Leadership Styles And Managed Change In Public Universities In Uganda

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Abstract
The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between leadership styles and managed change in Public Universities in Uganda. A cross sectional design and a quantitative approach was adopted for this study. The study used a population census since the study population was small, hence the population comprised of public universities in Uganda which are 5 in total. The data was tested for reliability, analysed using SPSS and results presented based on the study objectives. Results revealed positive and significant relationship between leadership styles and managed change. This implies that when proper leadership styles are used, it leads to effective management of change. The study recommended public institutions to adopt open, participative leadership styles so as to achieve the purpose for which the change was sought for. The outcome of this study will help leaders of Public Universities to recognize the importance of leadership in managing reform driven change. The study will also avail leaders of public universities in Uganda with appropriate leadership styles that can enhance successful reform driven change.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Managed Change, Public Universities, Uganda

Introduction
Change is ubiquitous – a constant across public and private sector organizations which can be in the form of execution of a new business strategy, restructurings, introduction of new policies, acquisitions, mergers, relocations or the implementation of new technology (Brunton & Matheny, 2009). One of the central objectives of any strategic change initiative is to improve organizational efficiency, increase competitiveness, enhance organizational flexibility, produce quality in addition to reducing operating costs and improve organizational performance considerably (Storey, 1995). However such change initiative may fail to produce sustainable changes in processes, behavior or performance if not handled and managed properly. (McGreevy, 2009).

Successive waves of reform-driven change (Flood, 2000) continue to demand rapid adoption of new practices and priorities by change agents, yet as demonstrated by McNulty and Ferlie (2004), these waves of reform are sometimes reduced to ripples when planned change initiatives give way to the change agents’ embedded norms and assumptions. Walston and Chadwick (2003) note that the change agents’ perceptions of any change effort are extremely important to the success of these restructuring thrusts.

Implementing change is never easy. In order to succeed, meticulous planning and execution of this change by leadership is essential (Elias, 2009). However, ineffective leadership may have led to continued failure by organizations to manage reform-driven change. According to Kistan (2005) it is clear that merging institutions is a thorny issue, and cannot be resolved quickly. The merging of institutions brings with it a whole host of challenges. The current literature review has found that merging higher education institutions globally is invariably unpredictable, as the institutions experience multifaceted complexities.

A case in point is Kyambogo University which was established in 2003 following an Amendment of the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act 2001. It provided for the merger of three institutions (Uganda National Institute of Special Education (UNISE), the Institute of Teacher Education, Kyambogo (ITEK) and the Uganda Polytechnic, Kyambogo (UPK), (Parliamentary report, 2003) to form one university as it had been recommended by the Tusubira report, 1999. Since inception, the University has encountered several challenges arising from the complete failure by the University’s leadership, to successfully manage the change process to form a new Kyambogo University and handle integration of staff within the new structure. The institution has been faced with gross mismanagement of financial resources; break down of an accounting system, poor record keeping, failure to remit statutory contributions like NSSF, PAYE and redundant staff which explains the current human resource crisis, whereby every single job had three staff in the new structure (IGG Report, 2009).
More so, there have been several strikes by both students and teachers at Kyambogo University in the recent past after merging the three institutions which led to its subsequent closure at one point in time causing a lot of noise among the public. The employees also lost confidence in the Vice Chancellor sparking off other squabbles over salaries and titles for various heads of departments, (Monitor, April, 11, 2008). The institution also experienced malpractices in the salaries administration where some employees were being paid two or three times leading to a loss of about Uganda Shillings 92 million between December 2007 and February 2009. Several suppliers had not been paid plus a backlog of arrears owed to NSSF amounting to about Shs.25 billion after a physical audit dating back to 2003, (The Observer, January, 11, 2010). The University was also taken to court by three staff challenging the termination of their employment by the University Management, (The Monitor, January, 16, 2010). In the recent past, the University called back thousands of students’ transcripts over errors, (Sunday New Vision, March, 14, 2010). Such short and long term effects have had a tremendous impact on the University’s quest for stability, operational efficiency and effectiveness, flexibility and reduced operational costs (IGG Report, 2009).

With managed change being at the center of increasing organizational efficiency and controlling costs, the adoption and understanding of leadership styles is central to management of organizational change in Uganda’s public universities.

**Literature Review**

**Leadership styles**

Leadership is interpreted in various ways by different authors. Leadership is defined as an influence, that is, the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically toward the achievement of group goals. (Cole 1996). Armstrong (1990) suggests that leadership happens: when there is an objective to be achieved or task to be carried out and when more than one person is needed to do it. Sandra (1996) offers the following definition of what is involved in leadership. “Leadership exists when someone (the leader) exercises influence over others (the followers) in their group or organization. Hence leadership is mandatory for achieving goals including change in the organizations because someone has to point the way and ensure that everyone concerned gets there. A leader’s aim is to get people to do what he wants by obtaining willing cooperation, not unwilling submission.

Leadership style consists of a leader's general personality, demeanor, and communication patterns in guiding others toward reaching organizational or personal goals (Creighton, 2004). The leadership style adopted is regarded as a critical factor in the initiation and implementation of any change in the organizations. If the leader wants to engender a positive impact on individuals, teams, and organizations, both practitioners and researchers have suggested that earlier leadership paradigms such as directive versus participative, autocratic versus democratic, and task versus relationships oriented leadership styles should be broadened (Avolio et.al, 1995; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Conger, 1993; Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991, 1994; Puffer & McCarthy, 1996).

It is broadly accepted that effective leadership styles adopted are a key component in achieving institutional improvement (Stoll, 1997; Ofsted, 2000) and successful reforms (Cheng, 1998; Leithwood, 1998). Management style adopted within an institution is seen to be of central importance to the perceived and realized effectiveness of the whole organization (McMahon, Pockington & Weindling, 1993) and empirical results of a study by Dinham (2005), indicate that leadership is a critical factor in the attainment of exceptional reform outcomes and in developing effective, innovative institutions and facilitating quality improvements.

Hallinger and Heck (1996), report that the effect of leadership on school effectiveness occurs largely through actions by the principal such as providing a clear school mission and a positive school climate and Harris (2002), highlights such features of effective leaders as alignment to a shared set of values, distributed leadership, developing and maintaining relationships, and commitment building.

**Managed Change**

One of the central objectives of any strategic change initiative is to improve organizational efficiency and performance (Storey, 1995) and the underlying expectations of such change are that it will increase competitiveness, enhance organizational flexibility, produce quality and efficiency, in addition to reducing operating costs and improving organizational performance considerably (McGreevy, 2009).

However, Beer and Nohria (2000) point out that change is rarely successful and that as many as two thirds of change initiatives fail. Of the ones deemed successful as many as 75 percent of these fail to achieve their intended result (Nikolau et al., 2007). Change must be planned, managed, implemented, controlled and monitored.

**Leadership styles and Managed Change**

According to Gill (2003), the hierarchy of what it takes to make a change process successful is 1) leadership, 2) corporate values and 3) communication. Effective leadership styles are required for the successful introduction and maintenance of change (Lawson & Price, 2003).
Any reform package requires a determined leader whose vision and support make possible the success of reform strategies, provides higher profile advocacy for the change and models the new culture (Mwiria et al, 2007). A leadership style has a key role to play in setting direction, inspiring change throughout the organization and ensuring that change is implemented (Nohria, 2000).

The creation and design of change processes within an organization is most often a role of the leaders within it. In a research carried out by Oakland and Tanner, (2007), it was reported that leaders and the direction given by them are crucial to successful change in terms of their ability to make good decisions on what change needs to be implemented, accepting the risks associated with it and setting clear means of implementing the change. Most of the organizations agree now days that effective leadership styles are one of the most important contributors to the overall organizational performance and change. Effective leadership styles are always required to bring effective changes (Kennedy, 2000).

It could be argued that there is no 'one best-way' of leading the workforce. Callan (1997), argues that the effectiveness of a particular leadership style is always "situationally contingent", no universally appropriate style of leadership exits, there are varying styles - authoritative, participative or even supportive roles for example (Lussier & Achua, 2001). However it could be argued that when there are transformational changes, it creates a need for participative leaders who have charisma and inspiration to successfully implement new changes with the relative full support of their workforce (Saunders, 2000). Like culture, leadership skills or approaches cannot be changed, adopted or eliminated over night, they are often deeply rooted due to the culture of the organization and are not subject to "push-button control" (Bjerke, 2001). Therefore when organizations need to change, they cannot just adopt a particular leadership style that is thought to bring instant results. Leadership styles can be shaped just like culture for culture provides the workforce with a sense of how to behave and react (Lussier & Achua, 2001).

Change has triggered a radical shift in the role of senior managers from the traditional authoritarian, command and control style to a more open, participative management style. Traditionally, managers focused on the technical or operational dimension of management. However, to be effective leaders in an environment of change and flux, a second, interpersonal dimension becomes critical (Goleman, 1998; Javidan, 1995).

Nadler (1998) emphasized the importance of leaders in organizing and maintaining a climate for change within organizations. Although participation of all players is necessary, the role of the leader in the change process is crucial. Dubbed the "champions of change" it is the leaders, - the top management players who keep the change process moving while maintaining the operational integrity of the organization. Participative leaders provide direction, protection, orientation, conflict control, and the shaping of norms while overseeing the change process within the corporate structure (Conger, Spreitzer & Lawler, 1999). Priorities need to be set which encourage disciplined attention, while keeping a keen eye focused for signs of distress within the company members.

It is evident from the literature that initiating and coordinating change always requires well developed leadership styles. This is also true that any change process mostly face the certain level of resistances, the effective leader is one who can manage the resistance and implement successful changes. Recognizing, addressing and overcoming the resistance is always lengthy and not an easy process. People resist changes and especially they resist most to radical changes and it is only the leader’s ability and style to overcome. A strong leader is required to solve the problem as the physician is required to solve medical problem (Heifetz 1997).

Radical changes are difficult to adopt and also have more resistance, which requires more than mere leadership competences. Radical changes require private acceptance and it is a role of senior leaders to aware people to realize the need of change mainly trough participative leadership styles and therefore to create willingness to relinquish old style of working in favor of new ones (Reardon et.al, 1998).

A central position in the literature on change management is that the way an organizational change initiative is received by employees is dependent on the process of implementation (Burke, 2010; Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999). As such, the way in which organizational change is implemented - the process of change – is an important antecedent of the commitment to change of employees. The literature on change management distinguishes between planned and emergent change processes (Kickert, 2010; By, 2005; Burns, 2004). Planned processes of change are top-down and programmatic. The objectives of change are formulated in advance. Planned processes of change rely heavily on the role of management (Bamford & Forrester, 2003). Top-down communication is the main mechanism of creating support for change among employees. Through a process of ‘telling and selling’ (Participative and democratic leadership styles), managers disseminate information to inform employees about the change and why they should be committed to implementing it (Russ, 2008).
From the above, we argue that the leadership style is central in the successful management of change in organizations. Participative leadership is expected to have a direct positive effect on affective commitment to change.

Research Methodology
This study adopted a cross sectional and quantitative research design. A cross sectional was preferred because a large cross-section of the population will be studied at one specific time (Van Wagner, 2008). In addition, quantitative research approach was preferred for this study because it is more reliable and objective; can use statistics to generalize a finding (Creswell, 1994). This study comprised of public universities in Uganda. These are universities in which the state has 100% ownership and are 5 in total. Since the study population is small, the study used a population census. Primary data was obtained directly from stakeholders in public universities under study through the use of self administered questionnaires to respondents following the systematic and established procedures as suggested by (Churchill, 1979). The questionnaire was designed according to the objectives and study variables and responses to the questions were anchored on a five (5) point Likert scales ranging from 5 – strongly agree to 1 - strongly disagree. Part one of the questionnaires was used to gather biographic data of the respondents and part two was to collect data on leadership and management of change in public universities. To ensure reliability and validity of the instrument, reliability analyses of the scales in the research instrument was carried out by performing Cronbach’s alpha coefficient test (Cronbach, 1946). Alpha coefficient of above 0.6 for individual test variables was accepted meaning the instrument was valid. Table 1 shows the findings.

Table 1: Content Validity Index and Reliability analysis of the instrument

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Anchor</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha Coefficients</th>
<th>Content Validity Index</th>
<th>Validity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>5 Point</td>
<td>0.729</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed Change</td>
<td>5 Point</td>
<td>0.786</td>
<td>0.685</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: primary data

Leadership styles was measured using Goleman (1998) and Javidan (1995), who consider that effectiveness of a leader to manage change is determined by the leadership style used; direct vs. participative. Managed change was measured based on Storey (1995), who considers the central objectives of any strategic change initiative to be improvement of organizational efficiency and enhancement of organizational flexibility.

After collecting the data, it was edited, coded and checked to have the required quality, accuracy and completeness. Then data was analyzed using an SPSS 17.0 program which provided descriptive outputs. Correlation and regression analysis tools including cross tabulation was carried out to establish the strength of the relationship between variables. Multiple regression analyses were also be used to determine variance in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable.

FINDINGS
To determine the general attributes of the respondents, frequency tables were used. These attributes include; the qualification, age, gender, length of service in the university and category as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Attributes of Respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N=356</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest qualification</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age bracket</td>
<td>25-35 years</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-45 years</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46-55 years</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Above 55 years</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>139</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Length of service in the university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-5 years</th>
<th>6-10 years</th>
<th>10-20 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of service in the university</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Administrative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Primary data

Results in table 2 reveal that most of the respondents held a master’s degree (60.7%) followed by those who held a first degree (21.4%), and the least percentage (17.9%) were PhD holders. This does not differ from the expectation that university staff should be fairly learned (Ezenne, 2003).

The majority of the respondents were in the age bracket of 25-45 years (34.3%). Those in the age bracket of above 36-45 years come in second position (29.8%), the age bracket of 46-55 years (25.3%) and the age bracket of above 55 years took the remaining percentage (10.6%) which reflects that most university positions in Uganda are normally taken by relatively young people.

Table 2 further shows that 139 respondents were female representing 39.3 % and respondents 216 were male representing 60.7% of the total respondents. This means that males are increasingly taking on university positions in selected public universities. This may be a result of increasing numbers of males graduates compared to the females possibly due to high rates of girl child school drop outs in the early stages of education.

Results from table 2 also indicate that majority of the respondents had worked for the selected public universities between six to ten years representing 35.7% and the rest (those who had worked between 1 -5 years and 10 -20 years) shared 32.1%. This reflects presence of relative job stability in public universities (Fullan, 2001).

The greatest number of respondents was academic staff (60.7%) and administrative staff were represented by 21.4%. This tends to agree with the notion that academic staff are the core human resources of the universities (Gary, 2001).

Correlation Analysis

The drive of this study was to establish the relationship between Leadership styles and Managed change in public universities. The Pearson correlation test was employed to execute this. The correlation test is a measure of the relationship between two variables. The following bi-variate table 3 shows the results of the tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directive -1</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participative -2</td>
<td>.312**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership styles -3</td>
<td>.287**</td>
<td>.401**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managed change - 4</td>
<td>.432**</td>
<td>.510**</td>
<td>.479**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Leadership and Managed change in Public Universities

The results from the table 3 above, indicate a significant positive relationship between leadership and managed change revealed by the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.479$, $p < .01$). Results further show that the components of leadership styles ie Directive ($r = 0.432$, $p < .01$) and participative ($r = 0.510$, $p < .01$) are all positively related to managed change in public universities. This implies that effective leadership styles are associated with high levels of managed change in public universities. Ineffective leadership styles are associated with low levels of managed change in public universities. In other words, an improvement in the leadership style is positively associated with an improvement in managed change. This is indicative of the fact that when leadership is more open, participative in style in public universities, managed change increases.

Regression Analysis

The regression model revealed the extent to which the variance in Managed Change is explained by Leadership styles. Results were obtained as presented in table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficientsa</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.877</td>
<td>.391</td>
<td>2.242</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership styles</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>.273</td>
<td>2.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Dependent Variable: Managed change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results in table 4 indicate that Leadership styles only explain 31.4% (R square, 0.346) of the variance in Managed Change. This implies that 68.6% of the variance in Managed Change is explained by other factors outside the model used that explain managed change. The findings further revealed that the overall model was well specified ($F = 13.970$, $P < .01$). This means that the overall model outcomes are reliable.

Discussion of the Findings

Relationship between Leadership and Managed change in selected Public Universities of Uganda

Findings reveal that participative leadership styles have a significant positive relationship with the managed change in selected public universities. These findings are supported by Goleman (1998) and Javidan (1995), who concluded that change has triggered a radical shift in the role of senior managers from the traditional authoritarian, command and control style to a more open, participative management style. Hence, having open, participative leadership style is linked to the idea that if employees feel that the changes to be made did not consider their input, then perhaps they will not fully welcome the change and therefore not implement change procedures to the best of their abilities resulting in negative outcomes such as poor performance and lower productivity levels (Burnes, 2000).

Furthermore, Kotelnikov (2004), argued that if organizations want to achieve successful organizational change and the problem they may be facing is the lack of employee commitment, then building morale and commitment could be achieved through the adoption of a participative leadership style or through reinforcing this leadership approach for leadership can be simply defined as "influencing people to get things done to a standard and quality above their norm and doing it willingly"

Conclusion

The study established that there was a significant strong positive relationship between leadership and managed change in Uganda’s public universities. This implies that in order to ensure that change is successfully managed; there is need to adopt better leadership styles. Thus, organizations that use open, participative leadership styles should manage change much better than those that use the traditional authoritarian, command and control leadership styles. These findings underline the importance of leadership styles in enhancing proper management of change in the selected public universities.

Recommendations

There is need to find out other factors affecting effective management of change in public universities other than
leadership styles since findings revealed the existence of such factors.

It is important that public universities adopt open, participative leadership styles so as to achieve the purpose for which the changes are sought for. This is particularly encouraged where the changes are radical.

There is need to conduct studies in the following areas;

a) Change Management in public universities of Uganda as a longitudinal study to establish extensively the factors affecting successful organizational change in these institutions.

b) Drivers of appropriate change management in Uganda’s education institutions and the influence of change and its management on the quality of Uganda’s education system

Limitations of the Study

Measurements tools that were used are adopted from previous studies and therefore any limitations that are embedded in them equally affected this study. The study used a questionnaire for data collection and this has weaknesses of limiting the amount of data collected and lack of cooperation from the respondents as some are reluctant to reveal their views about the aspects studied. Time limitations together with cost implications did not permit a comprehensive study of the problem by the researchers.

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