The Impact of Leadership Styles on Employees' Organizational Commitment in Sothern Region in Zonal Education Departments, Southern Ethiopia

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of leadership styles on employees' organizational commitment in Zonal Education Departments; Southern Ethiopia. The study adopted a quantitative co-relational research design. A quantitative data was distributed to 126 randomly selected employees in two education departments namely Wolaita and Gamo Zones. The collected data was analyzed by using descriptive (frequency, mean scores) and inferential (correlation and linear regression) statistics. The results indicate that the employee's organizational commitment was found at moderate level. Employee's organizational commitment was significantly correlated with leadership styles. Regression results also indicated leadership styles predict employee's organizational commitment and among the three leadership styles, transactional leadership style has high predictive value on employee's organizational commitment the that there is statistically significant effect of leadership styles on employee motivation at zonal education department. Besides transformational leadership style influence came first concerning the size of the effect. On the bases of the finding, it was recommended that the heads of zonal education department should enhance the level of employees' motivation through the practice of appropriate leadership style which gains employees attention to devote their full efforts.

Keywords: Education departments, Employees Organizational Commitment, Ethiopia, Leadership styles

Introduction

In the contemporary world the issue of leadership has become a burning issue. Today many people worry about the issue of leadership and its role for success or failure of the organization weather it is profit making or service rendering. Leadership plays an important role in employees' creativity, feelings and satisfaction, also in organizations strategy formulation and implementation (Robbins, 2009). Based on the role and importance of leadership, many scholars have tried to define the term leadership yet not they come up with common consensus (Nel, Muller, Hugo and Dwyer, 2004; Hill, 2008; Lussier & Achua, 2013; Kumar, 2014; Wammy & Swammy, 2014).

According to Nel,etal.(2004) leadership as the process whereby one individual influences others to willingly and enthusiastically direct their efforts and abilities towards attaining defined group or organizational goals. Similarly, Cole (2005) defines leadership as a dynamic process whereby one man influences other to contribute voluntarily to the realization and attainment of the goals objectives; aspiration of values of the group that is representing the essence of leadership is to help a group or an organization to attain sustainable development and growth. Another definition by Harem (2004),stated that leadership a set of acts that the leader displays within the organization as a result of internal or external pressure and thus has direct effects on organization's employees behavior positively or negatively. Leadership is the process in which leaders of certain organization influences their followers to achieve an organizational goal.

Secondly, leadership style is a leader's behavior and attitude of governance and supervision. It is the result of personality traits, experience, attitude and philosophy of the leaders (Newstrom and Davis, 1993).According to (Gençer and Samur, 2016) Leadership Style is a set of characteristics used by leaders to influence subordinates so that organizational goals are achieved or it can also be said that leadership style is a pattern of behavior and strategies that are preferred and often applied by a leader. Harem (2004) define leadership style as a set of acts that the leader displays within the organization as a result of internal or external pressure and thus has direct effects on organization's employees behavior positively or negatively.As we can observe from various definitions of leadership style, it is the manner of the leader to direct or lead the workers of the organization to perform their activities to achieve the goal. A leadership style refers to a leader's methods and behaviors when directing and managing others in the work place. According to Mosadeghrad (2003) there are numerous leadership styles such as: autocratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, democratic, participative, situational, transformational, and transactional and laissez faire leadership style. Hersey and Blanchard indicated that there are four leadership style- telling, selling, participating and delegating (Robbins and Coulter, 2009). Besides, Bass (1985) identified three leadership styles - laissez faire style, transformational leadership style, and the transactional leadership style. On the other hand, Blake and Mouton identified five leadership styles according to leader's concern for people and concern for production: impoverished management style, authority- compliance style, middle of the road management style, country club management style and team management style (Robbins, 2009). Different scholars classified leadership style in different ways. All of them have their own bases for classification. It may include the manager's personal background, the Staff being supervised and the organization that they work. However this study employed the three leadership styles identified by Bass (1985) to assess their impact on employee organizational commitment.

The other variable used in this study is about employee organizational commitment. An employee's commitment towards an organization, whether termed as employee commitment or organizational commitment, has been defined by Michael Armstrong as the employee's identification with the values, goals and principles of the hiring organization, a true desire to belong and remain within the organization and to make an effort and an endeavor on the organization's behalf (Armstrong, 2007).There are three dimensions of employee's commitment such as affective, continuance and normative. The first dimension is attributable to emotional attachments. These are employees that - with strong affective commitment - carry on working for an organization for the reason that they simply want to do so(Avolio & Gardner, 2005). The second dimension, continuance commitment, is attributable to economic benefits or fear of loss. In this case, employees evaluate the pros and cons of departure from their present organization (Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang, 2008). The final dimension is attributable to obligatory feelings. Employees with strong normative commitment demonstrate the highest level of loyalty even under unpleasant circumstances. They feel indebted to their organization, and for that reason, they are not prone to leave, have low nonattendance/absenteeism and they are open to accept and commit to any change effected in their organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

In different country with different organization, the relationships between leadership style and employee employees' commitment have been conducted extensively. For instance, a study by Othman *et al*. (2012) investigated the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment. On the similar way, a study by Garg and Ramjee (2013) in public agencies in South Africa found out that there is a weak positive significant relationship between transformational leadership and affective, normative, and continuance commitment. The result in the study confirmed that there is a positive relationship between transactional and transformational leadership styles and organizational commitment. Furthermore, Ali (2011) on his study found statistically significant positive correlations between transactional and transformational leadership styles and organizational commitment. Moreover, Berisso (2015) also assessed the impact of principals' leadership behaviors on teachers' commitment in secondary schools and the result showed that leadership behavior did not influence teachers' commitment and allowed teachers to perform beyond their expectations. Regarding the issue, Hailu (2016) examined the relationship between perceived leadership styles and organizational commitment. The finding exhibited that a weak positive relationship between transformational leadership with affective, continuance and normative commitment. Nevertheless, transactional leadership has a negative and very weak correlation with continuance commitment. On the other hand, laissez-fair leadership has a positive but weak relationship with affective commitment.

It is clear that, the above mentioned study shows that there is no single best leadership style for different organizations and different dimensions of employee commitment. However there is no doubt that effective leadership style alters the commitment of an employee at any organization. Organizationally committed employees have better job performance and strong attachment with the organization (Al-Daibat, 2017). Leadership style plays an important role in employees' creativity, feelings and satisfaction, also in organizations strategy formulation and implementation (Robbins, 2009).

Like other organizations educational sectors also demand leadership styles that play an important role on employees' creativity, feelings and satisfaction. To this end leadership styles and employee commitment are interrelated. However which leadership style is more appropriate to enhance employee commitment under study area is still questionable. To get research based response and to bold out the importance of leadership ship styles on employee commitment in the success of an education sector in general and zonal education departments in particular, the current study was conducted in zonal education departments of Southern Region, Ethiopia. The authors thus realize this gap hence this study assess how the three leadership styles (transformational, transactional and laissez-faire) influences (affective, continuance and normative) commitment in zonal education departments. Accordingly, the following research questions were answered to attain the purpose of this study.

1. What is the extent of employees' commitment under the study area?
2. Is there association between leadership style and employees' commitment in the study area?
3. What impact of leadership styles on employees' organizational commitment under the study area

The study is expected to contribute to different bodies in many ways. First the findings of this study will add to the wealth of knowledge in other leadership and employees' commitment studies. It could also be helpful

for individuals who want to conduct further studies in related topics and other organizations those face similar problems.

Inevitably, this study will contribute to the growing body of research on the impacts of leadership styles on employees' commitment by examining the three important leadership styles and their impact on employees' commitment. It is believed that this study will add value to the literatures on zonal education departments' leadership styles, especially in the Ethiopian settings, since there were limited literatures done on similar settings. The results of the study will also help zonal education departments to practice leadership style that will develop employees' commitment, and will also contribute a lot to anyone who is interested by providing information on the impact of leadership styles on employees' commitment.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the researcher guided by the conceptual frame work of the study which was based on the theories of leadership and organizational commitment. This conceptual framework was adopted from full range leadership model which was introduced by Avolio and Bass (1991). Thus, this theoretical model includes three styles of leadership: (a) transactional, (b) transformational, and (c) Laissez-Faire and Meyer and Allen (1997), organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative), As shown in the framework, leadership styles are taken as the independent variables where as organizational commitment was used as the dependent variable.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework
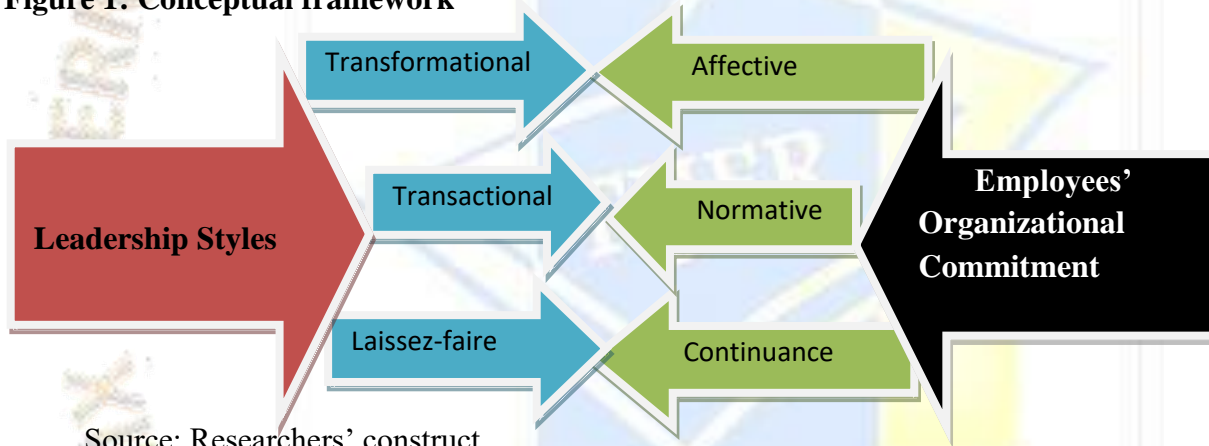
Source: Researchers' construct

Research Methods

This study was used a quantitative co relational research design. The study was carried out in Southern Region Zonal education departments. There are eleven Zonal Education Departments in Southern Region Ethiopia; two Zonal Education Departments were selected by simple random selection method. Totally 126 employees were randomly selected for survey. To collect relevant data, the researcher adapted and modified standard instruments of Avolio and Bass (2004) the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and Organizational Commitment (OC) by Meyer and Allen (1997). According to Meyer and Allen (1997), measurement of OCQ was three dimensions such as affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. OCQ consists 12 items and each variable has 4 items. The OCQ comprises by 5 point Likert scale. The scale ranges from 1to 5 as follows: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = strongly agree. High score shows high employees' organizational commitment perception while low score implies low perception in the scale. For the purpose of this study the previous 12 items will be reduced in to 9 because three ambiguous items will be omitted to make it more clearly for respondents

easily to fill the questionnaire. The questionnaires will be employed for directorates, expertise and common service providers.

To ensure reliability and validity of the instrument pilot study was conducted at Konso Zone education department. Accordingly, the reliability results were; .96 for transformational, .78 for transactional, and .76 for Laissez-faire leadership style, and .86 for employee's organizational commitment. Hence, as suggested by Burg-Brown (2016), if the coefficient is between .700 - 1.0, it is generally found to be internally consistent. Both content and face validity of this research instruments were judged by members of advisory committee and expertise in the field at Arba Minch University, and their comments incorporated in this study. To analyze and draw meaning from the collected data, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used. Accordingly, the analysis was made by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean ratings and correlations' were used.

Results

A totally of 126 questionnaires were distributed to workers (directorates, expertise andcommon service deliverers) and 122 (96.8%) were filled and returned back for further analysis.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of respondents (n=122)

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	80	65.6
	Female	42	34.4
Work Experience	Under 5	5	4.1
	6-10	11	9.0
	11-15	37	30.3
	16-20	30	24.6
	21 and above	39	32.0
Educational Level	Up to 12th Grade	14	11.5
	Certificate	25	20.5
	Diploma	17	13.9
	BA/BSc	46	37.7
	MA/MSc	20	16.4
Employee Status	Directorate	26	20.8
	Expertise	75	65.3
	common service deliverers	21	13.9

Source: Researchers field study 2022

The data in Table 1 above shows that from the total employee respondents, 65.6% are males and 34.4.% are females. From the employees,4.1% have under 5 years of experience,9.0% have 6 - 10 years, 30.3% have 11 - 15 years,24.6% also have an experience of 16 – 20 and 32.0% have 21 and above. From this we can conclude that, employees of zonal education department have adequate working experience that they can perform the given tasks. Regarding educational level, the majority of the employees are BA/BSc degree holders (37.7%). From the total employees, 20.8% are directorates, 65.3% expertise and the remaining (13.9%) are common service deliverers. The demographic information of the respondents implies that the respondents participated on this study were qualified and had enough experience for plausible information on the study expected.

3.1 The extent of employees' commitment under the study area

To analyze this objective descriptive statistics (mean score and standard deviation) were used.

Table 2. The level of employees' organizational commitment with respect to their immediate leaders' leadership styles.

Descriptive Statistics

Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Level
I feel like part of the family at this Department.	122	3.56	1.037	ｌerate
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided that I wanted to leave this Department now.	122	3.07	.964	Low
This Department has a great deal of personal meaning for me	122	3.59	.969	Moderate
It would be very costly for me to leave this Department right now.	122	3.34	1.019	Low
For me personally, the cost of leaving this Department would be far greater than the benefit.	122	4.05	8.727	High
I would violate a trust if I quit my job with this Department now.	122	3.21	.998	Low
I feel a strong sense of belonging to this Department	122	3.59	.841	Moderate
I feel emotionally attached to this Department.	122	3.25	1.039	Low
I would not leave this Department right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it.	122	3.38	1.313	Low
Total Affective Commitment	122	3.49	.64841	Moderate
Total Continuance Commitment	122	3.48	3.0632	Moderate
Total Normative Commitment	122	3.29	.95726	Low
Grand Total mean	**122**	**3.64**	**3.9858**	**Moderate**

According to Zaidaton & Bagheri (2009) the mean score below 3.39 was considered as low, the mean score from 3.40 up to 3.79 was considered as moderate and mean score above 3.8 was considers as high.

The three employees' organizational commitment dimensions such as affective, continuance and normative Commitment of zonal education department employees were assessed by using mean rates. The nine item questions were used to assess employees' organizational commitment.

Table (2) in the above shows that the level of employee organizational commitment as a whole among members of study sample study Zonal education departments in Southern Region, Ethiopia was moderate, with a mean of (3.64) and a standard deviation of (3.98), similarly also it was reported that the mean of the responses of the participants of the study area concerning Affective Commitment with a mean of (3.49) and a standard deviation of (.648) and a moderate degree of assessment. Continuance commitment measured with a mean of (3.48) and a standard deviation of (3.063) and also indicated moderate level. The degree of assessment of normative commitment measures with a mean of (3.29) and a standard deviation of (.957) and also indicated low level. These results indicates that, the employees under the study area were not achieved their highest motivation level due to the practice of present leadership style which is exhibited by their leaders. Therefore the leader should employ an appropriate leadership style which increases employee organizational commitment.

3.2 The relationship between leadership style and employees' commitment under the study area

Table 3. Correlation Analysis between leadership style and employees' commitment

Employees' Organizational Commitment (Dependent Variable)	Pearson Correlation	Leadership styles (Independent Variable)			
		Transformational	Transactional	Laissez-faire	Total Leadership Styles
Affective Commitment	Pearson Correlation	.337**	.323**	.092	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.311	
	N	122	122	122	
Continuance commitment	Pearson Correlation	.162	.061	.105	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.074	.501	.248	
	N	122	122	122	
Normative commitment	Pearson Correlation	.162	.421**	.257**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.074	.000	.004	
	N	122	122	122	
Total commitment	Pearson Correlation				.226*
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.012
	N				122

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

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

In the above, Table 2 shows the relationship of leadership styles (transformational, transactional and laissez-faire) and organizational commitment (affective, continuance, normative commitment). The affective commitment result shows that r(122) = 0.337, P= 0.00 and r(122) = 0.323, P = 0.00 for transformational and transactional leadership styles respectively. This shows there was a statistically significant positive association between affective commitment with transformational and transactional leadership as P<0.01 where as affective commitment has positive but insignificant relationship with laissez-faire leadership style r(122) = 0.92, P= .311. On the other hand, continuance commitment result reveals r(122) = 1.62, P= .074 r(122) = 0.061, P = .501and r(122) = .105, P =.248 for transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles respectively. Thus, the result shows that there is a statistically insignificant positive association between continuance commitment with transformational transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles as P>0.01.

On the different way, normative commitment is positively and significantly associated with both transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles as r(122) =.421, P = 0.00 and r(122) =.257, P = 0.04 respectively however it was insignificantly but positively associated with transformational leadership styles. On the other hand, when we see the grand total employees' organizational commitment with grand total leadership style, the result

shows that there is statistically significant association with the three dimensions of organizational commitment with the total three dimensions of leadership styles as indicated in the Table 3 r(122)= .226, p=0.12.This implies that the leadership styles practiced in Zonal Education Departments have statistically significant correlation with employees' organizational commitment.

3.3 The Impact of Leadership Styles on Employees' Commitment under the Study Area

In this study, three predictor variables (transformational, Transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles) were included in the regression analysis with employee commitment dimensions (affective, continuance and normative) as the dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis was done to confirm the impact of leadership styles with employee organizational commitment.

This analysis was takes place by taking the average organizational commitment value as a dependent variable.

Table 4. Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					R square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. change
	.242[a]	.159	.035	3.57656	.159	2.448	3	118	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Commitment
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership Styles (Transformational, Transactional, Laissez-faire)

The above result in Table 4 shows that leadership styles had statistically significantly predicts employees' organizational commitment, multiple correlation coefficient value as $F_{1, 118}$= 2.448, $p < .001$. The (R2) was (.159) which indicates that leadership styles were capable of accounting for (15.9%) of the changes in the dependent variable (organizational commitment). Therefore leadership styles significantly predict the organizational commitmen organizational commitment t hence the equation is greater than zero and extremely unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table 5. Multiple linear regression analysis

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.998	1.699		3.530	.001
	TRANSF	.094	.418	.023	.225	.001
	TRASC	.910	.575	.170	1.583	.001
	LASZF	.403	.360	.107	1.118	.001

*a. Dependent Variable: TOCM   *Significant at 1% level*

Table 5, the coefficient indicates that transactional leadership significantly predicts the organizational commitment among the three leadership styles (p<.001). The unstandardized coefficient for transformational leadership (0.910) indicates that as one unit increases in transformational leadership, the academic staff continuance commitment increases by 0.094 units.

The coefficient result on the above Table 5, shows that transactional leadership style positively and significantly predicts employees organizational commitment at (p<.001) statistical level. A unit change on transformational leadership style would increase employees' organizational commitment by 0.94 standard deviations all other factors held constant.

On the same way the above Table 5 depicts that laissez-faire leadership styles significantly predicted employees' organizational commitment(p<.001). The unstandardized coefficient for laissez-faire leadership (0.403) indicates that as one unit increases in laissez-faire leadership, the Zonal education departments' employees' commitment increases by 0.403 units.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to examine the impact of leadership styles on employees' organizational commitment in Zonal Education Departments; Southern Ethiopia The following is an explanation of the results of this study. The results of this study shows that, the commitment level of Zonal Education Departments employees was found at moderate . The average mean of employee motivation as a whole is (3.64) with a standard deviation of (3.9858) , as shown in table (2) which indicates the moderate level of employee motivation under the study area. The average mean score of affective commitment is (3.49) with a standard deviation of (0.6484) which found at moderate level, an average mean score of continuance is (3.48) with a standard deviation of (2.0632) which found at moderate level and an average mean score of normative is (3.29) with a standard deviation of (2.0632) which found at low level. This implies that, the employees under the study area were not achieved their highest commitment level due to the practice of present leadership style which is exhibited by their leaders and other factors which not included in this study. The results showed that employees of Zonal Education Departments in Southern Region, Ethiopia were not fully committed on their leaders' leadership style.

With regard the relationship between leadership style and employees' organizational commitment under the study area correlation analysis were made. The result shows that, the whole organizational commitment dimensions were positively and significantly correlated with leadership styles. Affective commitment positively and significantly correlated with transformational and transactional leadership styles but insignificantly with laissez-faire.
However, continuance commitment is insignificantly correlated with transformational, transactional and laizess-faire leadership styles. On the other hand normative commitment significantly correlated with transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles and insignificantly with transformational leadership styles.

Regression analysis was also carried out to examine the impact of leadership styles with the dimensions of the organizational commitment. The three leadership styles such as transformational transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles were examined. Accordingly, the coefficient indicates that transactional leadership significantly predicts the organizational commitment among the three leadership styles and following the laissez-faire. The unstandardized coefficient for transformational leadership also exhibited with predicting an employees' organizational commitment in Zonal Education Departments employees' in Southern Region, Ethiopia.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Effective leaders are always use variety of leadership style which is suitable for an organizational employee to perform their tasks with high motivation and commitment. The main objective of this paper was to assess the impact of leadership styles on employees' organizational commitment in zonal education departments. Based on the results of this study, the researchers concluded that the commitments of Zonal education department employees were found at at moderate level. On the other hand, the results indicated that there is a significant relationship between leadership styles implemented by their immediate leaders and employees' organizational commitment. Moreover conclusions can be made that leadership styles have a predictive power on employees' organizational commitment .From the three leadership styles, transactional leadership style has shows significant effect on employees' organizational commitment that means followers receive rewards for acting according to the leader's wishes

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made. The finding indicated that employees' of zonal education department were not fully committed. This indicates that the employees were not performing their activities up to their maximum effort. Therefore the zonal education department heads and directorates should practice an appropriate leadership style that enhances employees' commitment.

There is strong relationship between leadership style that the immediate leader practiced in the education departments and their employees' organizational commitment. Thus the immediate leaders of each employee should understand, aware and implement the transactional type of leadership style which highly predicts employees' organizational commitment. The present study was only conducted on the impact of three leadership styles (transformational, transactional and laissez-faire) on employee organizational commitment (affective, continuance and normative) Therefore, future researchers should conduct on including other types of leadership styles with respect to these variables on different Zonal education departments to enhance employee organizational commitment.

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