaged in assigned task and are also independent, critical thinkers. Because of the

enormous contribution exemplary followers offer to both the leader and the organisation, some leaders go to a great extent to attract them. Not only do exemplary followers put their talent to work, but their brainpower to serve the organisation and other stakeholders. The repertoire of skills they have add considerable vale to the organisation when fully utilised (Kelly 1992).

Passive Follower

This is the opposite of exemplary followers. They are dependent and uncritical thinkers, and also rank low on the level of engagement. Passive followers are not enthusiastic about their assigned task, neither do they do any thinking on their own. In addition, they always need to be supervised when performing a task. Their lack of sense of responsibility and the inability to take initiative means they need constant direction at all times (Kelly, 1992).

Job Performance

In-Role Behavior and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

A study conducted by William and Anderson (1991) pointed out that individual job performance consists of three main aspects: in-role behavior, organizational citizenship behavior of an individual (OCBI), and organizational citizenship behavior to the organization (OCBO). OCBO are general behaviors of employees that the organization benefit from. OCBI are “behaviors that immediately benefit specific individuals and indirectly through this means contribute to the organization” (William & Anderson 1991, p. 602). Naiemah, Hassan and Annuar (2014) states that, the in-role behavior and OCBI developed by William and Anderson (1991) constitute the task and contextual performance proposed by Borman and Motowidlo (1993).

Task and Contextual Performance

In order not to include other factors that are essential to organizational effectiveness, Borman and Motowidlo (1993) made a distinction between task and contextual performance. Hitherto, research on performance and employee selection practices concentrated mainly on an aspect (the activities that appear on employee job description) in the area of performance and this was a real concern to all (Motowidlo, 2003). Several studies have shown that job performance is not limited to only task performance but contextual performance. Outcomes of past studies such as: Van Scotter and Motowildo (1996), Borman, White, and Dorsey (1995), Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994), and MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Fette (1991) support the distinction between contextual and task performance put forward by Borman and Motowidlo (1993). They suggested that, both contextual and task performance contribute to the overall performance of an employee.

3.0 Materials and Methods

In order to achieve the goal of this study, the non-experimental, survey with quantitative research design was employed to determine if followership styles of middle-level staff of the selected universities have effect on their work performance. The population for the study was made up of middle-level staff in the two universities; University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA), and Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA). There were 270 middle-level staff (180 from GIMPA, and 90 from UPSA) at the time of the study. Out of this, a sample of 159 (researcher rounded it up to 160 sample size) was estimated using the statistical table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The sample size (160) was then proportionately divided for the two institutions (107 for GIMPA and 53 for UPSA). A non-probability convenient sampling technique was then employed to select a total of 160 middle-level staff from both institutions. Primary data on followership styles and job performance were collected by administering the questionnaires to the respondents.

The Instruments

This study employed the followership style questionnaire developed by Kelly (1992), and the job performance questionnaire developed by William and Anderson (1991) but concentrated only on IRB and OCBI of job performance as recommendations by Novikov (2016). The followership styles questionnaire is made up of a seven point Likert scale from zero to six and twenty statements based on two dimensions; independent thinking and active engagement. The job performance scale uses 14 items to describe two types of job performance: in-role behavior (IRB), organizational citizenship behavior of individual (OCBI). Out of the 14 items, seven items measure IRB while seven items also measure OCBI. The middle-level staff answered their followership style questionnaire and self-perception on one's job performance (Oyetunji, 2012). Previous studies have found both instrument to be reliable. Mertler, Steyer, and Peterson (1997), and Dawson and Sparks (2008) both found Cronbach alpha of 0.84 for the followership questionnaire. Oyetunji (2013) found the internal consistency reliability of the In-Role job performance to be Cronbach alpha of 0.76, Novikov (2016) found the whole instrument (IRB, OCBI and OCBO) to be Cronbach alpha of 0.84. Field (2002) also found the IRB to be Cronbach alpha values in the range of 0.80-0.94 and the OCBI values in the range of 0.70-0.88.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics used were: age, gender, level of education and experience. Majority of the middle-level staff (48.1%, i.e. 77 respondents) were aged between 30 and 39. Males accounted for 89 (55.6%) and females were 71 (44.8%) of the sampled staff. From the study, statistics indicate that, 20 % (32 respondents) has a diploma, 23.1% (37 respondents) has a higher national diploma (HND), and 56% (91 respondents) has a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education.

Dominant Followership Style

Table 1: Dominant Followership Style of Middle-Level Staff

Followership Styles		
	Frequency	Percent (%)
Alienated	1	0.6
Conformist	10	6.3
Pragmatist	53	33.1
Exemplary	93	58.1
Passive	3	1.9
Total	160	100

Source: Field Data (2017)

A descriptive statistic of the followership styles of middle-level staff is shown in table 1. From the table, the majority (58.1%) of the participants acted as exemplary followers, 33.1% of the participants indicated being pragmatist followers, 6.3% indicated being conformist followers, 1.9% indicated being passive followers, with only 0.6% indicated being alienated followers. Therefore, from the first research question, the exemplary followership style is the most dominant followership style among the middle-level staff of the selected public universities.

Correlation Analyses and Discussion

The second research question was transformed to the following hypotheses.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between followership styles and job performance.

H2: There is a significant relationship between followership styles and job performance

Table 2. Correlation Result of Followership Style and Job Performance

		Alienated Followership Style	Conformist Followership Style	Pragmatist Followership Style	Exemplary Followership Style	Passive Followership Style	Totals of Job Performance
Alienated Followership Style	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	160					
Conformist Followership Style	Pearson Correlation	-.020	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.797					

	N	160	160			
Pragmatist Followership Style	Pearson Correlation	-0.056	-0.182*	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.483	0.021			
	N	160	160	160		
Exemplary Followership Style	Pearson Correlation	-0.093	-0.304**	-0.829**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.240	0.000	0.000		
	N	160	160	160	160	
Passive Followership Style	Pearson Correlation	-0.011	-0.036	-0.097	-0.163*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.891	0.654	0.221	0.040	
	N	160	160	160	160	160
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation	-0.032	-0.056	0.156*	0.192*	-0.040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.689	0.481	0.049	0.015	0.615
	N	160	160	160	160	160

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

Source: Field Data (2017)

From table 2, there is a weak negative relationship between alienated, conformist, and passive followership style and job performance. This means that as the staff exhibit any of these followership styles, their ability to perform high decreases. However, pragmatic ($r = 0.156$ $p = 0.049$) and exemplary ($r = 0.192$ $p = 0.015$) followership styles showed a significant positive relationship with job performance. This implies that, job performance will be high for employees who exhibited both pragmatist and exemplary followership style. From the results, the hypothesis is rejected for alienated, conformist, and passive followers but accepted for exemplary and pragmatist followers.

Although Favara's (2009) studies found only exemplary followership style to be positively related to high job performance, Oyentunji's studies (2013) found no relationship to exist between exemplary followership styles and job performance. On the contrary Oyentunji's studies (2013) rather found passive followership style to be highly related with high job performance. However, Amanollah, Kalkhoran, Naami, and Beshlideh (2013) study revealed that, exemplary followers (high level of independent, critical thinking, and high level of active engagement) basically have higher level of job outcomes. In addition, Novikov (2016) study also found exemplary followers to be high performer as compared to pragmatist followers which also supports Kelly's (1992) followership theory. The result of this study implies that, leaders (heads of department) of the various public universities need more of exemplary middle-level staff in order to achieve their set goals for the institution.

Regression Analyses and Discussion

The following hypothesis was formulated from the second research question.

Ho: There is no significant effect of followership styles on job performance

H2: There is a significant effect of followership styles on job performance

In order to assess the effect of the various followership styles on job performance, a hierarchical regression was employed to ascertain the individual variance. The results of the analysis have been output below:

Table 3. Result of Hierarchical Multiple Regression for the Predictive Effect of Followership Styles on Job Performance

Mode	R	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change		
				R Square Change	F Change	df1		df2	
1	0.201 ^a	0.041	0.034	5.89286	0.041	6.673	1	158	0.011
2	0.221 ^b	0.049	0.037	5.88524	0.009	1.410	1	157	0.237
3	0.222 ^c	0.049	0.031	5.90389	0.000	0.010	1	156	0.921
4	0.227 ^d	0.052	0.027	5.91471	0.003	0.430	1	155	0.513
5	0.253 ^e	0.064	0.034	5.89533	0.012	2.020	1	154	0.157

a. Predictors: (Constant), Exemplary

b. Predictors: (Constant), Exemplary, Pragmatist

c. Predictors: (Constant), Exemplary, Pragmatist, Alienated

d. Predictors: (Constant), Exemplary, Pragmatist, Alienated, Passive

e. Predictors: (Constant), Exemplar, Pragmatist, Alienated, Passive, Conformist

f. Dependent Variable: Job Performance

Source: Field Data (2017)

The results of the analyses above (Table 3) reveals that in the first step, exemplary followership style contributed 4.1% ($R^2=0.041$) variance in job performance. The result further reveals that exemplary followership style is positively related and significant to job performance ($\beta= 0.201$, $p=0.011$). However, in the second step, pragmatist followership style contributed 0.9% ($\Delta R^2 =0.009$) variance in job performance. From the result, there is a positive relationship between pragmatist followership style and job performance ($\beta= 0.159$, $p=0.237$) but not significant. In the third step, alienated followership style did not make any contribution when it was added to the job performance model ($\Delta R^2 =0.00$, $\beta=0.008$, $p=0.921$). Also, in the fourth step, passive followership style contributed 0.3% ($\Delta R^2=0.003$) variance in job performance. The coefficient table reveals that, passive followership style is negatively related to job performance ($\beta= -0.055$, $p=0.513$). In the fifth step, conformist followership style contributed 1.2% ($\Delta R^2=0.012$) variance in job performance. The result further revealed that although conformist followership style is positively related ($\beta= 0.237$, $p=0.157$), it is however not significant. The table indicates that, only the relationship between exemplary followership style and job

performance was positive and has significant effect on job performance ($\beta= 0.201, p<0.05$). However, there is no significant effect of pragmatist, alienated, conformist and passive followership styles on job performance. In line with hypothesis two, only exemplary followership style was the followership style variable that had the most variance on job performance.

The result of the hierarchical regression indicated that only exemplary followership styles had the most variance on the job performance of the middle-level staff. It was revealed that; exemplary followership style is the only style that has a significant effect on job performance as compared to the other four followership styles. Favara (2009), Amanollah et al., (2013), Hinic et al., and Novikov (2016), found exemplary followership style to be high predictor of job performance and job satisfaction. This implies that, middle-level staff who exhibit exemplary followership style will have higher levels of job performance. It could also be said that, since exemplary followership style significantly affects the job performance of middle-level staff, to improve job performance, the leaders of the various public universities should look out for employees who exhibit the exemplary followership style during recruitment. Also, the leaders can put in necessary measures such as training and motivation in order to transform non-exemplary employees to become exemplary. Finally, being aware of the effect of exemplary followership style will enable the head of department of the public universities to know the appropriate leadership style to exhibit when dealing with them.

Independent Sample Test and Discussion

The third question was also transformed to the following hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant difference in job performance due to followership style

H3: There is a significant difference in job performance due to followership style

In order to test the hypothesis that there is a difference in job performance due to followership style of the middle level staff, the independent sample test was employed. The intention had been to use an ANOVA to compare the mean differences across all five groups. However, there was insufficient data in one group (alienated followership) to do so. The researcher then identified and selected the two dominant followership styles that were significant to the job performance construct and hence used them as the two groups against which job performance was tested on. The results of the analysis are displayed in table 4 below:

Table 4. Independent Sample Test for Dominant Followership Style and Job Performance

Group Statistics

Followership Style	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
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Job Performance	Exemplary	93	50.3763	5.88276	0.61001
	Pragmatist	53	48.4528	6.03058	0.82836

*p is not significant at 0.05 level of significance

Source: Field Data (2017)

Independent Sample Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Job Performance	Equal variances assumed	0.206	0.650	1.883	144	0.62	1.92351
	Equal variances not assumed			1.870	106.061	0.64	1.92351

Source: Field Data (2017)

From the output above (table 4), since the first significance value is greater than 0.05 (0.650), the entire table will be analysed using the top rows. From the output table above it can be inferred that there is no statistically significant difference in the job performance ($t_{(144)} = 1.833, p > 0.05$) of middle-level staff who practiced exemplary followership style ($M = 50.38, SD = 5.88$) and those who practiced pragmatist followership style ($M = 48.45, SD = 6.03$). That is, there is enough statistical evidence to conclude that the hypothesis three is invalid. Hence hypothesis three was not supported.

This implies that, although the job performance level of the middle-level staff can change due to the type of followership style they exhibited, this change is not too substantial. The two most dominant followership styles were the exemplary followership style followed by the pragmatist followership style. From the findings, it was revealed that these two most dominant followership styles do not bring about a considerable change in the job performance level of middle-level staff who exhibit these followership styles.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The oversight of many organizations and academic institutions is the focus on building leaders to the near neglect of followers who as well play a key role to the success or failure of any organization. The findings from the study revealed that, exemplary followers are positive predictors of high job performance. Heads of

department of Ghana's public universities should be aware of the different followership styles exhibited by their middle-level staff. Although these leaders are often preoccupied with other administrative duties, there is the need to appreciate the existence of these followership styles since a lack of understanding of it can eventually lead to ineffectiveness on the part of the subordinates (Collinson, 2006). The findings of this study show that, a total of 41.9 percent (alienated=0.6%, conformist=6.3%, pragmatist=33.1%, passive=1.9%) of the middle-level staff are not exemplary followers. This implies that, about 41.9 percent of these middle-level staff have low level of job performance and thus, will not make significant contribution to the growth of the institution. It now becomes the responsibility of the heads of department to now put measures in place aimed at promoting characteristics that can lead to exemplary followership. In order to be able to do this successfully, there should be some aspect of followership studies in leadership education across board, that is, heads of departments ought to understand how to follow (Pitron, 2007) to begin with. This will enable them to transfer that knowledge to their staff to become exemplary followers through behavior modelling. Also, heads of department can do this by consciously encourage non-exemplary followers to be more proactive and this will encourage them to be courageous and assume responsibility (Chaleff, 2009; Kellerman, 2008) thus, making them more actively engaged and highly independent, critical thinkers. Comparatively public universities in Ghana are recognized as one of the best in Africa, and the more exemplary followers (who form the majority) we have, the better these public universities become.

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