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LEADERSHIP STYLES AND ACADEMIC STAFF TURNOVER INTENTIONS IN UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study established the effects of leadership styles on academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. The specific objectives were to: establish the effect of employee leadership styles (autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire) on academic staff turnover intentions. The study hypothesized that there was no statistically significant relationship between leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. The study was anchored on Lewin Kurt model of leadership and the Harvard model of HRM. The study was anchored on positivism research philosophy and a descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used. The study population was 17,210 academic staff in chartered universities in Kenya from whom a sample of 364 academic staff was drawn. A multistage sampling technique was used. Data was collected using a questionnaire. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Reliability was established through the use of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The results revealed that autocratic leadership style has a significant positive influence on academic staff turnover intentions. In contrast, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles negatively influence academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. The findings will contribute to theory, policy-making and HRM practice.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Academic Staff, Turnover Intentions, Universities.

INTRODUCTION

Adopting relevant HRM strategies in organizations may be constrained by the leadership system represented by top management, unit, functional level and first-line management. An essential component of leadership that may influence the adoption of employee-centered HRM practices is the leadership style exercised by managers at various levels of organizational hierarchy. Leadership style introduces diversity in how managers apply HRM practices so that it can explain employee behavioral outcomes. Mbah and Ikemefuna (2011) Puni et al. (2016) assert that autocratic leadership style is one of the main reasons for high employee turnover intentions in an organization. Further, they point out that the autocratic leadership style is antagonistic, thus creating a conflicting relationship between a leader and subordinates which can cause dissatisfaction and resentments. Cherry's (2018) study believes that the reason people quit their job and leave the organization is poor leadership style. Employees under autocratic leaders may experience job dissatisfaction, lower commitment, psychological distress and high turnover intentions.

Furthermore, strict employee supervision acts as an extrinsic factor and a dissatisfier and a demotivator. Tian & Huang (2014) affirms that incompetent autocratic leadership style results in high levels of stress, low commitment, low job satisfaction or dissatisfaction and high employee turnover intentions. However, the democratic leadership style and laissez-faire style make employees feel more valued and engaged, reducing their turnover intentions (Puni et al., 2016). Due to the potential impact of applying different leadership styles on HRM practices and the emergent employee behaviors, this study proposes to measure this impact by examining the relationship between leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions in chartered universities in Kenya.

Leadership is the process of influencing the behavior of others to achieve results (Armstrong & Taylor, 2017).

However, leadership style refers to the patterns of behavior, assumptions, attitude, or traits exhibited by individuals attempting to provide leadership to achieve the desired result (Yukl, 1989). Leadership style is an approach used by managers to exercise their leadership function in the organization. Effective leadership style is necessary to reduce employee attrition (Hassan, 2014). Leadership style involves the leader setting achievable goals, coming up with action plans and directing the followers through feedback that informs the set goals (Ogalo, 2013). There are various leadership styles that leaders may choose to apply. Kurt (1939) identified three leadership styles formulated around decision-making authority: autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership style, and laissez fair leadership style.

Leaders, who adopt the autocratic leadership style dictate work methods, do not consult, make unilateral decisions, do not share opinions and limit employee participation (Puni *et al.*, (2016). This leadership style is less creative and creates a permanent state of tension and discontent, resistance and decreased leaders' interest in the subordinates (Tian & Huang, (2014). Autocratic leadership is executed through punishment, threats, demands, orders, rules, and regulations. Democratic leaders are characterized by collective decision-making, camaraderie, active follower involvement, fair praise, and restrained criticism. They facilitate collective decision-making (Cherry, 2018). The laissez-faire behavior attracts leaders that are comfortable with having minimum input in decision making, although they may still be responsible for the outcome of the decision made (Dessler & Starke 2017).

It is the type of leadership style where leaders refuse to make decisions, are not available when needed, and take no responsibility for their lack of leadership ability (Cherry, 2018). Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by very little guidance from leaders, complete freedom for followers and provision of the tools and resources needed. The group members are expected to solve problems independently, power is handed over to the followers, yet leaders take responsibility for the group decisions and actions. According to Tannerbaum and Schmidt (2009), leadership style varies along a continuum with manager-centered behavior, referred to as autocratic-leadership on one end and subordinate-centered behavior referred to as laissez-faire leadership style on other end. They argued that leadership styles could be located along such a continuum.

Research has shown that leadership style directly influences employees' turnover intentions (Bohn, 2002; Cherry, 2018). As Siew (2017) explained, leadership style affects turnover intentions. Puni *et al.*, (2016) established that employees under autocratic leaders are more prone to employee turnover intentions mainly due to the leaders' over-emphasis on production other than the people dimension. Workers under a democratic leadership style are less likely to have turnover intentions due to the collective decision-making approach of the leader. Employees under laissez-faire leadership style lack direction. They are keen to blame each other for mistakes, refuse to accept personal responsibility, and produce low work progress, leading to dissatisfaction, frustration, and turnover intentions. Applying different leadership styles implies the philosophical orientation embraced by managers to obtain results through their human resources (H.R.). HRM has two distinct orientations: soft HRM and hard HRM orientations. The adoption of either approach or both is dependent on the leadership style embraced by the management. Keenoy (2017) pointed out that hard and soft HRM are complementary rather than mutually exclusive practices. The soft HRM approach is a modern humanistic orientation underpinning Hawthorne studies, McGregor theory Y, Harvard framework, Ohio state university dimension of leadership behavior and democratic leadership style. This orientation treats employees as the essential resource in an organization and a source of competitive advantage (Beer *et al.*, 1985; Walton, 1985; Guest, 2017).

Individuals and their self-direction place commitment, trust, and self-regulated behavior at the Centre of any strategic approach to people (Guest, 2017). Therefore, the soft HRM approach practices lead to lower absenteeism, lower labour turnover, and high employee retention (Guest, 2017). In contrast, the hard HRM is a traditional approach underpinning McGregor theory X, Michigan production-centered supervision and Ohio state university initiating structure and autocratic leadership style (Legge, 1995). Employees are treated simply as a resource of an organization, like machines and buildings. Fombrun (1983) and Tichy (2015) noted that the Hard HRM orientation focused on the resource side of human resources that emphasized costs in the form of headcounts and procedural aspects of the HRM functions. The Hard HRM placed control firmly in the hands of management. The HRM division's role is to manage numbers effectively while keeping the workforce closely matched with both bodies and behaviors (Hendry & Pettigrew 2016). Leadership style may influence soft and hard HRM orientations, employee voice mechanisms, and turnover intentions. This thesis measured the effect of employee voice mechanisms on turnover intentions and the moderating effect of leadership style on this relationship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership style is the pattern of behavior that a leader exhibits, in influencing the subordinates towards the goals of an organization. Leadership is the process of having a remarkable influence on subordinates. They are motivated to achieve specified targets beyond what is expected and maintain cooperation for sustainable development Yukl (1994). Leadership is indispensable in business, political, educational, and social organizations to attain goals. Organizational researchers' interest in leadership research, particularly leadership style, started in 1945 with the Ohio State University researchers. Researchers have mentioned several forms of leadership styles in the business arena. Autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles are the oldest and the most recognized leadership styles throughout the world.

Combining these three leadership styles further develops other leadership models like transformational, transactional, ethical, charismatic, etc. The nature of leadership style influences individuals' turnover intentions, stay in an organization and engagement in counterproductive work behavior. Mbah and Ikemefuna (2011) argued that

poor leadership style is a product of autocratic leadership style or production-centered leadership flair which serves as one of the main essential reasons employees leave their jobs or resort to deviant behavior, quit their jobs and leave the organization. Similarly, an antagonistic relationship between leaders and subordinates can cause employees to lose commitment and job satisfaction. CIPD (2019) believes that number one reason employees quit their job is the leadership style exercised in the organization. Those who remain working with leaders who exhibit poor leadership have job dissatisfaction, lower commitment, psychological distress, and high turnover intentions.

Using a cross-sectional survey design, Puni, Agyemang and Asamoah (2016) examined the relationship between leadership style, employee turnover intentions, and counterproductive work behavior. Purposively sampling was used. Data were analyzed using an inter-correlation matrix to establish the relationship between the study variables. The study's findings showed a significant positive association between autocratic leadership style and employee turnover intentions and counterproductive work behavior. It also revealed a significant negative correlation between democratic leadership styles, employee turnover intentions, and counterproductive work behavior. This study was done in Ghana and it showed the general relationship among leadership style, employee turnover intentions, and counterproductive work behavior. The moderating effect of leadership style was not established. It used purposive sampling against superior probability sampling. The study was also a case study done in only one bank, therefore limiting the study's scope and generalization of the findings.

Liu, Cai, Li, Shi and Fang (2013) researched leadership style and employee turnover intentions. The hierarchical regression model was used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that democratic leadership style has a significant moderating effect on employee turnover intentions. The study established the linkage between leadership style and employee turnover intentions; however, the moderating application of leadership styles is not well articulated. The study was contextualized in Asia, a different environment from Kenya. The study analyzed only democratic leadership styles on turnover intentions and left out autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles included in the current study. Babalola, Stouten and Euwema (2016) examined the frequency of the moderating interaction between ethical leadership and turnover intentions in Nigeria. Interview schedules were used in data collection. Results from 124 employees, coworkers, and supervisors revealed that ethical leadership moderated the relationship between frequent change and turnover intentions. The relationship was positive only when ethical leadership was low. The moderating relationship could be shown to be mediated by employees' state of self-esteem. The study was based in Nigeria and has shown the moderating relationship between ethical leadership and employee turnover intentions. However, it has not highlighted the moderating relationship between democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles as premised in this study.

Albert et al., (2016) examined the relationship between leadership style, employee turnover intentions, and counterproductive work behavior using a cross-sectional survey design. Purposively sampling was done. Data were analyzed using an inter-correlation matrix to establish the relationship between the study variables. The result showed a significant positive association between autocratic leadership style, employee turnover intentions, and counterproductive work behavior but exposed a significant negative connection between democratic leadership styles, employee turnover intentions, and counterproductive work behavior. Laissez-faire leadership style indicated a significant negative relationship with turnover intentions but a significant positive correlation with counterproductive work behavior (CWB), implying that subordinates under laissez-faire leaders will show fewer turnover intentions but more CWBs due to the apathetic attitude shown by the leader. Employees under autocratic leaders are more prone to CWBs and intentions to quit jobs mainly due to the leader's over-emphasis on production than people. Workers under a democratic leadership style are less likely to involve in turnover intentions and CWBs due to the collective decision-making approach of the leader.

The study recommends leadership training in team building and decision-making to minimize turnover intentions and CWBs. No single style of leadership style can suit different situations. Based on the situation of the employee and organization, a leader can combine one or more leadership styles in influencing followers towards the desire goals of the organization. Thus, choosing the right leadership style, in the right situation, at the right time is the key to successful leadership. The autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership style is fundamental leadership approaches in Lewin's leadership framework, 1939. Thus every leader employs these three leadership styles in the leading process. However, the extent of these leadership styles may differ from each other (Cherry, 2019). That is why these three leadership styles belong to the same continuum. This study focused on investigating the moderating effect of leadership style on the relationship between employee voice mechanisms and turnover intentions.

METHODOLOGY

Positivist research relies on taking a large sample. The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design using quantitative approaches that is the measurement of weights of the responses given by the respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2018). A descriptive cross-sectional survey studies large populations by selecting and studying samples from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). A descriptive cross-sectional research design enabled the present study to establish the relationship between employee voice mechanisms and turnover intentions. The relationship is moderated by leadership style and job satisfaction in Kenyan chartered universities. The descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used because the parameters of a phenomenon were picked at a specific time to accurately capture the characteristics of the population relating to what, where, how, and when of the research topic (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). The design was adopted because the parameters of the phenomenon and the existing data among universities were collected at a specific single point in time. The results were generalized to represent the entire population of the study. The descriptive cross-sectional design allowed for the description of relationships between variables under study, which enabled the study to collect and compare several variables in the study simultaneously. The research design has been used in previous studies (Abigail 2018; Nkari 2015; Kombo 2015; Muccheke 2013).

Sample Size

The primary data for the research was obtained from a sample of chartered university academic staff in the rank of professor, senior lecturer, lecturer, assistant lecturer and teaching assistants. The multistage sampling technique was used to identify sampling units at different stages according to the structure of the population. This sampling approach involved the use of several probability sampling techniques at several stages. Kilika, K'obonyo, Ogutu and Munyoki (2012), Mitalo (2018) also used a similar approach in their studies. Four multistage sampling techniques were adopted in this study. The first stage involved selecting fifteen (15) chartered universities from which the sample of academic staff was drawn. As of January 2020, there were 49 chartered universities in Kenya consisting of 31 public chartered universities and 18 private chartered universities. Bryman and Bell (2018) indicated that for a study that includes target populations with five or more subgroups to be studied, the survey should only target 30 percent of the population to enable a detailed examination of the population.

To get the required sample of academic staff in the public and private chartered universities, the study took 30% of 49 chartered universities, which produced more than 30% of the population. A simple random proportionate sampling method was then used to get public and private chartered universities. A total of 15 chartered universities out of 49 public and private chartered universities which were 30% of all chartered universities, was selected, comprising nine public chartered universities and six (6) private chartered universities on a prorated basis.

The second stage involved selecting public and private chartered universities from which academic staff were sampled per region. The eight regions of Kenya are Coast Region, North Eastern Region, Eastern Region, Central Region, Rift Valley Region, Nyanza Region, Western Region and Nairobi Region. The study used a simple random proportionate sampling technique to get the required universities per region from which a sample of academic staff was drawn. The distribution of public and private chartered universities from which the sample is drawn per region is shown by the sampling matrix in Table 1.

Table 96: Sampling matrix

Region	Public chartered universities	Private chartered universities	Sampled in Public chartered universities	Sampled in Private chartered universities	The total number to be sampled
Nairobi	6	10	2	3	5
Coast	3	-	1	-	1
Rift Valley	6	2	2	1	3
Central	4	2	1	1	2
Eastern	5	2	2	1	3
Nyanza	4	2	1	-	1
Western	2	-	1	-	1
North Eastern	1	-	-	-	-
Total	31	18	9	6	15

Source: Researcher, (2020)

The third stage involved selecting the sample from the study population of academic staff in fifteen (15) chartered universities. The total academic staff from the fifteen 15 chartered universities in Kenya is 6893, comprising 4993 academic staff in 9 public chartered universities and 1900 in 6 private chartered universities. The sample size was obtained using an easy sample size calculator by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Using a population size of 7,000, a sample size of 364 respondents was appropriate to achieve a confidence level of 95 percent and 5% margin of error. The study then used a proportionate sampling technique to apportion the sample size of 364 respondents to every university. The summary of the distribution of the sample in the selected universities is shown in Table 2.

The fourth stage involved selecting the academic staff from ranks of professor, senior lecturer, lecturer, assistant lecturer/tutorial fellow, and teaching assistants. The study allocated the sample of 364 respondents proportionately to each of the 15 selected universities, as tabulated in Table 4. Then stratified random sampling technique was used to select desired respondents from each academic rank. The serial number of each participant in an academic rank will be written on a piece of paper and placed in a basket. The basket was shaken, one paper picked at a time and the number on the paper record. The process was repeated until the desired number in every academic rank was achieved. If a paper already been picked was picked again, the paper was folded and returned in the basket.

Table 97: Distribution of the sample in the Universities

University	Population	Sample
Dedan Kimathi University of Technology	482	25
Kenyatta University	1,702	89
Egerton University	570	30
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology	453	24
Chuka University	270	14
Pwani University	171	9
Technical University of Kenya	616	33
University of Eldoret	313	17
Kisii University	416	22
United States International University	287	15
Africa Nazarene University	166	9
KCA University	238	13
Kabarak University	315	16
Mount Kenya University	694	37
Kenya Methodist University	200	11
Grand Total	6893	364

Source: Researcher, (2020)

Correlation of Leadership Styles and Turnover Intentions

The study's objective sought to examine the effect of leadership style on the academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. Leadership styles were conceptualized in the study with three leadership styles: autocratic leadership styles, democratic leadership styles, and laissez-faire leadership styles. A correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationships between leadership styles (moderating variables) and academic staff turnover intentions (dependent variable). The Pearson's Product Moment correlation technique was used to determine the relationship between indicators of leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. It was meant to identify the strength and direction of the relationships between indicators of these variables. Results of correlation were presented in Table 3.

The correlation results presented in Table 34 showed that autocratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions are positive and significantly correlated ($r = 0.191, p = 0.000 < 0.01$). This suggests that academic staff turnover intentions are increased by using an autocratic leadership style in the universities in Kenya. Democratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions are depicted to be negative and significantly correlated ($r = -0.177, p = 0.001 < 0.01$). This suggests that an increase reduces academic staff turnover intentions using democratic leadership styles by management of chartered universities in Kenya. Further, laissez-faire leadership style was negative and significantly correlated with academic staff turnover intention ($r = -0.226, p = 0.000 < 0.01$). This correlation depicted that an increase reduced academic staff turnover intention in the use of laissez-faire leadership style.

Table 98: Correlations between leadership style and turnover intentions

		Turnover Intentions	Autocratic	Democratic	Laissez-faire	Leadership style
Turnover Intentions	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	352				
Autocratic	Pearson Correlation	.191**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	352	353			
Democratic	Pearson Correlation	-.177**	-.062	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.242			
	N	352	353	353		
Laissez	Pearson Correlation	-.226**	-.141**	.657**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.008	.000		
	N	352	353	353	353	
Leadership Styles	Pearson Correlation	-.030	.638**	.684**	.574**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.580	.000	.000	.000	
	N	352	353	353	353	353

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data, (2021)

Regression of Leadership Styles and Academic Staff Turnover Intentions

The study's objective was to examine the effect of leadership styles on academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. The leadership style was conceived in terms of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Leadership styles are measured along a continuum with manager-centered behavior, referred to as autocratic-leadership style on the one end and subordinate-centered behavior referred to as laissez-faire leadership style on the other end. Respondents had been asked to indicate the extent to which the leadership styles existed in the universities in Kenya.

To assess the effect of leadership styles on academic staff turnover intentions, the following hypothesis was set: H04
H0₁: *There is no statistically significant relationship between leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya*

H0_{1a}: *There is no statistically significant relationship between autocratic leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya*

H0_{1b}: *There is no statistically significant relationship between democratic leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya*

H0_{1c}: *There is no statistically significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya.*

To test Hypothesis H0_{1a}, H0_{1b} and H0_{1c}: a simple regression analysis was carried out against academic staff turnover intentions and leadership styles, namely autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership style and laissez-faire leadership style as the predictor variable. The results are presented in Table 4

The regression results for autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership style, and laissez-faire leadership style produced $R^2 = 0.051, 0.031$ and 0.051 respectively for each dimension of leadership styles as presented in Table 4. This implied that a 5.1% variation of employee turnover intentions is explained by autocratic leadership and laissez-faire leadership style more the while 3.1% of the variation of employee turnover intentions is explained by democratic leadership style. The results imply that autocratic leadership style and laissez-faire leadership style accounted for 5.1% each. In comparison, democratic leadership style accounted for 3.1% variation in academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. The remaining variation is explained by other variables not included in this study, like personal factors, demographical factors, country employment level, and labor mobility. The results showed that the effect of the autocratic leadership style is statistically significant (18.884, p-value=.022), democratic leadership style (11.294, p-value=.001), working conditions (18.884, p-value=.000) at 5% level, implying that the suggested models are suitable for prediction purposes.

Table 99: Regression results for leadership styles

Statistics	Autocratic leadership style	Democratic leadership style	Laissez faire leadership style
R	0.226	0.177	0.226
R2	0.051	0.031	0.051
F	18.884	11.294	18.884
Sig(p-value)	0.022	0.001	0.000
constant	1.742	3.177	3.310
Sig(p-value)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Regression coefficient	0.263	-0.209	-0.260
S.E error	0.072	0.062	0.060
t-test	3.639	-3.361	3.310
Sig(p-value)	0.000	0.001	0.000
Beta	-0.191	-0.177	-0.226

Source: Primary Data, (2021)

Regression of autocratic Leadership Style and Academic Turnover Intentions

The first sub-objective sought to investigate the relationship between autocratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. The following null hypothesis was formulated to determine the relationship between autocratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions.

H0_{2a}: There is no statistically significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. Results presented in Table 4 indicate a statistically significant positive linear relationship between autocratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions (**regression coefficient = 0.263, p = 0.000 < 0.05**) at a 5% level. This means that one-unit increase in autocratic leadership style leads to a significant increase in academic staff turnover intentions by a factor of **0.263**. The null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya is not supported in the current study. This means that the autocratic leadership style significantly influences academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. It implies that autocratic leadership style positively influences academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya.

Based on these results, the regression model for the prediction of academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya can be stated as follows:

$$Y = 1.742 + 0.191X_{2a} \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where: Y The dependent variable (the academic staff turnover intentions)

X_{2a} =Autocratic leadership style

1.742 = y –Intercept (constant). Estimate the expected value of academic staff turnover intention when autocratic leadership style is Zero (Constant).

0.191 = an estimate of the expected increase in academic staff turnover intentions in response to a unit increase (improvements) in autocratic leadership style(X_{2a}).

The conclusion arrived at in this hypothesis can be explained on several grounds. First, in terms of concern for the current study, the study's findings bring out the role of autocratic leadership style in academic staff turnover intentions. The researcher observed that the findings raise an implication pointing at the relevance of the autocratic leadership style in stimulating employee turnover intentions pointed out by Kurt Lewin Leadership Model (Lewin et al., 1939). This is supported by the descriptive statistics, which showed that on average academic staff were neutral that management in the universities adopted and applied autocratic leadership style in handling employees, achieving results, exercising authority and control and in decision making with an aggregate (**mean = 3.10, SD = 1.208**). Second, from the theoretical literature, the study used the Kurt Lewin Leadership Model (Lewin et al., 1939) which identified three leadership style dimensions formulated around decision-making authority. The autocratic leader dictates work methods, does not consult, makes unilateral decisions, does not share opinions and limits employee participation (Robbins & Coulter, 2009). This leadership style is less creative, determining a permanent state of tension and discontent, resistance, and decreasing leaders' interest in subordinates' interests (Raus & Haita, 2011).

Autocratic leadership style is gained through punishment, threat, demands, orders, rules, and regulations. This behavior may result in quick decision-making in times of stress and solid deadlines for completing tasks set by the leader. However, utilizing such a leadership style stifles creativity concerning problem-solving, which ultimately decreases job satisfaction and employee performance. It also leads to resentment among team members and towards the leader, resulting in rebellion and high staff turnover (Lewin, 1939). Lastly, the findings of this study were consistent with study findings by Albert et al., (2016), Puni et al., (2016), and Liu et al., (2013) who found a significant positive association between autocratic leadership style and employee turnover intentions. This means that an autocratic leadership style will lead to high dissatisfaction. Individuals who are not satisfied with their jobs are expected to leave the organization, resulting in turnover intentions.

Regression of Democratic Leadership Style and Academic Turnover Intentions

The second sub-objective sought to investigate the relationship between autocratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. To determine the relationship between democratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions, the following null hypothesis H_{01b} was formulated.

H_{01b} : *There is no statistically significant relationship between democratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya.*

Results presented in Table 4 indicated a statistically significant positive linear relationship between democratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions (**regression coefficient = -0.209 , $p = 0.000 < 0.05$**) at a 5% level. This means that one-unit increase in democratic leadership style leads to a significant decrease in academic staff turnover intentions by a factor of **0.209**. The null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between democratic leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya is not supported in the current study. This means that the democratic leadership style has a negative and significant influence on academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. Further, it implies that democratic leadership style negatively influences academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. Based on these results, the regression model for the prediction of academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya can be stated as follows:

$$Y = 3.177 - 0.177X_{2b} \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

Where;

Y = The dependent variable (the academic staff turnover intentions)

X_{2b} = democratic leadership style

3.177 = Y – Intercept (constant). Estimate the expected value of academic staff turnover intention when democratic leadership style is Zero (Constant).

-0.177 = An estimate of the expected decrease in academic staff turnover intentions for a unit increase (improvements) in democratic leadership style (X_{2b}).

The conclusion arrived at in this hypothesis can be explained on several grounds. First, in terms of concern for this study, this study's findings bring out the importance of a democratic leadership style in reducing academic staff turnover intentions. The researcher observed that the findings raise an implication pointing at the relevance of autocratic leadership style in reducing employee turnover intentions pointed out by Kurt Lewin Leadership Model (Lewin et al., 1939). This is supported by the descriptive statistics which showed that on average academic staff disagreed on democratic leadership style regarding employee participation, decision making, questions, suggestions, intrinsic motivation and rewards exhibited by management with an aggregate (**mean = 2.95, SD = 1.163, CV = 39.50**).

Second, from the theoretical literature, the study used the Kurt Lewin Leadership Model (Lewin et al., 1939) which identified three leadership style dimensions formulated around decision-making authority. The democratic leadership style involves a leader who customarily consults his team members and considers their suggestions, although the final decision lies with the leader (Dessler & Starke 2017). In this kind of leadership style, criticism is allowed and praise is given. The democratic leader encourages subordinates to identify problems and suggest solutions to overcome those problems (Amzat & Ali, 2011). Democratic leaders are characterized by collective decision-making, camaraderie, active follower involvement, fair praise, and restrained criticism. Democratic leadership style facilitates collective decision-making (Cherry, 2018). The use of a democratic leadership style results in higher quality and quantity, commitment to the goals, a sense of ownership and a valued feeling of being a

part of the team in the organization (Lewin, 1939). This implies that a democratic leadership style can create feelings of satisfaction, leading to reduced turnover intentions. Lastly, the findings of this study were consistent with study findings by Albert *et al.*, (2016), Puni *et al.*, (2016) who found a significant negative association between democratic leadership style and employee turnover intentions and Liu *et al.*, (2013) revealed that democratic leadership style has a significant moderating effect on employee turnover intentions and established the linkage between leadership style and employee turnover intentions, This means that democratic leadership style will lead to high job satisfaction and an individual who is not satisfied with their jobs are expected to stay in the same organization, which will lead to reduced turnover intentions.

Regression of Laissez-Faire Style and Academic Turnover Intentions

The researcher sought to investigate the relationship between Laissez-faire leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. To determine the relationship between Laissez-faire leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions, the following null hypothesis H_{01c} was.

H_{01c} : There is no statistically significant relationship between Laissez-faire leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. Results presented in Table 4 revealed a statistically significant positive linear relationship between laissez-faire leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions (**regression coefficient = -0.260 , $p = 0.000 < 0.05$**) at a 5% level. This means that one-unit increase in laissez-faire leadership styles leads to a significant decrease in academic staff turnover intentions by a factor of **0.209**. The null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya is not supported in the current study. This means that laissez-faire leadership styles have a negative and significant relationship with academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. Based on these results, the regression model for the prediction of academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya can be stated as follows:

$$Y = 3.310 - 0.260X_{2c} \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

Where;

Y = The dependent variable (the academic staff turnover intentions)

X_{2c} = Laissez faire leadership styles

3.177 = Y – Intercept (constant). Estimate the expected value of academic staff turnover intention when laissez-faire leadership styles are Zero (Constant).

-0.260 = An estimate of the expected decrease in academic staff turnover intentions for a unit increase (improvements) in laissez-faire leadership styles (X_{2c})

The conclusion arrived at in this hypothesis can be explained on several grounds. First, in terms of concern for this study, this study's findings bring out the importance of laissez-faire leadership styles in reducing academic staff turnover intentions. The researcher observed that the findings raise an implication pointing at the relevance of the laissez-faire leadership style in reducing employee turnover intentions pointed out by Kurt Lewin Leadership Model (Lewin et al., 1939). This is supported by the descriptive statistics which showed that on average academic staff disagreed with the existence and use of laissez-faire leadership style with an aggregate (**mean = 2.56, SD = 1.240**). This implies that the laissez-faire leadership style has not yet been adopted and used in universities.

Second, from the theoretical literature, the study used the Kurt Lewin Leadership Model (Lewin *et al.*, 1939) which identified three leadership style dimensions formulated around decision-making authority. The laissez-faire leadership style attracts leaders that are comfortable with having minimum input in the decision-making process. However, they are responsible for the outcome of the decision made by the followers (Dessler & Starke 2017). It is a leadership style where leaders refuse to make decisions, are not available when needed, and take no responsibility for their lack of leadership ability (Cherry, 2018). Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by very little guidance from leaders, complete freedom for followers. Leaders provide the tools and resources needed and group members are expected to solve problems independently. Power is handed over to followers and yet leaders still take responsibility for the group decisions and actions. This leadership style allows developing critical thinking skills and group problem solving (Dessler & Starke 2017). This implies that laissez-faire leadership styles leadership style can create feelings of satisfaction leading to reduced turnover intentions

The findings were consistent with the studies by Albert *et al.*, (2016), Puni *et al.*, (2016) and Liu *et al.*, (2013) who found a significant positive association between laissez-faire leadership style and employee turnover intentions. Mumtaz *et al.*, (2018) found a strong positive correlation between employee-boss relations and employee turnover. Lastly, the observations drawn above contribute to bridging the knowledge gaps identified in chapter two of the current study. The studies by Albert *et al.*, (2016), Puni *et al.*, (2016) and Liu *et al.*, (2013) found a significant positive association between laissez-faire leadership style and employee turnover intentions. However, purposive sampling yielded a non-probability sample which resulted in biased data and findings. This calls for an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, the data collected in these studies were analyzed using descriptive statistics did not establish the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables under study. Data should be collected from exited employment and analyzed using appropriate techniques like correlation and regression to get reliable information on turnover. Autocratic leadership style leads to increased turnover intentions, while democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles reduce turnover intentions. Therefore, management of universities should adopt leadership styles that lead to reduced turnover intentions.

CONCLUSION

The study sought to examine the effect of Leadership styles on academic staff turnover intentions. Hypothesis two of the study was meant to answer this objective by testing the relationship between leadership styles and academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. The study explained the conclusions arrived at using the descriptive statistics obtained on the indicators for leadership styles. From the descriptive results on leadership styles, the study noted that academic staff agreed that management of the universities adopted autocratic leadership leading to turnover intentions. Equally, they disagreed that democratic and laissez-faire were used in the universities. Based on the findings of this study, this research concluded that leadership styles do not influence academic staff turnover intentions in universities in Kenya. However, when each leadership style is practiced in exclusion of other leadership styles, Autocratic leadership style positively influences academic staff turnover intentions, democratic and laissez-faire leadership style negatively influences academic staff turnover intentions. This study also concluded that leadership styles practiced by management in universities were favorable for academic turnover intentions since majority indicated that autocratic leadership style was commonly practiced.

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