The Praxis of Leadership Styles on Employee Productivity: A Case of the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between leadership styles and employee productivity in the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality, Limpopo Province (South Africa). The study adopted mixed methods in which data was collected through interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis. The study revealed that various leadership styles must be used in an organisation rather than being stagnant in order to address employee productivity or lack thereof. This is important because a leadership style employed by the leader can impact the employees either positively or negatively in regard to performing according to organisational objectives. The findings also revealed that it is important for leaders to involve employees in the decision-making as it assist in bringing about commitment as well as motivating and inspiring employees.

Keywords: Employee productivity, Leadership, Leadership styles, Situational Leadership

1. Introduction

The concept and definition of leadership and leadership styles can differ from one person or situation to another. The word leadership has been used in various aspects of human endeavour such as politics, businesses, academia, and in the social realm. Literature suggests that types of leadership styles imposed on employees can have an impact on their productivity in various settings (Voon, Lo, Ngui & Ayob, 2011; Paracha, Qamar, Mirza, Hassan & Waqas, 2012; Mosadeghrad, 2013; Iqbal, Anwar & Haider, 2015). The study of leadership began to gain momentum at the turn of the 20th century with the trait-based perspective which saw the determining of history through the lens of exceptional individuals (Day & Antonakis, 2012). Thus, scholars in this field focused on identifying robust individual differences in personality traits that were thought to be associated with effective leadership (Day & Antonakis, 2012). According to Yahaya, Osman, Mohammed, Gibrilla, and Issah (2014), the trait approach theory argues that leaders have certain personalities, social and physical characteristics, which influence whether the person acts as a leader or just a mere manager. It can therefore be argued that abilities such as "intelligence, knowledge and expertise, dominance, self-confidence, high energy, tolerance for stress, integrity and maturity are inborn in leaders" (Yahaya, Osman, Mohammed, Gibrilla & Issah, 2014). It is against this background that public sector organisations in South Africa are endeavouring to overcome the challenge of under-performance in most disciplines of their operations which might be as a result of leadership qualities. As a result, they continue to receive constant criticism for poor service delivery, internal wrangles, inefficient bureaucracy, financial mismanagement, corruption and poor corporate governance (Mathebula, 2014). Management scholars (Castro, Perinan & Bueno, 2008; Ghafoor, Qureshi, Khan & Hijazi, 2011) have argued that effective leadership acts through empowering employees to engage on improved work outcomes. The purpose of conducting this research was to determine the types of leadership styles with a view of assessing how different styles affect the performance of employees using the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality as a case study. In doing so, the study probed various leadership styles from the municipality and subsequently how they are able to perform under a particular style as adopted and applied by the leaders.

2. Literature Review

Leadership refers to the ability to persuade others to enthusiastically and diligently pursue the project or organisational mission and/or objective. "While leadership depends on depth of conviction and the power emanating therefrom, there must also be the ability to share that conviction with others, the ability to make purpose articulate" (Hickman & Sorenson, 2014). On this note, Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi and Shaikh (2012), define leadership style as the pattern of behaviour engaged in by the leader when dealing with employees which is a manner and approach of providing direction, implementing

plans, and motivating people. It is important that a leadership style should portray the collaboration between leaders and employees as this will assist in improving productivity and efficiency of employees. It can be augured that the type of leadership styles utilised can affect the employees by either inspiring or discouraging them which can in return have an impact on their levels of performance and can increase or decrease productivity. Employees are regarded as the labour force of any organisation and therefore it is up to them to transfer the vision, objectives and goals of the organisation into reality. In simple terms, it is their duty to carry out the required objectives of the organisation with the help of their leader. Functions of a leader are many and varied, depending upon the basic problem with which a group must deal and the type of leadership style in action (Timmins, 2008; Morgeson, DeRue & Karam, 2010; Chuang, 2013). Leaders who believe and demonstrate that the labour force is the greatest asset of any institution are likely to command them with utmost respect and therefore channelling them towards organisational success. These are leaders who build the richly diverse organisation with powerful representation at every level, on all teams, in all groups, on all boards, in all management, and in all visual materials. The leadership style that a leader uses play a pivotal role in the satisfaction of employees with their job and how they are rewarded for performing well to keep them motivated. A leadership style that connects positively with the perceptions of employees on their jobs, can lead to employees being satisfied and can result in them enjoying tasks at hand (Martins & Coetzee, 2007; Mosadeghrad & Ferdosi, 2013).

2.1 A Synopsis of Leadership Theories

The leadership theories of the last century have their base in industrial organisations and society (Kumar, Adhish & Deoki, 2014). The theories have provided significant knowledge which has facilitated current and future theory development. However, no schools of leadership have emerged out of the immense reservoir of data and analysis about leadership (Bloomfield, Barnes & Huyse, 2003; Mulford, 2003; UNHCR, 2015). This is true partly because scholars have worked in separate disciplines and sub disciplines in quest of different questions and problems. However, society is on the edge of an intellectual breakthrough in leadership theory (Cullen, Willburn, Chrobot-Mason & Palus, 2014). Theories of leadership attempt to explain

the factors involved either in the emergence of leadership or in the nature of leadership and its consequences. The focus of leadership training and practical preparation must be grounded in theory and in the concepts, ideas, and conclusion that have been researched and used by leaders across a variety of settings. Therefore, theories such as the trait approach theory, behaviour approach theory, contingency approach theory, and situational approach theory of leadership are important in understanding leadership styles.

2.1.1 Trait Approach theory
The Trait Approach arose from the "Great Man" theory as a way of identifying the key characteristics of successful leaders. Through the trait approach theory, various leadership qualities are employed, selected and installed into those in leadership positions (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano & Dennison, 2003; Margeson *et al.,* 2010). This approach was common in the military and is still used as a set of criteria to select candidates for commissions (Kumar *et al.,* 2014). Whereas Yahaya, Osma, Mohammed and Gibrilla (2014) state that the idea behind this school of thought is that effective leaders share common traits. It effectively assumes that leaders are born, not made. Attempts to identify the traits of effective leaders have focused on three main areas according to Turner and Muller (2005); "the abilities traits demonstrate hard management skills, personality traits on the other hand addresses issues such as self-confidence and emotional variables and the physical appearance which include size and appearance" (Masood *et al*., 2006: 12). This approach is subsequently discussed.

2.1.2 Behavioural Approach
From the late 1940s onwards, the focus of leadership research shifted from leader traits to leader behaviour. Researchers were particularly interested in identifying leader behaviour that enhanced the effectiveness of subordinates (Chuang, 2013). With that shift in research, the former common opinion that leaders with the right qualities have to be selected changed into the opinion that, knowing the effective leadership behaviour, leaders can be trained to become successful (Bryman, 1992). Leadership behaviour is an empirically observable influence attempt that varies according to the situation, whereas a leadership style denotes a long-term, situational invariant behavioural pattern (Masood, Dani, Burns & Backhouse, 2006). From the point of view of the subordinate, leadership is

experienced as a 'style'. Ideal types of leadership styles are, however, only heuristics for the generation of hypotheses. According to Yahaya *et al.* (2014), the outcomes of the attribute studies were unconvincing. Traits, amongst other things, are hard to measure. It was not easy for instance to measure traits such as integrity, diligence, honesty or loyalty. To avert this situation, another approach in the study of leadership had to be found; the behavioural school. It supposed that effective leaders espouse certain styles or behaviour. It assumes, in effect, that effective leaders can be made.

2.1.3 Contingency Approach

The contingency theory concentrates on the effectiveness of the leader, which is based on the individual's leadership style and the situations one tends to favour (Mosadeghrad & Ferdosi, 2013). The main proposition in contingency approaches is that the effectiveness of a given leadership style is contingent on the situation, implying that certain leader behaviour will be effective in some situations but not in others (Ghafoor *et al.,* 2011*)*. One example of such a contingency theory focuses on criteria to determine whether or not a leader should involve subordinates in different kinds of decision-making. The effectiveness of decision procedures depends on aspects of the situation, including the amount of relevant information held by a leader and co-workers, the likelihood that co-workers will accept an autocratic decision and the extent to which the decision problem is unstructured (Yahaya *et al.*, 2014).

2.2 Viability of Various Leadership Styles

Effective leadership styles are achievable by using mixtures of styles as situations arise. Each leader has to choose a style that suit his or her personality and that best represents the values of the institution he/she is leading. In all, a leader has to be transparent with all daily dealings, communicates effectively, be honest with staff members, showing an unbending integrity while at the same time be knowledgeable or skilful about the tasks at hand and be easy to follow. Productivity of an employee is boosted when they are encouraged, motivated and positively appraised. According to Iqbal *et al.* (2015), the various leadership styles have different impacts on the productivity and empowerment of employees. One kind of style may be supportive of some of the employees while it may be a barrier for other employees. A wise leader is able to choose an effective style which will cater for all his or her

employees, and which will assist in the productivity of employees in an institution. Depending on the leader concerned, various leadership styles can be adopted and applied in various organisational setting. The following section of the paper briefly interrogates authoritarian, democratic or participative, Laissez Faire, transactional, transformational, charismatic and situational leadership.

2.2.1 Authoritarian Leadership

Ogunola, Kalejaiye and Abrifor (2013) define autocratic leadership as the one in which the leader retains as much power and decision-making as possible. It is often considered to be the classical approach. The premise of the autocratic leadership style is the belief that in most cases the worker cannot make a contribution to their own work, and that even if they could, they would not. Authoritarian leaders provide clear expectations for what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done (Iqbal *et al.,* 2015). In simple terms, autocratic leaders give orders. There is also a clear separation between the leader and the followers. Authoritarian leaders formulate judgments autonomously with little or no input from others. Decision-making in authoritarian leadership is less inventive. However, employees need to feel a sense of belonging to the tasks they have been assigned to do as this might not be a good idea for leaders to deny junior workers to make a contribution to their own work as this will decrease the level of job satisfaction and productivity. According to Ogunola *et al.* (2013:3715) autocratic leaders attempt to simplify work to gain maximum control.

2.2.2 Participative Leadership or Democratic Leadership

Participative leadership is a style that involves all members of a team to identify goals and develop procedures or strategies to achieve those goals (Martins & Coetzee, 2007; UNHCR, 2015). In most cases participative leadership style is associated with democratic leadership style. From this perspective, participative leadership is a leadership style that depends to a great deal on the leader working as a facilitator (Cullen *et al*., 2014). A democratic leader does not give his followers orders but motivates them to be able to do their job on their own without being told what to do. "Democratic leaders tend to invite other members of the team to contribute to the decision-making process, although they are the ones to make the final decision" (Yahaya *et al.*, 2014). Hence, it increases job satisfaction through

the involvement of others and helps to develop people's skills. Employees would also feel in control of their own destiny and be motivated to work hard by more than just a financial reward. This approach could, however, take longer, but often with a better end result. Democratic or participative leadership is most suitable when working as a team and when quality is more important than speed to market or productivity (Yahaya *et al.*, 2014:5).

2.2.3 Laissez-Faire

Timmins (2008:15), views Laissez-Faire as a type of leadership that holds that individuals are motivated by internal forces and should be left alone to complete work. The leader provides no direction or facilitation. This type is absent when needed, avoids making decisions, and delays responding to important questions and urgent matters. According to Sabuttey, Nkuah and Awal (2013), Laissez-Faire leaders avoid attempting to influence their subordinates and shirk supervisory duties. They get too busy on their desks dealing with paperwork and avoid situations that preclude any possibility of confrontation with followers or subordinates. They leave too much responsibility with subordinates, set no clear goals, and do not help their group to make decisions. They refrain from offending subordinates and therefore tend to put a blind eye on the issues since their main aim is to please everybody by being good to everyone. Murari (2015) argues that the Laissez-Faire leadership is common, but it is unrealistic and immature way to encounter rapidly growing quality, innovation and effectiveness. Those leaders are leaning to entrust responsibility and authority and not in empowering but to run away from responsibility.

2.2.4 Transactional Leadership

Paracha, Qamar, Mirza, Inam-ul-Hasan and Waqas (2012) define transactional leadership as an exchange between followers and leaders desired outcomes by fulfilling the leader's interest and followers' expectations which involves promises or commitments embedded by respect and trust. Timmins (2008) also views transactional leadership as the leader's ability towards identification of follower's needs and aspirations and clearly demonstrates the ways to fulfil these needs in exchange for performance of followers. Timmins (2008:17) states that transactional leadership begins with the idea that team members agree to obey their leader. Transactional leadership serves as the pathway to contingent reinforcement whereby the leader and follower agree on the necessary path to achieve the reward or avert punishment. Timmins (2008:17) further argues that this leadership style demonstrates behavioural patterns associated with constructive and corrective transactions. Similarly, to Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa and Nwankwere (2011:104), transactional leaders display both constructive and corrective behaviour. Constructive behaviour entails contingent reward while corrective dimension imbibes management by exception, i.e. similarly to what mother Teresa meant for the health sector.

2.2.5 Transformational Leadership

The difference between transformational and transactional leadership lies in the way of motivating others. Transformational leader's behaviour originates in the personal values and beliefs of the leader and motivates subordinates to do more than expected. Chuang (2013) views transformational leadership as a process where one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. "Transformational leaders are true leaders who inspire their employees constantly with a shared vision of the future" (Obiwuru *et al.*, 2011). While this leader's enthusiasm is often passed on to the team, he or she may need to be supported by "detail people". Hence, in many organisations both transactional and transformational leadership are needed. Transactional leaders ensure that routine work is done reliably, while transformational leaders look after initiatives that add new value. Transformational leaders are those that have integrity, sets clearly defined goals, communicates vision with subordinates, sets a good example, presumes the best from employees, encourages, inspires and supports, acknowledge good work, provides inspiring work and helps people see beyond their self-interests and focus more on team interests and needs (Yahaya *et al.*, 2014:6). Taylor (2009) is of the opinion that transformational leadership focuses on the empowerment and development of follower potential in attaining long term goals.

2.2.6 Charismatic Leadership

Max Weber's work in defining charisma led to him categorizing charisma as an untraditional form of influence where the leader possesses exceptional qualities as perceived by his or her followers. The Former President of South Africa, Dr Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela is a perfect example of e leader who possessed exceptional qualities that the world continues

to draw inspiration from. Charismatic leadership is a style that is recognisable but may be perceived with less tangibility than other leadership styles. This reality is likely due to the difficulty associated with directly defining charisma in an individual when only examining the individual (Kelloway, Barling, Kelley, Comtois & Gatien, 2003). The leadership behaviour of charismatic leaders makes their followers believe that they have extraordinary leadership abilities. The key characteristics of charismatic leaders are that they have vision and articulation and are willing to take risks (Robbins, Judge, Odendal, & Roodt, 2009:323). According Kelloway *et al.* (2003), charismatic leaders communicate with clear vision and express language that is emotionally appealing to the needs and values of their followers. According to Murari (2015), follower attribution of charismatic qualities to a leader is jointly determined by the leader's behaviour, expertise, and aspects of the situation.

2.2.7 Situational Leadership

Situational leadership evolved from "task-oriented" to focus on leadership that is about the people (McClesky, 2014:118). The concept was developed in 1969 by Paul Hersey (Esther, 2011). Situational leadership principally focuses on the role of the follower as a leadership style "changes according to the follower's knowledge and skills in a given situation (Esther, 2011). Situational leadership advocates for the fact that "there is no one best way of leadership since effectiveness depends on the situation" (Mujtaba & Sungkhawan, 2009). This leadership style is viewed as the most effective style as the leader has an effective impact on the follower's development and managing change in varying circumstances (Lynch, 2015). It can be drawn from this observation that a situational leader has the potential to marshal followers towards the realisation of organisational objectives. This leadership style is critical in that policy and service delivery objectives in a municipality as reflected in the Integrated Development Plan may be come achievable. This is so because, objectives can be altered depending on the municipal citizenry's needs during the Integrated Development Plan review process which is carried out on annual basis.

### 2.3 The Impact of Leadership Styles on Employee Productivity

According to Yahaya *et al.* (2014), "productivity is the relationship between the amount of one or more inputs and the amount of outputs from a clearly identified process". The most common measure is labour productivity which is the amount of labour input (such as labour hours of employees) per physical unit of measured outputs (Iqbal *et al.,* 2015). Another measure is materials productivity in which the amount of output is measured against the amount of physical materials input. Yet, another measure of productivity is termed total productivity (Bloomfield *et al.,* 2003). Total-factor productivity is the ratio of output to all inputs and not just labour. In other words, total-factor productivity includes all the factors of production. According to McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2002), leadership undeniably affects organisational performance; in particular, employee productivity and organisational commitment as affected by leadership behaviours. The style of the leader is considered to be particularly important in achieving organisational goals. It can therefore be argued that with practical reality and experience consistently demonstrating the benefits of transformational leadership style over the more traditional forms such as transactional leadership in terms of achieving organisational goals, there is a clear linkage between the impetus that leadership style possesses on employee productivity. Leaders apart from their actions must inspire, should empower employees to make certain decisions and keep processes running smoothly and effectively. They also need to constantly keep them abreast with the current affairs and situations (Yahaya *et al.*, 2014). For institutions to achieve a higher level of productivity depends on the effectiveness of the leader and the type of leadership style they impose on subordinates. However, the leader's style alone cannot be responsible for the performance of workers nor for the attainment of organisational goals. Workers' perceptions of their leaders' style and their feelings about their ability to perform and achieve goals are important determinants. Furthermore, employees' perception of their relationship with their manager and in particular the level of support they receive from their manager would seem to influence productivity (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002). Leadership style in an organisation is one of the factors that play significant role in enhancing or retarding the interest of employees and commitment of the individuals in the organisation. Thus, Murari (2015) emphasises the need for a manager to find his leadership style and use it to the best interest and in achieving set objectives.

3. Research Methods

This paper is conceptual in nature but however uses preliminary findings to support the literature

Figure 1: Effectiveness of Different Leadership Styles
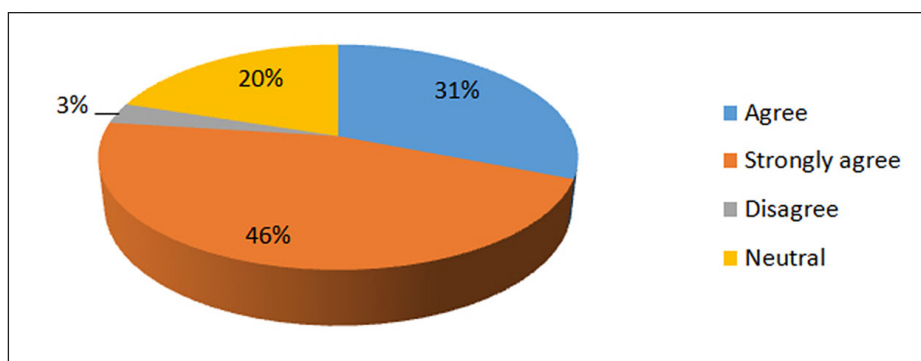
Source: Author

reviewed. According to Creswell, Klassen, Clark and Smith (2010:4), mixed methods can be defined as a research approach or methodology focusing on research questions that call for real-life contextual understandings, multi-level perspectives by utilising multiple methods for rigorous quantitative research assessing magnitude and frequency of constructs and rigorous qualitative research exploring the meaning and understanding of constructs. Having adopted mixed methods, the study used both judgmental or purposive sampling techniques which were applied only to municipal leaders and random sampling technique which was used when collecting data from the municipal employees. Mixed methods allows a researcher to capitalise on the weakness by one method and therefore complements the results which are both qualitative and quantitative. Judgmental or purposive sampling technique is used where the researcher selects units to be sampled based on their knowledge and professional judgment. Individuals that were sampled included the Municipal Manager, Head of Departments and subordinates. The random method of sampling was used to extract information from the Municipal Manager, the Head of Departments and their subordinates including political office bearers. This method randomly selects employees to obtain information from larger quantities of people. The total sample size in this study constituted of 35 officials and 5 political leaders of the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality. In this regard, data was collected using interviews and questionnaires while document analysis was used to supplement primary data.

4. Findings and Analysis

Having adopted a purposive sampling strategy to select participants, the paper provides both quantitative and qualitative data collected from respondents.

4.1 Quantitative Data

Such data was collected to probe the effectiveness of different leadership styles, the relationship between leadership styles and productivity and sticking to one leadership style or rotating.

4.1.1 The Effectiveness of Different Leadership Styles

This section of the study sought to probe whether the use of various leadership styles in a same institutional setting can be effective or not. The study found that the use of different leadership styles are considered to be effective in most organisations as they aid in resolving challenges in different situations. The following is a summary of the findings on the effectiveness of different leadership styles.

Figure 1 illustrates the results for the effectiveness of different leadership styles. Thirty-one percent of the study sample in the Sekhukhune District Municipality agreed that different leadership styles are effective, while most of the employees strongly agreed (46%) that indeed the use of different leadership styles is effective. Only 3% of the sample disagreed while 20% were neutral. This implies that leaders in the municipality and arguably in other municipalities use different styles of leadership in various situations as such a need arises. It was then concluded that the adoption and use of various leadership styles can aid the performance of employees rather than using a single style.

4.1.2 The Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Productivity

Leadership styles can have either negative or positive impact on the productivity of employees. It is always important for a leader to have a clear understanding of how a leadership style works and how

Figure 2: Impact of Leadership Styles on Productivity
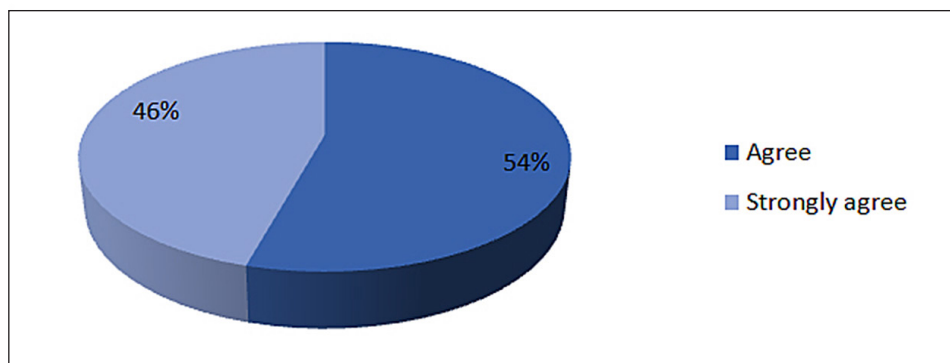
Source: Author

Figure 3: Sticking to One Leadership Style and Rotation
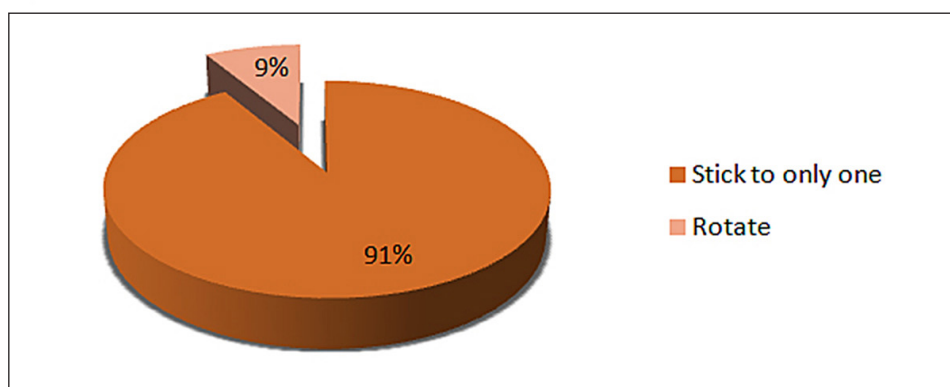
Source: Author

it can affect employees. This section of the study probed the impact of different leadership styles on employee productivity as summarised below.

Figure 2 illustrates the impact of leadership styles on productivity. The majority of employees (54%) agreed that indeed leadership styles have an impact on the productivity of employees, while 46% of the sample strongly agreed. This suggests that leadership styles discussed in the literature can influence both negatively and positively on the employees. This means that leadership styles motivate and increase the level of productivity or they can either demotivate employees in a way that they cannot achieve the required levels of productivity.

4.1.3 Sticking to One Leadership Style or Rotating
There are always challenges that leaders are facing in the day to day running of municipalities. It is therefore important that a leader adopts a collection of leadership styles that can assist to resolve issues depending on the situation. The findings for whether a leader should stick to a single leadership style or rotate are summarised in Figure 3. The majority of the

sample (91%) believes that a leader must rotate, while only 9% of the sample believes a leader must stick to a single leadership style. This implies that a leader must be situational so as to accommodate employees at all levels and circumstances.

4.2 Qualitative Data

The quantitative data probed the variables such as effects of leadership styles on productivity, Current leadership style and outputs produced, the role of employees in assisting leaders in choosing leadership styles, involvement of employees in decision-making processes to improve productivity, better productivity in the day-to-day running of the municipality, the impact of a leadership style on the productivity of the whole organisation, whether a leader uses authoritarian, participative, laissez-faire, transactional, transformational, charismatic, and servant leadership; the leadership style used by respondents leader.

4.2.1 The Effects of Leadership Styles on Productivity
The question as to what effect leadership style has on productivity resulted in mixed reactions from the

respondents. Observations to some of the answers triggered the interest of the main aim of the study. Other respondents insinuated that:

"different leadership styles can have both negative and positive effect on productivity depending on which style is adopted. For instance, the authoritarian leadership style can have a positive effect to employees who require close supervision. This is so as employees are likely to feel commanded by the leader and therefore respond by producing the required outputs. The reason is that autocratic leaders have all the decision-making authority and employees might feel pressurised and their right for participating in decisions is minimal and this can cause a drop in productivity".

Another respondent states that:

"a leadership style condones and motivate good and quality productivity".

These responses point out that indeed leadership and various leadership styles have an impact on employees' productivity.

4.2.2 Current Leadership Style and Outputs Produced

Productivity in an organisation is determined by the style of leadership employed (Chuang, 2013). As quoted by one of the respondents:

"yes, the current leadership is effective enough because employees have the right to make decisions where necessary, they are not excluded from the decision-making processes".

Another respondent simply stated that the current leadership; *"it is hands on".* In the light of these responses it becomes clear that the leadership style adopted in the municipality has the capability to bring better productivity. The effectiveness of a leadership style can result into smooth functioning and therefore it is up to leaders and the workers to ensure that the leadership style is implemented and executed correctly.

4.2.3 The Role of Employees in Assisting Leaders in Choosing Leadership Styles

In attempting to respond to the question, one of the respondents mentioned that; for subordinates to be involved in deciding the appropriate leadership style assists not only on employee's productivity but

also on strengthening relations between leaders and their subordinates. One respondent stated that:

"yes, it must be a collective leadership style, because it allows employees to contribute in making decisions and compliance".

Employees feel that they belong and are valued if they are involved in decision-making processes that affect their jobs. This also creates commitment and on behalf of the employees in carrying out their duties. Though employees should be given the platform to assist a leader, there must be principles and rules that guide them on how to decrease the level of indiscipline and lack of respect towards the leader.

One respondent disagreed with the others and held that it is inappropriate and rather impractical particularly in government where subordinates are not expected to bring innovation. Another respondent stated that:

"it is appropriate to assist a leader to choose his or her leadership style; because the style will have an effect on the level of productivity of employees therefore they should be given an opportunity to decide the style that will work for both the leader and themselves".

4.2.4 Involvement of Employees in Decision-Making Processes Improve Productivity?

In responding to this question one of the respondents said:

"yes, because involving employees in making decisions makes them feel appreciated and have a sense of ownership and be committed to their jobs".

Another respondent had this to say:

"yes, because employees are able to decide what can help in order to improve their performance and subsequently increases productivity".

From these responses it can be deducted that the involvement of employees in decision-making implies that the leader is willing to listen and understand the ideas and experiences of employees, and also gives them an opportunity to present their grievances. This contributes to fewer misunderstandings and more understanding of goals which therefore have the potential of improving productivity.

4.2.5 Better Productivity in the Day-To-Day Running of the Municipality Achieved Through Leadership?

One respondent stated that:

> *"yes it brought changes, such that the Sekhukhune District Municipality has obtained an unqualified audit opinion".*

Another respondent said:

> *"yes, because everyone feels accepted and enjoying their jobs, because of the participative style used in the municipality and it increases productivity and has also contributed to an effective employee relations".*

Another response was that:

> *"yes, today's leadership style is a democratic style, in which everyone is free to participate".*

Furthermore it was stated that:

> *"yes, because it also allows everyone to participate and also constructively criticise for the purpose of building".*

The responses of the participants imply that the leadership style used brought changes in the municipality by increasing productivity as well as making the employees of the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality feel involved in the everyday running of the municipality. The use and success of the leadership styles in this municipality is effective in that it has the potential to produce unqualified audit as expressed by the Auditor-General.

4.2.6 Impact that a Leadership Style has on the Productivity of the Whole Organisation

A leadership style on its own cannot be effective; it is therefore the duty of both a leader and the follower to strategically implement it to ensure that it brings good results. In responding to the question posed above one respondent stated that:

> *"leadership style that an organisation use can either have a positive or negative impact on productivity of the organisation".*

One participant said that; *"it must be a positive one".* It is believed that a positive leadership style can contribute in bringing more productivity in the organisation. A positive leadership style is one in which employees are motivated and inspired to do well to achieve the goals of the municipality.

4.2.7 Whether a Leader Uses Authoritarian, Participative, Laissez-Faire, Transactional, Transformational, Charismatic, and Servant Leadership

For this question one respondent had to say this:

> *"participative, transformational, transactional and servant leadership style".*

Another respondent chose the participative leadership style. One of the respondents stated that *"both the democratic and authoritarian".* As it has been mentioned earlier that different leadership styles are used for different situations, and it is also advisable that a leader should adopt more than one style. This is demonstrated by the respondents in the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality whereby more than two leadership styles are adopted and it is believed they are used to aid in different circumstances. A participative or democratic leadership style is the one that allows employees to make contributions in decision-making processes and the leader values the inputs of the subordinates as well as boosting the employees' morale. In most cases a leader uses both the transformational and transactional leadership style interchangeably. However, the transformational leadership is one that motivates and enriches productivity through communication, and smaller tasks are assigned smaller to the workforce to ensure success. Among other styles of leadership is the servant leadership that provides support to the workforce without expecting to be acknowledged. In most instances employees are likely to want this type of a leader but the problem with this is that it is demotivating because every time employees become too relaxed and fails to give adequate attention to organisational goals.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of this paper was to investigate the impact of leadership styles on employee productivity in the Greater Sekhukhune District Municipality, Limpopo Province (South Africa). This paper on the basis of the literature review and preliminary primary data gathered from both interviews and questionnaires has indeed establish that leadership styles, depending on the situation that a leader finds himself in, have an impact on employee performance and productivity.

This finding has a far-reaching implication on leadership and leadership styles as it would suggest that the productivity of employees can well be defined by leaders and their qualities in steering the workforce. Although different leadership styles are utilised in different directorates of the Sekhukhune District Municipality, employees must always be consulted in decision-making processes. The reason for this is that resources responsible for the articulation and realisation of organisational objectives. It must however be noted that different leaders tend to utilise leadership styles deemed effective to them.

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