Leadership Styles Adopted By Municipal and District Assemblies: A Case of the Builsa District Assembly

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Abstract: This research was carried out to examine the leadership styles used by the District and Municipal Assemblies (MMDA"s) in the Upper East Region of Ghana to implement their programmes and projects to the benefit of the people. The Builsa District Assembly was used as a case study. The objectives of the study were to find out the extent to which the respondents understood the meaning of leadership, the types of leadership styles exhibited, and the relationship that exists between employees and management. Structured questionnaire was the main tool used for collecting data. Questionnaires for staff and leaders of the Assembly were randomly distributed to solicit their views. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 was method used to analyse the data collected. One major finding was that leadership styles adopted by the MMDA"s have been generally viewed as uncompromising and it is therefore, significant that leaders adopt much more tolerable styles of leading their subordinates which would encourage better understanding of leadership styles by their workers. A number of recommendations have been made based on major findings of the study. These include; the need for improved free flow of communication, transparency and the need for leaders to be prompt in handling issues and challenges.

Keywords: Leadership, Leadership Styles, District Assemblies, Management.

INTRODUCTION
Background of the Study

Good leadership style is the only solution in the rapidly changing world of organizations. As such, it should be seen as a crucial factor especially in Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies. There are varied views of leadership resulting in different interpretations of its meaning. According to Mullins leadership may be explained in simple terms, as "getting others to follow" or "getting people to do things willingly" [1]. Essentially, leadership is a relationship through which one person influences the behaviour or actions of other people. This means that the process of leadership cannot be separated from the activities of groups and effective team building. Good leadership is that which is capable of emulation, where subordinates are able to see management as a role-model with standards and traits may be imitated. Such leaders tend to create patterns of set examples, whether in the form of taking unpopular decisions or of steadfast loyalty to the organization during bad times with which their teams can be identified and subsequently develop for themselves [2].

The Builsa District Assembly is one of the nine districts in the Upper East Region of Ghana. The district was created in 1975 from the then Navrongo District by Legislative Instrument 1441 [3].

It is bounded to the North East by the Kassena-Nankana District, to the west by the Sissala East District and to the south by the West Mamprusi District. The District has a population of 83,262 with a growth rate of 1.1% [3]. It covers an area of 2,220 km² and constitute about 25.1% of the total land area of the Upper East Region [3].

In terms of ethnic composition, the district can be described as a homogenous one with majority being traditional worshipers (Traditional Religion) makes up 46% of the population followed by the Christian Religion 28%, and Islam 23%, with the rest constituting a small minority of about 3% of the total population [3]. The Builsa tribe constitutes about 83% of the entire population. The remaining 17% is made up of minority tribe comprising the Kantosi, Mamprusi, Sissala, and Moshi [3].

For every organization to function well leadership plays an important role and the Assemblies are no exception. Leadership impacts on the day-to-day administration of every Assembly. The Assembly is the highest political authority in the district. It is therefore, the center of management and

developmental decision-making. The Assembly is made up of the District Chief Executive, Presiding Member, Executive Committee, Town Councils, Unit Committees, District Coordinating Director, Internal Audit and Public Relations. Under the administration; there are various Departments comprising the District Planning Officer, Budget Officer, Local Government Works and the Finance Officer. There are various sub-Committees such as the Development Planning, Justice and Security, Finance and Administration, Social Services, Education, Health, Sanitation and Food and Agriculture. Members of Parliament who fall within the electoral area are also members of the Assembly, except that they have no voting right.

Significance of the Study

With much interest and concern shown by the general public in relation to the management of the assemblies, and also the complaints coming from all quarters of the communities, the study will assist leaders in the Assemblies in particular and communities as a whole, to appreciate the important role their leaders play as far as the day to day running of the Assemblies are concerned.

This study is also aimed at helping researchers and the leadership of the assemblies to use as a base for further research into leadership in the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies. It is expected to enlighten other members of staff of the Assembly and the general public to understand and appreciate the various leadership styles being practised in the assemblies.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

This study reviewed considerable related literature, on leadership styles in the MMDAs. The numerous literature available on this topic suggested that much studies have been done on it. Different opinions have been given as to what leadership is made of, what the definitions of leadership are, types of leadership, qualities of a good leader, roles of individual leaders, delegation of authority and the importance of leadership.

Definition(s)

According to Bateman and Snell "Leadership seems to be the marshaling of skills possessed by majority but used by minority but it is something that can be learned by anyone, taught to everyone, denied to no one [4]. ″Leadership is a rather complex issue which has captured the attention of many [5-7] most probably because it is a common phenomenon on every level of life. Leadership is the heart of any organisation because it determines the success or failure of the organisation [8].

Types of Leadership Styles

Kippenberger believes that leadership style is the style that leaders adopt in their dealings with those who follow them [9]. He explains that style in this type of context is generally taken to mean a way of behaving. The appropriate style will depend on a wide variety of criteria, including the relationship between the parties involved, the nature of what needs to be done, and the match or mismatch between the difficulty of the task and the competencies available.

Dale states that ″leadership style is our characteristic manner of expressing our values and of executing our work [10]. ″Malphurs is of the opinion that″ ″there is perhaps more than one particular style, depending on the situation″ [6]. This is supported by Hybels who maintains that leaders often have impact not only because they are highly gifted, but also, because their leadership styles march perfectly with specific ministry needs [11].

According to Uris standardized leadership style instruments can help uncover an individual‚s leadership style which may assist one in becoming effective or even more effective as a leader [12].

Democratic Leadership Styles

The Democratic leadership style describes the leader who shares the decision-making abilities with group members by promoting the interests of group members and by practising social equality. This style of leadership encompasses discussion, debate, sharing of ideas and encouraging people to feel good about their involvement. The boundaries of democratic participation tend to be circumscribed by the organization or group needs and the instrumental value of people's attributes.

William *et al.*, idea of democratic leadership is that it consists of managers and employees working together to make decisions [13]. Many progressive organizations are highly successful at using democratic style of leadership that values traits such as flexibility, good listening skills and empathy.

Autocratic Leadership Style

This is a type of leadership style in which the leader makes his or her decisions and members comply with them, thus, ruling in a strict or cruel way.

According to William *et al.*, autocratic leadership style involves making managerial decisions without consulting others [13]. Such a style is effective in emergencies and when absolute followership is needed – for example, when fighting fires. Autocratic leadership is also effective sometimes in dealing with new, relatively unskilled workers who need clear direction and guidance.

Laissez-Faire Leadership Style

The laissez-faire style is sometimes described as a "hands off" leadership style because leaders delegate the task to their followers while providing little

or no direction to the followers. If the leader withdraws too much from their followers it can sometimes result in lack of productivity, cohesiveness, and satisfaction. Laissez-faire leaders allow followers to have complete freedom to make decisions concerning the completion of their work. It allows followers a high degree of autonomy and self-rule, while at the same time offering guidance and support when requested. The laissez-faire leader using guided freedom provides the followers with all materials necessary to accomplish their goals, but does not directly participate in decision making unless the followers request their assistance.

According to Claire Capon [14], laissez-faire leadership style occurs when the manager or leader can see that members of the group are working well on their own. He/She makes a conscious decision to pass power to group members. This allows the group the freedom "to do as they think best" without management interference, but with management assistance being readily available if required.

Trait Leadership

Leadership trait theory is one of the earliest theories of leadership; it can be traced back to Thomas Carlyle"s 1849 assertion that "The history of the world was the biography of great men". It is the idea that there are certain inborn traits that make people more likely to succeed as leaders: in essence, it argues that leaders are born, not made.

Early research on leadership examined what distinguished leaders from followers, on the assumption that those who had emerged as leaders were likely to have more leadership traits than their followers. Considerable number of researchers discovered that there is not much difference between the two groups, the researchers identifies as errors in selecting leaders. However, since the purpose of identifying leadership traits was to make it easier to identify potential leaders, this lack of difference between them is a bit worrying.

The popularity of trait theory has come and gone over the years. Until the early 1950s, it was the only theory of leadership that was considered valid. However, in 1948, a researcher called Stogdill noticed that people who were leaders in one situation were not necessarily leaders in other situations, and that observation consequently rather destroyed trait theory situational and behavioural theories started to emerge.

Charismatic Leadership

Weber defines charismatic leadership as "resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him". He termed religious leaders like Jesus as charismatic leaders. Later researches considered various social-political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi as charismatic leaders. Dictators

like Hitler also had some charismatic traits. These were the leaders with exceptional qualities which made them almost Godlike to their followers. The charm of such people made heir followers support them without question. While analyzing such a strong bond between the charismatic leader and his followers, Weber focuses on the social patterns and conditions under which the leader exists. However, later researches threw more light on the psychological attributes of leaders which made them successful charismatic leaders. Research h a s shown that charismatic leaders appeal strongly to the values of the followers and it is this psychological bondage between the two which makes the charismatic leadership succeed. Neither the sociologically oriented Weberian approach nor the psychological approach alone can explain the success of charismatic leaders. The approaches together, however, give the better analysis of charismatic leadership.

Leadership by Birth

A naturally born leader is a person that displays the characteristics and personality traits of a leader and naturally falls into leadership roles throughout his/her life. Some children display these traits from a youthful age and go on to play leadership roles at school, assuming team leader roles and having the knack to direct others in a positive way. Social ability, self- confidence, assertiveness and boldness are all characteristics of born leaders.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study comprises the research design, population, sample and sample techniques, data collection procedure, instrumentation, validation of instrument and data analysis.

Research design

The research was designed based on qualitative research technique which sought to understand and draw synergies with the leadership style adopted by the Builsa District Assembly. Qualitative research aims to achieve an in-depth understanding of a situation [15]. It draws on the meaning and not the frequency of occurrence of a social phenomenon. According to Jankowicz [16], it is the nature and content of what is said, its meaning, rather than the number of people saying it, or the frequency with which it is said, that matters. Even though, in many qualitative studies, meanings are identified, categorized, and their impact enumerated, in one way or the other; the basic metaphysical assumptions (ontology and epistemology) are relevant [16]. The research design used is both descriptive and exploratory in nature, using questionnaire as the preferred and appropriate method of data collection with the researcher as the main instrument. It involves organizing, collecting and analysing data. The aim is to look for patterns, hypothesis or ideas that can be tested and will form the basis for further research. The typical

research techniques used here include case study and review of related data.

Population and sample selection

Population is the sum aggregate or totality of the phenomenon of interest to the researcher. The population for the study was Builsa District Assembly. It comprises leaders and staff of the district assembly. The researcher used simple random sampling method to arrive at fifty samples because the sample frame was accurate with all elements in the population known [17]. The simple random sample is the basic sampling method assumed in statistical methods and computations which allow a researcher to select samples without bias [17]. The main benefit of the simple random sample is that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen. This means that it guarantees that the sample chosen is representative of the population. In turn, the statistical conclusions drawn from analysis of the sample will be valid.

While the name 'simple random sample'

implies that it is simple, the mathematics of random sampling is actually complex. The samples involved in the study were 40 males and 10 females from the Builsa district assembly. Questionnaire was the main tool used for the study.

The researcher designed one questionnaire for respondents. The questionnaire contained questions on personal data, knowledge on leadership style, individual leaders roles, personal relationship, qualities of a good leader, and levels of knowledge on leadership practices in the district assemblies. Confidentiality of respondents was ensured, as they did not indicate their names on the questionnaire they completed. The data collected was analyzed and codified into frequency counts, tables, and percentages. The responses were also summarized, tabulated and interpreted using tables.

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Personal data gathered on this study tried to look at the sex, age, educational level and number of years respondents worked at the assembly.

Table-1: Sex of respondents

Sex	Frequency	percentage
Male	40	80
Female	10	20
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

From the table above, majority of the workers thus, 80% were males while 20% were females. This shows that, males are more in the Builsa District Assembly than females.

Table-2: Age of respondents

Age Range	Frequency	percentage
18 – 30	25	50
31– 40	20	40
41 – 50	5	10
51 – 60	-	-
61 – 70	-	-
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

From the above table half of the respondents (50%) had their ages falling between18 – 30, 40%, between31 – 40, while 10% between41 – 50. What

this meant was that majority of the workers in the MMDAS are youthful age.

Table-3: Educational level

Educational Level	Frequency	percentage
Tertiary	37	74
Secondary	11	22
Basic	2	4
Other Specification	-	-
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

The table above shows that, majority of the workers 74% attained tertiary education, 22% had

secondary level education, while 4% had basic education.

The table below indicates that 80% of the

workers have employed by the District Assembly from 1 – 5 years, 10% from 6 – 10 years, 4% from 16 – 20 years, 4% from 21 – 25 years and, 2% from 11 – 15 years.

Table-4: Number of Years worked in the Assembly

Range of	Frequency	percentage
1 – 5	40	80
6 – 10	5	10
11 – 15	1	2
16 – 20	2	4
21 – 25	2	4
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

This shows that majority of the workers have worked from 1 – 5 years in the assembly. It is

therefore, obvious that the MMDAS have a crop of experience staff.

Table-5: Knowledge on leadership style

Attainment of Level	Frequency	percentage
Elected by the people	10	20
Appointed by Government	11	22
Through promotion interview	27	54
Emerging out of situation	2	4
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

Table-5 indicate that 54% of the workers became leaders through promotion interview, 22% were appointed by government, 20% were elected by the people, and 4% emerged out of unforeseen

circumstances. This shows that majority of the leaders usually gain their positions through promotion interview.

Table-6: Current positions occupied

Position	Frequency	percentage
Junior Staff	47	94
Departmental head	2	4
Municipal	-	-
Chief Executive	1	2
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

Table-6 indicates that, 94% of the workers in the assembly are junior staff, 4% are departmental heads and a 2% at the Chief Executive level. The above data therefore shows that most of the workers in the

Assembly are junior staff. The implication is that decisions at the MMDAS are taken by the few senior members.

Table-7: Opportunities for staff to make suggestions exist

Response	Frequency	percentage
agree	21	42
Disagree	17	34
Strongly agree	8	16
Strongly disagree	4	8
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

A close examination of table-7, it shows that,

42% of the respondent agreed with the statement that

staff have the opportunity to suggest changes in the Assembly, 34% disagreed, 16% strongly agreed and 8% strongly disagreed. From the data, it is important to note that majority (42%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that staff has the opportunity to suggest changes in the Assembly.

Table-8: What Leadership styles are exhibited by leaders?

Response	Frequency	percentage
Democratic	40	80
Autocratic	5	10
Lasses-faire	5	10
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

From the table above, 80% of the workers indicated management adopting democratic leadership style which is reaffirmed in table-7 above with staff and leaders given the opportunity to make suggestions to management. 10% of the respondents said it is autocratic leadership style and 10% maintain it was laissez-faire leadership style. This therefore suggests that management of the Assembly practice democratic style of leadership.

Table-9: Relationship between Junior Officers and Management (District Chief Executive) is cordial

Response	Frequency	percentage
Agree	24	48
Strongly agree	13	26
Strongly disagree	7	14
Disagree	6	12
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

Table-9 indicates that, 48% and 26% of the respondents agreed and strongly agree respectively with the statement that cordial relationship exists amongst workers and the District Chief Executive, while 14% and 12% strongly disagree and disagreed respectively with the statement. It is clear from the table, it is clear that there is cordial relationship among staff and the District Chief Executive in the Assembly.

Table-10: Leaders and other workers are interdependent on each other.

Response	Frequency	percentage
Agree	21	42
Strongly agree	19	38
Strongly disagree	7	14
Disagree	3	6
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

Table-10 shows that 21 representing 42% of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement and 19 representing 38% agreed with the statement that leaders and staff are interdependent whereas 7 representing 14% and 3 or 6% strongly disagree with the statement. This shows how interdependent leaders and their subordinates are in the Assembly. They strongly agree that they are interdependent on each other when it comes to work.

Table-11: Leaders consult their subordinates for their opinions whenever problems arise.

Response	Frequency	percentage
Agree	26	52
Disagree	9	18
Strongly agree	8	16
Strongly disagree	7	14
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

Table-11 suggest that, 52% agree with the statement, 18% disagree, 16% strongly agree, and 14% strongly disagree with the statement that leaders consult their subordinates for their opinion wherever problems arise. The data confirms that leaders consult subordinates for their opinion wherever problems arises since majority of the respondents agree to the statement.

Table-12: Staff has the opportunity to suggest changes in the Assembly.

Response	Frequency	percentage
Agree	21	42
Disagree	17	34
Strongly agree	8	16
Strongly disagree	4	8
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

Table-12 shows that 21 representing 42% of the respondents agree with the statement that staff have the opportunity to suggest changes in the Assembly, 17 representing 34% disagreed, 8 or 16% strongly disagree while 4 representing 8% strongly agree. From the data, it is significant to note that majority of the respondents agree with the statement that staff have the opportunity to suggest changes in the Assembly.

Table-13: Individuals are involved in decision making in the Assembly

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	15	30
No	35	70
Total	**50**	**100**

(Source: Researchers field work, 2014)

Table-13 shows that 35 or 70% of the workers responded no, to the statement that, individuals are involved in decision making in the Assembly while 15 or 30% responded yes. This data shows clearly that majority of the individuals are mostly not involved in decision making in the Assembly.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that the Management of Builsa District Assembly practise democratic leadership style as majority of the respondents, 80% strongly agree and agree.

This is confirmed by the fact that leaders always allow subordinates to take part in the administration of the District Assembly as indicated in Table-7.

The study further revealed that staff and their leaders in the District Assembly are interdependent. This is also evident in the fact that 42% and 38% strongly agree and agree that workers in the Assembly are interdependent as indicated on Table-10.

It was also revealed that staff of Builsa District Assembly enjoys cordial relationship as majority of the respondents, 42% agree to the statement as shown in Table-9.

However, the study revealed that leaders do not always allow individuals in their decision making process as shown in Table 13. There are some decisions that are strictly reserved for management to make for the entire Assembly, such as the award of contracts for projects. The study therefore, reveals a sort of selective involvement of workers in decision making at the assemblies.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious from the results of the study that no one leadership style can be seen as the best under all circumstances. The appropriate style will depend on a wide variety of criteria, including the relationship between the parties involved, the nature of what needs to be done, and the match or mismatch between the difficulty of the task and the competencies available. Therefore, it is important that leaders should be well equipped with managerial skills to enable them carry out their responsibilities in the district assemblies effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the researchers recommend that leaders should provide avenue for free flow of communication in the Assemblies.

Leaders should also show transparency in carrying out the day -to - day activities and business as in the District Assemblies; and should also act with alacrity in resolving problems as and when they arise

It is the hope of the researchers that this

research work will provide the basis for future research into leadership styles and personality types as well as, conflict management and leadership in other organizations, be they public or private.

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