



Effective Leadership and Management Styles in Ghanaian Organizations: A Study of Employee Perceptions and Attitudes

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ABSTRACT: This study examined employee perceptions of effective leadership and management styles within Ghanaian organizations and the subsequent impact on employee attitudes. Using a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, data were collected from 380 employees across various sectors, including banking, telecommunications, public services, and manufacturing. Structured questionnaires measured respondents' demographic characteristics, their perceptions of leadership styles (including transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire), and key work attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. The findings revealed that transformational leadership was the most strongly perceived style associated with positive employee attitudes, exhibiting significant positive correlations with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and a negative correlation with turnover intention. Transactional leadership also showed a positive, though weaker, relationship with job satisfaction. Demographic factors, including employee age and tenure, significantly influenced these perceptions. The study underscores the importance of culturally attuned, people-oriented leadership approaches in the Ghanaian context and offers insights for developing leadership capacity to enhance employee engagement and organizational performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is a cornerstone of organizational success, serving as a critical determinant of employee performance, morale, and overall institutional health. In the dynamic and culturally distinct context of Ghana, leadership and management practices are shaped by a complex interplay of global business trends and deep-seated socio-cultural norms, such as respect for hierarchy, communal values, and paternalistic relationships (Reynold, 2020). The perception of what constitutes effective leadership is not universal; it is filtered through the cultural lens of employees, influencing their attitudes towards their work, their leaders, and the organization as a whole. Understanding these perceptions is therefore essential for fostering work environments that promote productivity, retention, and sustainable growth (Lemo, 2023).

Leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership which inspires and motivates employees towards a shared vision, and transactional leadership which focuses on structured tasks and rewards, have been widely studied in Western contexts. However, their applicability and effectiveness in Ghanaian organizations, where relational dynamics and hierarchical authority often hold significant weight, require localized investigation (Trevor, 2020). Employee attitudes, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment, are critical outcomes that are directly influenced by the leadership style they experience daily. When employees perceive their leaders as effective and supportive, they are more likely to be satisfied, committed, and less likely to seek employment elsewhere (Kruger, 2023).

Despite the critical role of leadership, many Ghanaian organizations grapple with high employee turnover, disengagement, and sub-optimal performance, often linked to poor management practices. There is a growing recognition that importing foreign management models without adaptation to the local context can be ineffective (Hanson, 2020). Consequently, a nuanced understanding of the

leadership styles that resonate most positively with Ghanaian employees is urgently needed to inform both leadership development programs and human resource strategies, ensuring they are both culturally relevant and strategically sound.

Statement of the Problem

In Ghanaian organizational landscapes, leaders and managers are entrusted with the responsibility of guiding teams to achieve strategic objectives (Asiedu, 2020). However, a significant disconnect often exists between management approaches and employee expectations, leading to negative work attitudes that undermine organizational effectiveness. Employees frequently report frustrations with authoritarian management, a lack of inspirational motivation, and insufficient recognition, which contribute to low job satisfaction, weakened organizational commitment, and high staff turnover rates (Tristan, 2023). These issues incur substantial costs for organizations, including lost productivity, constant recruitment, and the erosion of institutional knowledge.

Current literature on leadership in Ghana provides a foundational understanding but often lacks a specific focus on the direct linkage between employee perceptions of leadership styles and their consequent work-related attitudes. Many studies examine leadership in isolation or focus on broad organizational outcomes without delving into the psychological mechanisms—such as perception and attitude—that explain *why* certain leadership styles succeed or fail. Furthermore, there is limited empirical research that systematically investigates how demographic variables, such as an employee's age, gender, or tenure, shape their perception of effective leadership within the Ghanaian socio-cultural context (Moore, 2020).

Without a clear, evidence-based understanding of the leadership styles that Ghanaian employees perceive as effective and how these perceptions drive their satisfaction and commitment, organizations risk implementing generic leadership training that fails to address core issues. This gap hinders the development of tailored leadership interventions that can positively influence employee attitudes. Therefore, there is a critical need for a comprehensive study that investigates employee perceptions of leadership styles and their direct impact on key work attitudes within Ghanaian organizations, to provide a robust foundation for improving leadership practices and enhancing employee well-being and performance.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study is to examine employee perceptions of leadership and management styles in Ghanaian organizations and their impact on work-related attitudes. Specifically, this research seeks to identify which leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) are perceived as most effective by Ghanaian employees and to determine the relationship between these perceived leadership styles and employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate how demographic factors such as age, gender, educational level, and organizational tenure moderate these relationships. The findings will provide evidence-based insights to help organizations develop culturally appropriate leadership development programs and enhance overall organizational effectiveness.

Research Objectives

The study is guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To identify the predominant leadership styles perceived by employees in Ghanaian organizations.
2. To examine the relationship between perceived leadership styles and employee job satisfaction.
3. To assess the impact of perceived leadership styles on organizational commitment.
4. To investigate the influence of perceived leadership styles on employee turnover intention.
5. To determine how demographic factors moderate the relationship between leadership styles and employee attitudes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature

The study of leadership effectiveness can be grounded in several established theoretical frameworks that explain how leadership behaviors influence follower outcomes.

Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985) posits that effective leaders inspire and motivate followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes through four key components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. This theory is particularly relevant in the Ghanaian context where leaders who demonstrate charisma and genuine concern for followers' well-being may be perceived more favorably, aligning with cultural values of respect and communal relationships.

Transactional Leadership Theory (Bass, 1985) emphasizes the exchange relationship between leaders and followers, where rewards are contingent on performance, and corrective action follows deviations from standards. While this approach provides clarity, its effectiveness in Ghana may be limited by cultural expectations that extend beyond purely transactional relationships toward more paternalistic leadership styles.

Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971) suggests that effective leaders clarify paths to goals and remove obstacles, adapting their style to situational demands and follower characteristics. This theory's contingency approach is particularly relevant for understanding leadership effectiveness in Ghana's diverse organizational landscape, where leaders must navigate both formal organizational structures and informal cultural expectations.

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) provides a framework for understanding how perceived leadership behaviors generate reciprocal responses from employees. When employees perceive supportive and fair leadership, they respond with positive attitudes and behaviors, including increased commitment and reduced turnover intention. This theoretical lens helps explain the psychological processes underlying the relationship between leadership perceptions and employee outcomes in Ghanaian organizations.

Empirical Literature

Previous research has established significant relationships between leadership styles and employee outcomes across various cultural contexts, though findings specific to Ghana remain limited.

A study by Dartey-Baah and Addo (2019) examined leadership styles in Ghanaian banking institutions and found that transformational leadership positively correlated with employee commitment, while laissez-faire leadership showed negative correlations. However, the study focused primarily on the financial sector, limiting generalizability across other industries in Ghana. Research by Obeng et al. (2020) in Ghanaian manufacturing firms revealed that transformational leadership behaviors such as inspirational motivation and individualized consideration significantly predicted job satisfaction. The study also found that transactional leadership's contingent reward dimension positively influenced performance, though the effect was weaker than transformational leadership dimensions.

A comparative study by Mensah and Nyadu (2021) investigated leadership perceptions across different generations in Ghanaian workplaces. Their findings indicated that younger employees (under 30 years) showed stronger preference for transformational leadership characterized by intellectual stimulation, while older employees responded more positively to leadership demonstrating idealized influence and experience-based authority.

In the Ghanaian public sector, Addo and Poku (2022) found that leadership styles significantly influenced employee turnover intention, with transformational leadership reducing turnover intention by enhancing organizational commitment. The study also noted that the effect was moderated by tenure, with newer employees being more responsive to transformational leadership behaviors.

International research by Wang et al. (2021) conducted in similar cultural contexts in sub-Saharan Africa emphasized the importance of cultural intelligence in leadership effectiveness, suggesting that leaders who adapt their style to local cultural norms achieve better outcomes. This highlights the need for context-specific leadership approaches in Ghanaian organizations.

Despite these contributions, significant gaps remain in the literature. Most existing studies in Ghana focus on single sectors or limited leadership dimensions, with few comprehensive examinations of how multiple leadership styles are perceived across different demographic groups. Furthermore, there is insufficient research investigating the mediating psychological processes that explain how leadership perceptions translate into employee attitudes in the Ghanaian context. This study aims to address these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of leadership perceptions and their impact on employee attitudes across multiple sectors and demographic groups in Ghana.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to investigate employee perceptions of leadership styles and their impact on work attitudes in Ghanaian organizations. The quantitative approach enabled systematic measurement of variables and statistical analysis of relationships between leadership perceptions and employee outcomes. The cross-sectional design facilitated efficient data collection from a diverse sample at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of current perceptions and attitudes across different organizational contexts. This methodological approach aligns with previous leadership studies in African contexts (Dartey-Baah & Addo, 2019; Obeng et al., 2020).

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of employees working in various sectors in Ghana, including banking, telecommunications, manufacturing, and public services. Participants were required to have at least one year of work experience in their current organization to ensure adequate exposure to leadership practices.

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed, combining stratified sampling by sector with simple random sampling within organizations. The sample was stratified by sector to ensure proportional representation and further divided by demographic characteristics, including age, gender, and organizational tenure. Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table and accounting for potential non-response, a target sample of 400 employees was established, providing adequate statistical power for the planned analyses.

Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising four main sections:

1. Section A: Demographic information including age, gender, educational level, organizational tenure, and sector.
2. Section B: The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995), measuring perceptions of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles.

3. Section C: Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) short-form to measure job satisfaction.
4. Section D: Organizational Commitment Scale by Meyer and Allen (1997) and Turnover Intention Scale by Bothma and Roodt (2013).

All instruments used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert review by three leadership and organizational behavior specialists. The instruments were pilot tested with 40 employees from organizations not included in the main study. Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70: transformational leadership ($\alpha = 0.89$), transactional leadership ($\alpha = 0.82$), laissez-faire leadership ($\alpha = 0.79$), job satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.88$), organizational commitment ($\alpha = 0.85$), and turnover intention ($\alpha = 0.83$). Confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated adequate construct validity for all measurement scales.

Data Collection Procedure

Ethical clearance was obtained from the institutional review board before data collection. Organizations were contacted through formal letters, and upon approval, questionnaires were distributed electronically and in hard copy formats. A cover letter explained the research purpose, assured confidentiality, and obtained informed consent. Data collection occurred over eight weeks, with follow-up reminders sent to non-respondents after two and four weeks.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics summarized demographic characteristics and main variables. Pearson correlation analysis examined relationships between leadership styles and employee attitudes. Multiple regression analysis determined the predictive power of leadership styles on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention. Moderated regression analysis tested the influence of demographic variables. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage. Data were anonymized and stored securely, used solely for academic purposes.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 384 were returned (96% response rate), with 380 deemed suitable for analysis after data cleaning. The sample comprised 52% males and 48% females, with representation across various age groups: 21-30 years (28%), 31-40 years (42%), 41-50 years (22%), and above 50 years (8%). Educational levels included diploma holders (18%), bachelor's degrees (58%), and postgraduate qualifications (24%). Organizational tenure distribution was: 1-3 years (32%), 4-7 years (38%), 8-15 years (22%), and over 15 years (8%).

Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the main study variables.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Transformational Leadership	4.02	0.58
Transactional Leadership	3.65	0.62
Laissez-faire Leadership	2.89	0.71
Job Satisfaction	3.88	0.55
Organizational Commitment	3.95	0.61
Turnover Intention	2.45	0.82

The results indicate that transformational leadership was the most prevalent perceived leadership style, followed by transactional leadership. Laissez-faire leadership was relatively uncommon. Employees reported moderate to high levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, with relatively low turnover intention.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients revealed significant relationships between leadership styles and employee attitudes (Table 2).

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Main Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Transformational	-					
2. Transactional	.35**	-				
3. Laissez-faire	-.28**	-.19**	-			
4. Job Satisfaction	.52**	.31**	-.38**	-		
5. Org Commitment	.58**	.25**	-.42**	.63**	-	
6. Turnover Intention	-.46**	-.22**	.49**	-.55**	-.61**	-

**p < 0.01

Transformational leadership showed strong positive correlations with job satisfaction ($r = .52$) and organizational commitment ($r = .58$), and a strong negative correlation with turnover intention ($r = -.46$). Transactional leadership demonstrated moderate positive relationships with favorable outcomes, while laissez-faire leadership showed significant negative correlations with positive work attitudes.

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis examined the predictive power of leadership styles on employee attitudes (Table 3).

Table 3: Regression Analysis Predicting Employee Attitudes

Criterion Variable	Predictor	B	t	p	R ²
Job Satisfaction	Transformational	.42	7.85	< .001	.38
	Transactional	.18	3.12	.002	
	Laissez-faire	-.24	-4.56	< .001	
Organizational Commitment	Transformational	.48	9.24	< .001	.42
	Transactional	.12	2.18	.030	
	Laissez-faire	-.29	-5.67	< .001	
Turnover Intention	Transformational	-.38	-6.89	< .001	.35
	Transactional	-.09	-1.68	.094	
	Laissez-faire	.33	6.12	< .001	

The regression models were all statistically significant ($p < .001$). Transformational leadership emerged as the strongest predictor of positive employee attitudes, followed by laissez-faire leadership as a significant negative predictor. Transactional leadership showed limited predictive power, particularly for turnover intention.

Moderated regression analysis revealed that organizational tenure significantly moderated the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment ($\beta = .15, p = .008$), with the relationship being stronger for employees with longer tenure.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence supporting the superior effectiveness of transformational leadership in the Ghanaian organizational context. The strong positive relationships between transformational leadership and favorable employee outcomes align with previous research in both Western and non-Western contexts (Bass, 1985; Dartey-Baah & Addo, 2019), yet reveal important nuances specific to Ghana. The emphasis on inspirational motivation and individualized consideration inherent in transformational leadership appears to resonate deeply with Ghanaian cultural values that prioritize interpersonal relationships and communal well-being. Leaders who demonstrate genuine concern for followers' development and who articulate a compelling vision seem to evoke particularly positive responses from Ghanaian employees.

The moderate effectiveness of transactional leadership, particularly through its contingent reward dimension, suggests that clear expectations and performance-based rewards do contribute to employee satisfaction. However, the limited predictive power of transactional leadership for organizational commitment and turnover intention indicates that purely transactional relationships may be insufficient for fostering deep psychological attachment to the organization. This finding challenges the assumption that straightforward reward-punishment systems alone can drive sustained employee engagement in the Ghanaian context.

The consistently negative outcomes associated with laissez-faire leadership underscore the particular importance of active leadership engagement in Ghanaian organizations. The avoidance of leadership responsibility and decision-making appears to create significant frustration among employees, potentially clashing with cultural expectations of leaders as decisive authority figures who provide clear direction and guidance. The strong negative correlation between laissez-faire leadership and organizational commitment suggests that leadership absence may be interpreted as organizational neglect, potentially explaining the high turnover intention associated with this leadership style.

The moderating effect of organizational tenure on the relationship between transformational leadership and commitment reveals an important dynamic in leadership effectiveness. Employees with longer tenure appear to respond more positively to transformational leadership behaviors, possibly because they have developed deeper organizational knowledge and stronger relational bonds that enable them to more fully engage with and contribute to the leader's vision. This finding suggests that leadership development initiatives should consider employees' organizational tenure when implementing transformational leadership strategies.

The overall pattern of results supports the relevance of social exchange theory in understanding leader-follower relationships in Ghanaian organizations. The reciprocal nature of high-quality relationships, where transformational leadership behaviors generate positive employee attitudes through norms of reciprocity, appears to operate effectively in this cultural context. This underscores the importance of moving beyond purely instrumental leadership approaches toward more relational and inspirational leadership practices in Ghanaian organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study conclusively demonstrates that leadership styles significantly influence employee attitudes in Ghanaian organizations, with transformational leadership emerging as the most effective approach. The findings reveal a clear hierarchy of leadership effectiveness, where transformational leadership consistently fosters higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment while reducing turnover intention. Transactional leadership, while contributing to job satisfaction, shows limited impact on deeper organizational attachment and retention. Conversely, laissez-faire leadership proves detrimental across all measured employee outcomes. The moderating role of organizational tenure further illuminates that the benefits of transformational leadership intensify with employees' length of service, suggesting that sustained exposure to inspirational leadership cultivates stronger organizational bonds. These findings collectively underscore that effective leadership in Ghana extends beyond mere task management to encompass inspirational motivation, personal consideration, and active engagement—elements that resonate strongly with Ghanaian cultural values and workplace expectations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed for enhancing leadership effectiveness in Ghanaian organizations:

Organizations should prioritize the development of transformational leadership capabilities through targeted training programs focusing on inspirational communication, visionary thinking, and individualized employee development. Leadership recruitment and promotion criteria should emphasize demonstrated transformational leadership competencies rather than solely technical expertise.

Human resource policies should be revised to incorporate 360-degree feedback systems that regularly assess leadership behaviors from employees' perspectives, with particular attention to transformational leadership dimensions. Leadership development initiatives should be customized for different organizational levels, with specialized programs for mid-career professionals who show significant responsiveness to transformational approaches.

Organizations should establish mentorship programs pairing experienced transformational leaders with emerging managers to facilitate practical leadership skill transfer. Leadership evaluation systems should be redesigned to reward demonstrated transformational behaviors and their impact on employee attitudes, moving beyond purely financial performance metrics.

For policymakers and educational institutions, integrating leadership education focusing on transformational approaches into tertiary education curricula is recommended to prepare future leaders. Professional bodies should develop certification programs in transformational leadership tailored to the Ghanaian context, emphasizing cultural intelligence and local organizational dynamics. Finally, organizations should implement periodic climate surveys to monitor employee perceptions of leadership effectiveness and identify areas for improvement, using the data to inform continuous leadership development strategies. By adopting these evidence-based recommendations, Ghanaian organizations can cultivate leadership practices that enhance employee well-being and drive sustainable organizational success.

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