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Full Length Research Paper

Investigating the influence of Leadership on Change Management at Makerere University

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Leadership is an essential ingredient of persons with supervisory responsibilities in any organization. It is the element that organizations rely on to translate goals and objectives into accomplishments. Colleges and universities, however, present unique challenges for scholars and practitioners who seek to better understand and/or practice leadership, because it has to be applied in a variety of different settings including administrative departments, academic departments, and in student and faculty organizations. Makerere university, being the oldest and biggest university in Uganda is expected to be at the apex of leadership in Ugandan university. However, Makerere university, despite using a collegial system and trying to put some leadership mechanisms in place, there has been a persistent decline in its performance. This has been partly attributed Makerere's failure to change to the dynamics of the current academia. This study therefore sought to examine how leadership at Makerere university influenced change. A quantitative survey research design was used where quantitative research data collection and analysis methods were employed. A sample of 335 was extracted from the academic staff. On the other hand, a sample of 189 was taken from the administrative staff, giving a total sample of 462 for the study. Questionnaire method was used to collect data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze background information of the respondents, while correlation and regressions were used to analyze the relationship between study variables. Correlation results indicate a significant and positive relationship between leadership and change management ($r = .158^{}$, $p < .01$). This implies that a unit change in leadership will cause a 15.8% improvement in change management. Further, regression analysis results indicate that leadership predicts change management (Beta = 0.69). The regression model is significant (Sig = .000). Given the findings, universities should undertake a deliberate policy to develop a dialogue orientation with staff to be able to foster effective leadership in the faculties in order to bring about positive change.**

Keywords: Leadership Change, Management, University

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an essential ingredient of persons with supervisory responsibilities in any organization. It is the element that organizations rely on to translate goals and

objectives into accomplishments (Simon, 1976). This is as true for colleges and universities as it is for other organizations. Colleges and universities, however,

present unique challenges for scholars and practitioners who seek to better understand and/or practice leadership, because it has to be applied in a variety of different settings including administrative departments, academic departments, and in student and faculty organizations (Rowley & Sherman 2003).

Sicherman (2005) describes a faculty in the context of Makerere University as an administrative grouping of a number of departments specialized in a particular discipline which is headed by a dean. A review of the leadership literature suggests that there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are scholars who have attempted to define the concept (Bass, 1990). Fiedler (1978) argues that the effectiveness of any group or organization is dependent on achieving a match between the leadership style and collegial system which the leader operates. Shattock quoting Hardy in the politics of collegiality (1996) defined collegial systems as the organized anarchy, bureaucratic and technocratic approaches to decision making. This makes collegiality an important mechanism in managing the competing pressures and is more conducive to meeting the challenges of change management. However, Makerere university, despite using a collegial system and trying to put some leadership mechanisms in place, there has been a persistent decline in its performance. Scholars have attributed this failure to change to the dynamics of the current academia (Mamdan, 2007). This study therefore sought to examine how leadership at Makerere university influenced change. The study focused on Makerere University, which is located in the Kawempe Division, Kampala District in Uganda.

Leadership and Change Management

The importance of leadership to the change management process is underscored by the fact that change, by definition, requires creating a new system and then institutionalizing the new approaches (Kotter, 1995). Transformational leaders are able to guide organizations through very significant change, they do this by transforming things around them (Michael, 1996). Such leaders release the energy of enthusiastic followers, this creates the psychological ground for common action. Transforming leaders engage with their potential followers uplifting and inspiring them. (Nicholls, 1988). Tichy and Devanna (1990) show that transformational leaders engage in a process, which includes a sequence of phases: recognizing the need for change, creating a new vision, and then institutionalizing the change. A review of literature on change oriented or outstanding leadership, which also includes charismatic and visionary leadership (House, 1995) indicates that the majority of approaches share the common perspective that by articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of

group goals, and providing individualized support, effective leaders change the basic values, beliefs and attitudes of followers so that they are willing to perform beyond the minimum levels specified by the organization (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1996). According to Bass (1995). Charisma attention to individualized development, and the ability and willingness to provide intellectual stimulation are critical to leaders whose firms are faced with demands for renewal and change. The idea that transformational leaders creates a culture which embraces change is consistent with change literature research by Brown and Eisenhart (1997). Their description of the three key characteristics of successful managers in a continuously changing organizations proposes that the successful leader creates a system (i.e. and organizational culture) that is neither too rigid (over-controlling the change process) nor too chaotic (so the change process falls apart) The practice of transformational leadership by head departments, 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) Further, this style of leadership works well in situations where administrators, have few resources with which to induce behavioral change (Rowley and Sherman 2003).

Leadership in faculties is about being a leading professional, leading others in a collegiate style, recognizing and encouraging quality, fostering and developing talent, intervening, coaching, being a role-model of exemplary behavior, taking risks and acting as an agent of change (Marsh, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991). For organizational change to succeed during a transition period central management ideally should adopt a transformational leadership style, such leaders possess along term perspective and view intra and extra organisational factors from holistic orientations (Bass, 1985). These individuals know how to develop a vision of what the organization can be, mobilize the organization to accept and work toward achieving the vision, and institutionalize the changes to endure over time (Liu and Dubinsky, 2000).

Parry (2003) specifically examined leadership styles in public sector organizations and found that a transformational leadership style has a positive effect on the innovation and effectiveness of these organizations. A transformational leader would be a good facilitator of this process by promoting the creation of a culture that encourages team decision-making and behavioral control (Manz and Sims, 1990). The leader must work at getting large numbers of people in the organization involved in the transformation process (Eisenbach, Watson, Pillai 1999). The idea that the transformational leader creates a culture which embraces change is consistent with change literature research by Brown and Eisenhart (1997). Their description of the three key characteristics of successful managers in continuously changing organizations

proposes that the successful leader creates a system (i.e. an organizational culture) that is neither too rigid (over controlling the change process) nor too chaotic (so the change process falls apart). The more specific dynamics of the transformational model consists of five parts: challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart (Kouzes and Posner, 1988). Tichy and Devanna's (1990) definition of transformational leadership is concerned with change, innovation, and entrepreneurship. According to them, transformational leadership is processed through recognizing the need for revitalization, creating a new vision and institutionalizing change.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research design, study population, sampling techniques, data collection and analysis methods that were used in the study.

Research design

A quantitative survey research design was used where quantitative research data collection and analysis methods were employed.

Study Sample

The total population of academic and administrative staff of Makerere university at the time of this study was 2,679. Out of these, 2,590 were academic and 189 were administrative staff. A sample of 335 was extracted from the academic staff. On the other hand, a sample of 189 was taken from the administrative staff, giving a total sample of 462 for the study.

Data collection methods

Questionnaire method was used to collect data. The study questionnaire was developed guided by literature and pre-tested before the survey.

Validity and Reliability

The importance of a test achieving a reasonable level of reliability and validity cannot be overemphasized. To the extent a test lacks reliability; the meaning of individual scores is ambiguous. If a test is not reliable, it is not valid. Validity was measured basing on a factor analysis which confirms the dimensions of the concept that have been

operationally defined, to ensure appropriateness of results. Validity of the instrument was obtained using the Content Validity Index (CVI). Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using the Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Cronbach's alpha (α) 0.5) (Cronbach, 1946) test. To test for the internal consistencies of the scales used to measure the variables.

The reliability analysis of the instrument was performed using information collected from the pilot testing of the questionnaire to confirm adequacy and completeness of the instrument. Table 1 displays the reliability indices/coefficients for all constructs used in the study.

Results in table 1 show that both variables had an alpha co-coefficients value higher than 0.5. This was considered satisfactory for the study. On the other hand, both alpha reliabilities (α) for all scales were above 0.7, ranging from 0.7236 to 0.7889, thereby meeting acceptance standards for research (Nunnally, 1978).

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze background information of the respondents, while correlation and regressions were used to analyze the relationship between study variables.

FINDINGS

This section presents findings from the study.

Age and work experience

The results in table 2 below were generated to explore the age by number of years worked by the respondents.

The results in table 2 reveal that 3% of the respondents belonged to the 15-25 years age group, 55.5% to the 26-36 age group and 41.5% to the 36 years and above. In addition, 14.8% of the respondents had worked for 5-10 years, 75.9% for 11-20 years and 9.3% had worked for 20 years and above. There was association between one's age and marital status ($X^2 = 17.485$, Sig. = 0.002).

The relationship between the study variables

As earlier mentioned, correlation method was used to examine the relationship between leadership, change management. Table 3 presents the results.

Correlation results in table 3 indicate a significant and positive relationship between leadership and change management ($r = .158^{**}$, $p < .01$). This implies that a unit change in leadership will cause a 15.8% improvement in change management.

Table 1. Validity and reliability

Variable	Anchor	Cronbach Alpha Value (a)
Leadership	5 point	0.7236
Change Management	5 point	0.7889

Table 2. Age and work experience

			Age			Total
			15-25 years	26-36 years	Above 36 years	
Number of Years Worked	5-10 Years	Count		35	24	59
		Row%		59.3%	40.7%	100.0%
		Column%		15.8%	14.5%	14.8%
	11-20 Years	Count	8	175	119	302
		Row%	2.6%	57.9%	39.4%	100.0%
		Column%	66.7%	79.2%	72.1%	75.9%
	Above 20 Years	Count	4	11	22	37
		Row%	10.8%	29.7%	59.5%	100.0%
		Column%	33.3%	5.0%	13.3%	9.3%
Total		Count	12	221	165	398
		Row%	3.0%	55.5%	41.5%	100.0%
		Column%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
X ² =, 17.485 df = 4, Sig. = 0.002						

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Matrix

	Leadership	Change Management
Leadership	1.000	.158**
Change Management	.158**	1.000

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

Source: Primary Data

Table 4. Regression results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
	(Constant)	.825	.281			2.212	.000
	Leadership	.139	.056	.069		1.755	.000
	Dependent Variable: Change Management						

Source: Primary Data

Regression analysis

In addition to correlation, regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which leadership predicted

change management in Makerere university. Table 4 shows the results.

The regression analysis results in table 4 indicate that leadership predicts change management (Beta = 0.69).

The regression model is significant (Sig = .000).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results revealed a significant and positive relationship between leadership and change management. It was evident that enhancement of the leadership behavior in terms of honesty, empathy, integrity and consensus building, this will significantly affect change management positively in the different faculties and consequently affecting the leadership of the university. The results revealed that when leadership is enhanced it would cause a 15.8% positive change in change management. Michael, (1996) supports the results when he posts that transformational leaders are able to guide organizations through very significant change. They do this by transform things around them. Such leaders release the energy of enthusiastic followers, this creates the psychological ground for common action.

Transforming leaders engage with their potential followers uplifting and inspiring them. The literature of Nicholls, (1988); Tichy and Devanna (1990) supports that results of the study by posting that transformational leaders engage in a process, which includes a sequence of phases: recognizing the need for change, creating a new vision, and then institutionalizing the change. A review of literature on change oriented or outstanding leadership, which also includes charismatic and visionary leadership (House, 1995) indicates that the majority of approaches share the common perspective that by articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, and providing individualized support, effective leaders change the basic values, beliefs and attitudes of followers so that they are willing to perform beyond the minimum levels specified by the organization (Podsakoff *et al.*, 1996). According to Bass (1995). Charisma attention to individualized development, and the ability and willingness to provide intellectual stimulation are critical to leaders whose firms are faced with demands for renewal and change.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study posts that leadership has a significant positive relationship with change management. This implies that good leadership brings about positive change in the organization.

Universities should undertake a deliberate policy to develop a dialogue orientation with staff to be able to foster effective leadership in the faculties in order to bring about positive change.

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