

Transformative Leadership Style as a Satellite to Change Economic Environment

Audrey Muyuni
Department of Religious Studies
Mulungushi University
Central, Zambia
Email: muyuniaudrey@gmail.com

Ireen Moonga
Department of Literature and Languages
Mulungushi University
Central, Zambia
Email: nganduiree@gmail.com

Jive Lubungu
Department of Literature and Languages
Kwame Nkrumah University, Zambia
Central, Zambia
Email: lubbs1976@gmail.com

Victor Chikampa
Department of Social Sciences
Mulungushi University
Central, Zambia
Email: victorchikampa@gmail.com

Abstract

Higher education institutions face a unique set of challenges in today's rapidly changing and increasingly competitive environment. They must not only provide quality education but also meet the demands of stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and funding agencies. To achieve excellence in higher education, transformative leadership is essential. Despite the efforts of higher education institutions to enhance their quality of education and meet stakeholder expectations, many still struggle to achieve sustainable growth and excellence. This highlights the need for having transformative leadership that can foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement to align institutional goals with stakeholder needs and expectations. Hence, this study reviewed findings on wellness and leadership in higher education that aligns leadership styles and organizational excellence in Zambian colleges of education. The study was guided by behavioural and contingency theories. Behavioural theory posits that a leader's behaviour is the best predictor of his or her leadership influences and, as a result, is the best determinant of his or her leadership success. Contingency theory, which is similar to situational theory, takes a broader view that includes contingent factors about a leader's capability and other variables such as The objectives of the study was to examine the role of leadership in creating a culture of innovation, continuous improvement, and stakeholder engagement in Zambian Colleges of Education. The research was qualitative in nature employing comparative design to review leadership styles and organisational well-being which enhances changing economic environment. Three Zambian Colleges of Education were purposively selected in order to have a wider comparison on leadership styles used to achieve changing economic environment through transformative leadership. The study findings showed that all types of leadership were used in Zambian Colleges of Education. Furthermore, the study offered some practical recommendations for higher education leaders and managers who are interested in fostering a transformative leadership culture and achieving organizational excellence.

KEY WORDS: Transformation, Leadership Style, Economic, Environment, Higher Education

Background of the Study

It is not easy to define leadership in precise terms. Different scholars have defined leadership differently. Lubungu (2022: 137) defined leadership as the ability to influence others through communication individually or as a group, to accomplish

worthwhile, meaningful and challenging goals. Smith (2020: 67) defines leadership as “the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. It is a human factor which binds a group together and motivates it towards its goals” While Harold Koontz and Cyril O'Donnell define it as “influencing people to follow you and to work willingly for the advancement of common goal” (Goel, 2012: 183). The common denominator of these definitions is that there can be no leadership without people. A leader, therefore, is an individual person who influences others working with them, guides others to work in the proper direction and coordinates group members to work as a team. The leader is aware of external as well as internal environments and factors using strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analyses. They encourage followers to be creative and motivate them towards achievement of common goals. It is on this premise that this chapter will base its focus.

The purpose of the study was to review some of the most widely accepted leadership styles in three selected Zambian Colleges of Education. These include transactional, laissez-faire, autocratic, authoritarian, and transformational leadership. The article examines how and whether these leadership styles impact performance outcomes and employee well-being such as employee stress, well-being, productivity, turnover and absenteeism. Lubungu et al (2022) asserted that leadership and organisational excellence intertwine in the sense that leadership helps to improve individuals, groups, culture, and organizational performance. In the absence of skilled leadership there can be no organisational well-being to posit change economic environment in education provided. Further, Torri and Toniolo (2010) defined organisational well-being as the organisation's ability to promote and maintain the physical, psychological and social well-being at all levels and for every job. A poor organisational atmosphere may cause burn-out and lead to behaviours that constitute psychological violence and harassment which might be a hindrance to achieve productivity education in the face of changing economic environment through recommended leadership styles.

Therefore, Colleges of Education, as educational organisations, are expected to foster leadership styles that promote organisational excellence. For instance, workers or subordinates should feel motivated, inspired, and comfortable. Healthy organisations lead to healthier employees, which in turn reduce the need to take time off from work. Understanding the nexus between leadership and organizational well-being allows both subordinates and policy

makers to develop a better understanding of how these institutions of higher learning are run. To contribute towards change economic environment the Zambian Colleges are expected to reinforce and adapt leadership styles that meets all stakeholders' well-being. Because different people require different styles of leadership, this study reviewed multiple leadership styles and suggested that organisational excellence may result in a happy and healthy workforce.

This study contributes to literature on widely accepted leadership styles that lead to a desirable atmosphere among workers in Colleges of Education. Lack of healthy leadership and a focus on organisational excellence suggests a bleak future of the institutions. The implication of the study for Zambian Colleges of Education is that leaders of these organisations can use the findings of this study to select the best leadership style that relates to their environment and achieve organisational excellence of their institutions. The following segment presents the theories which were utilised in this study.

The Behavioural and Contingency Theories

This study is anchored on behavioural and contingency theories. Behavioural theory posits that a leader's behaviour is the best predictor of his or her leadership influences and, as a result, is the best determinant of his or her leadership success. Contingency theory, which is similar to situational theory, takes a broader view that includes contingent factors about leader capability and other variables. Branches of contingency theory include Fiedler's Contingency Theory, Hersey and Blanchard Maturity Model, Path-Goal Theory, and the Vroom-Yetton Expectancy Theory, all of which will be taken into account.

Fiedler's Contingency Theory is based on the belief that different situations lead to the different leadership styles while the Hersey and Blanchard Maturity Model states that instead of using just one leadership style, successful leaders should change their leadership styles based on the professional maturity of the people they are leading and the details of the task. The Path-Goal Theory assumes that there is one right way of achieving a goal and that the leader can see it but the follower cannot. It is based on the following approaches: clarifying the path to subordinates so that they can achieve organizational goals, increase rewards for the followers, and remove the hurdles that may obstruct success. The Vroom-Yetton Expectancy Theory, on the other hand, focuses on the degree of a subordinate's participation during different situations. Hence, the amount of follow participation reflects the style and success of both leadership practices and decision-making processes. In the light of the behavioural and contingency theories, the researchers suggest that the use of appropriate leadership styles would have a greater chance of attaining organizational excellence in Colleges of Education, while the reverse is also true.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership and Organisational Excellence in Colleges of Education in Zambia

The literature reviewed showed organisational excellence as it pertained to the colleges. Further, a detailed account was focused on transformational leadership style in support with organisational excellence and transformative leadership prone to changing economic environment.

ORGANISATIONAL WELL-BEING

As stated earlier, organisational well-being refers to a company's ability to create and maintain a culture where employees fulfil their potential and the company profitably fulfils its purpose (Nielsen, 2014). In this case, workplace well-being relates to all aspects of the physical environment, such as how workers feel about their work, their environment, the climate at work, and work organisation (Nielsen & Yarker, 2008). In this chapter, we took

into consideration that workers' well-being is the key factor in determining an organisation's long-term goals. It is therefore important to discuss the relationship between leaders and employees.

Organisational well-being involves the relationship between the leaders and employees in a given organisation. Nielsen (2014) observed that organisations are increasingly becoming aware of the importance of employee happiness when gaining competitive advantage. The 'happy productive worker' notion suggests that employees who score highly in well-being metrics also perform better. Additionally, there is good scientific evidence that line and middle managers play an important role in ensuring and promoting their employees' well-being. Most employees come to understand what their role is within the organisation and what is expected of them through line and middle managers. Formulating a clear vision for that work helps the creation of a sense of meaningfulness. Employees perceive their jobs as Wellness and Leadership in Higher Education meaningful when they see how their individual jobs and tasks fit in with the goals of the group and what they can achieve through doing their bit (Nielsen, 2014).

Having discussed organisational well-being and organisation excellence, it is important to note that different leaders in Zambian Colleges of Education practice different leadership styles. In this study the authors' main focus is to review the leadership styles applied in higher learning institutions in Zambia.

Based on the findings of this literature review, it is clear that institutions of higher education in Zambia require leaders to take the role of managing in achieving the well-being of their workers. The first question we must ask is what can managers do to promote their employees' well-being and performance? The researchers recommend adopting a transformational leadership style, which encourages leaders to advance the well-being of both the workplace and the workers (Munir, 2009). If workers are lacking in their non-work lives, they are likely to underperform even when they have the ability to do better.

The Role of Managers in Promoting Well-Being

Managers, specifically supervisors, play a critical role in promoting not only employees' well-being but also organisational well-being. By adopting good leadership styles, managers can achieve organisational goals resulting from emotionally motivated employees. Tureen (2021) argues that to promote emotional wellness, Supervisors must develop competencies which permit them to be mindful about their own moods, emotions, and mental state so that they can react, without judgment, to meet both their needs and the needs of their employees. Failure to develop mindfulness competencies increases the likelihood that employees feel abandoned to a system that has already demonstrated a lack of concern for individuals and/or individual emotional wellness. Managers or supervisors are also expected to engage mindfully to avert the risk of causing emotional harm not only to themselves but also to those with whom they interact. Tureen refers to such supervisors as being 'within the box' (Tureen, 2021:251) and among those who can contribute to an overall culture that fails to prioritise wellness and that, over time, may result in poor organisation.

Furthermore, transparency is key when articulating supervisors' goals associated with honouring and prioritising employees' emotional wellness. This scenario is expected to be the norm in higher learning institutions such as Colleges of Education. Tureen opines that "where supervisors are unable to enshrine pro-emotional wellness in formal organisational documentation, they can still prioritise emotional wellness, for themselves and their teams, within their philosophy of management" (Tureen, 2021:

pp). Taking a proactive role in trying to clarify and communicate uncertain policies, rather than waiting for employees to discover and report uncertainty is critical of supervisors. This requires regular updates of employees as a way of assuring them the importance of the matter and that it has not been forgotten. Supervisors are also responsible for modelling behaviours that acknowledge the seriousness often rebut which also seek to avoid making the experience seem harrowing (Tureen, 2021).

How Do Transformational Leaders Promote Employee Well-Being?

Transformational leaders need to win the hearts of those they lead by making sure that their basic needs are taken care of and not taking it for granted that the workers will survive within the salaries that they draw. Chilala explains how he led his organisation into taking care of the employees' basic needs: If we took care of their existence needs, our staff would be free to aspire and to think more about growth and development. It was my responsibility and not the responsibility of employees to ensure that the leadership and the organisation were good enough to attract them to stay. (Chilala, 2020:74) Transformational leaders are role models who 'walk the talk' thus enticing the employees to trust their good intentions. When employees trust their leader, the development gender is assured.

In Zambia, transformational leaders also increase employees' belief in themselves and that they can cope with the challenges they are faced with at work. When leaders hold and express high expectations that their employees can successfully tackle the challenges they meet at work and leaders function as role models demonstrating how new and unforeseen events can be successfully managed, employees' self-efficacy increases, and they come to believe in a successful outcome when they take one new challenge at work.

Findings and Discussions

Overview

It is clear that not many studies on educational leadership have been conducted in Zambia since independence: "...56 years of Zambia's independence in 1964, only two studies were conducted on school leadership" (Mubita, 2017:36). However, an increase has been experienced in the post-independence era both at secondary and tertiary level. For example, Simango (2016) in his unpublished work, entitled "Leadership styles employed in Zambia's Colleges of Education", revealed that the leadership styles employed in Zambia's Colleges of Education were varied. There are a number of leadership styles practiced in many institutions that affect how work is done in these institutions.

Autocratic/Authoritarian Leadership Style

This study reveals that 70 percent of Zambian leaders in different institutions employ an autocratic/authoritarian leadership style in their learning institutions. Authoritarian leadership is that which is associated with the bureaucratic organisational structure. The autocratic manager sets objectives and tasks for the workforce or group, and expects orders to be obeyed blindly and without question (Stefanou, 1989). Such a leader becomes the superordinate and does not consult with the subordinates when making significant decisions (Miller et al., 1983). This type of leadership not only destroys common sense, sense of belonging or ownership of the learning institution, and creativity in the subordinates, but also leads to a decrease in motivation from the employee's point of view since workers are hired and fired easily. Tannenbaum and Schmidt (2018) identified seven levels of leadership and assert that as the freedom of the subordinates increases, the ultimate authority of the leader should decrease. Stefanou (1989) also argues that autocratic managers see workers as replaceable production units who can only be motivated by fear or by appeals to their self-interest in terms of money. As a result, most workers are made to feel that they are at the mercy of their managers who can have

them fired at any time. It is important, however, to realise that work cannot be sustained without the contribution, efforts, and commitment of the employees (Ghoshal, 2005). This implies that regardless of how effective leadership is, without the availability of talented and skilled employees who have the capability to implement the strategic goals of the organisation, the desired performance may not be realised (Ibid).

It is however encouraging to know that the Ministry of Education in Zambia came up with the appraisal system that demands that the supervisors sit with their subordinates to discuss before any form is filled in, rather than appraising someone in secret. This has resulted in more transparency in most learning institutions in Zambia and more and more workers have been assured of job stability. Banda et al. (2009) developed with the School-Based Continuous Professional Development Teaching Skills Book (SBCPD) to try and improve the work culture of the teachers and give them more confidence in their discharge of duties. Schyns, Maslyn, and Weible (2010) argue that whether leaders possess a desired leadership style or not, the span of their being in power may interfere with their ability to maintain a high quality of leader-follower exchange relationship among all their employees. Therefore, when formulating the applicable ratios, it is important to take into account the task, the nature of instructions provided, the time involved, the amount of authority delegated, the workforce skill level that includes the ability of both the subordinates and the leader, as well as the work environment (Armstrong, 2012).

The result of such a situation can make workers freer and more responsible in their workplaces.

Through the SBCPDs, Zambian leaders encourage subordinates to interact among themselves and come up with lessons that are refined, thus making the presenters more confident and competent when delivering the lesson. Some of the Zambian universities and colleges have taken it upon themselves to offer teaching methodology courses to all the lecturers in all schools despite the area of specialization in order to empower lecturers in their lesson delivery.

Laissez-Faire Style

The findings revealed that the laissez-faire style was practised in some colleges where members of staff and students are at the core in deciding what they wanted to do at their own time. Bates (2011) explained that in Zambia's Colleges of Education, managers who run different departments embraced a laissez-faire style of leadership. Simango (2016) found out that in such institutions, meetings, briefings or even memos are very rare. When a meeting is called, very few people attend. Bailey (2011) explained laissez-faire style as hands-off leadership because leaders delegate the tasks to their followers while providing little or no direction to the followers. As such, there is a risk of a lack of productivity, cohesiveness and satisfaction. However, Simango (2016) further showed that laissez-faire leaders allow followers to have complete freedom to make decisions concerning the completion of their work. As such followers possess a high degree of autonomy and self-rule while at the same time offering guidance and support when requested.

Participatory or Democratic Style

According to Stefanou (1989) in a democratic or participative management style, the manager allows the employee to take part in decision-making: everything is agreed to by the majority. Democratic managers encourage employees to set their own objectives and delegate authority wherever possible, giving reasons for any order or instructions they give out. Participation in decision making is encouraged and group members or employees are given the necessary information to form their opinions, which the manager takes into account when making a decision. Stefanou

(1989) further asserted that this management style is based on workers being seen as human beings who can be trusted to put their hearts into task. According to Nyoni (2012), democratic/consultative leadership style is wide spread in dual-mode colleges of education in Zambia.

The study noted from the responses that democratic leadership style was the highest among other leadership styles. Nyoni's (2012) findings revealed that, by and large, most Zambian principals applied democratic leadership styles in their day-to-day discharge of their duties. As it was aptly put by Martindale (2011), a democratic leadership style is one in which the focus of power is more with the group as a whole, and there is greater interaction within the group. As a result, group members have a greater say in decision making. The manager has substantial but not complete confidence and trust in the employees. Although general decisions are made by the manager, they seek the opinions of the employees, but make the final decision (Martindale, 2011). Simango (2016) reveals that goals and taking key decisions was a combined exercise of the entire workforce in the college. Goals were set by departments and administrators and given to management planning committees of different compositions from college to college. The speculation that can be made here is that there was a high possibility that most of the members of staff have a positive attitude toward the organisation, the Principal, and their work. Simango's (2016) study is in agreement with David (2012), who postulates that when the employees feel that adequate consultation has not taken place, they publicly accept orders from the manager but sometimes covertly resist the order by in subordination, especially when the manager decides based on the majority-rules principle.

Transactional Leadership

Kalimapos'a's (2010) study revealed that transactional leaders are concerned with the everyday transactions involved in the running of an organisation. Braimoh's (2012) study also showed that transactional leadership style frequently involves a quid pro quo arrangement between the leader and the follower. The role of the leader is seen primarily as motivating followers to bring about intended out-comes, and to reward them appropriately. Transactional leaders use an exchange model, with rewards being given for good work or positive outcomes. Conversely, people with this leadership style also can punish poor work or negative outcomes, until the problem is corrected (Braimoh, 2010). One way that transactional leadership focuses on lower level needs is by stressing specific task performance (Simango, 2016). Transactional leadership style has been found to have a direct effect on school, program and instruction, and student outcomes as well as wellness of the staff and students (Menon, 2014). Great schools are built on the premise that student learning and success are the foundational basis for each decision.

No matter the leadership style that administrators employ, they must put student learning and achievement at the centre of any decision that they make. Lemoine and Greer state that, "without the involved direction of the principal, the faculty of schools will never accomplish the task of meeting the needs of students and helping them progress" (Lemione & Greer, 2014, p. 20). These decisions may not always be the easier on the premise that student learning and success are the foundational basis for each decision. No matter the leadership style that administrators employ, they must put student learning and achievement at the centre of any decision that they make. Lemoine and Greer state that, "without the involved direction of the principal, the faculty of schools will never accomplish the task of meeting the needs of students and helping them progress" (Lemione & Greer, 2014, p. 20). These decisions may not always be the easiest ones, but maximising student learning is essential to boost performance and wellness

among college students. Tureen (2021) adds that supervisors who fail to engage mindfully are most likely to risk causing emotional harm to themselves and to those they interact with. School administrators must lead by example and gain respect from their staff in order to gain optimal performance within their schools. Transactional leaders need to make time to allow teachers to engage in a concerted effort to improve their instructional strategies and leaders should support them through this process to improve their wellness and eventually produce quality students to function as per societal expectations. Administrators must prioritise the transmission of a clear vision to followers in terms of developing school goals (including high academic goals) and obtaining staff consensus on desired out-comes (which are major influencers of the degree of teacher motivation). Moss (1979) rightly notes, "[b]y empowering others, a leader does not decrease his power; instead, he may increase it especially if the whole organization performs better" (p. 328). It is evident that education leaders who take the structured policies or strategic plans and allow their staff to take ownership and have a say in the decision-making process, will gain a great deal of respect and increase the positive culture in their schools. Importantly, effective leaders make people feel that even the most difficult problems can be tackled productively. They are always hopeful, conveying a sense of optimism and an attitude of never giving up in the pursuit of highly valued goals" (Fullan, 2001:7). It is this attitude that is contagious and will ultimately assist in developing a culture of greatness. The principal plays a major role in the daily interactions with in their school and the culture that they desire to create.

Transactional leadership comprises a wide range of leaders' behaviours, from laissez-faire leadership (barely reacting in any situation), to active or passive management by exception (reacting only toward negative/critique-worthy behaviours), and ultimately to provide contingent rewards and punishments (Gilbert and Kelloway, 2018).

On the other hand, Simango (2016) concludes that there is no single leadership style that may provide answers to all situations in institutions of higher education in Zambia; rather, a blend of the leadership styles would be beneficial to college principals. Some studies have, however, shown that leadership styles represented in colleges of education in Zambia do not promote employee well-being. Instead, they create a hostile atmosphere leading to frustration thereby affecting the psychological, social and physical well-being of employees. Little research has been done on this subject in Zambia and as such Simango's (2016) finding may not be conclusive. Perhaps a different perspective could be obtained if more studies were conducted on the same subject.

References

- [1] Lubbugu, J. Moonga, I. Muyuni, A & Chola, D. (2022). Wellness and Leadership in Higher Education: Leadership Styles and Organizational Well-Being in Zambian Colleges of Education in Alexander.C.J and Tureen, A. Leadership Wellness and Mental Health Concerns in Higher Education. United States of America: IGI Global.
- [2] Goel, D. (2012). Performance appraisal and compensation management: A modern approach. PHI Learning. doi:10.1201/b13031.
- [3] Bass, B. M. (1997). Does the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries? *The American Psychologist*, 52(2), 130–139. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.52.2.130.
- [4] Menon, M. W. (2014). The relationship between transformational leadership, perceived leader effectiveness, and teachers' job satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 52(4), 509–528. doi:10.1108/JEA-01-2013-0014.

- [5] Avci, A. (2015). Investigation of transformational and transactional leadership styles of school principals, and evaluation of them in terms of educational administration. *Educational Research Review*, 10(20), 2758–2767. doi:10.5897/ERR2015.2483
- [6] Basham, L. M. (2012). Transformational leadership characteristics necessary for today's leaders in higher education. *Journal of International Education Research*, 8(4), 343–348.
- [7] Muspratt, A. (2019, April 23). A guide to change and transformation. *Processing Excellence Network*. <https://www.processexcellencenetwork.com/organizational-change/articles/a-guide-to-change>.
- [8] Bergersen, A., & Muleya, G. (2019). Zambian civic education teacher students in Norway for a year—How do they describe their transformative learning? *Sustainability*, 11(24), 7143–7160. doi:10.3390/s11247143
- [9] Anonymous. (n.d.). Transformational leadership. Langston University. <https://www.langston.edu/sites/default/files/basic-content/files/TransformationalLeadership.pdf>
- [10] Nielsen, K., Randall, R., Yarker, J., & Brenner, S.-O. (2008). The effects of transformational leadership on followers' working conditions and well-being. *Work and Stress*, 22(1), 16–32. doi:10.1080/02678370801979430
- [11] Nielsen, K., Yarker, J., Brenner, S. O., Randall, R., & Borg, V. (2008). Leadership style, work characteristics and well-being. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 63, 465–475. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2008.04701.x PMID:18727749
- [12] Munir, F. (2009). How do transformational leaders influence followers' affective well-being? Exploring the mediating role of self-efficacy. *Work and Stress*, 23(4), 313–329. doi:10.1080/02678370903385106
- [13] Brenner, S. O., Randall, R., & Borg, V. (2008). Leadership style, work characteristics and well-being. *Journal of Education Kenya. Wellness and Leadership in Higher Education of Advanced Nursing*, 63(5), 465–475. PMID:18727749
- [14] Kabeta, R. M. M. (2015). Instructional leadership and its effect on the teaching and learning process: The case of selected basic school head teachers in central province Zambia. *International Journal of Scientific Research*, 4(4), 1876–1884.
- [15] Mubita, K. O. (2017). Studies on school leadership in Zambia: A Review. *African Research Review: An International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 11(4), 30–44. doi:10.4314/afrev.v11i4.4