

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLE AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN PLAN INTERNATIONAL, JUBA-SOUTH SUDAN: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY.

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Page | 1

Abstract

Background

This study aims to find out the relationship between leadership style and project performance in Plan International, Juba South Sudan.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive research. The study targeted 45 respondents who comprised project managers, project team members, community leaders, and project beneficiaries. The researcher used questionnaires and interview guides as the data collection tools.

Results

The majority of the respondents ranged between the age of 30 – 39 years and 20 – 29 years. Therefore, it also indicates that the majority of the respondents were youths. The findings stated that performance would be high if staff were involved in decision making and the study also found out that; staff guidance provided without much pressure could impact project performance. Democratic leadership helps subordinates and holds them responsible for their work results, which many respondents believed is ideal for Plan International. However, some aspects of authoritative leadership were also highly supported by the respondents. The authoritative constructs of close supervision and the aspect of reward and punishment were mentioned.

Conclusion

Project SUCCESS can never be achieved by consideration of only one or two of the variables investigated by this research. The findings of this study establish that all the variables studied impact on project performance of Plan International. Therefore, for Plan International to improve its performance, it should make considerations of incorporating the recommendations provided by this study.

Recommendations

All staff should be adequately involved in the decision-making process of Plan International. Supervisors or line managers should provide adequate guidance without much pressure on staff for improved project performance. Subordinates should be held accountable for the results of their work to influence responsible behavior and enhanced performance

Keywords: Relationship, Leadership Style, Project Performance, Plan International, Juba South Sudan.

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Introduction

Leadership is the process by which a person exerts influence over people and inspires, motivates, and directs their activities to help achieve group or organizational goals (Jones & George, 2004). Leadership is essentially a process in which one individual or sometimes a small group of individuals influences the efforts of others toward the

achievement of goals in a given set of circumstances (Cole, 2005). Leadership style is a pattern of behaviors engaged in by a leader when dealing with employees. Lewin, Leppit, and White (1939) acknowledged three leadership styles i.e. autocratic, democratic, and Laissez-Faire.

Project performance is one of the most critical challenges for all grassroots, national, and international development

agencies (Bass, 2009). Globally, billions of shillings have been spent on community projects to enhance the living conditions of the people, Whittaker, (1999). Empirical studies have revealed that less than one-half of poverty eradication and community-based project initiatives in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa never come close to achieving the anticipated results. Mearian & Songini (2002) reported that in the last quarter of the twentieth century, close to half of poverty eradication projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia were abandoned or re-engineered after a 2-year implementation effort failed due to poor leadership. Leadership has long been considered an important factor that influences innovation and performance (Munirat et al 2014) in the workplace. In project-based organizations, the leadership of managers is important in facilitating improved project performance (Bass, 2009). Leadership affects project culture, project strategy, and project team commitment (Shore, 2015). Many projects continue to fail despite advances in project management methodologies, leadership being a major cause (Berg & Karlsen, 2007; Ellemers, DeGilder, & Haslam, 2014; Schmid & Adams, 2008). A study done by Lynet (2015) on leadership and performance of IT projects found that the leadership competency required for successful project performance was lacking despite the huge investment and use of established project methods and techniques. This study aims to find out the relationship between leadership style and project performance in Plan International, Juba South Sudan.

Methodology
Research design

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive research because it allows the researcher to study phenomena and not to manipulate variables as noted by Kombo & Tromp (2006). Borrowing from Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) descriptive research is a self-report study that requires the collection of quantifiable information from the sample.

Target Population

The study targeted 45 respondents who comprised project managers, project team members, community leaders, and project beneficiaries who are involved in the implementation of Plan International projects in Juba County, as indicated in the company’s (Project Manual, 2019).

Sampling Technique

The sampling Techniques used to determine the sampled employees for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were purposive and simple random sampling.

Sample Size

The sample size that shall be defined using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) was 44, as shown in the table:

Table 1: Showing Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

S/No.	Category	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
01	Project managers	10	10	Purposive Sampling
02	Project team members	10	10	Simple Random Sampling
03	Community leaders	15	14	Purposive
04	Project beneficiaries	10	10	Simple Random Sampling

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used questionnaires and interview guides as the data collection tools. The questionnaires feature structured questions that provide quantitative data for statistical analysis. On the other hand, open-ended questions will be used to generate qualitative data for content analysis. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) will be conducted to gather in-depth information from key informants such as the project managers and community leaders. Owen (2012) recommends the use of questionnaires for their potential to reach out to respondents within a short time; their ability to accord respondents adequate time to respond and offer a sense of privacy and confidentiality to the respondent.

Procedure

Before commencing data collection; the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the university and permission obtained from Plan International to assure their subordinates that the exercise is academic. Questionnaires were distributed to respondents’ and filled questionnaires were collected later on.

Validity

Validity is defined as the degree to which a test measures what it purports to measure (Collins & Hussey, 2003). Each item in the instruments was reviewed by the supervisor who reviewed how each of the specified study objectives and research questions would be captured in the instrument. Content validity was ascertained by determining whether the content that the instruments contained would be an adequate sample of the domain of the content they were supposed to represent. **Reliability** A pilot study was conducted to test the reliability of the instruments in nearby counties which have similar demographic characteristics to Juba and a test-retest technique was used.

Pilot Testing

A pilot study was conducted before the main research to pre-test or try out research protocols, data collection instruments, sample strategies, and other research techniques in preparation for the study. One of the advantages of conducting a pilot study is to give warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols could not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments were inappropriate or too complicated (Vaus, 1993).

Data Analysis and Presentation

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. Qualitative data was used to analyze data through content analysis and presented in the form of explanatory notes while the quantitative approach was used to analyze statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations and presented in the form of tables and charts.

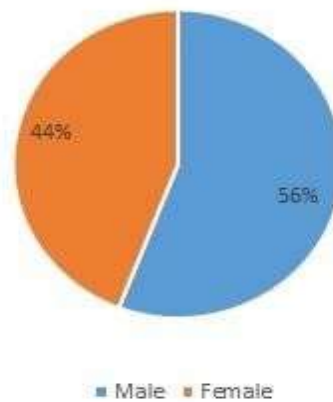
Ethical Considerations

The researcher exercised utmost caution while administering the data collection instruments to the respondents to ensure their rights and privacy were upheld. To ensure confidentiality, the respondents' names did not appear on the questionnaire.

Results

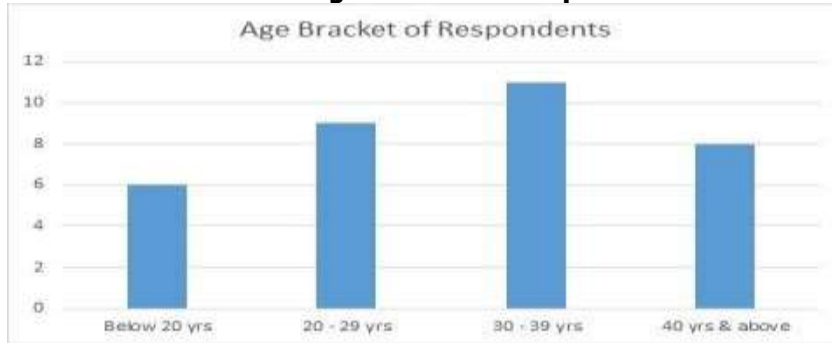
Demographic Information of Respondents Gender of respondents

Gender of Respondents



The gender of the respondents is represented by the below pie chart: showing that 56% of the respondents were male while 44% were female.

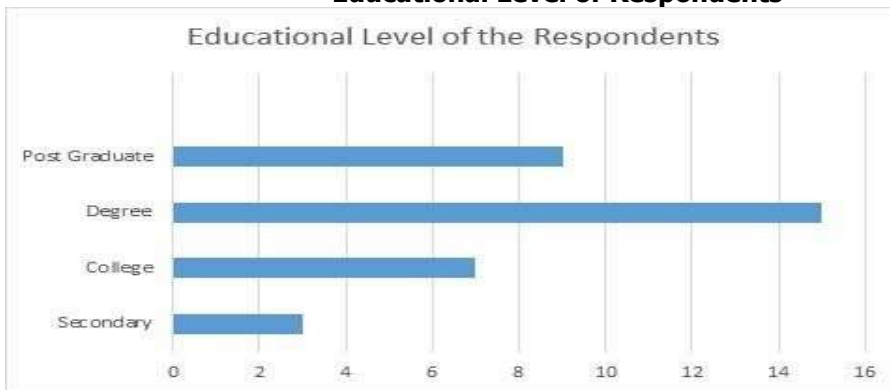
Age Bracket of Respondents



Page | 4

As shown below, the majority of the respondents ranged between the age of 30 – 39 years and 20 – 29 years. Therefore, it also indicates that the majority of the respondents were youths.

Educational Level of Respondents



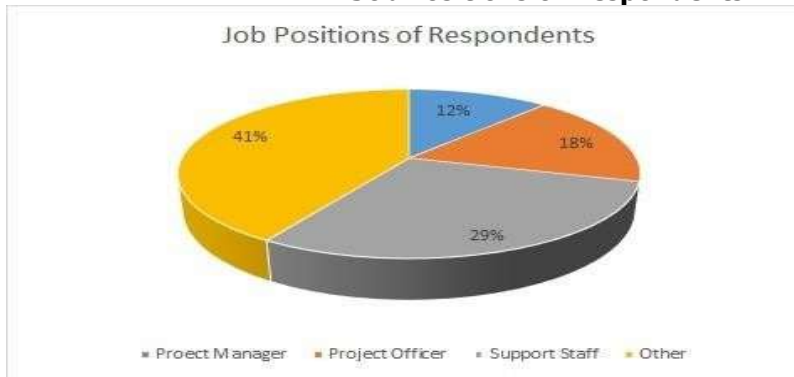
A large number of the respondents had acquired first degrees and attained post-graduate qualifications. Few acquired the minimum qualification of secondary school certificates and college diplomas.

Work Experience of Respondents



The majority of the respondents have worked for not less than 3 years. The second largest category of respondents have at least experience from 1 – 3 years.

Job Positions of Respondents



Most respondents were from the other category of respondents. The other category of respondents comprises project beneficiaries and community leaders. However, the highest category of respondents was the support staff of Plan International.

Leadership Style

The findings reveal that the democratic leadership style has been highly embraced by the staff of Plan International. Responses rated that performance would be high if staff were involved in decision-making. It was also indicated by majority that if guidance is provided without pressure could impact project performance. Under democracy, the respondents agreed with the assertion that leaders should help subordinates and hold them responsible for their work results. However, some aspects of authoritative leadership were also highly supported by the beneficiaries. The authoritative constructs of close supervision and the aspect of reward and punishment were mentioned. Thus, this did not mean the adoption of absolute dictatorship but administration has to be tightened to enforce compliance with control measures that are always geared at achieving greater results.

Discussion

The findings stated that performance would be high if staff were involved in decision making and the study also found out that; staff guidance provided without much pressure could impact project performance. Democratic leadership helps subordinates and holds them responsible for their work results, which many respondents believed is ideal for Plan International. However, some aspects of authoritative leadership were also highly supported by the respondents. The authoritative constructs of close supervision and the aspect of reward and punishment were mentioned. Leadership style is a pattern of behaviors engaged in by a leader when dealing with employees. Lewin, Leppit, and White (1939) acknowledged three leadership styles i.e.

autocratic, democratic, and Laissez-Faire. Vigoda-Gadot (2007) argued that every leader in their organization and operations practices a particular leadership style where such styles are referred to as a set of behavior patterns. Leadership frequently occurs during the constant organizational work and others know leaders by leadership. Where the manager of the organization is in very close cooperation with the employee, the leadership style of these managers has a significant impact on employee self-confidence. Consequently, it was found that employee self-confidence has a positive impact on performance (Shirzad & Zanganeh, 2011).

Conclusion

Project success can never be achieved by consideration of only one or two of the variables investigated by this research. The findings of this study establish that all the variables studied impact on project performance of Plan International. Therefore, for Plan International to improve its performance, it should make considerations of incorporating the recommendations provided by this study.

Recommendation

All staff should be adequately involved in the decision-making process of Plan International Supervisors or line managers should provide adequate guidance without much pressure on staff for improved project performance Subordinates should be held accountable for the results of their work to influence responsible behavior and enhanced performance

Acknowledgment

To all that supported this project, great thanks.

List of abbreviations

KIIs: Key Informant Interviews
PM: Project Management

PI: Plan International
PISS: Plan International South Sudan
UN: United Nations

Source of funding

The study was self-funded.

Conflict of interest

The author had no conflict of interest.

Author Biography

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Page | 7

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