

## PERSONALITY TRAITS OF TEACHERS AND DESIRED LEADERSHIP STYLES

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study investigated the relationship between teachers' personality traits and their desired leadership styles in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana. The descriptive survey design was used for the study with a total of 417 employees randomly selected from five secondary schools in the metropolis. Results indicate that all the five personality traits had significant positive relationship with transformational leadership style, with conscientiousness having the strongest relationship and neuroticism the weakest. Thus conscientious teachers have higher preference for transformational leadership than employees of the other personality traits. Neuroticism had the strongest positive relationship with transactional leadership style among the other traits. Agreeableness and openness also had significant (weak) positive relationship with transactional leadership style. Conscientiousness however did not have significant relationship, with extraversion relating negatively with transactional leadership style. It was recommended that school managers should endeavour to know the traits of their subordinates and apply the appropriate leadership styles when dealing with them to bring about good interpersonal relationship and satisfaction at the workplace.*

**KEYWORDS:** Teachers, Transactional, Transformational, Laissez-Faire, Leadership, Personality Traits

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## INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a dynamic process that deserves attention as it is a quality and a skill, which is both admired and needed in our society. Hogan and Kaiser (2005) define leadership as being about the performance of groups or teams. They argue that measuring personality is a valid predictor of leadership capability, when looked at from two perspectives, firstly how you think about yourself, and secondly, how others think about you (Reputation). Hogan and Kaiser (2005) indicated significant relationship between personality and organisational performance through the importance of leadership style shaped by personality. Where personality is shaped in younger years, and therefore less developed during adult years, the skills approach and knowledge are required by a leader to be successful (Northouse, 2010). Therefore shaping employee attitudes and the effective functioning of the team, which subsequently drives, or hinders, organisational effectiveness would require a relational process involving personal interactions between leaders and followers. Leaders must continue to expand their understanding of themselves, their role in leadership, and develop their own leadership skills.

Personality refers to the characteristics of the person that account for consistent patterns of feeling, thinking and behaving (Pervin, Cervone & John, 2005). The personalities of people are in some ways unique; each person has a different pattern of traits and characteristics that are not fully duplicated in any other person. This pattern of traits tends to be stable over time (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). There are two basic determinants of personality (Pierce & Gardner, 2003), our heredity and past interactions with our environment. Our genetics make up set the lower and upper limits for our personalities and our life experiences determine where within that range we will fall. Knowledge of personality is one of many tools in the managerial and leadership tool kits for more

effective managers or leaders (Pierce & Gardner, 2002). In fact, only five dimensions are to be considered as these dimensions have emerged in so many different studies conducted in different ways. They are referred to as the Big Five dimensions of personality (Digman, 1996). People's personality has a significant influence on the way they think, feel and relate to others. Personality traits tend to be pretty stable in adulthood and lead people to act in certain preferred ways. Personality sometimes encourages subordinates to carry out work roles effectively and at other times get in the way of others. Leaders with extraversion traits for example find it easier to lead meetings and confront situations whereas individuals with low level agreeableness traits may have difficulties in team building, coaching and mentoring because they are self-sufficient and self-absorbed. In a similar vein an individual with a different background has different attitudes, values and norms and such differences result in different personalities of individuals that determine their actions and behaviours.

Research studies into the relationship between personality and human behaviours (Dole & Schroeder, 2001) have indicated that people with strong personalities can influence others to act and do things while others who have certain types of personalities, can determine the way an organisation goes. Extraverts and introverts, for example, represent the opposite ends of key personality traits that affect how people form and manage relationships with others and how they communicate- both at work and in their personal lives. The foregoing may be a precursor to differences in the teachers' desired leadership styles. Majority of people are neither very extrovert nor very introvert but somewhat in between. Therefore people high on extraversion would likely be surrounded by such people at work and in their personal lives. They will also lead an active existence and they will seek excitement and stimulation. There is no absolute agreement among researchers about the five-factor structure of personality (Block, 1995) however the Big Five framework provides opportunity for integration of commonalities among diverse approaches to personality (John & Srivastava, 1999). The researchers describe the Big Five traits and their relationships with the three leadership styles.

### **Conscientious personality traits and transformational leadership**

People high in Conscientiousness tend to be organized, thorough, and planning. Daft (2005) defined conscientiousness as the degree to which a person is responsible, dependable, persistent, and achievement-oriented. A conscientious person is focused on a few goals, which he or she pursues in a purposeful way, whereas a less conscientious person tends to be easily distracted and impulsive. This dimension of personality, Daft (2005) added, relates to the work itself rather than to relationships with other people. Indeed, many entrepreneurs show a high level of conscientiousness. Studies reported that transformational leadership is more effective, productive, innovative, and satisfying to the followers' as both parties work towards the good of organization propelled by shared visions and values as well as mutual trust and respect. According to (Albulushi & Hussain, 2008) when transformational leadership is practiced, team members believe that their leaders care for them rather than using them as a means to an end. Walumbwa and Lawler (2003) indicated that transformational leaders can motivate and increase followers' motivation and organizational commitment by getting them to solve problems creatively. Bass and Avolio (1990) revealed that transformational leaders who encourage their followers to think critically and creatively can have an influence on their followers' commitment.

Bass (1985) has contended that self-determination is likely a characteristic of transformational leaders. According to Barrick and Mount (1991) and Barrick, Mount and Jugde (2001) that achievement and self-discipline are the major components of Conscientiousness and there is a possibility that Conscientiousness is related to transformational leadership. Avolio et al. (1996)

have argued that empirical data do not appear to support the argument of relationship between conscientiousness and also found that Conscientiousness displayed very weak, non significant correlations with supervisor and subordinate ratings of transformational leadership. Judge and Bono (2000) found in their study a link between traits from the 5-factor model of personality (the Big 5) and transformational leadership behaviour. However Neuroticism and Conscientiousness were found to be unrelated to transformational leadership.

### **Openness personality traits and transformational leadership style**

Openness to experience (sometimes called Intellect or Culture) is the dimension, which includes having wide interests, and being imaginative and insightful. Daft (2005) defines this dimension as the degree to which a person has a broad range of interests and is imaginative, creative, and willing to consider new ideas. These people are intellectually curious and often seek out new experiences through travel, the arts, movies, reading widely, or other activities. People lower in this dimension tend to have narrower interests and stick to the tried-and-true ways of doing things. As Judge and Bono (2000) have showed, personality is related to behaviour and their examination of the relationship between personality and transformational leadership indicated openness to experience was related to transformational leadership. Individuals high in this trait are emotionally responsive and intellectually curious (McCrae, 1996) and are likely to have a vision for an organization's future as a result of their imaginative and insightful abilities. Since they have concern for others, they are likely to be concerned with individuals' growth and development needs (individualized consideration) and are likely to be sure that individuals are rewarded appropriately and praised "for work well done" (Bass, 1985).

### **Extraversion personality traits and transactional leadership style**

The broad dimension of Extraversion includes a variety of specific traits such as talkative, energetic, and assertive (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Daft (2005) mentioned that extroversion dimension also includes the characteristic of dominance and often quite self-confident. They seek out positions of authority, and are competitive and assertive. They like to be in charge of others or have responsibility for others. Depue and Collins (1999) argued that extraversion is composed of two central components, affiliation (having and valuing warm personal relationships) and agency (being socially dominant, assertive, and influential). They seek excitement (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975) and social attention (Ashton, Lee, & Paunonen, 1999). Watson and Clark (1997) suggested that positive emotionality is at the core of extraversion and extraverts experience and express positive emotions. They tend to seek out and enjoy change and may score high on intellectual stimulation. Therefore they tend to exhibit inspirational leadership (e.g., having an optimistic view of the future). They are likely to generate confidence and enthusiasm among followers.

As intimated by (Bass, 1985) transactional leaders aim at monitoring and controlling employees through rational or economic means and provide tangible or intangible support and resources to followers in exchange for their efforts and performance. They focus on management by exception in setting standards and monitoring deviations from these standards. In the less active version of management by exception (management by exception-passive), leaders take a passive approach (*laissez-faire*) intervening only when problems become serious (Bass, 1985). The results of a study conducted into the relationship between transactional and *laissez-fair* leadership style and personality traits by (Jannesari, Irvani, Masaali, Farhang, & Ghorbani, 2013) have shown that there were some meaningful relationships between transactional leadership and extraversion.

### **Agreeableness personality traits and transactional leadership style**

This dimension includes traits like sympathetic, kind and affectionate. Daft (2005) defined agreeableness as the degree to which a person is able to get along with others by being good-natured, cooperative, forgiving, compassionate, understanding, and trusting. Daft (2005) added that a leader who scores high on agreeableness seems warm and approachable, whereas one who is low on this dimension may seem cold, distant, and insensitive. They added that people high on agreeableness tend to make friends easily and often have a large number of friends, whereas those low on agreeableness generally establish fewer close relationships. Bass (1985) indicated that people high on agreeableness are concerned with individuals' growth and development needs (individualized consideration) and are likely to be sure that individuals are rewarded appropriately and praised "for work well done" (contingent reward). Costa and McCrae (1992) have confirmed that such individuals are modest, altruistic and tend to be both trusting and trustworthy. They have emphasized several leadership behaviours that might be exhibited by individuals high in agreeableness including their concern for others. According to Judge and Bono (2000) agreeableness and extraversion positively predicted transformational leadership but not transactional leadership.

### **Neuroticism (Emotional Stability) and laissez faire leadership style**

Emotional Stability (sometimes called Neuroticism) is characterized by traits like tense, moody, and anxious. Daft (2005) refers to this dimension as the degree to which a person is well adjusted, calm, and secure. A leader who is emotionally stable handles stress well, is able to handle criticism, and generally doesn't take mistakes and failure personally. In contrast, leaders who have a low degree of emotional stability are likely to become tense, anxious, or depressed. They generally have lower self-confidence and may explode in emotional outbursts when stressed or criticized. With regard to laissez faire leadership, the leader allows the employees to make decision, but the leader is still responsible for the decisions that are made. This style of leadership is used when employees are able to analyze the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to do it. The major indicator of laissez faire behaviour is the leader's incapacity to get involved. The leader works intentionally on avoiding involvement or confrontation. According to (Sarros & Santora, 2001) this reflects a lazy and sometimes non-committed attitude among executives. It damages the organizational goodwill and frustrates hard working executives who "do not walk the talk".

### **Gender differences and their desired leadership styles**

Park (1996) demonstrated that gender is related to leadership style. There are controversies with regard to the foregoing. However the question here is can there really be a difference between the leadership styles of males and females? Statham (1987) and Winther and Green (1987) argue strongly that there are differences, while Powell (1990) and Donnell and Hall (1980) assert just as strongly that there are none. Rosener (1990) has studied second generation of managerial women she borrowed from Burns (1978) to describe the different leadership styles she found. The men in the study were typically "transactional" leaders, saw job performance as a series of transactions with subordinates. The transactions consist of exchanging rewards for services rendered or punishments for inadequate performance. Rosener found that men are more likely to use power that comes from their organizational position. Women in her study were characterized as "transformational" leaders. They are skilled at getting subordinates to transform their own self interest into the interest of the larger group. Women ascribe their power not to their position within the organization but to their own personal characteristics. The findings of

this study corroborate those of the Eagly and Johnson (1990) meta-analysis, which found that women leaders are more democratic.

*These women actively work to make their interactions with subordinates positive for everyone involved. More specifically, the women encouraged participation, share power and information, enhance other people's self-worth, and get others excited about their work. All these things reflect their belief that allowing employees to contribute and feel powerful and important is a win-win situation-good for the employees and the organization. (p. 120)*

Eagly and Johnson's comprehensive meta-analysis findings suggest that there are some small differences in the leadership styles of males and females. Kanter (1977) indicated that organizational position is a more powerful determinant of behaviour and attitude than supposedly inherent sex differences leaves much to be desired. This is because there are dangers of overgeneralizations. Thus some women have become leaders and instead of bringing a "softer" approach-based on supposedly inherent female characteristics of submissiveness, passivity, and caring-they have demonstrated that women can be competitive and assertive, in some cases trying to be more "male" than the females (Hearn & Parkin, 1986-87). On the other hand, some men have exhibited the softer approach traditionally associated with women.

### **Gender differences and their personality traits**

A study conducted by Costa Jr., Terracciano and McCrae (2001) suggests that gender differences are small relative to individual variations within genders; differences are replicated across cultures for both college-age and adult samples and differences are broadly consistent with gender stereotypes. Women reported themselves to be higher in Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Warmth and Openness to Feelings whereas men were higher in Assertiveness and Openness to Ideas. Contrary to predictions from evolutionary theory the magnitude of gender differences varied across cultures. Again contrary to predictions from the social role model, gender differences were most pronounced in European and American cultures in which traditional sex roles are minimized. Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) review of research on sex-related differences in cognition, temperament and social behaviour in children and adults concluded that men are more assertive and less anxious than women; no differences were found for two other traits analyzed, locus of control and self-esteem. Feingold (1994) used meta-analysis to confirm the gender differences in adult personality traits by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) and explored other gender differences and concluded that women scored lower than men on assertiveness and higher on gregariousness (extraversion) anxiety, trust, and tender mindedness (nurturance).

Neuroticism has predispositions to experience of anxiety, anger, depression, shame and other distressing emotions. Gender differences on traits related to neuroticism have been consistently reported with women scoring higher than men (Lynn & Martin, 1997). Feingold (1994) found that women scored higher in anxiety; Nolen-Hoeksema (1987) in a review of general population surveys reported that women scored higher in symptoms of depression and Kling, Hyde, Showers and Buswell (1999) found that women scored lower than men on measures of self-esteem. Extraversion reflects sociability, Assertiveness, and positive emotionality, all of which have been linked to sensitivity to rewards (Depue & Collins, 1999). Whereas gender differences are small on the overall domain level of Extraversion (with women typically scoring higher), the small effect size could be due to the existence of gender differences in different directions at the facet level. Women tend to score higher than men on Warmth, Gregariousness, and Positive Emotions, whereas men score higher than women on Assertiveness and Excitement Seeking (Feingold, 1994; Costa et al., 2001). Therefore within the framework of the FFM evidence might

be seen in terms of aspects of Openness. For example, women are often found to be more agreeable than men (Feingold, 1994; Costa et al., 2001). This means that women, on average, are more nurturing, tender-minded, and altruistic more often and to a greater extent than men.

However, such a finding does not preclude the fact that men may also experience nurturing, tender-minded, and altruistic states, and that some men may even score higher in these traits than some women. Eisenberg, Fabes, Schaller and Miller (1989) found evidence of greater facial expression of emotion in women, and the ability to decode non verbal signals of emotion is consistently found to be more developed in adult women than in men (McClure, 2000). Conscientiousness describes traits related to self-discipline, organization, and the control of impulses, and appears to reflect the ability to exert self-control in order to follow rules or maintain goal pursuit. Women score somewhat higher than men on some facets of Conscientiousness, such as order, dutifulness, and self-discipline (Feingold, 1994; Costa et al., 2001). These differences, however, are not consistent across cultures, and no significant gender difference has typically been found in Conscientiousness at the Big Five trait level (Costa et al., 2001).

### **Age differences and desired leadership style**

Findings of a research conducted by Kabacoff and Stoffey (2011) on the 'influences of age on the leadership style' suggest that older managers were mature, saw challenges and had long-term perspectives in managing people, in contrast, younger managers were competitive, and result oriented and adopted an open style of management. In a related study by Nguyen and Nguyen (2012), of 'Relationship between Leadership Styles and Ages' the result indicated that the younger and older managers have different profiles in their autocratic and democratic leadership style (consultative and participative). Older managers are more autocratic in decision-making process, more consultative in employees' opinion and more participative in employees' performance in comparison with younger managers. Mitchell (2000) suggests that several factors account for generational differences in the attitudes and behaviour of workers. The level of education and age education influence people's values, wants and needs and makes them think and behave differently. Age, on the other hand, tend to give greater or lesser degree of expression of individualism among the workers with the younger generations feeling more comfortable exhibiting individualistic behaviours.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Review of literature revealed substantial studies in leadership and personality traits, but in the Ghanaian context, not much is empirically known. Ghana has a unique culture and it would not be surprising to find out that more than one leadership style exists as there are significant differences in the cultural attributes of each ethnic group (Kennedy & Mansor, 2000). Just as organizational performance is influenced by a competitive and innovative culture, the latter can indeed influence leadership style which consequently may affect organizational performance through its culture (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). Pedraja and Rodriguez (2004, 2005) have shown that leadership styles influence effectiveness in public organizations but it is equally difficult to ascertain which style is more effective with myriad of other factors at play. The foregoing confirms explanation given by (Vroom, 2000) that analysis of factors, including the relevance of decisions, the importance of commitment, success probability, leader and group experience, group support to goal achievement and team competency should be considered in defining leadership style. While, in western literature, empirical evidence exists to support the fact that there is relationship between leadership style and personality trait, in Ghana it is not certain

whether the same can be said. It is again not clearly understood whether variables such as age and sex differences can influence personality traits and leadership styles.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between teachers' personality traits and their desired leadership styles in Ghana by focusing on the relationships among the three leadership styles (transformational, transactional and laissez faire).

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

In order to find answers to the problem, the following research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

#### **Research Questions**

RQ 1. To what extent would conscientious teachers desire transformational leadership style?

RQ 2. To what extent would openness to experience teachers desire transformational leadership style?

RQ 3. To what extent would teachers of extraversion personality desire transactional leadership style?

RQ 4. To what extent would teachers of agreeableness personality desire transactional leadership style?

RQ 5. To what extent would teachers of neuroticism personality desire Laissez faire leadership style?

#### **Hypotheses**

1. There is a significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of their desired leadership styles
2. There is a significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of their personality traits
3. There will be age difference in terms of teachers' desired leadership styles

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The descriptive survey research design was used in the study. As indicated by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), the descriptive design identifies the opinions people hold about certain phenomena. In this study, the phenomena were identified as personality traits and leadership styles.

## Research participants

The research participants were 417 teachers from randomly selected secondary schools for the study. There were 158 males (37.9%) and 259 females (62.1%). Their ages ranged between 18-24, N= (27.1%); 25-31, N=147(35.3%); 32-38, N= 69(16.5%) and 39 and above = 88(21.1%).

## Sampling technique

The researchers were interested in exploring teachers personality traits and their desired leadership styles hence we used the random sampling technique to select secondary school teachers in the Cape Coast metropolis.

## Instruments

Two questionnaires were adopted for the study. Firstly the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (5x), was made up of five point likert scale ranging from *frequently, if not always* to *not at all*. The scoring was based on a range of 4=frequently to 0= not at all. Satisfaction, extra effort and effectiveness were not included in these analyses. The various subscales are briefly described below.

### The Transformational Leadership subscales

Idealized Influence (attributed). This subscale is comprised of 4 items, which assess the degree to which the supervisor is perceived as espousing important values, beliefs, and a sense of mission. Idealized Influence (behaviour) =4 items. It assesses the subordinates' perceptions of how much the leader makes personal sacrifices, deals with crises and obstacles, and exhibits self-confidence. Inspirational motivation (IM) =4items. It measures the leaders' setting of high standards and orientation toward the future. Intellectual Stimulation (IS). The IS subscale is composed of 4 items that assess follower perceptions of the degree to which their supervisor accepts their Ideas and encourages them to challenge the status quo by re-examining critical assumptions. Individual Consideration (IC). IC is a 4 item subscale that measures the extent to which subordinates perceive the supervisor as treating them as individuals, rather than as part of a group and invests in their learning process.

### The Transactional Leadership subscales

Contingent Reward (CR). The CR subscale is composed of 4 items that measure the supervisors' exchange- related behaviour, in which rewards are contingent upon the subordinates' agreement to task performance. Management-by-Exception - Active (MBEA). The MBEA subscale assesses the degree to which the leader actively searches for subordinate mistakes; this subscale contains four -items. Management-by-exception - passive (MBEP). MBEP is a four -item subscale that represents the subordinates' perception that the leader does not get involved in their work unless problems attract the leader's attention.

## Non-Leadership

Laissez-faire (LF). In addition to the Transformational and Transactional Leadership scales the LF subscale consists of four items included in the MLQ (5x) to measure "nonleadership ": in other words the perception of leadership inaction. The MLQ is made up of 45 items.

Second The Big Five Inventory which consists of 44 items measuring five trait dimensions of personality - extraversion (8 items), agreeableness (9 items), conscientiousness (9 items),

neuroticism (8 items) and openness to experience (9 items) - and uses a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree'. Both inventories have been used extensively and therefore have very good reliabilities.

### **Procedure for data collection**

The five secondary schools used for the study were visited to familiarise ourselves with the environment. A letter of introduction from the Head of the Department of Educational Foundations was sent to the heads of the schools to allow us to collect the data. Three weeks was used for the data collection. Each questionnaire was to be filled within 45 minutes. The questionnaire was given to heads of the various departments of the schools who gave them to their colleagues to complete and return within one week. Six hundred questionnaires were sent out but 417 were recovered giving over 80% return rate.

### **Procedure for data analysis**

The data was analyzed using SPSS version 16 software. The five research questions were analyzed using regression. The hypotheses were also analyzed with independent t-tests.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Analysed data for answering each research question and testing the hypotheses are presented in this section. Between group analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that respondents' personality traits significantly influence the extent to which they desire transformational leadership style ( $F_{(5, 411)} = 31.33, p < .001$ ). Analyses of b coefficients indicate that there were positive or direct relationships between each of the personality traits of the respondents and their desire for transformational leadership styles. Again the analyses suggest further that, apart from t-statistics of neuroticism that was not statistically significant, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness were all statistically significant. This suggests that teachers with all the traits, apart from neuroticism desire transformational leadership style to some extent with differences in the extent of desirability.

### **Research Questions**

#### **RQ1. To what extent would conscientious teachers desire transformational leadership style?**

Results indicate that conscientious teachers have the greatest desire for transformational leadership style ( $r = .457$ ). Overall personality traits of teachers accounted for 27.6% of the variance in their desire for transformational leadership. Specifically conscientiousness accounted for 7.3% of the variance ( $p < .001$ ).

It has been argued by Barrick and Mount (1991), that there is a possibility that conscientiousness is related to transformational leadership. The finding of this study gives credence to the argument held by Barrick and Mount (1991), but not Avolio et al. (1996) who contended that empirical data do not appear to support the argument of relationship between conscientiousness and transformational leadership.

Again in line with reports of various studies that transformational leadership is more effective, productive, innovative, and satisfying, the teachers of the current studies may be influenced by

such attributes to the extent that they may work as team members because they believe that their leaders are more caring as well as showing mutual trust and respect for them. More interestingly because conscientious individuals are goal and detail oriented (Hogan & Ones, 1997), conscientious teachers may be more akin to engage in management by exception-active which is an attribute of transformational leaders.

**RQ2. To what extent would openness to experience teachers desire transformational leadership style?**

The finding with regard to teachers' openness to experience personality traits desirability of transformational leadership style was ( $r = .299$ ) and showed variability of 3.5%. The result is significant to transformational leadership since openness to experience includes having wide interests, being imaginative and insightful. Individuals high in this trait are emotionally responsive and intellectually curious (McCrae, 1996) and are likely to have a vision for an organization's future as a result of their imaginative and insightful abilities. Daft (2005) reported that such people are willing to consider new ideas, intellectually curious and often seek out new experiences through travel, movies, reading widely, or other activities. However those lower in this dimension tend to have narrower interests and stick to the tried-and-true ways of doing things. It is indeed possible that by their strong attributes they prefer a transformational leader which is evident in the study of Judge and Bono (2000) which examined the relationship between personality and transformational leadership and indicated that openness to experience was related to transformational leadership. Moreover, the report in this study may be related to individualized consideration since subordinates perceive the supervisor as treating them as individuals, rather than as part of a group and invests in their learning process. The leader is likely to be sure that those individuals are rewarded appropriately and praised "for work well done" (Bass, 1985).

**RQ3. To what extent would teachers of extraversion personality desire transactional leadership style?**

The results of linear regression analysis indicated that extrovert teachers do not desire transactional leadership. The b coefficient was negative and was not significant either ( $r = -.125$ ,  $p = .139$ ). The result of the current study contradicts the results of a study conducted into the relationship between transactional and laissez-fair leadership style and personality traits by (Jannesari, Iravani, Masaeli, Farhang, & Ghorbani, 2013) which asserted that there were some meaningful relationships between transactional leadership and extraversion. Our finding however underscores the report given by Daft (2005) which stressed that, extraversion is characteristic of dominance and often quite self-confident and seeks out positions of authority and is competitive and assertive. Therefore it will be unusual for transactional leaders who use the less active version of management by exception (management by exception-passive), take a passive approach (laissez-faire) intervening only when problems become serious (Bass, 1985) to be preferred by subordinates who value warm personal relationships and agency (being socially dominant, assertive, and influential) (Depue & Collins, 1999). Even though transactional leaders focus on management by exception in setting standards and controlling employees through rational means and providing support and resources to followers in exchange for their efforts and performance (Bass, 1985), extraverted employees seem to be more inclined to relational rather than transactional orientation of leadership.

**RQ4. To what extent would teachers of agreeableness personality desire transactional leadership style?**

Agreeableness teachers' desire for transactional leadership style was relatively weak ( $r = .194$ ,  $p = .028$ ). Interestingly teachers of neuroticism had the strongest desire for transactional leadership style ( $r = .300$ ,  $p = .002$ ). The result of this study supports the agreeableness characteristics of leaders who appear warm and approachable, whereas one who is low on this dimension may appear cold, distant, and insensitive (Daft, 2005). It is also in line with Bass's (1985) indication of people high on agreeableness concern for individuals' growth and development needs (individualized consideration) and give reward for hard work (contingent reward). On the contrary, Judge and Bono (2000) have revealed that agreeableness and extraversion positively predicted transformational leadership but not transactional leadership. The later may be linked to the weak score of teachers' level of agreeableness personality desirability of transactional leadership style.

**RQ5. To what extent would teachers of neuroticism personality desire Laissez faire leadership style?**

A linear regression analysis indicated that the relationship between neuroticism and teachers' desire for laissez faire leadership style was not statistically significant ( $r = .061$ ,  $p = .243$ ) and neuroticism accounted for only 0.03% of why employees desire laissez-faire leadership style. The study does not have support for a typical leader with traits like being tensed, moody, and anxious but a degree to which a person is well adjusted, calm, and secure (Daft, 2005). A leader who is emotionally stable is able to handle criticism, and generally doesn't take mistakes and failure personally. In contrast, leaders who have a low degree of emotional stability are likely to become tense, anxious, or depressed. In general it is likely that respondents in this study have characteristics of neuroticism with some degree of adjustment, calmness and security to work independently which may warrant laissez faire headmasters. This is however dangerous because research indicates that laissez faire leadership style reflects a lazy and sometimes non-committed attitude among executives (Sarros & Santora, 2001).

**Hypotheses**

**1. There is a significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of their desired leadership styles**

The study sought to find out if male and female teachers differ in terms of their desired leadership style. The independent sample t-test was used to test the significance of the differences. The results indicated that males and females differ significantly in their desire for transformational leadership with more males than females desiring for transformational style. This was significant at the .05 level of significance ( $t = 2.152$ ,  $p = .032$ ). Statham (1987) and Winther and Green (1987) argue strongly that there are gender differences in leadership styles which are confirmed in this study. Again the result of the current study gives credence to what Rosener (1990) found in her study of second generation of managerial women she borrowed from Burns (1978). She concluded that men are more likely to use power that comes from their organizational position. However, women are characterized as "transformational" leaders and skilled at getting subordinates to transform their own self interest into the interest of the larger group. They ascribe their power not to their position within the organization but to their own personal characteristics. Eagly and Johnson (1990) meta-analysis, which found that women leaders are more democratic also emphasise the gender difference in leadership style. Even more

intriguing is the assertion that some women leaders tend to be competitive and assertive, in some cases trying to be more “male” than females instead of bringing a “softer” approach-based on supposedly inherent female characteristics of submissiveness, passivity, and caring (Hearn & Parkin, 1986-87). The foregoing further corroborates the finding in this study.

## **2. There is a significant difference between male and female teachers in terms of their personality traits**

A test of significance of the differences between male and female teachers in terms of their personality traits was carried out using independent samples t-test. Results showed that males and females differ significantly on only extraversion ( $t=2.23$ ,  $p=.026$ ). Feingold (1994) used meta-analysis to confirm the gender differences in adult personality traits by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974). She also explored other gender differences and concluded that women scored lower than men on assertiveness and higher on gregariousness (extraversion) anxiety, trust, and tender mindedness (nurturance). The current finding confirms Feingold's (1994) conclusion on the differences inherent in males and females in terms of their personality traits. The result reported by this study does not confirm suggestion that gender differences are small relative to individual variations within genders (Costa Jr., Terracciano & McCrae, 2001).

## **3. There will be age difference in terms of teachers' desired leadership styles**

This hypothesis sought to find out if teachers of different age brackets would differ in terms of their desired leadership style. The between groups ANOVA was used and results indicated that teachers' age did not significantly affect their desired leadership style ( $F_{(3,413)} = 2.523$ ,  $p<.057$ ). The result is not in consonance with findings of Kabacoff and Stoffey (2011) on the ‘influences of age on leadership style’ which suggest that older managers were mature, had long-term perspectives in managing people, in contrast, younger managers were competitive, result oriented and adopted an open style of management. Again there was no link between the current study and the result obtained by Nguyen and Nguyen (2012), about the ‘Relationship between Leadership Styles and Ages’ which indicated that older managers are more autocratic in decision-making process, more consultative in employees' opinion and more participative in employees' performance in comparison with younger managers. The contrasts may be linked to the settings in which the various studies were conducted. While the other two studies were conducted in business environments, the present study was carried out in an educational environment. There's no doubt that the new generation of leaders has priorities that are often quite different from those of previous generations of leaders. Hence in hiring and keeping the best and brightest people or teachers, the ones who will lead our institutions into the future, then you must create a work environment that's tailored to their values and priorities and not their age.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Generally the findings give credence to the problem statement and made it more understandable. It is therefore recommended from the findings that, school managers should be interested in transformational personnel with openness traits to experience since they have wide interests, are imaginative and insightful to motivate students to study hard.

Again the results indicated that males and females differ significantly in their desire for transformational leadership with more males than females desiring transformational style. This

also calls for gender advocacy groups to organize training workshops for teachers on how to ensure gender equality in the classroom, and this should also go for the community as a whole. Teachers must also be aware of the tendency to discriminate in the classroom as a result of differences in personality traits and differences in leadership styles.

In addition, research purported to discover dispositional bases of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership should focus on specific traits relevant for each type of leadership behaviour.

Finally, considering research evidence that agreeableness and extrovert teachers do not desire transactional leadership but interestingly teachers of neuroticism had the strongest desire for transactional leadership style, it is critical that we gain a deeper understanding of how these leadership behaviours develop over time.

### **Implications for Practice**

The prime implication of the findings to practitioners is that, individuals differ on the leadership styles that make them function at their optimum due to their personality traits. Employees differ significantly in terms of their motives, values and perception which invariably affect their interactions and social relations. It would be inappropriate for leaders and managers of employees to employ same leadership style in dealing with all employees. Leaders therefore need to know their employees personality traits and apply desirable styles in dealing with them in order to bring out the best in them and boost their satisfaction.

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