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## Full Length Research Paper

# A Study on Leadership and Faculty Performance at Makerere University

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Good leadership is essential for improved performance of public universities. However, despite signs of good leadership at Makerere University, performance of faculties at the University has continuously declined overtime. This has made the University's status to continuously drop as seen in the Webmetrics rankings. This study therefore sought to examine the relationship between leadership and faculty performance and Makerere University. The study took the form of a cross sectional survey and correlation design to establish the relationships between leadership and faculty performance. A sample of 462 staff of Makerere University was taken. Results reveal a significant positive relationship between leadership and faculty performance (r = .223\*\*\*, p<.01). This implies that a unit change in leadership will cause a 22.3% improvement in faculty performance at the university. The regression analysis results also indicate that leadership significantly predicted faculty performance (Beta= .087, Sig. = .000). For universities to improve faculty performance, they should put in place policies that bring about good leadership.

Keywords: Leadership, Performance, Public Universities.

#### INTRODUCTION

A century of scholarly literature has produced a myriad leadership and management theories and models and at the same time has muted the leadership and management terminology to the synonymous definition of "good management" (Kakabadse and Kakabadse 1997). From the so-called "great man theory" (Bernard, 1926, Tead, 1935) to the current favor of transformational leadership thesis (Avolio, Waldman and Yammarino, 1991; Tichy and Devanna, 1986) and "New Age" value and spiritual leadership (Banner and Blessingame, 1988;

Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Fairholm, 1991, 1993; Senge 1992). Four generic perspectives have provided a basis for the diversity of leadership theories and models including the personality, behavioral, contextual and development perspectives.

Good leadership is essential for improved performance of public universities. However, performance of faculties at Makerere University has continuously declined. This has made the University's status to continuously drop as seen in the Webmetrics rankings (The New Vision,

Thursday, February 5, 2009). This could be due to ineffective leadership (Mamdan 2007). Thus the purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between leadership and faculty performance and Makerere University.

## LEADERSHIP AND FACULTY PERFORMANCE

Educational leadership has a special purpose in society and any definition of educational leadership should be deeply concerned with what Duignan and Macpherson (1993) have termed as value based leadership which should be primarily concerned with the generation of knowledge and the promotion of effective teaching and learning. In a faculty it about taking action and promoting the implementation of change to shape the institution's character and direction (Trow, 1985). It aims, of course, is to improve and to become more effective in developing and delivering the curriculum (Andrews and Sonder, 1987; Hoyle et al., 1985). As articulated by Kerry and Murdoch (1993); educational leadership is that part of management function which provides progress towards new goals in a time of change. To achieve this leadership in faculties starts with the creation of a vision for the organization or one of its constituent parts, in such a way that others share and own the vision. Making the vision happen is concerned with allowing, encouraging or facilitating others to achieve an optimum performance. both in relation to their own potential and also in relation to the needs and mission of the organization. Leadership is essential in all organizations, and educational institutions are no exception, but the concept of academic leadership is unique in higher education and, arguably, is concerned with leadership that extends beyond the organization into the wider world that higher education institutions seek to serve. Academic leadership is unquestionably a central component in striving towards academic excellence. Wolf, H.H 1990 argues that strong, creative and effective leadership is central in attaining academic excellence. Such academic leadership is important in managers at all levels in higher education. and should not be viewed as the sole preserve of senior managers. Indeed, one of the main responsibilities of senior staff should be to cultivate the academic leadership potential of their subordinates. The future of academic institutions depends on the development of effective leadership skills at all levels in the organization (Munitz, B. 1995). As in businesses, not-for-profit, and governmental organizations, leadership in faculties is an important requirement of managerial positions. Top administrators, staff members, are often called on to assume leadership roles in their respective functions and as members of teams or projects (Dyer, 1977). In academia, these responsibilities come in addition to normal educational duties in the respective disciplines

Although there is some overlap between leadership and management, leadership has been defined as a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes. This distinguishes it from management, which involves the efficient and effective maintenance of an organization's current activities, and the implementation of policies (Bush and Glover, 2003).

## Insights from leadership theory

Leadership theory contends that the behaviour of individuals can significantly influence the behaviour of others. Thus it is argued that an effective leader can influence others to accomplish organizational goals. Leadership has traditionally been conceptualized as an individual-level skill. The most influential leadership model was proposed by Burns (1978), who characterized behavior leader as either transactional transformational. In transactional leadership, leaders and followers exchange needs and services to accomplish independent objectives, or a form of leadership by bartering, and positive reinforcement is given for good work (Sergiovanni, 1991). Transformational leadership theory relates to the charisma, intellectual stimulation and consideration of individual leaders (Bass. 1985). Leadership is considered a factor that has a major influence on the performance of organizations, managers and employees (Wang et al., 2005; Bass, 1985, 1988a, Conger and Kanungo 1987, House 1977, and Yagil 1998) view leadership as a function of the relationship between a manager/leader and her/his followers. Bass, for example, has stated that since charisma is a product of interpersonal relationships, and can be attributed by an individual to their immediate supervisor/manager, it is not the monopoly of top leaders in an organization (Bass 1998,). The reorientation of faculties towards change can better be understood in the context of wider changes in the world of organizations, viewed in this context, it becomes clear that, like all other complex organizations, schools and universities must rapidly improve their ability to position themselves proactively in more differentiated and turbulent environments (Heinz, 2002). To do so, they must adopt new organizational structures and practices and overcome one-sided mental models of an earlier period. This is true in the leadership of faculties where by leadership should not be vested in dean, but through heads of departments and sections in the faculty and this also strengthens the concept of distributive leadership which according to existing literature the idea of distributed leadership overlaps substantially with shared (Pearce and Conger, 2003), collaborative (Wallace, 2002), democratic (Gastil, 1997.) and participative (Vroom and Yago, 1998) leadership concepts.

This accumulation of allied concepts means that distributed leadership is often used in a shorthand way to

describe any form of devolved, shared or dispersed leadership practice in faculties (Alma, 2008). While it is certainly the case that all leadership is to some extent distributed, as leadership is essentially organizational influence and direction, it does not mean that everyone in organization simultaneously leads. Distributed leadership theory would recognize that many people will have the potential to exercise leadership in any organisation but the key to success will be the way that leadership is facilitated, orchestrated and supported. Recent studies (Leithwood, K, Day, C., Sammons, P., Harris, A., Hopkins, D, 2007) have shown that different patterns of distributed leadership are critical in achieving organizational improvement and change and the initial findings from this work show that the patterns of leadership practice in faculties affect organizational performance. The findings also reveal that the effects and impact of distributed leadership on organizational outcomes depends upon the pattern of leadership distribution. This work highlights two key conditions necessary for successful leadership distribution. First, leadership needs to be distributed to those who have, or can develop, the knowledge or expertise required to carry out the leadership tasks expected of them. Second, effective distributed leadership needs to be coordinated, preferably in some planned way (Leithwood et al., 2006b).

To achieve this notion of distributed leadership, it must be through the idea of leadership development at all levels in the faculties this is can be defined as expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes (McCauley, C.D., Moxley, R.S., Van Velsor, E. 1998), Rather than focusing on leader development, which builds the human capital of individuals, leadership development focuses on building the social capital of organizations . Day, 2000 argues that Leader development is thought to occur through training in individual skills and abilities. However, leadership has been shown to be a complex interaction between the designated leader and the social and organizational environment. The underlying assumption is that more effective leadership occurs through the development of individual leaders, and that leadership can be added to organizations to improve social and operational effectiveness. A complementary perspective approaches leadership as a social process that engages everyone in the community. In this way, each person is considered a leader, and leadership becomes an emergent property of effective systems. However, in academic departments. leadership is required for both administrative and academic functions. In contrast to the administrative departments, the faculty members who find themselves in these roles do not necessarily aspire to managerial or leadership positions. This can be especially true for staff who serve as department chairs. It is important to point

out that most faculty members are at a college or university because they have been educated for, and want to, teach and/or do research. Because academia follows the principle of shared governance, decision making involves both the central administration and the faculty members of a campus. To fulfill its role, the staff must first supply, and then develop members as leaders to help assure that individuals who have the expertise in the respective disciplines guide the academic programs. Many faculty members thus end up in both managerial and leadership roles without ever having aspired to them. This creates the unique challenge of campus leadership.

## Leadership in academia

Leadership in today's academia must take into account the needs and demands of various stakeholders, and include these major stakeholders in the change process. It is no longer acceptable for any one stakeholder group to place responsibility for instituting change on the shoulders of one individual leader (Gregory, 1996; Rowley and Sherman, 2003). Leadership is also about having meaning. In organizational terms, this is about building vision. This, according to Fullan (1981), should permeate the organization with values, purpose and integrity for both the and how of improvement. The way in which vision is built, however, also needs to be distributed. It is shared through the dynamic interaction of organizational members and leaders, resulting in a homologous sense of purpose concerning both the content and the process of change. Researchers who have studied leadership in today's more business-like university environment, where the university must be able to manage equally competing needs from the current marketplace, have focused on transactional leadership. transformational leadership, or a combination of both. Transactional leadership, which is based on motivating people to perform in exchange for specific rewards, has been shown to enable the university to manage the conflicting demands of maintaining a balanced budget while continuing to support the needs of the faculty (Pounder, 2001). However, the limitation of this approach to leadership is evident when leadership lacks the resources to provide a basis for the exchange, it can become difficult to obtain commitment from the faculty.

The ability of a leader to generate commitment to change underscores the primary dimensions of transformational leadership (Ramsden, 1998). Originally defined by Bass (1985) and Bass and Avolio (1994), transformational leadership is the ability to motivate employees to excel beyond what is expected through the use of individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, and charisma. The practice of transformational leadership by the department dean has been found to be related to faculty satisfaction and the willingness to expend the

Table 1. Study population

Category	Population	Sample
Academic Staff	2,590	335
Administrative Staff	189	127
Sub-Total	2,679	462

Table 2. Age and level of education

			Level of Education				
			Bachelors degree	Masters	PhD	_ Total	
	15-25 years	Count	11	2		13	
		Row%	84.6%	15.4%		100.0%	
Age		Column%	4.2%	2.0%		3.3%	
	26-36 years	Count	142	53	6	201	
		Row%	70.6%	26.4%	3.0%	100.0%	
		Column%	54.0%	53.0%	17.1%	50.5%	
	Above 36 years	Count	110	45	29	184	
		Row%	59.8%	24.5%	15.8%	100.0%	
		Column%	41.8%	45.0%	82.9%	46.2%	
Total		Count	263	100	35	398	
		Row%	66.1%	25.1%	8.8%	100.0%	
		Column%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Source: Primary Data

Table 3. Leadership and faculty performance

	Leadership	Faculty Performance		
Leadership	1.000	.223**		
Faculty Performance	.223**	1.000		
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: Primary Data

extra effort required in the change process (Neumann and Neumann, 1999). Furthermore, this style of leadership works well in situations where administrators, have few resources with which to induce behavioral change (Rowley and Sherman, 2003). This should compose the concept of distributed leadership which does not imply that the formal leadership structures within organizations are removed or redundant. Instead, it is assumed that there is a powerful relationship between vertical and lateral leadership processes. It also means that those in formal leadership roles are the gatekeepers to distributed leadership practice in their faculties (Alma 2008).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This section presents the research methods used in

Table 4. Regression Analysis

		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	.921	.321	<u> </u>	2.867	.000
	Leadership	.146	.078	.087	1.882	.000

Dependent Variable: Faculty Performance

Source: Primary Data

conducting the study. It includes the research design, target population, sampling design, data collection, and data analysis and presentation methods.

#### Research design

The study took the form of a cross sectional survey design. Correlation survey design was used to establish the relationships between leadership style, collegial systems, change management and faculty performance.

## Study population and sampling

The survey population comprised of 20 faculties of which 2.590 are academic staff and 189 are administrative staff of Makerere University. Samples of 335 and 127 were taken from academic staff and administrative staff respectively as seen in Table 1:

#### Measurement of variables

Scales from previous studies were used to measure the study variables.

Leadership: Leadership was measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1994). A 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree was used.

Faculty **Performance**: Faculty Performance measured using a six item scale adapted from Yolande R. Mc Nicoll et.al. (2006). A 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree was also used.

#### **FINDINGS**

This section presents findings from primary data. We start with background information by examining respondents' age and levels of education and later examine the study variables using regression and correlations.

#### Age by level of education of the respondents

Cross tabulation was employed to explore the distribution of the age by level of education of the respondents. Table 2 presents the results:

The results in table 2 reveal that 3.3% of the respondents belonged to the 15-25 years age group, 50.5% to the 26-36 age group and 46.2% to the 36 years and above. In addition, 66.1% of the respondents possessed bachelor's degrees, 25.1% had master's degrees and 8.8% possessed PhDs. There was association between one's age and level of education ( $X^2 =$ , 22.073, Sig. = 0.000).

## The relationship between leadership and faculty performance

The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was employed to establish the relationship between leadership, change management, collegial system and faculty performance in the oil Industry.

Correlation results in table 3 indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between leadership and faculty performance (r = .223\*\*, p<.01). This implies that a unit change in leadership will cause a 22.3% improvement in faculty performance.

## **Regression Analysis**

Regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which leadership predicted faculty performance. Table 4 presents the results:

The regression analysis results in table 4 indicate that leadership significantly predicted faculty performance

(Beta = .087, Sig. = .000).

#### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Correlation results indicated a significant and positive relationship between leadership and faculty performance. This implies that when the transformational, transactional and distributive leadership of the university is enhanced this would cause a significant positive effect of 22.3% on faculty performance. The results receive support from the works of Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2007) who assert that different patterns of distributed leadership are critical in achieving organizational improvement and change and the initial findings from their work show that the patterns of leadership practice in faculties affect organizational performance. Their findings also revealed that the effects and impact of distributed leadership on organizational outcomes depends upon the pattern of leadership distribution. They highlight two key conditions necessary for successful leadership distribution. First, leadership needs to be distributed to those who have, or can develop, the knowledge or expertise required to carry out the leadership tasks expected of them. Second, effective leadership needs to be coordinated, preferably in some planned way (Leithwood et al., 2006b). The practice of transformational leadership by the department dean has been found to be related to faculty satisfaction and the willingness to expend the extra effort required in the change process (Neumann and Neumann, 1999).

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the findings, we can conclude that; leadership has a significant impact on faculty performance. Therefore, for universities to improve faculty performance, there should be good leadership. Universities should put in place policies that bring about good leadership in implementing the elements of leadership to improve faculty performance.

Further, the administration of the university should put emphasis on achieving effective leadership in the faculties as this will cause positive change that will lead to growth in the university.

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