

Impact of Leadership Techniques on the Performance of the South African Telecommunication Sector

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Abstract

Purpose: This study's goal was to ascertain how leadership behaviors affected the South African telecommunications sector's performance.

Methodology: All employees at the Vodacom corporate office were the objective of this study, which employed a descriptive research approach. With the aid of stratified random sampling, 98 respondents made up the sample size. Both primary and secondary data were used into the study. The primary data was collected utilizing interview guides and structured questionnaires. Later, utilizing helpers, the surveys were self-administered. Different methods of obtaining information from managers to confirm the answers to the questionnaires were utilized using the interview guide. By examining the annual financial records over a period of ten years, secondary data were acquired (2004- 2014). Software from the statistical package for social sciences was used to examine the statistical data that was gathered (SPSS).

Findings: Results of the study demonstrated that at Vodacom Limited, performance was certainly influenced by leadership style. The comprehensive statistical analysis of the data gathered provided a clear picture of the link that currently exists and the effect that leadership styles have on organizational performance. Overall findings indicated a favorable association between transactional and transformational leadership and organizational success. As predicted, relationship analysis demonstrated a favorable relationship between all transformational leadership characteristics and organizational performance.

Conclusion: Distinct leaders and organizations have different leadership philosophies. Organizations in both the public and commercial sectors place a high importance on leadership as a resource for managing their constantly changing operating conditions.

Recommendation: According to the study, top management in businesses should make every effort to set a better example for their employees, motivate them by giving their jobs purpose and challenge, encourage their efforts to be innovative and creative, and carefully consider each person's need for growth and benefit.

Keywords: Telecommunication, Vodacom, leadership styles, South Africa



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Contrary to common opinion, any significant organization's objective is not only to exist, but also to retain that existence by improving its performance. Organizations must thus continuously improve performance to meet the demands of the fiercely competitive business (Arslan & Staub 2013). The success or failure of a company is significantly influenced by the positioning and leadership style of the leadership team. A leader is a person who directs, inspires, and influences people around him to carry out their specific jobs. He also helps his team members perform well and accomplish the goals of the company. The manner in which an organizational leader offers direction, carries out plans, and inspires others is referred to as their leadership style.

According to Jeremy et al. (2011), Ngambi et al. (2002), and Ngambi (2011), "leadership is a continual process of affecting people favorably toward being conscious of their full potential in achieving a value-added, common goal, with enthusiasm and uprightness. The stated impact guarantees that all team members perform fully, voluntarily, and cooperatively in an effort to meet the specified organizational goals set for both the group as a whole and each individual team member. The coordination between the team's leader and members, as well as the professionalism and effectiveness of the team members, are significantly influenced by the leader's leadership style (Jeremy et al., 2011). Leadership style in a firm is one of the major agents that enact a significant role in improving or worsening the attention and involvement of employee in the firm (Obiwuru et al., 2011).

Leadership is a crucial managerial function that involves inspiring workers to work toward a common goal. Leadership places a strong emphasis on developing followers and meeting their needs. Managers that practice transformational leadership focus on developing the morals, motivation, and value systems of their workforce in addition to their skill development (Ismail et al., 2009). It essentially helps followers reach their goals while they are employed by the firm; it also inspires followers to be encouraging and make an effort to adapt to new and improved practices and alterations in the external environment (Azka et al., 2011). Michael (2011) asserts that effective leadership has the ability to propel companies forward. Leaders assess the culture, the tolerance for change, and the level of employee motivation. They mould organizational plans including their implementation and effectiveness. Leaders play different roles at any and every stage of an institution including management. Common trait observed among all successful leaders is that they motivate those in their environment to effectively utilise the organization's resources as much as possible.

One of the most noticeable effects on how people connect with the business is leadership. According to Rowe (2001), a successful leader not only motivates his followers but also sees to it that their needs are met while the organization works to meet its objectives. There must be a connection between leadership and organizational success for a number of reasons. According to studies, when firms face new problems, good leadership practices may have a favorable impact on performance (Higgs and Rowland, 2008). Effective organizations are aware that they cannot exert power over a commercial activity or product unless they have adequate knowledge about the process, the product, or the service in question. To stay competitive, organizations need to effectively manage their operations with employees, processes, planed action, reductions times, relations with suppliers, and other areas of the business (Summers, 2005).



When a leader practices transformational leadership, the followers are inspired to go above and beyond what is expected of them because they respect, adore, and believe in the leader (Bass, 1985; Katz & Kahn, 1978). A transformational leader inspires followers by educating them on the advantages of task results, motivating them to put the team or the organization's interests ahead of their own. He incites mental enticement by encouraging followers to think critically and creatively while seeking out newer and better job techniques (Bass et al., 1994). This has a direct and good impact on performance, fulfillment, and willingness in relation to company goals (Podsakoff et al., 1996). Bass (1990), advised that four behaviors of transformational leadership to include charisma, inspirational encouragement, mental stimulation, and personal consideration.

Over the past ten years, there has been a progressive change in the corporate environment in South Africa (Wangari, 2014). External political, economic, social, technical, and demographic variables have had a significant impact on this, as have numerous developments in the more immediate business environment, namely shifts in the industry. In an effort to adjust and keep up with these developments, businesses have been pushed to alter their strategy. In earlier study by Day, Harris, and Hadfield, it was shown to be crucial to consider the relationship between a leader's approach, the leadership style being examined, and the environment in which they operate (2001). The topic of leadership and business success has in fact been the subject of much investigation and study on a global scale. In fact, Jain (2008) links strong leadership to high performance in businesses and uses businesses that made it through crises in Turkey to support her claims. On the basis of this, Ogbonna and Harris's research on the particular leadership traits that produce successful companies in 2000 highlighted the importance of democratic leadership in their examination of UK businesses. It would thus be appreciated if each industry had a unique leadership style that improved its performance. With the South African telecommunications sector as its emphasis, this research has now gone on to close this context gap and add to the body of knowledge on the impact of leadership styles on businesses. The general objective of the study is to determine the effect of leadership on the performance of Vodacom Ltd.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Great Man Theory

The great man notion first appeared in the 1840s, but writer and educator Thomas Carlyle subsequently popularized it. In his work "On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History," he compared a number of prominent leading heroes, which served as the inspiration and impetus for this theory. Because leadership was formerly viewed as primarily a masculine trait, especially in terms of military leadership, the phrase "Great Man" was used rather than "person."This theory of leadership proposes that traits of leadership are intrinsic and hence the famous saying "great leaders are born and not made and Great leaders will arise when there is a great need" for instance if a crisis arises, the great men step up to take their natural position. In 1860 though, Herbert Spencer, a British scholar disagreed with the great man theory by claiming that the "heroes are only but the product of their times and their actions the results of social settings conditions". The study in this light sought to assess whether the situation at the Vodacom gave rise to a great leader or contrary to the theory.



2.1.2 Traits and Behavioral Theory

One of the first theories of leadership, the characteristic viewpoint, dates back to the 1940s and holds that "great leaders are born with distinguishing personality qualities that make them more suited for leadership and make them different from other individuals or their followers." The most extensive list of qualities was produced by Stogdill's (1948) analysis of the leadership literature. As a result of Stogdill's insight that leadership contexts change greatly and impose unique demands on leaders, situational and behavioral methods have since replaced characteristic theory. These ideas point to characteristics and talents including dependability, adaptability to conditions, ambition and accomplishment orientation, likability, assertiveness, self-confidence, courage, effective decision-making skills, and willingness to accept leadership as being beneficial while leading. These people who are best suited for leadership also possess skills like intelligent, creative, diplomatic and tactful, fluent in speaking, persuasive and socially skilled.

According to behavioral theories of leadership, "leaders may be distinguished from followers by their conduct." With the idea that exceptional leaders are formed, not born, it places more emphasis on the behaviors of leaders than on mental attributes or internal moods. This idea contends that teaching and observation are two effective ways for people to learn how to lead. Behavior theories look at the leader's focus on people, tasks, or both. In 1945, research from the Universities of Michigan and Ohio State identified two primary types of leadership behavior: employee-centered and production-centered (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988). This theory was relevant to the study since the study examined the behavioral approach of leaders at Vodacom and thus able to evaluate whether the leaders are task oriented, people oriented or both.

2.1.3 Situational and Contingency Theory

According to the contingency theory of leadership, a leader's ability to lead depends on how the situational variables interact with their own personal traits. Contingency theories hold that contextual circumstances influence the link between leadership style and organizational results, making outcomes unpredictable by leadership style unless the situational variables are known (Cheng and Chan, 2002). "This leadership method uses three models: situational leadership theory by Heresy and Blanchard (1969), Fiedler's (1967) coworker theory, and House's (1971) path-goal theory. No one leadership style is more effective than another when using this method and the three models. Success depends on a variety of factors, including the leader's favored style, the followers' talents and habits, and the circumstances. Effective leadership requires adapting one's style of leadership to situational factors, and control is contingent on three factors namely the relationship between the leader and followers, the degree of the task structure and the leaders' authority, position or power". This study sought to find out whether Vodacom applies different styles of leadership in different situations or if it applies one style and which leadership style was the most appropriate for retail firms that can lead to improved organizational performance.

2.2 Empirical Review

There has been much discussion on the connection between leadership style and organizational performance. Numerous study findings demonstrate the connection between leadership style and organizational success. Depending on the research variables employed, specific leadership behaviors may either favorably or adversely correlate with an organization's performance. The leadership style "had a substantial positive association with the organizational performance in both



institutions," according to Sun (2002), who examined the relationship between leadership performance in businesses and schools. Generally speaking, an organization's performance and a leader's performance go hand in hand. Compared to exchange leadership, transformational leadership has a stronger and more positive link with organizational success (Huang, 2006).

The effect of leadership behaviors on the performance of services SMEs in Malaysia was examined by Arham (2014). The survey comprised 193 owners and senior executives of SMEs in the services sector in Malaysia. The results demonstrated that: a) there were significant, visible correlations between various leadership behaviors and the organizational performance of services SMEs; and b) transformational leadership had a greater impact on SMEs' performance than transactional leadership. The results suggest that one of the key elements influencing SMEs' performance in the services industry is the leadership style that some leaders of SMEs exhibit.

Ali, Elmi, and Mohamed (2013) looked at the connection between organizational performance in Mogadishu and leadership conduct. In Mogadishu, Somalia, efforts were made to determine the link between managerial style and workforce productivity. To determine the nature of the associations, the study utilized both a descriptive and a correlation research approach. The spearman correlation statistical technique was used to analyze the data with the goal of determining the link between the aforementioned variables. The thorough study, findings, and suggestions were built on this.

The study's findings demonstrated that there is a substantial, moderate, and positive association between leadership conduct and employee performance that is statistically significant has a favorable relationship with employee performance. The researchers came to the following conclusions based on their findings. The performance of employees may be greatly improved if telecommunications businesses model appropriate leadership behavior for their staff. In order to better satisfy their customers, telecommunications businesses should also offer performance evaluations of their staff members. Telecommunication companies should promote their employee performance in order to satisfy it. Finally, telecommunication companies should supposed to not only think about resource or money but take into account that there are other factors that can effects their employee performance.

Zumitzavan and Udchachone (2014) investigated the connections between respondents' demographics, leadership philosophies, organizational innovation, and performance, and they discussed which leadership philosophies are most beneficial to businesses. Using a survey questionnaire, 419 managers were selected as a sample for the study. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to analyze the data. Results showed that organizational performance is really influenced by leadership types. Additionally, they pointed out a connection between leadership philosophies and organizational effectiveness that was mediated by organizational innovation.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

All employees at the Vodacom corporate office were the objective of this study, which employed a descriptive research approach. With the aid of stratified random sampling, 98 respondents made up the sample size. Both primary and secondary data were used into the study. The primary data was collected utilizing interview guides and structured questionnaires. Later, utilizing helpers, the surveys were self-administered. Different methods of obtaining information from managers to confirm the answers to the questionnaires were utilized using the interview guide. By examining



the annual financial records over a period of ten years, secondary data were acquired (2004 - 2014). The statistical program for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to evaluate the statistical data that had been gathered. This was conducted mainly by use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Inferential statistical techniques such as correlation and regression coefficients were involved in trying to determine existence of any causal relationship among the various leadership styles and performance. The data was then presented in form of tables, graphs and charts.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

The study's target demographic, which comprised of 130 individuals working in several departments at Vodacom in Pretoria, was management employees. There should be 98 responses in the sample for the 130 target population. In order to eliminate bias, the study's sample size of 98 respondents was dispersed according to numerical strength.

4.1.1 Operationalization and Measurement of Variables

Organizational performance served as the dependent variable in this study, whereas leadership styles served as the independent factors. Economic conditions, governmental regulations, and organizational culture were taken into account as intervening variables in this study. The variables and their operationalization are described in table 1.

Table 1: Operationalization and measurement of variables

Variable	Indicators	Nature	Operationalization	Measure
Leadership styles	Transformational	Independent/ Predictor	Idealized influence Inspirational motivation Individualized consideration	5 point Likert Scale
	Transactional	Independent/ Predictor	Contingent reward Active leaders Passive leaders	5 point Likert Scale
	Laissez faire	Independent/ Predictor	Length of involvement in making decisions	5 point Likert Scale
Organizational performance	Volume of sales	Dependent/ Criterion (DV)	Financial performance Employee motivation Volume of sales Firm growth/ expansion	5 point Likert Scale



4.2 Descriptive Analysis

4.2.1 Effect of Transformational Leadership Style on Performance of Vodacom Limited

The first objective of the study was to establish the effect of transformational leadership style on performance of Vodacom Limited. The study findings indicated that transformational leadership influenced performance to a great extent which was evidenced by a mean score of 3.82. Inferential analysis including correlation and regression analysis indicated that there existed a positive (r=0.867) and significant (p=0.000) correlation between performance and transformational leadership. Further, the regression results showed that transformational leadership had a positive (β =0.229) and significant (p<0.05, p=0.001) influence on performance. The findings imply that improved implementation of transformational leadership by one unit leads to improved organizational performance at a rate of 22.9%.

4.2.2 Effect of transactional leadership style on performance of Vodacom Limited

The second objective of the study was to find out the effect of transactional leadership style on performance of Vodacom Limited and results indicated that transactional leadership had a positive influence on performance. This was associated with the overwhelming responses from the respondents who agreed that transactional leadership enhanced the motivation of employees, reduces the level of employee turnover, enhancing the level of sales in the firm and improved financial management and profitability to a great extent. The descriptive statistics on transactional leadership attracted a mean of 3.91. The Inferential analysis including correlation and regression analysis indicated that there existed a positive (r=0.969) and significant (p=0.000) correlation between organization performance and transactional leadership. Further, the regression results indicate that transactional leadership and organizational performance had a positive and significant relationship (beta=0.674 p value 0.000). This implied that a one percentage change in transactional leadership implementation was associated with 67.4 percentage increase in organization performance.

4.2.3 Effect of Laissez-Faire Leadership Style on Performance of Vodacom Limited

The third objective of the study was to establish the effect of laissez-faire leadership style on performance of Vodacom Limited. The study findings indicated that laissez-faire leadership and had an influence on organization performance. The correlation results showed that laissez-faire leadership was positively correlated with organization performance of Vodacom Limited. This was supported by a significant value of 0.000 and a positive correlation of 0.877. Regression results indicated that that laissez-faire leadership had a positive and significant relationship (beta=0.094 p value 0.025) with organization performance. This suggests that a one percentage change in laissez faire leadership implementation was associated with 9.4 percentage increase in organization performance.

4.3 Inferential Statistics

The study sought to find the relationship between transactional leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership and organization performance. Table 2 below presents the findings.



Table 2: Bivariate correlation

Variable		Organizational performance	Transformational leadership	Transactional leadership	Laissez faire leadership
Organization Performance	Person Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-ailed)				
Transformational leadership	Person Correlation	0.867	1		
	Sig. (2-ailed)	0.000			
Transactional leadership	Person Correlation	0.969	0.82	1	
	Sig. (2-ailed)	0.000	0.000		
Laissez faire leadership	Person Correlation	0.877	0.846	0.846	1
	Sig. (2-ailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	

Table 2 displays the results of correlation test analysis between the dependent variable (organization performance) and independent variables and also correlation among the independent variables themselves. Results indicated that there was a positive and significant relationship between organization performance and all the independent variables. This reveals that any positive change in transformational leadership, transactional leadership and laissez faire leads to increased organization performance. The results indicated that there exists a positive and significant (r=0.867, p<0.000) correlation between transformational leadership and organization performance. The correlation between the variables indicates that increased organization performance would be associated with improved transformational leadership effectiveness as indicated by a positive correlation between the two variables. The findings are consistent with Sun (2002) who went ahead to compare the leadership style with the leadership performance in schools and enterprises, and indicated that the leadership style has a noticeable positive correlation with the organizational performance in both schools and enterprises. Liberally, the leadership performance is similar with the organizational performance. The transformational leadership has a positive relationship with the organizational performance, higher than the exchange leadership (Huang, 2006).

The results also indicated that there exist a positive and significant (r=0.969, p>0.000) correlation between organization performance and transactional leadership. The correlation between the variables indicates that if transactional leadership effectiveness is improved and enhanced then this would be associated with improved organization performance as indicated by a positive correlation



between the two variables. Finally, the results indicated that there exist a positive and significant (r=0.877, p>0.000) correlation between organization performance and laissez faire leadership. The correlation between the variables indicates that if laissez faire leadership effectiveness is improved and enhanced then this would be associated with improved organization performance as indicated by a positive correlation between the two variables.

In order to establish the statistical significance of the independent variables on the dependent variable (organization performance) regression analysis was employed. The results presented in the table 3.

Table 3: Regression model fitness

Indicator	Coefficient
R	0.959
R Square	0.92
Adjusted R Square	0.917
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.16163

Table 3 shows the amount of variance in organization performance as explained by the variance in the set of independent variables used in the study (i.e. transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership). The R square of 0.92 indicates that 92% of the variations in organization performance is jointly accounted for by the variations in transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership. From the model summary table below adjusted R2 was 0.917 this indicates that the combined effect of predictor variables (transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership) explains 91.7% of variations in organization performance. The correlation coefficient of 95.9% indicates that the combined effect of the predictor variables has a strong and positive correlation with organization performance. Results are in agreement with those of Arham (2014) who investigated the impact of leadership behaviors on the performance of services SMEs in Malaysia and revealed that there were significant relationships between different leadership behaviors and organizational performance of services SMEs; and transformational leadership contributed more significantly to the performance of SMEs than transactional leadership behavior. The findings implicate that leadership behavior of leaders of SMEs is one of the essential factors that influences SMEs performance in the services sector. Prior to estimation of the regression model the goodness of fit was performed and the results are presented in the Table 4 below.

Table 4: ANOVA

Indicator	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	23.029	3	7.676	293.848	0.000
Residual	2.012	77	0.026		
Total	25.041	80			

Table 4 indicates that the overall model was significant, that is, transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership are good joint explanatory variables for organizational performance (F = 59.309, p-value=0.000). The findings imply that all the independent variables were statistically



significant in explaining changes in organizational performance. This is demonstrated by a p value of 0.000 which is less that the acceptance critical value of 0.05. The study findings are in agreement with Ali, Elmi and Mohamed (2013) who investigated the relationship between leadership behavior and employee performance in Mogadishu. Emphasis was put on trying to establish the relationship between leadership behavior and employee performance in Mogadishu-Somalia. The findings revealed the existence statistically significant has a positive relationship between leadership behavior and employee performance, the study also indicate that there is a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between leadership behavior and employee performance. Table 5 displays the regression coefficients of the independent variables.

Table 5: Regression coefficients

Variable	Beta	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Constant	0.09	0.193	0.467	0.642
Transformational leadership	0.229	0.069	3.34	0.001
Transactional leadership	0.674	0.067	10.072	0.000
Laissez faire leadership	0.094	0.041	2.285	0.025

Table 5 displays the regression coefficients of the independent variables. The results reveal that transformational leadership was statistically significant in explaining organizational performance (beta=0.229 p value 0.001). The findings imply that improved implementation of transformational leadership by one unit leads to improved organizational performance at a rate of 22.9%. The findings are in support of Huang (2006) who found that transformational leadership had a positive correlation with the organizational performance, higher than the exchange leadership.

Regression results indicate that transactional leadership and organizational performance had a positive and significant relationship (beta=0.674 p value 0.000). This implied that a one percentage change in transactional leadership implementation was associated with 67.4 percentage increase in organization performance. Results are in agreement with Sun (2002) compared the leadership style with the leadership performance in schools and enterprises, and indicated that the leadership style has a significantly positive correlation with the organizational performance in both schools and enterprises. Finally, the results indicated that laissez faire leadership and organizational performance had a positive and significant relationship (beta=0.094 p value 0.025). This implied that a one percentage change in laissez faire leadership implementation was associated with 9.4 percentage increase in organization performance.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Relational analysis demonstrated, as predicted, a high positive association between organizational performance and all transformational leadership philosophies. Therefore, it can be inferred that transformational leaders encourage their followers to exert more effort. Since they are able to motivate their followers to improve their chances of success and foster their creative problemsolving abilities, transformational leaders get the best work from their followers. Additionally, it can be deduced that managers who are motivated by the goal to improve employee performance should aim to display more transformation leadership style and less of the other forms. It was



found that transactional leadership style had a positive relationship with organization performance. Therefore, it can be said that transactional leadership style was statistically significant in explaining Vodacom leadership's organizational success. The results of the study also led to the conclusion that Vodacom had used both transactional and transformational leadership styles, both of which are associated with excellent performance as a result of their emphasis on teamwork and employee participation in decision-making. Performance has a tenuous and favourable link with laissez-faire leadership. The study comes to the conclusion that a laissez-faire leadership style destroys employee morale and motivation, declining work satisfaction, and poor organizational performance.

5.2 Recommendations

Leaders should be aware of what is crucial for their team members and the business as a whole, and they should inspire their team members to creatively identify the possibilities and problems around them. The leaders of teams should foster a sense of cooperation among their subordinates by having their own goals and strategies for their personal growth. Therefore, it is advised that managers make an effort to serve as role models for their staff, motivate staff by giving them meaningful work that is challenging, encourage staff to be inventive and creative, and pay attention to each employee's need for success and development.

Another powerful leadership approach is transactional leadership. Therefore, it is advised that Supervisors develop equitable and inclusive reward-exchanging relationships with the Employees. When goals are met, they should set clear expectations, acknowledge success, and give rewards in exchange for the followers' efforts. Performance has a tenuous and favourable link with laissez-faire leadership. To boost organizational performance, managers are advised to abandon this leadership stance. Supervisors should increase their understanding of how followers perceive leaders' actions and how these actions relate to worker productivity. The study suggests that programs for developing leaders might aid in helping managers comprehend the connections between good management and performance.

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