

The Impact of the Transactional Leadership on Organizational Productivity: A Monographic Study

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE- The objective of this article is to examine whether the transactional leadership styles of an enterprise is reflected in the productivity of the employees.

METHODOLOGY- Three dimensions of transactional leadership, namely task orientation, people orientation and shared leadership are identified as independent variables for the study. Further, eight productivity measures, namely efficiency, effectiveness, value addition, quality defects, employee satisfaction on supervision, labour turnover, employee absenteeism, and overall productivity index, are taken as different dimensions of productivity, which is the dependent variable. Hence, the study will be focused on assessing twenty-four (24) leadership-productivity associations. A monographic sample was used to ensure that the research findings would not be affected by the contextual differences of totally different business settings. Kruskal- Wallis test, correlation analysis, and descriptive statistics were used for the analysis.

Findings- Leadership style is not significantly related to the productivity of the organization. Differences in leadership styles do not cause differences in productivity. This idiosyncratic finding could be explained in terms of the influences of contextual variables and methodological issues.

CONCLUSION- The proposed recommendations strongly advocate for future empirical research of this valuable topic, thus adding new knowledge to the existing. Further, it was recommended that at least the descriptions of three parties, namely, the leader himself/herself, leader's boss, and the leader's subordinates should be used in assessing the leadership style. Next, it was concluded that leadership, as a research phenomenon, could not be separated from its context and contextual variables such as characteristics of subordinates, nature of the work, organizational culture which were found to moderate and/or substitute of leadership style.

KEY WORDS: Leadership Styles, Organization, Productivity, Monographic Study

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a vital role in business organizations in today's business marketplace (Amer, 2017, United States Census Bureau, 2015). Academics, managers, and owners of business ventures consider leadership styles as a critical concept for investigation, which needs more attention and expansion (Sok, Snell, Lee, &Sok, 2017). The approach adopted in the handling of people will determine whether the organization will ultimately be successful or unsuccessful. Traditionally, different leadership theories propose different strategies to ensure maximum productivity for the given organizations. However, the situational approach indicates that there is no compromise on the best way of managing people. While behaviorism argues that the maximum attention for both the task and the people is the best way of managing an organization, the situationism contends that the best style depends on many situational factors such as attributes of subordinates, uniqueness of the leader, organizational culture, nature of the task and so on. Nevertheless, there are some differing views as to organizational productivity are independently determined by environmental and other organizational factors but not only by the leadership styles.

Further, in the Sri Lankan context, there is an enormous gap in the literature in this regard when compared with the western countries (Kumara, 2012; Kasturiratne, 2012; Ranasinghe, 2008). In the present context, leadership styles are identified as a mirror image of the local competitive advantages and disadvantages of the exterior environment (Nicolae, Ion, &Nicolae, 2016). Therefore, this discussion is vital to contemporary society giving special attention to the sustainable development of a country through the maximization of organizational productivity. A group of literature (Mamsa, Innocent & Elkanah, 2019; Luthans, 1995; Redmond and Mumford, 1993; Katzell and Guzzo, 1983) says that the productivity of an organization is largely determined by its

leadership. More specifically, it is the leadership styles, i.e., task orientation and people orientation that decide the level of productivity. However, another group of literature (Brown, 1982; Meindle, 1985; Pfeiffer, 1977; Miner, 1982) challenges this proposition, saying that leadership has only a minimal relationship with productivity, as organizational outcomes are determined primarily by environmental factors. Therefore, this contradiction on leadership styles and its impact on productivity lead to the identification of a research problem that is worth studying. Hence, the research problem addressed in this paper is, "Do the leadership styles influence and explain the variations in the productivity?". Therefore, this article aims at (1) examining the relationship between leadership styles and productivity, (2) identifying whether the differences in the leadership styles cause differences in the productivity, and (3) to have an insight into the impact of situational factors on the leadership style and productivity.

In order to fulfill this requirement, at the outset, theoretical concepts of leadership styles and the productivity of the organization were studied to identify the different types of dimensions based on the suitable theories, approaches, and models. It is indicated to develop a conceptual framework depicting the impact of leadership styles have, with the dimensions exclusively selected for this article, in relation to the exhaustive literature review on the subject of organization productivity. Therefore, the ultimate intention of this article is to examine the dimensions in relation to the variables and the proposed conceptual framework, consisting of dimensions in relation to different disciplines that would be explored in future studies especially focusing on the apparel industry around the world. Furthermore, researchers are allowed to discover the associations among various academic approaches, learning outcomes, and subsequent business performance by exploring leadership styles which is an area that needs continuing research (Buckley, 2014; Fani, 2015). It is also worthwhile to note that leadership could be validated and tested through the manufacturing sector in different industries and countries (Dermol, 2010), including Sri Lanka. In order to establish a strong basis on the vitality of these main constructions, a sound theoretical review of the literature is essential.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Development: Theories need not be regarded to be only academic since these assist to comprehend basic concepts that are necessary to take decisions and actions with a clear mind in an enhanced manner rather than without any explanation or theory. At all potential levels, theories can basically have an impact on influencing conclusion and action. The disputes that arise inconsequent to disparities in descriptions could be due to the theories that require testing. This section provides a brief explanation for the literature related to the topic of the study.

The study mainly focuses on the examination of the impact of leadership styles on the productivity of a selected garment – manufacturing organization in Sri Lanka. The study adopts the two-dimensional view of leadership: task-orientation and people orientation. Further, the literature reveals that task-orientation and people-orientation are not incompatible, and skillful leaders can combine these orientations in their overall style to produce favorable results. Accordingly, the study identifies this dimension of leadership as "Shared Leadership." The productivity is assessed in relation to the measures of efficiency, value addition, effectiveness, quality defects, and labour turnover, employee absenteeism, and employee satisfaction on supervision. Being understood, through in-depth literature reviews, that leadership is a more abstract and theoretical concept, the present research selected to provide an empirical light in explaining such leadership models in an empirically grounded manner.

Productivity : Productivity isn't everything, but in the long run, it is almost everything. A country's ability to improve its standard of living over time depends almost entirely on its ability to raise its output per worker (Thoradeniya, 1998). Productivity is the belief in human progress. It is a state of mind which aims at perpetual improvement. It is a ceaseless effort to apply new technology and new methods for the welfare and happiness of humankind. It is the training of the minds and the development of attitudes of the people as a whole, which determines whether the nation will realize high productivity and an affluent life or low productivity and poverty"(Asian Productivity Organisation, 2012).

Productivity of Organizations : Efficiency, effectiveness and quality are the few dimensions of the productivity of organizations. There are few needful to do if productivity in the organization to be maximized. Those are namely set mutual expectations with the team; agree that leaders are fair and reasonable; measure current productivity; set targets; provide visible feedback; discuss progress on a regular basis; and celebrate milestones and achievements (Mitchell, 2016).

Various tools and methods to improve productivity in the organization presented in figure 2.

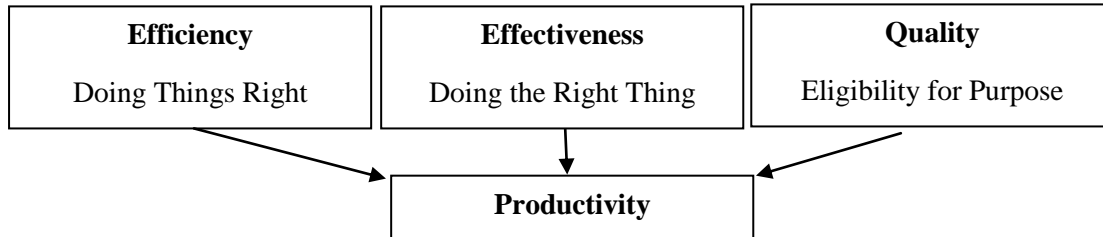


Figure 2: Various Dimensions of the productivity

The focus is given in this section to identify some of the concepts which can be ideally used in conceptual and theoretical backgrounds. Due to the sheer ability of the infrastructure geared towards productivity, many of the concepts given below are well-practiced in Japan. Nevertheless, due to the infrastructural and attitudinal factors in countries like Sri Lanka, it is a challenge to implement and practice the concepts which help improve productivity.

Transactional Leadership : Transactional leadership involves an exchange relationship between leaders and followers in the direction of established goals by clarifying role and task requirement. Transactional leaders' focus is to maintain the status quo and they are oriented to enhance the present way of doing things. Transactional leadership involves two major dimensions namely task orientation and people orientation. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to find fully task oriented or people oriented leaders. Instead we find leaders with a combination of both characteristics. In this research, such leaders are labeled as Shared Leadership.

Task-orientation is the degree to which the leader organizes and defines relationships in the group by activities such as assigning specific tasks; specifying procedures to be followed; scheduling work, and clarifying expectations; encourage people to work harder; emphasize t deadlines; see to it that people in the work group are working up to capacity; closely supervise employees; and getting the job done is more important to them than employees' growth or personal satisfaction. People orientation is the degree to which the leader creates an environment of emotional support, warmth, friendliness, and trust. Employee oriented leaders are friendly; trustful; earn respect; have a warm relationship with team members; do personal favours for people in the work group; treat all people in the work group as his/her equal; be willing to make changes; back up what people; and have a participative decision making.

While advancing Burns (1978) model, Bass (2004) proposed a new theory of transformational leadership and outlined its components. To understand transformational leadership, we must differentiate it from transactional leadership. Transactional leadership is based on the exchange process, where the leader administers rewards and sanctions. The leader and follower agree, explicitly or implicitly, that desired follower behaviors will be rewarded, while undesirable behaviors will draw out punishment. Potential rewards include an increase in salary, promotions, and more benefits. Conversely, penalties may include pay cuts, demotions, and terminations. Based on this, one could argue that transactional leadership behaviors do not even qualify for a "true" leadership label (Brown and Thoranton, 2013). Since it is based on exchange, transactional leadership does not seek to motivate followers beyond the level that is required to avoid punishment or gain extrinsic rewards. Accordingly, total reliance on this leadership style may cause performance and satisfaction to suffer (Bass, 1985; Burns; 1978). Transformational leadership, however, engages followers by appealing to their upper-level needs and ideals that yield higher levels of follower satisfaction and performance (Bass, 1985).

Transformational leadership: Transformational leadership is based more on leaders' shifting the values, beliefs and needs of their followers. Further, these leaders provide individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation and possess charisma.

Unlike Burns (1978), Bass (1985) insists that, to be effective, leaders need to demonstrate features of both transactional and transformational leadership. Empirical evidence tends to support the view that leaders will maximize their effectiveness when they exhibit both transformational and transactional behaviors (Bass, & Yammarino, 1989).

Romance of Leadership : Romance of leadership as a construct refers to the generalized beliefs that individuals have regarding the significance of leadership to organizations, which may influence how they see their leaders (Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich; 1985). These beliefs enhance followers' perceptions of charismatic/transformational qualities. Meindl and Ehrlich (1988) have developed the Romance of Leadership Scale (RLS). However, up to this point, only inconclusive empirical evidence is available regarding this concept (Meindl; 1988).

Methodological Issues in Selecting the Sample: One of the significant issues in the discussion of leadership, concerns the limited attention given to the effects of the organizational environment (Hunt and Osborn, 1982). Most leadership research has either isolated the leader's behavior from its effects or isolated the effects from the leader's behavior (Campbel et al., 1970). According to Campbel et al. this occurs due to the bias towards instrument-centered research, in which aspects of the environment, cognition, behavior, and organizational outcomes are studied separately rather than together. This has happened because in this traditional, nomothetic research constructs, researchers have attempted to discover generalizable laws or propositions of behavior by averaging responses for each separate variable while using group-comparisons designs (Davis and Luthans, 1984). It is a general trend in these nomothetic research constructs that very few variables are tested, taking a large sample. This has resulted in reductionist tendencies in leadership research in which categories that are general in nature are singled out because they appear to explain a great deal (Campbel et al, 1970). This approach to leadership has failed, mainly because researchers have not been able to link together the results of these numerous separate studies to produce an improved overall understanding of leadership (David and Luthans, 1984). Therefore it is evident that one of the main instrumental biases on which those nomothetic research constructs are built is the sample size that permits generalizable laws but ignores the contextual differences. Having understood this truth, this research is limited to a monographic site, as it would ensure that the research findings would not be affected by contextual differences of totally different business settings. Further, this permits the researchers to get a clear insight into the impact of situational factors on the leadership and productivity.

Having understood this reality of difficulty of separating the leadership from its context the research was limited to a monographic site, as it would ensure that the research findings would not be affected by contextual differences of totally different business settings.

Sample Profile : The organization selected for this purpose is a large-scale garment factory, located in the Central Province, about 90-km away from Colombo. The total workforce of this organization consists of 1300 employees, belong to eight different hierarchical strata from which five are identified as staff levels. The staff members amount to 173. There are 11 sewing lines with 500 machines. The plant consists of a floor area of 55000 sq. feet and most of the members of the lower level management and almost all of the labour grade employees are from the vicinities of the factory. Most of them do not possess a good educational background; to be specific hardly anyone who sat for the General Certificate in Education Advances Level (GCE,A/L) examination can be found among them. Majority of the lower level managers, especially in the production department, are the people who were promoted to those positions from the lower grades, after being identified by the authority as the people with higher level of potential necessary to perform supervisory jobs. At the interviews that the researcher had with those lower level managers and operational level workers, they pretended to be so loyal and committed to the organization; however, in contrast to this, labour turnover rate was around 5% during the past few years, which was far higher than the industry average of 2.5%. Further employee absenteeism was found to be a major barrier in meeting the daily targets. Almost all of the top level and middle level managers possess sound educational background plus professional qualifications. The present Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the factory has started his career at this organization as the Factory Manager (FM) and was promoted first to the post of General Manager (GM) and then to the post of Director. It can be seen that this person is a sort of leader who gives more attention to details with little delegation.

Most of the workers and managers were found to be dissatisfied with the present work environment. Little concern had been paid to employees' health & safety and, machine operators and helpers with dusty hair is a common sight in the factory. However, welfare facilities such as provisions of distress loans, housing loans, free lunch, and annual picnic are available for both staff grade and labour grade employees. The organization has paid much attention to the management development and, managers from the supervisory level to the top level have been provided with chances to improve their supervisory and managerial knowledge, skills and attitudes through workshops and seminars conducted by the professional bodies in the field. The production department of the factory is under the direct supervision of the FM and, it has been subdivided into two areas that come under the control of two "Area Managers" (AM). While area – I consists of 05 sewing lines namely A,B,C,D and H, area – II consists of 06 sewing lines namely E, F, G, I, J and K. However it should be noted that the lines J and K were not included in the sample of the nine sewing lines selected for the study. These have been divided among three Assistant Production Managers (APM) who directly handle the activities of 09 Production Supervisors (PS). These production executives together with PS closely oversee the work of 432 Machine Operators (MO) and 78 Helpers (HLP). There is at least one Production Executive (PE) and one PS for each line and a sewing line consists of approximately 48 MO. Even though organizational positions are hierarchically arranged according to the position's power, the principle of unity of command is not preserved in the production department. Instead, a multiple command situation can be seen throughout the organization chart. This situation is depicted in Figure 01.

III. METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used. Personally administered Likert Scale questionnaires were used in collecting data on leadership style and employees' satisfaction. Further, structured and unstructured interviews were conducted with managers and non-managerial employees. Besides these primary sources of collecting data, different documents periodically prepared by the organization, such as annual business plans, monthly progress reports, etc. were used in collecting productivity-related data. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were used together with descriptive statistics where appropriate.

Table 1: Generally Hypothesized Relationships between Leadership Styles and Productivity

Leadership Style	Productivity Measure	Hypothesized Relationship
People Orientation	Efficiency	Positive
Task Orientation	Efficiency	Positive
Shared Leadership	Efficiency	Positive
People Orientation	Effectiveness	Positive
Task Orientation	Effectiveness	Positive
Shared Leadership	Effectiveness	Positive
People Orientation	Value Addition	Positive
Task Orientation	Value Addition	Positive
Shared Leadership	Value Addition	Positive
People Orientation	Labour Turnover	Negative
Task Orientation	Labour Turnover	Positive
Shared Leadership	Labour Turnover	Negative
People Orientation	Employee Absenteeism	Negative
Task Orientation	Employee Absenteeism	Positive
Shared Leadership	Employee Absenteeism	Negative
People Orientation	Quality Defects	Negative
Task Orientation	Quality Defects	Negative
Shared Leadership	Quality Defects	Negative
People Orientation	Satisfaction on Supervision	Positive
Task Orientation	Satisfaction on Supervision	Negative
Shared Leadership	Satisfaction on Supervision	Positive

People Orientation	OPI	Positive
Task Orientation	OPI	Positive
Shared Leadership	OPI	Positive

Source : Literature Review

The following statistical techniques are used for the analysis: Kruskal – Wallis Test, Correlation Analysis and Descriptive Statistics. With the help of the literature, a set of behavioural characteristics of leaders that can be used to distinguish between their task orientation and people orientation could be identified as type of supervision; mutual trust; emotional and Psychological Support; concern for the employee wellbeing and development; compliance to rules and regulations; meeting deadline and concern for task; type of communication; and mutual relationship and friendship. The questionnaire for assessing leadership style, consisted of 30 questions and above characteristics. The questionnaire was structured into two parts, namely part I and II. Part I covered the conative aspects of the leadership behavior whereas; part II covered the cognitive aspects of the leadership behavior. Further, Likert Scale questionnaire with seven questions was developed to measure the employees’ satisfaction on supervision. Both of these questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher to all the respondents with the purpose of guaranteeing the accuracy of the responses to a great extent. According to the available literature generally hypothesized relationships between leadership styles and organizational productivity measures are given in Table 1.

Table 2: Weightings of the managerial positions

Managerial Positions	Weight
Factory Manager	1
Area Manager	1
Asst. Production manager	3
Production Executive	4
Production Supervisor	1
Total	10

After a discussion with top level managers of the factory a conclusion was arrived at as to the weight the managerial levels according to the impact that each of these managerial levels have, on the operational level workers. This weighting system is given in Table 2 for the purpose of testing the association between leadership style values and productivity scores, 54 leadership situations are created by applying the weighted average leadership values of each production line to the monthly productivity values of respective lines.

Analysis: Weighted average leadership style values for each production line in relation to the task orientation, people orientation and shared leadership were calculated using the responses given to the questionnaires. To facilitate the comparison of leadership style values with productivity values, weighted average leadership values of production lines were classified in to five leadership levels, from 1 to 5. Monthly values of each productivity measure for the period of six months, in relation to each production line were identified for the purpose of analysis. Bringing the data given in Table 4 and monthly productivity data together created the leadership – productivity data matrix. This matrix describes the leadership style values and productivity values in relation to the 54 leadership situations identified. This was the base for the analysis. As explained earlier the Kruskal-Wallis test of ANOVA and correlation analysis were employed for the purpose of data analysis. Firstly, the Kruskal-Wallis test is used to determine whether there are significant differences among levels of leadership, the median values of productivity measures (as used by Kruskal-Wallis test) are plotted against the levels of leadership to visualize the relationship,

if any, between the two sets of variables. Thirdly, the relationships suggested earlier are reassured / retested with the help of a correlation analysis. Finally, descriptive statistics were used to retest the validity of the above two tests.

Table 3 : Leadership Situations used for the Analysis

Line	Leadership Situations					
	M ₁	M ₂	M ₃	M ₄	M ₅	M ₆
A	1	10	19	28	37	46
B	2	11	20	29	38	47
C	3	12	21	30	39	48
D	4	13	22	31	40	49
E	5	14	23	32	41	50
F	6	15	24	33	42	51
G	7	16	25	34	43	52
H	8	17	26	35	44	53
I	9	18	27	36	45	54

L = Production Lines

M = Months

Table 4: Weighted Average Leadership Values

Line	TO Value	PO Value	SL Value
A	50.49	42.60	46.45
B	49.11	45.48	47.29
C	51.43	47.28	49.35
D	46.81	52.72	49.76
E	53.92	44.57	49.25
F	49.64	48.64	49.14
G	45.00	52.74	48.87
H	49.64	39.11	44.37
I	52.48	44.56	48.52

TO = Task Orientation

PO = People Orientation

SL = Shared Leadership

The Kruskal-Wallis test is used to determine whether there are significant differences among levels of leadership styles in relation to each productivity measure. Secondly, if the test reports significant differences among levels of leadership, the median values of productivity measures (as used by Kruskal-Wallis test) are plotted against the levels of leadership to visualize the relationship, if any, between the two sets of variables. Thirdly, the relationships suggested earlier are reassured/retested with the help of correlation analysis. Finally, descriptive statistics were used to retest the validity of the above two tests.

Table 5 : Summary of the Findings as for Analyses I and II

Leadership Style	Productivity Measure	Significant Difference? (By Kruskal-Wallis test)	Direction of Association? (By Scatter Diagrams)	Significant relationship? (By Correlation Analysis)	In Agreement with Hypotheses?
PO	ECY	NO			
TO	ECY	NO			
SL	ECY	NO			
PO	EFT	NO			
TO	EFT	NO			
SL	EFT	NO			
PO	VAD	NO			
TO	VAD	NO			
SL	VAD	NO			

PO	LTO	NO			
TO	LTO	YES	INVERSE	Yes	No
SL	LTO	NO			
PO	EAB	NO			
TO	EAB	NO			
SL	EAB	NO			
PO	QD	YES	No		
TO	QD	NO			
SL	QD	YES	No		
PO	ESS	YES	No		
TO	ESS	YES	INVERSE	Yes	Yes
SL	ESS	YES	No		
PO	OPI	NO			
TO	OPI	NO			
SL	OPI	NO			

Source : Survey Data

Abbreviations used: PO-People Orientation; TO-Task Orientation; SL-Shared Leadership; ECY-Efficiency; EFT-Effectiveness; VAD-Value Addition; LTO-Labour Turnover; ESS-Employees’ Satisfaction on Supervision; OPI-Overall Productivity Index

Test – I (Kruskal – Wallis Test): Weighted average leadership values, given in Table 4 in relation to each dimension, were classified into five levels, as explained earlier. Where the significant differences are found, the median values were plotted to visualize the relationship, if any, between the two sets of variables. At every occasion, the differences are tested at the five-percent level of significance. In the conclusion of the Analysis – I out of 24 associations tested, significant differences among levels of leadership regarding productivity measures were reported only in the following six occasions.

1. Task Orientation and Labour Turnover
2. People Orientation and Quality Defects
3. Shared Leadership and Quality Defects
4. People Orientation and Employees’ Satisfaction on Supervision
5. Task Orientation and Employees’ Satisfaction on Supervision
6. Shared Leadership and Employees’ Satisfaction on Supervision

Accordingly, productivity measures of Efficiency, Effectiveness, Value Addition, Employee Absenteeism and Overall Productivity Index were found not to be affected by any leadership style. Further, scatter diagrams of median values of productivity measures suggested that expect for the association suggested by test of “Task Orientation and Employees’ Satisfaction on Supervision,” none of the other five situations given above reported a relationship congruent with that hypothesized.

Test – II (Correlation Analysis): The relationship between the weighted average leadership values and values of productivity measures of each production line was assessed with the help of a correlation test. According to the test, the following relationship was significant at 5%.

1. People Orientation and Labour Turnover.
2. Task Orientation and Labour turnover.
3. Task Orientation and Quality Defects.
4. Task Orientation and Satisfaction on Supervision.
5. Shared Leadership and Efficiency.
6. Shared Leadership and Satisfaction on Supervision.

However, it is noticed that except for the relationships described by item 4 (i.e., Task orientation and satisfaction on supervision) and item 5 (i.e., Shared leadership and Efficiency) all the other relationships identified above are in contradiction with what is commonly hypothesized. As explained above, people-oriented supervision that is characterized by friendship, mutual trust, open channels of communication, consideration for well-being and growth of subordinates, etc. helps keeps the labour turnover low. But in this case, the specific finding suggests a

positive relationship between people orientation and labour turnover. Further, high task orientation is generally supposed to cause employee dissatisfaction, grievances, and turnover. Nevertheless, the findings of this study suggest an inverse relationship between task orientation and labour turnover. Moreover, task-oriented supervision has been found to influence task performance positively. But in contrast to this, task orientation has been found to be positively related with the quality defects. As hypothesized, high task orientation coupled with high people orientation produces employees' satisfaction. In contrast to this, the shared leadership of this particular organization is found to negatively correlate with employee satisfaction on supervision.

Therefore, in the conclusion of Analysis II, it should be reported that out of 24 associations between productivity variables and leadership styles tested, only two associations are found to be significant, and only one is significant and congruent with generally hypothesized relationships. The findings of the above two analyses are summarized in Table 5.

According to Table 5, with the expectation of an isolated relationship of task orientation style with employees' satisfaction in supervision, no leadership style is significantly related with the given productivity measures as generally hypothesized. Therefore, it can be inferred that the leadership style is not reflected in the productivity of this organization, and the variances in the productivity of this organization are caused by some other factors, but not by leadership styles.

Test – III: If the leadership is regarded as the most important determinant of productivity, the production lines with the unchanged leadership style values should be able to hold on to their positions in relation to any productivity ranking over an extended period of time, with minimum or no fluctuations. For instance, Line-E is the highest in task orientation style and the third in a shared leadership style. But it has failed in holding on to its position continuously throughout the period and has fluctuated from the highest rank to the lowest rank during this six month period time with no changes in the leadership style values. This clearly indicates that the productivity of this line is decided by something other than leadership style. This situation was true for many production lines. Thus, this descriptive analysis also verifies the findings of Analysis I and II.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

These idiosyncrasies will be explained in terms of the points such as methodological issues and influences of contextual variables.

Methodological Issues:

The method adopted for assessing leadership style: When the fact that this study used only the leaders' self-descriptions in identifying/assessing their task orientations and people orientation is taken in to consideration, it can be logically argued that this could have been one of the main factors that causes the above controversy. Further, the researcher's own observations/ experience at the research site also can be cited to support this argument. During the process of administering the questionnaire on worker's satisfaction on supervision the researcher noted that some managerial staff members were openly and heavily criticized for lack of consideration by machine operators. Still, surprisingly it is found that such leaders who were subjects of those criticisms have rated themselves high in people orientation. Moreover, it is noted by the researcher that some lower-level managerial staff members, whose task performances were regarded with displeasure and contempt by the superiors, have also rated themselves high in task orientation. From this, it is clear that "the leadership style of a manager" is a unique interpretation by the party involved in assessing it. Therefore, it can be concluded that the accuracy of the results might have been affected by the method used for the assessment of leadership styles.

Method adopted in calculating average weighted leadership style values: As explained above, the principle of unity of command is not preserved in the production department. This has resulted in a multiple command situation. The unavailability of a clearly and precisely defined method for assessing every manager's influence on operational workers led the researcher to adopt a weighting system with the consultation of the management for the present study. Even though the utmost care is taken to ensure the accuracy of the weighting system, no guarantee is there to say that the method adopted is 100% perfect, since an attempt to quantify highly abstract phenomenon, specially related to the cognitive aspects of human behaviour may not be much rational. Perhaps, the degree of influence that superior has on the subordinate may be a matter of perfection of the individual concerned. For instance, some factory members revealed that they are utterly dissatisfied with the leadership style of their immediate superiors, but stressed that they still love their workplace because of the reverence towards the top-level management. Therefore it can be logically argued that the inevitable weakness of the

weighting system adopted to calculate the weighted average leadership style values also might have contribute to the idiosyncratic findings of this study.

Influences of Contextual Variables:

Nature of the tasks performed by Machine Operators: As suggested by job simplification or scientific approach to job design, continuous performance of a simplified task results in improvements in the performance of job holders and a high level of organizational productivity due to the learning effects. As disclosed by the top-level managers of the production department, continuous performance of the same style of garments by a group of employees over an extended period necessarily results in noticeable improvement of efficiency, effectiveness, and noticeable drop in absenteeism, employee turnover, and quality defects within the group concerned. Further, they explained with their experiences that the pressure and stress the employees go through in learning a new task is one of the main factors behind the level of absenteeism and labour turn over. For instance, line ‘F’ which recorded the highest average efficiency for six months period commencing from October to March has got the chance of producing the same style for consecutive three months starting from September though only 50% efficiency is recorded in the first month of the production, the efficiency rose into a massive figure 78% and 81% respectively during the latter two months. In the same way, even though 16.8% end line defects (Quality defects) are discovered in September, going in line with the improvements in efficiency, only 10% and 9% quality defects are reported respectively in October and November. But, when it is started to produce a new style, the quality defects rose to an amount of 29.5% in December. Refer to Table 06.

Secondly, the complexity of sewing operations related to different items and models is also learned to affect the performance of machine operators directly. For instance, the performance of Line F can be cited to explain this. Even though only 50% efficiency is reported in the first month of production of item ‘X’, 74% efficiency has been achieved in the first month though only 50% efficiency is reported in the first month of production of item ‘X’, 74% efficiency has been achieved in the first month of production of item Y. Refer to Table 06.

The variety of machine operators’ job was very minimal. Being requested to explain their attitudes regarding the variety of the tasks performed, all the machine operators interviewed (10) agreed that only very little variety is there in the job of a machine operator. The only variety involved in this job, according to machine operators, is changing the ‘part’ of the garment they are sewing, or simple changes in the style. For instance, in machine operators’ words, this change may involve ‘shifting from a collar of a shirt to the sleeve of a shirt, or shifting from the sleeve of a shirt to the sleeve of a jersey’. It is true this creates a structured task for them. At a later discussion factory manager confirmed this and added further that under these circumstances, an average employee could, into a great extent, be on his/her own if the necessary instructions are provided clearly at the beginning of a new operation. When viewed in this light, one can conclude that the leader’s role as an instrumental or task supporter in this organization is limited into a great extent to providing the basic information required at the initial stage of starting to produce a new garment of a new style. Accordingly, it can be decided that the routine nature of the task neutralizes the need for task orientation of leaders in this organization.

Table 6. Selected Performance Figures of Line F

		Item X		Item Y
	First Month (September)	Second Month (October)	Third Month (November)	First month (December)
Efficiency	50%	78%	81%	74%
Quality Defects	16.8%	10%	9%	29.5%

Source : Survey Data

Characteristics of Machine Operators: As explained at the beginning, almost all of the operational level workers are from the close vicinity of the factory. Most of them do not possess sound educational background. Further, a vast majority of them are from the poor families and is not economically strong. However, it should be noted that though they do not have other sources of stable income, they could manage the basic requirement of their life, i.e.foods and clothes, as most of their parents involved in the cultivation of traditional crops but in small plots of or do odd jobs. Whatever it is, being young people, filled with aspirations for successful lives all

of them are in the opinion that they should have a “job” to manage the life. Except for a few, this was the first employment, and this employment, for most of them, is everything in their life. So they seem to be ready to bear any hardship at work without complaining. Some of the machine operators hold the factory and management reverend and, the CEO is described to be their savior. Being questioned whether they would leave this organization if a new factory with better salaries established in close proximity, most of them responded negatively. It was due to their firm belief that it is this factory that helped them to stand on their own, and therefore they owe a great deal to it. Going along with this statement, it was found that about 20% of machine operators of the factory had over three years of work history, and another 5% of machine operators are working here from its inception.

Therefore, the researcher is in a firm belief that these types of favorable attitudes towards the job, management, and the organization by machine operators have a direct impact on labour turnover and absenteeism of production lines. Further, it can be logically decided that the reverend feelings they have towards the organization improve their commitment to the job and thus resulted in enhanced performance. Hence, it is evident that for a group of people like this leadership style could have only a minimal impact in the determination of labour turnover, absenteeism, job satisfaction, etc. further, it is noted that labour turnover is high among newcomers. According to the factory manager, labour turnover usually is around 60% among the machine operators with less than 06 months service period, whereas it is about 20% for those who have more than 06 months but less than one-year service. This factor, of course, is beyond the managers’ control. Moreover, the educational background of the newcomer is found to affect the labour turnover. For instance, Line “H” which commenced operations anew months ago was staffed on an experimental basis with young people who just sat for the GCE A/L examination. Subsequently, it experienced 40% labour turnover in the same month (September) and 25% in the next month (October), and finally recorded the highest average labour turnover for the survey period. Hence it is clear that the characteristics of machine operators had greater influences on the productivity measures than of leadership styles.

Corporate Culture: As noted by the researcher, the culture of this organization is characterized by some bureaucratic features such as rigid rules regulations and procedures, high level of centralization to details, emphasis in maintaining status quo etc. it seems that these features have directly resulted in, as explained by Kerr and Jermier, neutralizing and substituting people-orientation and task orientation of leaders, Specially, strict rules, regulations and procedures, inflexibility, centralized decision making and minimal delegation have resulted in lowering the position power of leaders at the lower levels of hierarchy. So what the middle level and lower-level managers are doing is just implementing the decision made by top-level managers. For an example, the lower-level managers have only a minimum or have no authority at all in finding solutions to some of the most frequent grievances of employees such as approval of level, excessive overtime work, night duties, etc. there is no doubt that this situation moderates the impact of individual leadership style on the organizational performance.

In spite of the above-mentioned bureaucratic features, company culture is embedded with values such as commitments to employees’ welfare, and to employee development. Especially top-level managers’ concern for employees’ welfare has helped in developing employees’ loyalty to the organization. What the machine operators disclosed at the interview with the researcher helped him to come to a firm conclusion that the stress created due to that ‘much emphasis placed on the task achievement by the leaders have been suppressed to a great extent by the positive attitudes created with the help of improved welfare facilities. In essence, this says that cultural values on people orientation have neutralized the individual leader’s people-orientation and task orientation into a considerable extent.

V. CONCLUSION

With the expectation of one isolated relationship, leadership styles are not significantly related to the given productivity measures as generally hypothesized. Hence, it was concluded that the leadership style is not reflected in organizational productivity. Thus, it was inferred that the variances in the productivity of this organization might have caused by the contextual variables. The nature of the task, characteristics of subordinates, and attributes of organizational culture are the contextual variables that is believed to cause the variances in the productivity within and among the production lines.

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