

EFFECTS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON PRODUCTIVITY OF SECRETARIES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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ABSTRACT: *Recently, there have been concerns about the attitude of some secretaries or administrative assistants in various organisations across Ghana and this has been blamed on several factors. This study subjects the types of leadership styles to productivity of secretaries or administrative assistants in the public sector in Ghana. The study adopted quantitative approach and survey as a research design. This enabled the researchers to take primary data from large number of respondents. It was found out that Leadership is not attached to a particular style but uses a style that may fit the situation or circumstance they face. Many secretaries and administrative assistants are aware of the competences needed to perform their role. However, these competences are not in use or exhibited by this category of employees. Autocratic leadership style does not necessary lead to high turnover and absenteeism, low productivity and distortion of communication.*

KEYWORDS: Leadership, Autocratic, Democratic, Productivity, Performance, Human-Relations.

INTRODUCTION

For centuries the corporate world has been obsessed with leaders, and with identification of the characteristics required for effective leadership. In more recent times the area of leadership has been studied more extensively than almost any other aspect of human behaviour (Higgs, 2003). Leadership has been defined severally by authors focusing on traits, behaviours, influence, interaction patterns, role relationship and as an occupation of an administrative position (Yukl, 2012 pg. 3). Kruse (2013) defines leadership as “a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal”. Beyond this, scholars have given numerous definitions of leadership (House et al. 1997; Hemphil and Coons, 1957; Katz and Khan, 1978; Burns, 1978; Rauch and Behling, 1984; Richards and Engle, 1986; Jacobs and Jaques, 1990; Schein, 1992; Drath and Palus, 1994). According to Yukl (2012) and Kruse (2013), this definition is based on the assumption that leadership involves intentionally influencing people working in various capacities in a group or organisations. Again Yukl (2012) and Kruse (2013) posited that leadership take place only when people are influenced to do things that are ethical and beneficial to the organisation.

Secretaries are among the categories of workers that come under both direct and indirect influence of leaders (Yukl, 2012). A secretary, according to Mayer (1977) is an executive assistant who possesses a mastery of office skills, demonstrates the ability to assume responsibility with or without supervision, exercises initiatives and judgment, and makes decision with the scope of assigned authority. To Pringle (1989) a secretary is supposed to facilitate communication between a section or department and the rest of the organization, clients, customers, and suppliers through the use of both written and verbal forms of communication. Cohn (1985), is also of the view that in addition to typing dictated letters, experienced secretaries provide information, compose routine statements, and make practical

arrangement for solution of problems. France (2009) sums it all by saying that today's secretaries are expected to be multi-task and multi-skilled, have important problem-solving skill and are the first to know what is going on in the organization. Kanter, (1977) and Cohn (1985) posit that the scope of secretary's roles or responsibilities is company-specific and person-specific and could be dependent on the nature of relationship between the secretary and the line manager. Cohn (1985) argues that secretaries have to provide different responses to suit the different routines of their bosses. This supports the assertion made above that secretaries are influenced by their line managers and that the leadership styles adopted by the line managers may have an impact on their productivity.

This study is grounded on the dyadic leadership theory (Yukl 2010). This theory talks about the relationship between a leader and an individual and that the motivation and the capability of an individual to a goal is based on the influence of the leader (Yukl 2010). Yukl (2010), explains that the behavior of leader is the source of influence that changes a subordinate's behavior, attitudes and motivation. Although there are multiple dyadic relationships, this study focused on the single relationship which is between the leader and the individual subordinate (Yukl 2010).

The importance of leadership style in an organization cannot be overemphasized. Leadership is a major element that sets successful and unsuccessful organizations and governments apart. It plays central role in offering direction and purpose towards achieving goals of the organization. The move of a substantial number of leadership researchers to studying new types of styles and other investigations of the leadership styles of men and women have opened opportunities for further research on the effect of managers' leadership styles on secretaries' productivity.

Research has revealed that there are different leadership styles such as Democratic, Autocratic, Laissez Fair which managers have adopted to enable them offer proper guidance to subordinates towards the achievement of organizational goals (Warrick 1981). Though it is believed that these are applied separately depending on the prevailing circumstance(s) within a business setting, some managers adopt and misapply leadership styles that make the secretary's work more difficult in terms of liaising between the manager and clients or visitors.

Scholars have undertaken research on the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance (Puni et al. 2014; Elenkov, 2002; García-Morales et al. 2008; Sethibe and Steyn 2016; Obiwuru et al. 2011) and leadership styles and employee performance (Eran Vigoda-Gadot, 2007; Mitchel and Palmer 2010; Rizki et al. 2017; Hayward et al. 2004). However, it appears that not much has been done on leadership styles and specific job roles. This study seeks to examine the effects of leadership styles on the productivities of secretaries in Africa with particular emphasis on Ghana. The aim of this paper is to explore the functions of secretaries in organisations and to examine their competences with respect to leadership styles of their superiors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Every business is expected to communicate with its stakeholders. This will involve a concept called organisational communication (Jablin & Putnam, 2000). According to them, organisational communication involves a situation where a person is supposed to design and

exchange messages in order to deal with environmental uncertainties. There is no doubt that at the centre of this is the work of a secretary. A secretary is an executive assistant who possesses a mastery of office skills and has the ability to take responsibility with no or less supervision, ability to make decision regarding the assigned duties, and being familiar with the work schedule of the boss as well as the boss's extracurricular activities (Azih 2013). For a secretary to be able to perform this important function really well may be dependent on the type of the leadership style of the superior. This is because leadership style plays a significant role in enhancing or retarding the interest and commitment of the individuals in the organization (Obiruwu et al. 2011). This review provides an overview of previous research on the types of leadership styles, the competencies of secretaries, the functions of secretaries, and how a choice of leadership style affects the secretary's productivity.

Types of leadership styles

Leadership style is a way in which leaders interact or behave towards members of their team (Gastil, 1994; Mullins, 1996). Various styles of leadership have been recognized by scholars, which include democratic, autocratic and laissez-fair leadership styles. In addition to the above, researchers such as Burns, (1978) Bass & Avolio (1997), Eagly et al (2003) and many more, have come out with thorough investigations on the concept of transformational and transactional leadership styles.

Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership is a behaviour that persuades people in a certain way in accordance with and/or favourable to basic democratic principles and processes, such as self-determination, inclusiveness, equal participation, and deliberation (Harris and Chapman, 2004). However, Warrick (1981) defined democratic leadership as a leadership style that places high emphasis on people and performance to achieve organizational and personal goals. It does this by striving for a well-organized work environment and clear responsibilities and objectives to get jobs done through motivation and management of individuals and groups to use their full potentials (Warrick 1981).

This style of leadership, also referred to as enlightened leadership, recognizes individual's or person's self-actualization and self-esteem through a highly encouraging and motivation-orientated environment. It puts into practice members' involvement in considering essential issues and exercises influence in reaching consensual decisions (Goodnight 2004). Evaluating the ideas of the above researchers, it is evident that the democratic style of leadership focuses on the individuals' and groups' participation and performance through motivational activities, and recognizes members' opinions and involvement in decision-making.

Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic style of leadership as explained by Warrick (1981), places high emphasis on performance and low emphasis on people for getting jobs done or achieving objectives through the use of authority, control, manipulation, and hard work. It assumes that people are untrustworthy, lazy, and irresponsible, and that, members should not or have minimal involvement in decision-making, planning, organizing, and control (Warrick 1981). Goodnight (2004) also suggested that autocratic leadership style is structured in hierarchical chain-of-command environment with well-established and controlled disciplinary procedures, which focus on punishment for nonconformity. He further explained that the autocratic leader takes

final decisions alone and imposes on the members, and believes that members have less abilities and capabilities and that, they need to be supervised and directed closely. DuBrin (1995) described autocratic style of leadership as a style with which leaders retain most authority to themselves and solely make decisions with a view of ensuring that members implement it without taking into consideration their attitudes and opinions in decisions making. It could be deduced from these researchers that, the autocratic leadership style has minimal recognition for members' involvement in decision-making and that, there is lack of trust for members. However, this style places higher emphasis on performance mostly through the use of command and force towards the achievement of the objectives.

Laissez-faire Leadership

Goodnight (2004) proposed that with the laissez-faire style of leadership, there is a strong belief that members or employees know the best way to perform their jobs and that they do not need direct supervision. This means that there is a freedom of choice for employees to do what they want. According to him, provision of information and resources is minimal with this style of leadership, and there is absolutely no participation, involvement, or communication within workforce, and also, employees' agreements and commitments towards goals and objectives are just assumed. In addition to Goodnight's opinion, Warrick (1981) suggested that, laissez-faire style of leadership places low emphasis on employees and performance with the assumption that human beings are unpredictable and uncontrollable. Therefore, a leader should do as much as possible to stay away from troubles and keep a low profile by leaving the people or giving the people the freedom to do whatever they want. Judge and Piccolo (2004) referred to laissez-faire leadership style as "nonleadership", because it is the avoidance of leadership. They illustrated that this type of leadership abdicates decision-making and avoids taking action. The above authors described the laissez-faire style of leadership in different ways but they have the same initiative about this style of leadership. This leadership style offers members or employees the freedom to perform their jobs and to make their own decisions, with no control or supervision on the employees.

Human Relations Leadership

Human relations leaders take into consideration the welfare and well-being of the people instead of the performance of a task (Warrick, 1981). According to Warrick (1981), human relations leaders have good and harmonic relationship with followers and consider followers' participation in decision making because, they assume "all" people are honest, trustworthy, and self-motivating, therefore, followers should be provided with a favourable working environment in order to make them happy which will consequently make them productive.

Transformational Leadership

According to Bass (1999), transformational leadership refers to a behaviour in which the leader promotes the members' level of maturity and concerns for accomplishments beyond instant self-interest and self-actualization through idealized persuasion, logical inspiration or individual consideration and the well-being of others, the organization, and the society. From a different perspective, Bolden et al (2003), described transformational leadership as a "process" in which leaders try to develop their followers by increasing the awareness of their followers about what is essential and right, and to elevate the maturity level of their followers by developing their potentials to a level that exceeds a simple exchange of reward for efforts. Bolden et al (2003) idea corresponds with Bass's (1999) idea with exception that Bolden et al

(2003) described transformational leadership style as a process. Apart from that, they viewed transformational leadership as a style that develops and prepares members or followers to become future leaders by means of inspiration, motivation, and persuasion to exceed the normal performance standards to a higher standard. Transformational leaders seek to increase the developmental level of members towards achievements and benefits for individuals, the organization, and the society. The effort of developing followers makes transformational leaders proactive and fast thinkers.

Transactional Leadership

From the perspective of Bass (1999), transactional leadership refers to the exchange connection that exists between the leader and the followers in meeting their own self-interest. He buttressed his opinion by saying that, the transactional leader establishes a contingent reward in exchange of the efforts of the followers either through directing or by participating on what needs to be done by the followers. In connection to this behaviour as observed by Bass (1999) is management-by-exception. This is where performance of followers is supervised by leaders and corrective measures are taken for non-performance. It could also be in the form of passive leadership where leaders wait until problems occur before corrective measures are taken, or leaders would rather prefer not to take any action as characterized by laissez-faire leadership. However, Eagly et al (2003), based on a prior research on leadership style for men and women, confirmed transactional leadership as managing in such a way that clarifies subordinates' responsibilities and rewarding them for achievement of standards, as well as taking corrective actions for failure to meet objectives. In consideration of the perceptions of the above researchers, transactional leadership is viewed as a mutual agreement between the leader and the subordinates, in which the leader seeks to attain best performance from subordinates in exchange of a reward, while the leader establishes corrective actions for failure of performance.

Competencies of secretaries

According to Ezenwafor (2013), competency is the ability to complete a task, find and apply solution to problems effectively. On the other hand, Robinson and Davidson (1999), define competency as capability or efficiency in undertaking assigned functions and duties. Ezenwafor (2013) is of the view that competency has the following components - knowledge and skills, (attitudes and beliefs), verbal, numerical and spatial aptitudes, thinking and leadership abilities, general, professional and organizational knowledge. Ezenwafor and Okeke (2011) identified the following competencies of secretaries needed for effective performance - secretarial competencies, office technology management competencies, communication competencies, management competencies, personality competencies and human relation competencies.

Secretarial competencies –

According to Ezenwafor and Okeke (2011) secretarial competencies comprise of speed and accuracy in using the keyboard, ability to produce documents with effective display and format, ability to proofread and edit documents, file and promptly retrieve documents from the file, keep track of files, handle correspondence, draft routine letters, organize meetings and produce suitable minutes.

Office technology competencies –

Technology is said to refer to the collection of tools, machinery, modifications, environmental arrangement and procedures. This means that office technology would cover all electronic equipment and facilities that enhance the procedures used to process office information. Therefore, secretaries are expected to have competencies with respect to office technology - ability to connect hardware components, boot and shut down computer, effectively use input devices, connect and use printer and relevant equipment for duplication, use secondary storage devices, use the internet for data collection and e-mailing, prevent viral infection and use software such as word processor, spread sheet and data-base management (Ezenwafor and Okeke 2011).

Communication competencies –

Ezenwafor and Okeke (2011) continued that communication is the process of transmitting information from one person or place to another. In business organisations, this is important to enable the organization achieve the stated objectives. However, communication needs to be effective by way of ensuring that the intended message is received, correctly interpreted and understood, accepted and appropriately acted upon by the receiver and confirmed by feedback. To make this happen, the secretaries need to have the following competencies - the ability to understand the official language, use oral communication effectively, effectively use written communication, spell words correctly in written communication, pronounce words correctly and clearly in oral communication, use suitable gestures to communicate, communicate with facial expressions, communicate orally with adequate tone and write legibly and logically in written communication.

Management competencies –

Obayi (2009), is of the view that a manager is supposed to possess special abilities to succeed. Hence management is needed in all human endeavours and by extension, all workers including secretaries in organizations need to practice good management to succeed. To undertake this function, secretaries need the following competencies - the ability to protect office documents from loss or willful destruction, properly handle and adequately maintain work equipment and facilities, manage the work environment by properly arranging and maintaining furniture and equipment, select suitable equipment and other devices for work, procure relevant office stationery and supplies, suitably use office hours, maintain confidentiality of office records, organize personal efforts and energy as well as those of subordinates and persistently seek solutions to problems.

Personality competencies –

Personality is explained to refer to all the physical, mental and emotional characteristics of an individual that are presented to other people. It is formed from childhood but goes through gradual changes through daily experiences. Happiness, job satisfaction and self-fulfillment of a worker are closely associated with personality. Secretaries need the following competencies to enable them relate well with people at work - ability to always maintain good appearance, demonstrate team spirit, speak and deal truthfully at all times, maintain cheerfulness and be approachable, tolerate other people, innovate workable ideas and processes, use initiative, apply self-control at all times, respect superiors and others, persistently work even when extra time is needed and be polite all the time.

Human relations competencies –

Human relations is the interaction that occur among people in an environment. From the point of view of Fulmar (1977), human relations involve dealing with people in such a way as to help achieve collective goals. It is about interaction at the workplace aimed at understanding fellow workers and clients to achieve organizational goal. Secretaries need human relations competencies to answer calls, treat mail and attend visitors, relate with the public, superiors, equals, subordinates and colleagues in general. These competencies are - ability to understand and treat other people as important members of the organization, be a member of a team, protect the interest of the supervisor, show respect to the supervisor at all times, get along with others, ability to be open and sociable, to be selfless, ability to listen and hear other people's point of view.

Functions/roles of secretaries

Ezenwafor (2013), identified the following functions of secretaries in an organization.

Data generation or collection –

Data is a set of raw facts that need to be processed to make it meaningful and usable to individual or a group of individuals. Secretaries perform the function of generating or collecting data by flipping through pages of files or clicking some buttons or keys of ICT hardware components or clicking options in a software component. They may also source needed data from other institutions or organisations through the internet.

Data processing and interpretation –

Information is the outcome of data that has gone through processing. According to Ezenwafor (2013), processed data could only be an information when the data is properly analysed and interpreted to serve a useful purpose. Data analysis and interpretation do not always involve statistical tools as some times simple mathematical tools and common sense are sufficient. Secretaries undertake analysis and interpretation of data using statistical tools and simple mathematical tools.

Information and office management –

Ezenwafor (2013) is of the view that, management takes place at all levels of human activities at all times and places. The secretary's information management functions include creation of all types of documents, dissemination of the documents, storing, retrieval of stored documents and making changes in the existing documents when new information becomes available. According to Obayi (2009), filing plays a major role in the performance of this function. Filing is said to be aimed at collection of information for references and preservation. For effectiveness, filing should meet the following conditions - simplicity, security, compactness and comprehensiveness, clear cross-referencing, space, economy, accessibility and adaptability (Obayi 2009).

Ezenwafor (2013) identified three types of information management systems characterized to three types of office. Information management that involves the use of papers, file jackets, file cabinets, and naming and numbering of files relate to traditional office. Information management involving the use of different hardware and software technological resources

relate to an automated office whiles information management that partly use both traditional office style and automated office style is or transition office.

Treating correspondence –

Robinson and Davidson (1999) defined correspondence as letters received or sent out of an office. Secretaries perform the function of reproducing manuscripts that originate from their supervisors as out-going mails from the office and receive and treat in-coming mails according to a prescribed procedure. In performing this function, secretaries are supposed to be creative, innovative and discreet.

Organizing and clerking meetings –

Shaw and Smith (1979) explain that meeting is an assembly of persons for a particular purpose. According to Omotosho (1979) the purpose may include sharing of ideas, expressing of views on topics raising or offering suggestions or solutions to problems. Little (1977) summed it up by saying that meetings are major part of communications in an organization and that all secretaries are supposed to be familiar with the necessary procedure for a successful meeting. The procedures include preparing and serving notice and agenda, collecting and assembling relevant data and information to facilitate discussions or solution of problems at meetings, clerking meetings, producing the minutes and distributing them to all the people entitled to have copies.

Handling telecommunication and postal services –

There are many services offered by telecommunication and postal services companies. Secretaries are supposed to be familiar with these services and their charges to enable them perform related functions promptly and efficiently.

The effects of a leadership style on the secretary's productivity.

Autocratic Leader –

Autocratic leaders assume that people are lazy, irresponsible, and untrustworthy and that planning, organizing, controlling, and decision making should be accomplished by the leader with minimal involvement from employees (Warrick 1981). Hence, this style makes people bitter and aggressive in behaviour and leads to distortion in communications, high turnover and absenteeism, and low productivity and poor work quality. It also puts employees under a lot of rules, procedures, red tape, status symbols, and working according to the dictates of the boss which makes employees dependent, less creative and afraid to seek responsibility (Warrick 1981).

Democratic Leader –

Warrick (1981), explains that this style places more emphasis on both the performance and the welfare of the employees. He explains that leaders who adopt this style assume that “most” people are honest, trustworthy, and are willing to work hard to accomplish meaningful goals and challenging work. Hence this style leads to high employee productivity, satisfaction, cooperation, and commitment, and that they are not subjected to rigorous controls and formal rules and procedures (Warrick 1981). Under this style, employees are competent and are willing to give their best, take initiative through critical thinking, communicate openly, and

seek and embrace responsibilities (Warrick 1981). Furthermore, it results in low employee absenteeism and turnover.

Human Relations Leader –

Human Relations Leadership places more emphasis on the welfare of employees than on the achievement of the task (Warrick 1981). Leaders who adopt this style make an assumption that “all” people are honest, trustworthy, self-motivated and would want to be involved in decision making. They also aim at making employees happy by ensuring that there is participative, permissive, and supportive work environment (Warrick 1981). However, it has been identified that this style interferes with high achievement because employees lose respect for their leaders, and that it leads to a rise of informal leaders, and frustrates goal-oriented people (Warrick 1981).

Laissez Faire Leader –

Leaders who practice this style place low emphasis on performance and assume that people are unpredictable and uncontrollable and that a leader needs to keep a low profile, stay out of trouble, and leave people alone as much as possible (Warrick 1981). In addition, these leaders rely on whoever will stand out to get the job done. It is argued that employees who are subjects of this style are indifferent, disinterested, and are resentful of the organization and their leaders (Warrick 1981).

Transformational Leader –

Burns (1978), defines transformational leadership as a process that involve both leaders and followers raising one another to a higher level of morality and motivation. According to Burns (1978), a transformational leader needs to be upright in order to transform followers into leaders and moral agents. Leaders who adopt this style have strong moral values and goals which translate into behaviours and decisions that promote ethical policies, procedures, and processes within their organizations (Zhu et al. 2011). Zhu et al (2011) again stipulate that these leaders also show concern for the needs, feelings, and moral development of their followers. They are of the view that these leaders help followers improve their sense of understanding of their own moral perspective and that of others. In addition, followers are influenced in selecting information based on moral relevance from available sources. Furthermore, this style causes followers to learn how to think about their own roles, how to make their own decisions, and how to behave in accordance with their moral identity by observing leaders’ morally communicating, modeling, rewarding moral actions, and engaging in moral behaviours (Zhu et al. 2011).

Transactional Leader –

These leaders use rational or economic means to monitor and control employees (Zhu et al. 2011). It is based on the principle of exchange where leaders provide tangible or intangible support and resources to followers and in return, followers give in their best in terms of efforts and performance (Zhu et al. 2011). They explain that the leader does not refrain from punishing the followers when they are unable to achieve an objective. This leadership style has the following impacts on followers: leaders who use this style monitor employees’ deviation from standards, mistakes, and errors, take action when necessary leading to moral development of employees (Zhu et al. 2011). However, they are also of the view that employees led with this style act in an unethical way when put under pressure from supervisors. In addition, employees

act unethically when faced with potential punishments, such as demotion, salary stagnation and humiliation (Jones and Ryan 1998).

METHODS

Design

The quantitative approach was used in this study. Quantitative research creates statistics by using a large-scale survey research with such methods as questionnaires or structured interviews (Dawson 2009). This is because the researchers needed to take data from a large number of respondents, use random sampling technique, generate quantitative data and make a generalization of the findings to the population.

The design that was used to undertake this research is survey. A survey is a type of research, in the course of which the researchers try to gain an overall depiction of a comprehensive phenomenon sprawling over a stretch of time and/or space. This could involve, for instance, the impact of motivation on employees' productivity, the compliance with environmental regulations by the corporate sector, and so forth (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2010).

The study population (N=950) is composed of 120 and 830 employees of the Regional Coordinating Council and Takoradi Technical University respectively all located within Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis in the Western Region of Ghana. In selecting these respondents, the purposive sampling of non-probability sampling was used because the study focused on the specific selected cases (secretaries) in the chosen organisations (Saunders et al, 2012) that enabled the research questions and objectives to be answered. Therefore, the sample size was 95 out of which 92 responded.

Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researchers. The instrument contained only closed-ended questions which were mainly likert type of questions. This gave the respondents the opportunity to either agree or disagree to a hypothesis (Warrick, 1981; Zhu et al, 2011; Ezenwafor, 2013). The respondents were given consent letters prior to responding to the questionnaire explaining the purpose of the study and ethical issues. The respondents had one week to complete the questionnaire. However, those who could not meet the deadline had a grace period of two days. Out of 100 respondents sampled, 92 completed the questionnaire.

The researcher(s) used Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS 21) to organize and extract data using frequency tables.

The questionnaire was designed in a tabular format and presented in four thematic areas. These are the types of leadership styles, competences of secretaries, functions of secretaries and the effects of leadership styles on productivity.

Table 1 - Types of Leadership Style

Serial	Statements	Responses
A	Workers welfare and their performance, good working environment, and employee involvement are important to your leader	Indicate your position in each statement labelled A to F with respect to: <i>Strongly Agree</i> <i>Agree</i> <i>Neither Agree or Disagree</i> <i>Disagree</i> <i>Strongly Disagree</i>
B	Your boss does not involve you in decision making but rather control, manipulate, and authorize to get jobs done	
C	Your boss provides you with information and resources but gives you the freedom to make your own decisions to perform your duties with no control or supervision	
D	Your boss involves you in decision making because he/she believes you are all honest, trustworthy, and self-motivated	
E	Your boss provides you with necessary resources, information and training to enable you develop your potential to make you mature for a leadership position	
F	Your boss frequently expects your output to match your salary	

Table 2 – Competences of Secretaries

Serial	Statements	Responses
A	You are very good at using the keyboard to produce documents and letters, file and quickly retrieve, handle correspondence, organize meetings and produce suitable minutes	Indicate your position in each statement labelled A to F with respect to: <i>Strongly Agree</i> <i>Agree</i> <i>Neither Agree or Disagree</i> <i>Disagree</i> <i>Strongly Disagree</i>
B	You read, understand, write and speak English fluently, and use suitable gestures and facial expressions to communicate effectively	
C	A secretary must protect office documents from loss or destruction, properly arrange and maintain furniture, equipment and other facilities	
D	A secretary should dress nicely, be cheerful and approachable, speak and deal truthfully at all times and tolerate other people	
E	A secretary must be a team player and treat other people as important members of the organization, respect and protect the interest of the supervisor at all times	

Table 3 – Functions of Secretaries

Serial	Statements	Responses
A	A secretary is supposed to generate or collect data from files, computer software components and from other institutions or organisations	Indicate your position in each statement labelled A to F with respect to: <i>Strongly Agree</i> <i>Agree</i> <i>Neither Agree or Disagree</i> <i>Disagree</i> <i>Strongly Disagree</i>
B	A secretary is supposed to analysed and interpreted data using statistical tools, simple mathematical tools and common sense.	
C	A secretary is supposed to create all types of documents, disseminate documents, store and retrieve stored documents and make changes in the existing documents.	
D	A secretary is supposed to reproduce manuscripts that originate from supervisors out-going mails from the office and receive and treat in-coming mails according to a prescribed procedure	
E	A secretary is supposed to be familiar with the procedure for a successful meeting, produce and distribute minutes to all the people entitled to have copies	
F	A secretary should be familiar with postal services and their charges in Ghana	

Table 4 – Effects of Leadership on Productivity

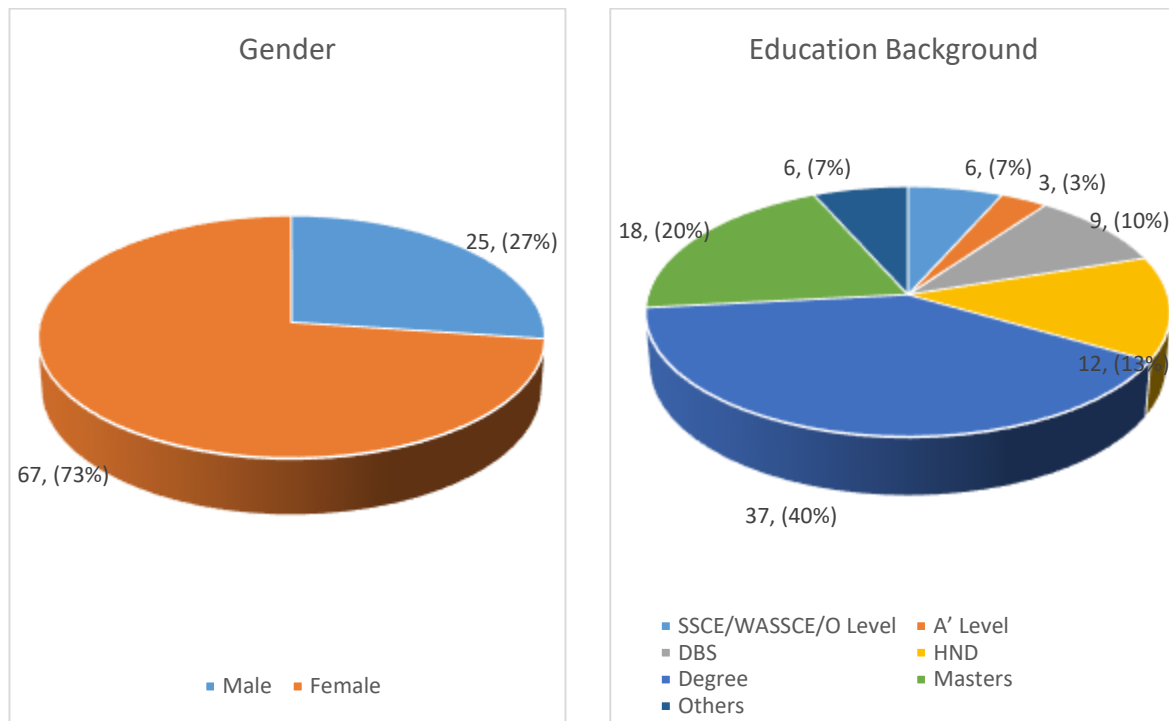


Figure 1 above present data on the education background and gender of the respondents. Out of 92 respondents 25 were males and 67 were females. Moreover, 18 of them representing 20

% have Master's degree, 37 representing 40% have 1st degree, whilst 12 people representing 13 % have Higher National Diploma.

Table 5: Types of Leadership Style

Statement	Responses											
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
A	15	17	58	63	6	7	12	13	0	0	92	100
B	6	7	34	37	12	13	28	30	12	13	92	100
C	6	7	18	20	21	23	34	37	12	13	92	100
D	15	16	40	43	15	17	15	17	6	6	92	100
E	9	10	61	67	3	3	15	17	3	3	92	100
F	12	13	52	57	25	27	3	3	0	0	92	100

Source: Fieldwork, *F* = Frequency

Majority of the respondents confirmed that their bosses use the types of leadership styles identified by Warrick (1981) and Zhu et al. (2011). As could be seen in the table 5, about 80% of the respondents depicted that their bosses use democratic style because workers are allowed to be part of the decision making and their welfare is paramount to their bosses. 44% of the respondents indicated that their bosses exhibit characteristics of this autocratic style however, 43% think otherwise. This meant that the respondents were divided on whether their bosses use autocratic style. It was not surprising for a total number of 50% of the respondents to indicate their leaders do not use laissez-faire leadership style because the cultural setting of people in Ghana does not give room for the practice of this style. About 59% of the respondents indicated their leaders use human relations approach, while whopping 77% also accepted that their leaders use transformational approach. Interestingly, 70% of the total number of respondents again indicated that their leaders use transactional leadership style.

Since the same respondents sampled gave these differing opinions about the types of the leadership styles used by their leaders, it appears that some leaders of these institutions do not stick with a particular style of leadership but adopt a style within the context of the situation present, especially with regards to democratic, transformational and transactional.

Table 6: Competences of SecretariesSource: Fieldwork, *F* = Frequency

On the issue of the competencies of secretaries identified by Ezenwafo (2013), almost all the respondents indicated that secretaries or administration assistants are indeed supposed to

Statement	Responses											
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
A	9	10	21	23	15	17	40	43	6	7	92	100
B	18	20	49	53	3	4	21	23	0	0	92	100
C	9	10	49	53	12	13	15	17	6	7	92	100
D	9	10	25	27	12	13	34	37	12	13	92	100
E	18	20	55	60	9	10	6	7	3	3	92	100
F	3	3	28	30	18	20	34	37	9	10	92	100

possess secretarial, office technology, communication, management, and personality competencies. This was not surprising because majority of the respondents possesses Masters Degrees and HND as well as DBA indicating that they really know and understand what is expected of them as secretaries. It is expected that the awareness of competencies should reflect in the performance of their functions.

Table 7: Functions of SecretariesSource: Fieldwork, *F* = Frequency

Finding on the functions of secretaries explored by Ezenwafor (2013) also had an overwhelming response. Almost all the respondents (100%) supported the fact that secretaries are supposed to generate and collect data from relevant sources, process and interpret data using appropriate instruments, manage information and office facilities, treat correspondence according to the prescribed procedures, and be abreast with the necessary procedures of

Statement	Responses											
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
A	52	57	37	40	0	0	3	3	0	0	92	100
B	49	53	43	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	92	100
C	52	57	37	40	0	0	3	3	0	0	92	100
D	49	54	40	43	3	3	0	0	0	0	92	100
E	40	43	52	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	92	100

organizing. However, just 50% think secretaries are supposed to handle telecommunication and postal services.

Table 8: Effect of Leadership Style on Productivity

Source: Fieldwork, *F* = Frequency

The effects of a type of leadership style as examined by Warrick (1981) and Zhu et al. (2011), came up with mixed responses from the respondents. A total number of 50% are of the view that autocratic style does not distort communication but rather has a high turnover and absenteeism, low productivity and that it puts secretaries under a lot of rules and procedures. As has been widely identified by researchers, many of the respondents (73%) indicated that democratic leadership style leads to high employee productivity, satisfaction, cooperation, and commitment, and that secretaries are not put under rigorous controls and formal rules and procedures (Warrick 1981).

With respect to the effects of human relations leadership style on secretaries, 63% supported Warrick's (1981) assertion that this style leads to participative, permissive, and supportive work environment, however, secretaries and other employees tend to lose respect for the leader. Respondents were divided on the effects of laissez-faire because 50% of them did not support the view made by Warrick (1981) that this style makes employees unconcerned, disinterested, and resentful of the organization and their leader. However, 50% supported Warrick's view.

A total number of 80% of the respondents were convinced that transformational leadership style helps employees improve their sense of understanding of their own moral perspective and that of others, and that they also select information based on moral relevance from available sources. Moreover, they also supported the assertion that employees learn how to think about their own roles, make their own decisions, behave in accordance with their moral identity by observing what the boss does (Zhu et al. 2011).

And finally the respondents were divided on the effects of transactional leadership style on secretaries. This is because, a total number of 47% did not agree that transactional leadership style make employees work to achieve a goal depending on type of reward available, and that employees behave unethical when they are faced with punishments, such as demotion, salary stagnation and humiliation from the boss. However, 33% support that claim and 20% were

Statement	Responses											
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
A	52	57	37	40	0	0	3	3	0	0	92	100
B	49	53	43	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	92	100
C	52	57	37	40	0	0	3	3	0	0	92	100
D	49	54	40	43	3	3	0	0	0	0	92	100
E	40	43	52	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	92	100

neutral.

Implication to Research and Practice

In practice, secretaries would be more receptive to any leadership style that would be exhibited by their bosses. This would make secretaries willing to work with any leader they find

themselves working with. This will go a long way to increase productivity and also enrich the job content as different leaders with different leadership styles can bring their rich experiences onboard. It would strengthen the application of situational approach to leadership practice, eschewing monotony. It therefore affirms the theory of contingency approach to management and its practice which is made effective by followership.

CONCLUSION

Leadership of the public sector institutions are not attached to a particular leadership style as many people perceive to be “that is his style”. Rather, it appears they use a style that will fit the situation or circumstance they face. Many secretaries and administrative assistants of the public institutions are really aware of the competences needed to perform their role. However, it appears these competences are not in use or exhibited by these category of employees. For example, in one of the institutions used for the study, information and communication management is really poor. This is because there is no database of information, thus a request is made for the same information repeatedly. In addition, because of the incompetence in office technology, IT staff are positioned at various divisions to assist or solve office technology problems of these secretaries or administrative assistants. Secretaries and administrative assistants undertake their functions as expected of them. This is not surprising because it is known that people in the public sector are expected to work with due diligence. As a result, secretaries and administrative assistants generate and collect data from relevant sources, and process and interpret using appropriate instrument. However, they do not keep proper database of the information.

There is an interesting revelation with respect to autocratic leadership style. Contrary to the popular view that it leads to high turnover and absenteeism, low productivity and distortion of communication, half of the respondents disagree. Expectation on the effects of democratic style was confirmed as many of the respondents agreed that they feel part of the management of the organisation. On human relations style, a staggering revelation emerged that the employees tend to lose respect for the leader. However, respondents were divided on the view that laissez-fair makes them unconcerned, disinterested and resentful to their leaders or bosses. Transformational leadership style was confirmed to have a major effect on the morality of the employees. This is because the roles and decisions they make are guided by the moral identity exhibited by their leaders or bosses. Moreover, many of the secretaries and administrative assistants of the public sector institutions do not support the assertion against transactional leadership style that goal achievement is dependent on the type of the reward and that employees are unethical when punitive action is meted against them.

Future Research

This study focused on the influence of leadership styles on secretaries. However, the influence of secretaries on their bosses was not captured. Moreover, the type of attitudes secretaries need to cope with a particular leadership style was also not taken into consideration. In addition, a particular leadership style that has been more effectively practiced and the level of change in productivity has not been captured. It is the expectation of the researchers for these areas to be explored in future research.

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