

Effects of Leadership Styles on Employee Performance: Case in Economic Sectors of Oromia, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to identify the effect of leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) on employee performance in Economic Sectors of Oromia National Regional State. To achieve the purpose, quantitative research approach was used in which 186 closed ended questionnaires were distributed and 159 (86%) were collected. The leadership styles were measured through the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire developed by Avolio and Bass (2004) and modified to fit the context of the study. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used for data analysis. The findings show that transformational leadership style is the most exhibited style in Economic Sectors followed by the transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles respectively. Scores in transformational and transactional leadership styles were found to be strongly correlated with employee performance. However, laissez-faire had a weak correlation with employee performance. The correlation between overall leadership styles and employee performance was strong with a coefficient of $r=0.673$. The regression analysis shows that the three leadership styles explain 48.8% of employee performance. In relative terms, employee performance is predicted more by transformational leadership style and followed by transactional leadership style. However, laissez-faire leadership was found to be negatively accounted to predict employee performance. It has been recommended that, for those economic sectors, leaders to encourage transformational leadership specially the intellectual stimulation by motivating creativity and innovative, individual considerations via paying special attention to each individual follower, to formulate and implement effective reward and recognition systems and to avoid laissez-faire leadership styles so as to improve organizational performance.

Key words: Leadership Styles: transformational, transactional, laissez-faire; Employee Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations are set up to achieve some set of goals and objectives. In order to achieve these goals and objectives; developing organizational culture and working on human factors are of utmost importance. The Economic sectors of Oromia National Regional state, the context of this study, were established as an executive body of the region to enhance the economic development and growth of the region by having the mandate of registration of trade licenses, collection of tax and revenue, budget disbursement and control, monitoring and evaluation of the whole budget of the region. A large number of organizations including the study context spend considerable huge amount of their times on solving managerial problems. Tandoh (2011) asserted that, the performance of the human factors is what leads to the survival and success of the organization. Linked to human factors, leadership plays considerable role in influencing organizational members to contribute efforts willingly towards the accomplishment of pre-determined goals and objectives (Igbaekemen, 2014). Organizations need powerful leaders and employees to accomplish their goals and objectives. Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2013). There are many ways of understanding leadership styles and for the purposes of this study, full range leadership model is focused. Full-range leadership model ranges from passive leadership to a leadership who unexpectedly rewards its followers and highly encouraging charismatic role model.

Studies about leadership styles and employees performance relationship found out leadership styles have a direct effect on employee performance. A study by Babatunde and Emem (2015) revealed that there was significance relationship between leadership style and employees performance in the attainment of organization goals and objectives. Similarly, Mohammed, et al. (2014) described that there is a significant relationship between leadership styles and employee performance in an organization.

It is a daily talk as well as walk of researchers that lack of effective leaderships in the organization creates many outcomes such as lack of motivation, dissatisfaction, high complaint, poor innovation, inability to meet performance targets, lower profit, poor communication of information, inefficiency and ineffectiveness, lack of cooperation and disintegration, poor growth and development of the institutions (cited by Koech, 2012). Moreover, this outcome happens due to lack of strategic interventions of specific leadership styles to the particular situations are predicted as the problems at hand.

Similar challenges are observed in this study context. Employees complain about problems regarding the way motivation packages are managed. To mention some there is no fair rewarding and recognition system, lack of proper performance evaluation, lack of capacity building, etc.,. Those problems may affect the enhancement of employee performance. Studies conducted in different countries associate such symptoms with the way leadership is exercised. However, although these studies are partly acknowledged as they can offer some lessons. Using them for conclusion as they are in this study context would be missing the context. Therefore, studies that sense contextual manifestation was considered important. However, no research has yet been conducted in the study area to ratify the fact on the ground. Therefore, this study intended to fill this gap by answering the effect of leadership styles actually exercising on employee performance in the sectors.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Theoretical literature

The topic of leadership has been the focus of studies for more than two decades and gradually became a topic of great interest. As indicated by Northouse (2010) leadership characterized as a procedure where leaders impact their employees to accomplish organizational targets. Sundi (2013) described leadership as the ability to convince and mobilize others to work together as a team under his leadership to achieve a certain goals. Similarly, leadership is the ability to influence people to willingly follow one's guidance or adhere to one's decisions. On the other hand a leader is one who obtains followers and influences them in setting and achieving objectives. Moreover, Memon (2014) defines leadership as a process by which an individual influences the thoughts, attitudes and behaviors of others.

As summary, Even though leadership had defined by different scholars in different ways, the main concept is to express the influence process between the leaders and followers to achieve the objective and goal of the organizations. Leadership takes place in a variety of situations, from military to education, from business organizations to state administrations, and from informal groups to large formalized organizations Bass, (2004). For the purpose of this study, the focus of the review is based on organizational leadership that occurs in formal organizations and is usually executed by managers/leaders.

Leadership Theories

A review of the leadership literature reveals an evolving series of 'schools of thought' from Great Man and Trait theories to Contingency theory. The Trait approach that endured up to the late 1940s claimed that leadership ability is inborn. From 1940s to late 1960s behavioural approach became dominant advocating that effectiveness in leadership has to do with how the leader behaves. In the late 1960s to the early 1980s the Contingency approach became popular suggesting that effective leadership is dependent upon the situation.

Trait Theory - Leadership trait theory is the idea that people are born with certain character trait. Since certain traits are associated with proficient leadership, it assumes that if you could identify people with the correct trait theories abound to explain what makes an effective leader.

Behavioral Theory - It prompted scholars and researchers to look beyond leader traits and consider how leaders' behaviors predicted effectiveness. The behavioral model to leadership suggests that the leader's behavior, not the leader's personal characteristics, influence employees' performance. A behavioral theory focuses on the actions of leaders rather than on mental qualities or internal states with the belief that great leaders are made, not born.

Contingency /Situational Theory - is an approach to leadership in which leadership effectiveness is determined by the interaction between the leader's personal characteristics and aspects of the situation. Contingency theories are based on the assumption that the relationship between leadership style and organizational outcomes is moderated by situational factors related to the environment and the outcomes/performance cannot be predicted by leadership style, unless the situational variables are known.

Leadership Styles

Leadership styles are seen as approaches that leaders use when leading organizations, departments, or groups (Mehmood & Arif, 2011). Similarly, leadership style was defined as a leader's approach of providing direction, motivating people and implementing plans. Thus, leadership style is defined in terms of how a leader interacts with his or her followers in order to achieve goals and objectives.

Transformational Leadership Style (TF) - As described by Cherry (2012) transformational theories focus upon connection formed between leaders and followers. Similarly, Northouse (2013) defined transformational as which concentrate on the connection developed between leaders and their subordinates, are able to inspire followers to change their expectations, perceptions and motivations and to work towards common goals.

Transactional Leadership Style (TS) - As defined by Antonakis (2003) transactional leadership is an exchange process based on the fulfillment of contractual obligations and is typically represented as setting objectives, monitoring and controlling outcomes. Robbins (2003) also defined transactional leadership as leaders who lead primarily by using social exchanges for transactions. This approach emphasizes the importance of the relationship between leader and followers, focusing on the mutual benefits derived from a form of 'contract' through which the leader delivers such things as rewards or recognition in return for the commitment or loyalty of the followers.

Laissez-Faire Leadership Style (LF) - Laissez-faire is a leader as one who avoids involvement when important issues arrive, is absent when needed, avoids making decisions, delays responding to urgent questions, lacks direct supervision of employees and fails to provide regular feedback to those under his or her supervision and highly experienced and trained employees requiring little supervision. However, not all employees possess those characteristics and this leadership style hinders the production of employees needing supervision (Bennett, 2009).

Employee Performance (EP) - Gungor (2011) described as employee performance plays an important role for organization and it is what an employee does or does not do. Performance of employees could include: quantity of output, timeliness of output, presence at work, cooperativeness. However, it should be noted that, the nature of performance is determined by the organization itself. Mohamed (2013) considered performance as a major multidimensional construct aimed to achieve results and has a strong link to strategic goals of an organization.

Different studies about leadership styles and employees' performance relationship found out leadership styles of leaders have effect on employee performance. Lee and Chuang (2009) explain that the excellent leader not only inspires subordinate potential to enhance efficiency but also meets their requirements in the process of achieving organizational goals. Leadership styles are important to enhance employees' performance. Thus effective leadership enables greater participation of the entire workforce, and can also influence both individual and organizational performance (Mullins, 2010).

Empirical Literatures

A number of studies have been conducted on the effects of leadership styles on employee performance and the evidences are also varied based on the variables and scope.

In South Africa, Hayward et al. (2003) found transformational leadership to be more effective than transactional leadership in increasing employee performance. The research found a significant positive linear relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance but no significant linear relationship between transactional leadership and employee performance. According to Pradeep and Prabhu (2011) leadership is positively linked with employee performance for both transformational leadership and transactional contingent reward leadership behaviors. The managers, who are perceived to demonstrate strong leadership behaviors, whether transformational or transactional, are seen to be engaging in increasing the employees' performance. Similarly, the study conducted by Koech. (2012) on the effect of leadership styles on organizational performance at state owned corporations in Kenya shows as transformational and transactional leadership styles had significantly correlated with organizational performance, but laissez-faire was not significantly correlated. Moreover, the study conducted by Celestine Awino (2015) the Effect of leadership styles on employee performance at Bank of Africa by using cross sectional descriptive survey research strategy. The findings shows that as transformational leadership style was the most exhibited style at the bank followed by transactional and laissez-faire respectively. Both transformational and transactional are positively correlated with employee performance, while laissez-faire leadership style had positive relationship and statistically insignificant correlation. Raja and Palanichamy (2015) examined the effect of leadership styles on employee performance in both public and private sector enterprises in India. The result shows that, there is a linear positive relationship and statistically significant between both transformational and transactional leadership and employee performance. However, the study found that laissez-faire leadership had a negative relationship with the employee performance. Rassol et al. (2015) studied leadership styles and its impact on employee's performance in health sector of Pakistan and concluded that transformational leadership styles have more positive effect on employee performance than transactional leadership.

In order to conceptualize the aforementioned research gap based on reviewed leadership theories and empirical findings, the following null hypothesis were developed and tested in the finding part of the study.

H1: Transformational leadership has no significant positive effect on employee performance in Economic Sectors of Oromia National Regional State.

H2: Transactional leadership has no significant positive effect on employee performance in Economic Sectors of Oromia National Regional State.

H3: Laissez-faire leadership has no significant positive effect on employee performance in Economic Sectors of Oromia National Regional State.

H4: Overall Leadership styles have no significant positive effects on employee performance in Economic Sectors of Oromia National Regional State.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Since the main objective of the study is to explain the effect of leadership styles on employee performance, both descriptive and explanatory research design were used. The study used quantitative approach of research to collect data from the respondents to understand and predict some aspects of the behaviour of the population of interest.

The target population of this study was employees of the sectors and they were 347 in number. In order to determine the number of respondents from the target population sample size determination formula developed by Yamane (1967) was used as follows.

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + N * e^2)}$$

Where,

N = population size, n = sample size,
e = margin of error at 5% (standard value of 0.05)
n= 186 (selected sample size)

Proportionally stratified sampling method was used to draw the sampling unit from the sectors. Based on their leadership role in organization, there are two strata (management members and non-management members). The final selection of each respondent from each stratum was done by using simple random sampling.

In measuring leadership styles, the study adapted Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire developed by Avolio and Bass (2004) and modified to fit the context of the study. Based on the selected sample size 186 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 159 (86%) questionnaires were properly filled and returned.

The collected data was first checked for its consistency, completeness, missing and other errors before the entry process. The data coding makes ready the completed and corrected questionnaire for analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS-version 20). To examine the causal relationship between dependent and independent variables, multiple linear regressions model was used.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics was used as a way to examine the mean, standard deviation, frequency and other information which are not apparent in the raw data. When the mean scores of the three leadership styles are compared to each other, the overall transformational leadership had the highest score of M=3.3204, overall transactional leadership had score of M=2.8673 and laissez-faire leadership style has mean score of M=2.5770. Comparatively the most frequently used leadership style was transformational leadership style followed by transactional leadership style and laissez-faire was the least frequently used.

A correlation analysis was performed to determine if there were any relationships between leadership styles and employee performance. There are standards for evaluating the magnitude of

a correlation/strength of relationship between variables. According to Somekh and Lewin (2005): If Correlation coefficient result is between 0.01 - 0.29, it implies weak relationship, when it is between 0.30 - 0.49, it implies medium relationship and if it is between 0.50 - 1.0, it implies strong relationship. The result of correlation coefficients of this study for transformational $r=0.693$, transactional $r=0.626$ and for laissez-faire $r=0.188$. These results show that transformational and transactional leadership styles are strongly correlated with employee performance and laissez-faire exhibited weak relationship with employee performance.

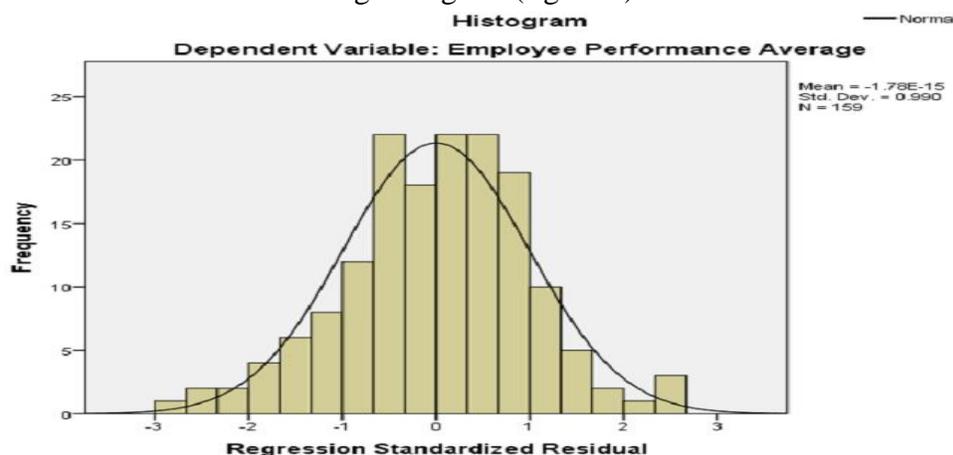
Table 1: Correlation between leadership styles and EP (N=159)

Variables	TF	TS	LF
EP			
Transformational leadership (TF)	1		
Transactional leadership (TS)	.529**	1	
Laissez-faire leadership (LF)	.357**	.454**	1
Employee Performance (EP)	.693**	.626**	.188*

1
 Independent Variables: Transactional, Transformational and Laissez-faire
 Dependent Variable: Employee Performance
 Source: Own survey, 2018

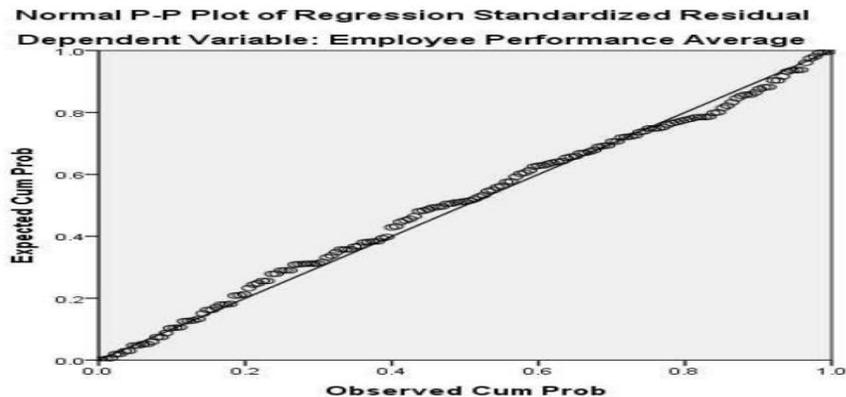
Before applying the multiple linear regression analysis to test the effect of leadership styles on employee performance, some tests were conducted in order to ensure the appropriateness of data analysis as follows:

Normality Test - The researcher used histogram method of testing the normality of the data. Histogram is bell shaped which lead to infer that the residuals (disturbance or errors) are normally distributed. The residuals are normally distributed about the predicted dependent variable score. The following histogram (figure 1) was used to test normality.



Linearity Test - Linearity refers to the degree to which the change in the dependent variable is related to the change in the independent variables. To determine whether the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable is linear; plots of the regression residuals through SPSS software was used. In case of linearity, the residuals should have a

straight line relationship with predicted dependent variable scores and based on this study since the change in the dependent variable is more of related to the change in the independent variables. Therefore, there is no linearity problem on the data for this study and residual follow at straight line. This test result is depicted in the following figure (figure2).



Multicollinearity Tests - It can be checked by correlation matrix and Variance Inflation Factors (VIF). A correlation matrix is used to ensure the correlation among independent variables. On the other hand, Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) of the linear regression indicates the degree that the variances in the regression estimates are increased due to multicollinearity.

As Hair et al. (2006) argued that correlation coefficient below 0.90 may not cause serious multicollinearity problem. From the result of this study in table 1, the correlation coefficient (r) among the independent variables ranged from .357 to .529 values and it is less than the stated standard. The Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) of the linear regression indicated the degree that the variances in the regression estimates are increased due to multicollinearity and VIF values higher than 10.0 shows as there is multicollinearity problem. As stated by Pallant (2007) Tolerance is a statistical tool which indicates the variability of the specified independent variable from other independent variables in the model and it has no multicollinearity problem if the tolerance is greater than 0.10 values. The results of Tolerance and VIF in table 2 suggest that multicollinearity is not suspected amongst the independent variables because the values of Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) are below 0.10 while the tolerance values are above 0.10 values.

Table 2: *Collinearity Statistics*

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
Transformational leadership	.313	3.198
Transactional leadership	.284	3.516
Laissez-faire leadership	.792	1.262

Source: Own survey, 2018

From an examination of the information presented in all the three tests (linearity, normality and multicollinearity tests), it can be concluded that there is no significant data problem that would

lead to say the assumptions of multiple regressions have been violated. Therefore conducting regression is sound worthy.

Once the assumptions are checked, regression analyses were run to find the casual association between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Table 3 below shows, the Adjusted R square value was 0.488 which means that 48.8% variations in employee performance were explained by the leadership styles jointly and 51.2% was due to other factors which are not included in the study.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.706 ^a	.498	.488	.56028

a. Predictors: (Constant) Transformational, Transactional, Laissez-faire leadership

b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Source: own survey, 2018

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results in table 4 of the regression between predictor variables and employee performance shows that, the probability value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) indicates the relationship was highly significant in predicting how leadership styles explain employee performance as shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	48.261	3	16.087	51.247	.000 ^b
Residual	48.657	155	.314		
Total	96.918	158			

Source: own survey result, 2018

To this effects, since P-value is 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), leadership styles do a good job in explaining the variation in the dependent variable (employees performance). The Beta Coefficient (B) result in table 5 shows the strength of the effect of each individual independent variable to the dependent variable.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Coefficients Result

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficient	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval	
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.177	.205	.772	1.583		
Transformational	.539	.100	.547	0.000	.341	.738
Transactional	.247	.119	.222	0.039	.013	.481
Laissez-faire	-.097	.057	-.109	0.091	-.209	.016

Note: B = Regression Coefficient, β = Standardized Coefficients, Dependent Variable: employee performance

Based on table 5 above, the Beta value (B) of transformational leadership is 0.539 which means that as transformational leadership increase by 1 percent, the employee performance will increase by 53.9% keeping the other factors constant. In the hypothesis of the study (Ho1): Transformational leadership style has no significant a positive effect on employee performance in economic sectors of Oromia National Regional State. Based on the regression result stated above, transformational leadership has positive effect on the employee performance and it is statistically significant to predict the dependent variable. This leads us to reject the null hypothesis. As previously described in the empirical literatures transformational leadership has positive effect on employee performance and the result of this study coincides with the result of most researchers. As an example, the studies conducted by Celestine, A.A. (2015) at Bank of Africa Kenya, by Koech, M. (2012) on state corporations of Kenya, by Raja and Palanichamy (2015) on public and private sector enterprises in India, Rassol et al. (2015) on health sectors of Pakistan, Pradeep and Prabhu (2011).

Similarly, the Beta value (B) of transactional leadership is 0.247 which implies that as transactional leadership increase by 1 percent, the employee performance will increase by 24.7% assuming the other variables are held constant at $p=0.039$ ($p<0.05$). Based on the result, the null hypothesis (Ho₂) that says Transactional leadership style has no significant positive effect on employee performance in economic sectors was rejected. The previous studies in the empirical concept shows transactional leadership style has positive effect and statistically significant with the employee performance and they coincides with the result of this study. For example, the study conducted by Koech, M. (2012), Raja and Palanichamy (2015), Seblewongel, Solomon. (2016), Celestine Awino (2015) coincides with the result of this study.

Thirdly, the Beta value (B) of laissez-faire leadership style is -0.097 which shows as laissez-faire leadership style increase by 1 percent, the employee performance will decrease by -9.7% keeping other factors constant at P-value 0.091 ($p>0.05$). The null hypothesis of this leadership style failed to reject because the laissez-faire leadership has negative effect and statistically insignificant in the prediction of employee performance. So, this revealed that laissez-faire

leadership style was the least important in predicting employee performance than the two leadership styles (transactional and transformational).

Lastly, the hypothesis stated as the overall leadership styles (transformational, transactional and laissez-faire) have no statically significant effects on employee performance was rejected because the result of the regression analysis shows as the overall leadership styles has significant effect at ($p < 0.05$) (refer table 3).

5. CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Transformational leadership has the largest mean score, strongly correlated with employee performance, more changes of employee performance are due to transformational and it can predict more employee performance than others, has positive effect and statistically significant. So, it can be concluded that comparatively transformational leadership style was the most frequently used in economic sectors and has positive effect on employee performance.

Transactional leadership style has the second largest mean score next to transformational leadership, has strong relationship with employee performance, can explain and predict employee performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that transformational leadership has positive effect on employee performance in economic sectors.

Laissez-faire has weak relationship with employee performance, was the least to explain employee performance, statistically insignificant and has negative effect to predict employee performance. So, it can be concluded that laissez-faire leadership style has negative effect on employee performance and that is the indicator of the leader who can't respond urgently, unable to take obligations, absent when needed and employees take their own decision to manage crisis situations.

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

It is advisable for economic sector leaders to become role models for their subordinates specially focusing on intellectual motivation by stimulating creativity and innovative. Likewise, individual considerations should be considered by leaders to enhance the employee performance of organization via paying special attention to each individual follower's need for achievement and growth by acting as a coach.

Transactional leadership was the second dominant leadership style in the economic sectors. Therefore, the researcher would like to recommend the leaders of economic sectors to formulate and implement effective reward and recognition systems properly. So, it is advisable for the leaders to reward or give recognition for those who accomplish their performance as expected or more than expectation to make them role model for others.

It is advisable for the leaders to avoid laissez-faire leadership style so as to improve organizational performance by becoming more involved in guiding their subordinates. So, the leaders should clarify expectations and provide goals and standards to be achieved for the followers; respond to urgent questions and make decisions promptly and precisely, should monitor and give feedback on time.

The researcher also recommends the economic sector managements and employees to have an organized experience for others, since the change in some sector can be a bench mark for other sectors to implement better leadership which can improve more employee performance.

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limited conclusions and generalizations were made because the target participants in this study were delimited to a single sector of the region. Generalization to other sectors may not be sound enough. The research is limited to the three leadership styles (variables) and there would be other categories of styles which can have effect on employee performance. The research used only close ended questionnaire and quantitative approach. The study may have other result if other methods of data collection were used. The research used only cross sectional research design to identify the effects of leadership styles.

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