

THE LEADERSHIP FACTOR IN THE SUSTENANCE OF NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS IN GHANA

¹Irene Akobour Debrah, ² George Laar Dam ³Job Asante

¹ Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies, Tamale

²School of Business and Law, University for Development Studies, Wa, Ghana

Tel: 0208296261

*Email: Irenedeb@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The sustenance of a non-profit organisation depends on its leadership and how the internal structures, systems and processes are managed. This study sought to examine the leadership factor in the sustenance of non-profit organisations. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Data was collected using questionnaires, documentary reviews and interview guides. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select 40 respondents from a target population of 100. The study revealed that the organisations were characterised by the practice of the democratic leadership style. However, leaders of these organisations did not have fundraising strategies, and this poses a threat to the sustenance of the organisations. Participative, visionary and transformational leadership styles were identified as the three most effective practices that would ensure organisational sustainability. However, the managers were not well exposed to these leadership skills; and this could have adverse effects on organisational sustainability. It is recommended that the human resource managers of the organisations should develop human resource policies that will guide them to recruit, train and sustain quality staff for the sustainability of the organisations. The Board of Directors should also support the managers to pursue leadership courses to augment their leadership skills. The Programme Manager of Action Aid should build the capacities of staff of the partner organisations to enable them sustain the organisations when Action Aid phases out from Tamale Metropolis.

Key words: Non-profit organisation, NGO, Leadership, Sustainability

1.1 Background to the study

Non-profit organisations have over the years been very influential in complementing the government's efforts in various aspects of development and improvement in the quality of life of poor people in the country. Some of these organisations include OXFAM, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Vision, IBIS and Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED). Others are local NGOs such as Grameen Ghana (GG), Centre for Active Learning and Integrated Development (CALID), Urban Agricultural Network (URBANET), Northern Sector Action Awareness Centre (NORSAAC) and Songtaba.

Most of these organisations have focused on key thematic areas such as water and sanitation, health, HIV/AIDS, education, sustainable livelihood, human security, agriculture and climate change. ActionAid Ghana Country Strategy Paper III (2005) indicates that a lot of impact has been made by most of these organisations in Northern Ghana.

There is growing interest by both researchers and development practitioners on the sustainability of organisations and what role leadership can play in the sustenance of their organisations. According to Avery (2004), there has been considerable theoretical and empirical work conducted on organisational performance over the last 25 years. This work seeks to better understand the antecedents, processes and emergent leadership styles and qualities that facilitate effective organisational outcomes and sustenance. An emerging area within this work is the role attributed to leadership in facilitating organisational sustainability.

Over the past decades, the question of appropriate leadership paradigms and behaviours has received considerable attention from both researchers and development practitioners. There is, however, the need to examine how the factor of leadership has influenced the sustenance of non-profit organisations. Hence this study takes the initiative to examine the relationship between leadership and the sustenance of non-profit organisations, using ActionAid partners in Tamale Metropolis as a case study.

ActionAid's partner organisations in Tamale Metropolis have been chosen as a case study because they have largely depended on funding from ActionAid. The survival of these partner organisations is under threat if ActionAid phases out and their leadership fails to secure alternative sources of funding. Already, some of the partners have folded up. Those that are still functioning, such as Centre for Active Learning and Integrated Development (CALID), Urban Agricultural Network (URBANET), Northern Sector Action Awareness Centre (NORSAAC) and Grameen Ghana, continue to rely heavily on donor agencies, particularly ActionAid, for the funding of their programmes. Their sustenance after the exit of ActionAid may depend largely on the quality of leadership in those organisations and their ability to thrive without support from ActionAid. It is for this reason that this study was conducted to examine the leadership factor in the sustenance of ActionAid partners in the Tamale Metropolis.

ActionAid Ghana Country Strategy Paper III (2005) suggests, among other things, a failure in leadership. But is leadership an important factor when it comes to the issue of sustainability of non-profit organisations? How does leadership promote the sustainability of ActionAid partner organisations? What forms of leadership are relevant for the survival of NGOs? The need for empirical answers to these questions has made it imperative for this study to be conducted to investigate the leadership factor in the sustenance of ActionAid's partners in the Tamale Metropolis.

THEORETICAL ISSUES

2.1 Concept of leadership

There are lots of definitions and interpretations for the term leadership. Mullins (2002) defines leadership as a relationship through which one person influences the behaviour or actions of other people. Johnson and Whittington (2005) also defined leadership as the process of influencing an organisation or groups within an organisation in its efforts towards achieving a goal.

Leadership has an ontological nature in an organisation. Thus, there is not an overall agreement of how the concepts of leadership must be defined. Different leadership discourses give more emphasis to some leadership issues than the others. Yukl (1994) states that most definitions of leadership reflect a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organisation.

A slightly different definition provided by Smircich and Morgan (1982) highlights the active involvement of followers in allowing leaders to take on this influencing role. As they revealed, leadership is an obligation or perceived right on the part of certain individuals to define the reality of others. In this definition, the authors put more emphasis on followership rather than leadership.

Traditionally, leadership has been associated with individual skills, characteristics and personal qualities in the leader (Nivala and Hujala 2002). A more recent view of leadership is that it is not an isolated activity invested in a single person, but rather a variety of people contributing to effective leadership. The implication is that leadership is therefore distributed. If this is the case, then preparation for leadership has to go beyond individual management training, since leadership capacities will need to be more widely developed in the team.

Cheryl (2009) asserts that being in a leadership position however does not make one a leader. He further explained that many people in leadership positions are not leading anyone anywhere; rather, they are contributing to dysfunctional, ineffective and unhappy groups. It can be deduced from the foregoing that good leadership is more about good "followership"; after all to lead, one must have people who are willing to follow. Why people choose to follow some leaders more enthusiastically than others, what qualities make a good leader and what styles leaders need to adopt are challenges facing managers of today and this is what the study tried to find out.

Cheryl (2009) believes that leadership is simply about people, sharing and communicating. Teams are made up of people with various skills and sometimes there will be occasions when team members will have superior skills, experience or knowledge than that of their appointed leaders. He says a good leader is one who is able to identify people with those skills, knowledge and rich experiences and create space for such team members to effectively put these skills into use for the achievement of organisational goals.

Because teams are made up of diverse personalities a good leader needs to have an understanding of each member's skills, strengths, and weaknesses in order to complement each other and maximise the cohesiveness of the group. Since teamwork is necessary for the achievement of organisational goals, it is important to find out whether managers in these organisations do appreciate these principles of teamwork in the day-to-day running of their organisations. This is what this study sought to do.

2.2 The nature of leadership styles in organisations

Bass (1990) describes both the transformational and transactional leaders as leaders who actively intervene and try to prevent problems, although they use different approaches. When researching into these two active forms of leadership, one finds that they are often contrasted with the third style of leadership, called *laissez-faire* leadership. Deluga (1990) describes the *laissez-faire* leader as an extreme passive leader who is reluctant to influence subordinates' considerable freedom, to the point of abdicating his/her responsibilities. In a sense, this extremely passive type of leadership indicates an absence of leadership.

Bass (1990) believes that organisations are subject to constant change as internal goals and external circumstances undergo transformation. The situational leadership theory suggests that there is no single leadership style that is consistently effective. He concludes by asserting that the best leadership style is one which adapts to changing contexts. Situational leadership can involve utilising different skills, approaches and tools at different stages, such as an employee survey to obtain feedback or training to focus on new areas of expansion.

Greenleaf (2010) looks at leadership in various forms including the servant leader, the autocrat, *laissez-faire*, participatory, coach and transformative leaders. According to Greenleaf, the servant leadership style views the leader as an individual who serves the group rather than an authoritative figure who commands behaviour. The servant leader is interested in building authority through consensus rather than legitimacy. As such he or she is a point of decision-making rather than the decision maker himself. He asserts that the servant leader listens carefully to employees and other members of the group and is persuasive rather than authoritative. He or she is more of a steward than an owner of authority. Managers can make use of some of the strengths of this leadership style for everyday use. Business owners can adopt some of the "soft" approaches into their own leadership styles, such as building consensus, involving employees, and creating effective teams through empathy and involvement.

Greenleaf (2010) asserts that the autocratic style tends to lean towards coerciveness and unilateral authority. Communication is usually one way. The autocratic style is very effective in crisis situations and emergencies when clear directions and absolutely authority is essential to motivate teams and organisations into a quick response. Using this leadership style over a long term can create employee-employer tension, perceptions of unfair workplace practices and stifle creativity and flexibility.

Bass and Avolio (1990) refer to the *laissez-faire* style of leadership as management-by-exception. Management-by-exception characterises how leaders monitor negative subordinates' behaviour and exert corrective action only when subordinates fail to meet objectives. Leaders who manage by exception intervene only when procedures and standards for accomplishing tasks are not met. It can, therefore, be concluded that by '*laissez-faire*', it is meant that the leader is not sufficiently motivated or adequately skilled to perform supervisory duties.

According to Bass and Avolio (1990), this leadership style suits teams of experts or collaborative workplaces where individual roles are highly autonomous and self-motivated or where the employer needs a lot of input and decision-making on the part of employees. Some common examples would be management consultancies where employees must work independently, but still require a leader who can show direction and trust. Leaders receive direct reports but do not give direction to employees on the details of the project.

Greenleaf (2010) considers the participatory leadership style as a good balance between hands-on management and autonomy for the employee. It is useful where the nature of the work requires an amount of oversight. For example, in very large projects that have been broken into segments, but where employees must work on their own. Effective participatory leaders listen closely to employees and adapt their decisions to reflect changes quickly. They may choose, for example, to conduct a periodic employee satisfaction survey to ascertain employee well-being.

The coach works very closely with employees to build the requisite skills for a role or a particular target. According to Greenleaf (2010), the coach will work with smaller teams or individuals at a time. This leadership style is appropriate for projects requiring highly specialised knowledge or skill sets, or where employees must be directly managed over a period of time.

According to Greenleaf (2010), transformative leadership is directed to bring a significant or complete change to individuals, a work process, teams, culture, an entire organisation, or a fundamental aspect of an organisation. Transformative leaders bring employees on to the new strategy or goal and motivate them to achieve the desired change. An essential characteristic of this leadership style is being able to communicate the new vision and encourage people to change quickly.

2.3 Leadership qualities and organisational sustainability

Wilson, Lenssen and Hind (2006) categorise the qualities of good leaders into knowledge, skills and attitudes. They assert that there should be a relationship between leadership and sustainability of organisations. The first reason relates to practice. Today's intensive, dynamic markets feature innovation-based competition, decreasing returns and the creative destruction of existing competencies (Santora *et al.*, 1999; Venkataraman, 1997). Scholars and practitioners suggest that effective leadership behaviours can facilitate the improvement of performance when organisations face new challenges (McGrath and MacMillan, 2000; Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997). Understanding the effects of leadership on performance is also important because leadership is viewed by some researchers as one of the key driving forces for improving a firm's performance. (Zhu *et al.* 2005).

Effective leadership is seen as a potent source of management development and sustained competitive advantage for organisational performance improvement (Avolio, 1999; Lado *et al.*, 1992 and Rowe 2001). For example, transactional leadership helps organisations achieve their current objectives more efficiently by linking job performance to valued rewards and by ensuring that employees have the resources needed to get the job done (Zhu *et al.*, 2005). Visionary leaders create a strategic vision of some future state, communicate that vision through the framing and use of metaphor, model the vision by acting consistently, and build commitment towards the vision (Avolio, 1999; McShane and Von Glinow, 2000). Some scholars (Zhu *et al.*, 2005) suggest that visionary leadership will result in high levels of cohesion, commitment, trust, motivation, and hence performance in the new organisational environments.

According to Mehra *et al.* (2006), when some organisations seek efficient ways to enable them to outperform others, a longstanding approach is to focus on the effects of leadership. This is because team leaders are believed to play a pivotal role in shaping collective norms, helping teams cope with their environments and coordinating collective action. This leader-centred perspective has provided valuable insights into the relationship between leadership and team performance (Guzzo and Dickson 1996).

Previous researches lead to the expectation that leadership paradigms will have direct effects on customer satisfaction, staff satisfaction, and financial performance. However, in general, the effects of leadership on organisational sustainability have not been well studied. House and Aditya's review (1997). They also criticised leadership studies for focusing excessively on superior-subordinate relationships to the exclusion of several other functions that leaders perform, and to the exclusion of organisational and environmental variables that are crucial to mediate the leadership-sustainability relationship.

Research implications: Some scholars believe that leadership facilitates organisational performance enhancement, while others contradict this and attribute it to followers. Therefore, a lot of gaps and unanswered questions remain. There is a need to re-examine the proposed leadership-sustainability relationship and that is what this study sought to achieve.

2.4 Leadership paradigms and organisational sustainability

Avery (2004) proposes 13 indices to differentiate between four leadership paradigms, which are: classical, transactional, visionary, and organic. The nine indices included in this review are: decision-making; range of staff's power; power distance between leader and the staff; key player of the organisation; source of staff's commitment; staff's responsibility; situation of management and leadership in the organisation, situation of diversity in the organisation and situation of control in the organisation. These nine criteria are considered more relevant for differentiating the four leadership paradigms than the other four criteria. Each paradigm is discussed in turn, including the distinguishing characteristics using the nine criteria listed above.

According to Avery (2004), classical leadership is probably the oldest paradigm with its origins in antiquity, and is still used in contemporary organisations. This paradigm reflected the prevailing view in the business literature until the 1970s when the human relations movement led to the need to focus on followers and their environment. According to Avery (2004), classical leadership refers to the dominance by a pre-eminent person or an 'elite' group of people. This leadership can either be coercive or benevolent or a blend of both.

According to Judge and Piccolo (2004), three dimensions of transactional leadership are contingent reward, management by exception-active, and management by exception-passive. Contingent reward is the degree to which the leader sets up constructive transactions or exchanges with followers. The leader clarifies expectations and establishes the rewards for meeting these expectations. In general, management by exception is the degree to which the leader takes corrective action on the basis of results of leader-follower transactions (Judge and Piccolo, 2004). As noted by Howell and Avolio (1993), the difference between management by exception (active) and management by exception (passive) lies in the timing of the leader's intervention. Active leaders monitor follower behaviour, anticipate problems and take corrective actions before the behaviour creates serious difficulties, while passive leaders wait until the behaviour has created problems before taking action (Howell and Avolio, 1993; Judge and Piccolo 2004).

In the last three decades, visionary leadership has received increasing attention (Bass, 1985, 1998; Burns, 1978; Conger and Kanungo, 1987; House 1977). It added a new dimension to organisational studies, namely the visionary aspect of leadership and the emotional involvement of employees within an organisation. The basic notion is that a visionary leader can create an impression that he or she has high competence and a vision to achieve success. Subordinates are expected to respond with enthusiasm and commitment to the leadership objectives, and may be recruited because they share the vision. Bass (1998) developed a theory of visionary or transformational leadership whereby the leader inspires and activates subordinates to perform beyond normal expectations.

Avery (2004) distinguishes the visionary leadership paradigm from the other three paradigms as follows: First, leaders employ a collaborative style for making decisions. They share problems with their followers and seek consensus before they make the final decision. Visionary leaders empower their followers, giving them a much higher level of power in the organisation than classical and transactional leadership. This is essential because the leader needs the followers' input and commitment to realise his or her goals. He states further that followers of visionary leadership need sufficient power to work autonomously towards a shared vision. The source of followers' commitment comes from the influence of the leaders' charisma or the shared vision.

The fourth paradigm, according to Avery (2004), organic leadership is relatively new to organisational studies. Organic leadership is likely to blur the formal distinction between leaders and followers. This paradigm relies on reciprocal actions, where team members work together in whatever roles of authority and power they may have that are not based on position power (Hirschhorn, 1997; Raelin, 2003; Rothschild and Whitt 1986). According to them, employees become interacting partners in determining what makes sense, how to adapt to change and what is a useful direction. Rather than relying on one leader, organic organisations are likely to have many leaders. Multiple leaders are valuable because as people cope with heterogeneous and dynamic environments, the knowledge and issues become too complicated for only a few leaders to understand (Avery 2004).

Organic leadership allows for people with different degrees of expertise on current issues to emerge and be accepted by the group as leaders. In addition, under organic leadership, there may be no formal leaders but the interaction of all organisational members can act as a form of leadership, held together by a shared vision, values, and a supporting culture. Under this paradigm where an organisation has no formal leadership structure, an integrator role may emerge to actively link together the many parts of the organisation (Avery 2004). The emphasis then is on emerging leadership rather than on people being appointed to leadership positions. However, Kanter (1989) argued that the downside of organic leadership that advocates autonomy, freedom, discretion and authorisation may result in loss of control and greatly increased uncertainty.

It is important to recognise that organic leadership is about generating a form of self-control and self-organisation where people have a clear sense of purpose and autonomy within a particular context (Meindl 1998). This idealised organic leadership paradigm requires its differentiation from classical, transactional, and visionary leadership concepts by not relying on formal leaders. Furthermore, the enterprise has to trust in the capacity of its members to solve problems and make decisions in the interests of the organisation. This idea clearly relies upon self-leading organisational members (Avery 2004).

2.5 Effective alternatives in leadership practices

According to Bush and Glover (2003), EdQual's Leadership and Management of Change Project set out to identify effective school leadership practices for improving the quality of education for the most disadvantaged learners. The research revealed effective alternatives for leaders. These include:

1. Mobilising community support for projects and programmes.
2. Persuading donors and NGOs to fund community development.
3. Improving the communication among stakeholders.

Some leaders believe that participating in the action research transformed attitudes to leadership. The study generated a belief amongst leaders that they could make a difference in the effective management of their organisations. There was a clear change of leaders' mindsets. Instead of seeing themselves as bureaucrats and functionaries, they realised that they could act as instructional leaders (Bush and Glover 2003).

In summary, the key literature on the study includes the types of leadership in the organisations. These included the transactional and transformational types. The effects of various leadership styles such as the democratic and autocratic on the sustenance of NGOs were also reviewed. Appropriate leadership qualities and alternative leadership practices that would enhance the sustenance of non-profit organisations were also discussed.

RESEARCH APPROACH

3.1 Research design

This study used a descriptive survey design. Yieri (2006) asserts that descriptive survey involves collection of data in order to answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject of study. According to Mays and Pope (2000), the qualitative research approach is most appropriate when conducting descriptive and exploratory study in order to qualify data that seem immeasurable such as feelings, beliefs, and thoughts. The study explored the views of managers and employees on the role of leadership in the sustenance of non-profit organisations. Therefore, the descriptive survey design is considered most appropriate.

3.2 Population

The study was carried out in the Tamale Metropolis in the Northern Region of Ghana. The population included key stakeholders such as managers, current and former staff of ActionAid partner organisations in the Tamale Metropolis. The target population was made up of 100 respondents, comprising 10 managers, 75 current and 15 former staff of ActionAid's partner organisations in the Tamale Metropolis.

3.3 Sample

Out of the targeted population of 100, 40 of them were sampled as respondents for the study. They consisted of 4 managers (10%), 30 current staff (75%) and 6 former staff (15%).

3.4 Sampling technique

The researcher used the purposive sampling technique to select 4 managers and 6 former staff of the organisations due to their knowledge of the management of the organisations. The managers were chosen because, as leaders of their organisations, they have vast experience in the management of organisations and, therefore, have valuable information that would enrich the study. The former staff were also selected purposively because they have had some experience working with the leaders of these organisations. Their reasons for leaving and their suggestions were rich sources of information for investigating the leadership factor in the sustenance of the organisations. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 30 current staff. This method was used to obtain representative information from the partner organisations.

3.5 Research Instruments

The study used questionnaires, documentary reviews and interviews to collect data. The documentary reviews were from the organisations' programme and policy documents such as partnership guide, strategic plans, and human resource and finance manuals. Others included the organisations' annual reports, yearly participatory reflections and review reports and mid-term reviews and evaluation reports. The purpose was to find out how the organisations were being managed to meet the organisational objectives. It was also intended to find out leadership practices that would enhance organisational sustainability.

Most of the items were largely close-ended to make coding easy. The four-type Likert type format was used for most of the questions. The Likert type questionnaire was found to be the most suitable instrument for the measurement of attitudes and perceptions because it enables respondents to indicate the degree of their belief or perceptions in a given statement (Best and Khan 1996). The four-type Likert type scale was also preferred to the most conventional 5-point scale. The Likert type scale items were made up of positive statements, indicating a favourable response on the part of respondents.

Interview guides were used for the managers and the out-gone staff of the selected organisations. This was to elicit additional information about the role of leadership in the sustenance of ActionAid partner organisations in the Tamale Metropolis. The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews in addition to the questionnaires for the managers and out-gone staff since they were in strategic positions and their experiences and inputs were very much needed to enrich the study. The advantage of the semi-structured interview is that the interviewer is in control of the process of obtaining information from the interviewee, but is free to follow new leads as they arise (Bernard 1988).

3.6 Data collection procedure

The data for the study were gathered from four Core Partner Organisations of ActionAid in the Tamale Metropolis. First, the researcher sent a proposal explaining the aim of the study to the organisations and obtained permission to carry out the study using their staff.

The researcher began the data collection process by first interacting with management and staff of the selected organisations with the primary aim of establishing rapport with them. The researcher introduced himself to the managers and explained the purpose of the exercise. The managers then introduced the researcher to the staff and briefed them on the purpose of the research.

To ensure that respondents provided constructive responses, the researcher vividly explained the items and Likert Scale. He created an opportunity for respondents to ask questions and seek clarification on issues that were quite technical for them. All these processes were followed in order to deepen respondents' understanding of the exercise for the researcher to elicit appropriate responses from respondents.

The questionnaires were administered to all managers of the organisations who were purposively selected based on their function and experience. The out-gone staff were contacted on phone and arrangements made to meet them for the exercise at their own chosen destinations. In all, 40 questionnaires were distributed, and all 40 were completed and returned. The 100% percent return rate was achieved due to the cordial relationship built between the researcher and respondents throughout the exercise. The researcher constantly made follow-up visits to respondents in their various organisations to ensure that all the questionnaires administered were retrieved.

3.6.1 Review of documents

Existing documents in the four selected organisations were reviewed by the researcher. This was done to elicit more information and clarification to complement the data collected from the questionnaires. The documentary reviews were from the organisations' programme and policy documents including official records, partnership guide, strategic plans, and human resource and finance manuals. Others included the organisations' annual reports, yearly participatory reflections and review reports and mid-term review reports.

3.6.2 Interviews

In addition to questionnaires, the researcher conducted interview with four managers and six out-gone staff from four selected organisations. The interview with the managers took place in their respective offices in Tamale whilst that of the out-gone staff was done at their new job locations.

The interview explored the experiences of respondents regarding the leadership practices in ActionAid partners and their effect on performance and organisational sustainability. The researcher took note of all the key issues raised concerning each question during the interview session.

3.7 Data analysis

Data collected were edited to ensure that all items were answered to determine the accuracy, consistency and appropriateness of responses. The completed questionnaires were serially numbered and coded. Items on the Likert Scale were scored 4, 3, 2 and 1 for strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. Statistical analyses were used. The Microsoft Excel programme was used to calculate percentages and process the data which were organised into tables of frequencies and percentages to make the analyses more meaningful.

The analysis of the study began with the background information of respondents which included their sex, age, educational background and their experience. The researcher used percentages and frequencies to analyse the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Background information about respondents

This section presents the background information on respondents. These are the sex, age and educational background of respondents. It also includes discussions of their job classification and the number of years they have worked in their respective organisations. The purpose of this information was to give the researcher an idea of the characteristics of the respondents. Table 1 presents the summary of the sex distribution of the respondents.

Table 1: Sex distribution of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	22	55
Female	18	45
Total	40	100

Source: Field survey, October, 2011

Table 1 shows that out of the 40 respondents, 22 (55%) were male, while 18 (45%) were female. The data clearly shows that majority of the respondents were male. However, as organisations that advocate for vulnerable groups and persons, it was expected that there should have been an equal representation of both gender.

Another aim of the study was to investigate the educational attainment of the respondents and Table 3 gives a summary of the respondents' educational background.

Table 3: Respondents' educational background

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Basic	0	0
Secondary	1	2.5
Tertiary	39	97.5
None	0	0
Total	40	100

Source: Field survey, October, 2011

Table 3 reveals that 97.5% of the workers have had tertiary education while only one (2.5%) had gone through secondary education. None of the respondents had only basic or no education. From the analysis, one would notice that majority of the respondents had tertiary education.

The implication is that the organisations have quality human capital in terms of knowledge and skills development. It is expected that the training received by staff of these organisations would be useful in their search for alternative sources of funding in case ActionAid folds up their operations in the northern region.

The study was interested in the number of years the workers had been in the organisations to determine the nature of the labour turnover. Table 4 shows the number of years the workers have served in the organisation.

Table 4: Number of years in the organisation

Staff by category	1 – 2 years %	3 – 4 years %	5 or more years %	Total %
Programme Managers	0	0	10	10
Programme Officers	47.5	5	2.5	55
Interns	35	0	0	35
Total	82.5	5	12.5	100

Workers: N=40

Source: Field survey, October, 2011

Table 4 shows that many of the workers (82.5%) have been with the organisations for between one to two years. Only 5% have worked with the organisations between 3 - 4 years while (12.5%) have worked at the organisations for more than 5 years. From the table, 35% of the respondents were on internship and had been with the organisations for between one and two years. This implies that a significant number of workers were not regular staff who were fully employed by the organisations. The greater number of the employees who have served the organisations for a short period of time suggests that the organisations are experiencing some form of staff turnover. These employees are junior staff. It can also be inferred from the data that number of years served also counts for those who are Managers. All Program managers had served 5 or more years in their organisations.

The interview with out-gone staff revealed that the organisations did not have a clear labour policy indicating the number of years a worker should serve, period for promotion and motivation packages for long-serving staff. The interview also revealed that even though there were no clear labour policies on staff motivation, the managers benefited from various forms of motivation at the expense of the junior staff. Some of these included: administrative cost support, allowances and funding from different donors.

The documentary review confirms what the out-gone staff said, that there were no clear labour policies in the selected organisations. In the selected organisations, workers often resign due to poor remuneration, conditions of service and generally poor morale and low levels of motivation. High staff turnover has a negative effect on the productivity and sustainability of an organisation. According to Glitton and Hard (1999), retaining workers in an organisation is key to the effective management and achievement of organisational goals.

From the discussion, it can be concluded that majority of the workers in the ActionAid partner organisations were males. Also, the organisations had young and energetic workers who were well educated and skilled. However most of them stayed there for a short time which suggests a high attrition rate, which has a negative impact on organisational sustainability. The interview with out-gone staff revealed that workers resign from the organisations due to the factors cited in the document, that is: remuneration, conditions of service and generally poor morale and low levels of motivation.

The impact of leadership styles on ActionAid partner organisations

The purpose of the research question was to find out the nature of leadership practices in the organisations. Table 5 presents the analysis. SA stands for “Strongly Agree”, A stands for “Agree”, D stands for “Disagree” while SD stands for “Strongly Disagree”.

Table 5: Workers' views on leadership practices in the organisations

Leadership practices	SA %	A %	D %	SD %	TOTAL %
Autocratic	12.5	2.5	37.5	47.5	100
Democratic	75	10	15	0	100
Laissez-faire	25	7.5	30	37.5	100

Workers: N=40

Table 5, Source: Field survey, October 2011

From Table 5, majority of the respondents (85%) indicated that their organisations were characterised by democratic leadership style. Only a few (15%) described the leadership practice as autocratic. From the foregoing, it is clear that leaders of the organisations mainly used the democratic leadership style. The implication is that members are involved in decision making and day-to-day running of the organisations, leading to their sustenance, as observed by Mankoe and Anthony (2003).

Under the democratic leadership practice, workers feel that their ideas are important and tend to feel more committed to changes in which they helped to initiate. This leads to employees developing organisational citizenship and thereby improved performance and strategic planning towards the sustenance of the organisations. This is also in line with the assertion by other researchers who assert that the democratic leadership practice is a people-centred type of leadership that encourages innovation among subordinates and improvement at the workplace environment (Bass 1997).

To determine whether leadership styles in the organisations created an opportunity for workers to be part of governance, the organisations' policies and procedures were also examined. These included: Fundraising Strategy; Sustainability Plan; Strategic Plan; Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework; Human Resource Policy Manual; and Finance Policy Manual. Table 6 shows the summary of respondents' views on the availability of the policies and procedures.

Table 6: Respondents' views on policies and procedures

Policies Documents	Available (%)	Not Available (%)	Total (%)
Fundraising Strategy	42.5	57.5	100
Sustainability Plan	32.5	67.5	100
Strategic Plan	65	35	100
M&E Framework	57.5	42.5	100
Human Resource Manual	67.5	32.5	100
Finance Manual	70	30	100

Workers: N=40

Source: Field survey, October 2011

From Table 6, majority of the workers (57.5%) said their organisations did not have a fundraising strategy, while 67.5% indicated that they did not have a sustainability plan in place. The fact that the organisations did not have a fundraising strategy implies that these organisations continue to rely on funds from ActionAid and other existing sponsors. There is therefore limited financial sustainability, and this poses a threat to the sustenance of the organisations. Fundraising is a critical component of most non-profit organisation, as Leslie (2008) asserts that without fundraising, many non-profit organisations cannot sustain their operations or provide necessary services to our society. This also reaffirms the assertion by Kay (2001) that every non-profit organisation must continually work at raising adequate funds to enable them serve the community properly, as described in its mission statement.

However, 67.5% said they had a Human Resource Policies and Procedures Manual, while 70% indicated that their organisations had a Finance Policies and Procedures Manual. Table 6 clearly shows that the finance policies and procedures manual is the commonest document that workers were familiar with. This indicates that each of the organisations had their local finance policies and procedures manual which directs the use of organisational resources. The result also indicated that the organisations have not developed their fundraising strategies and sustainability plans which are essential elements of the continuous existence of organisations.

It can be concluded that even though most workers indicated that their organisations had the monitoring and evaluation framework, human resource policies and procedures and the finance policy manuals, the absence of fundraising strategies and sustainability plans pose a threat to the future of these organisations. For leaders of the organisations to actually involve the workers in the management of the organisations, they need to orient them on these policies and procedures of the organisations.

The effects of leadership qualities on the sustainability of organisations.

The study sought to solicit from respondents what specific leadership qualities would result in the sustenance of ActionAid partner organisations in the Tamale Metropolis. Respondents' responses were summarised and are presented in Table 7. In the table, VM stands for "Very Much", SH stands for Somehow, and N for "Never".

Table 7: Leadership qualities

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES	VM %	SH %	N %	TOTAL %
Integrity and honesty	85	10	5	100
Dedication to work	87.5	7.5	5	100
Openness and transparency	77.5	10	12.5	100
Creativity	82.5	17.5	0	100
Strategic thinking	87.5	10	2.5	100
Effective communication	82.5	12.5	5	100
Good human relationships	90	5	5	100
Motivation	82.5	15	2.5	100
Teamwork	85	15	0	100
Coaching and development	70	25	5	100
Participatory decision-making	87.5	7.5	5	100
Effective Planning	52.5	25	22.5	100

Source: Field survey, October 2011

Table 7 also shows the specific leadership qualities that have an impact on the sustainability of ActionAid partners in the Tamale Metropolis. From Table 7, the top 10 leadership qualities identified by respondents included:

1. Good human relationships
2. Dedication to work
3. Strategic thinking
4. Participatory decision-making
5. Integrity and honesty
6. Teamwork
7. Creativity
8. Effective communication
9. Motivation
10. Openness and transparency

The implication of the finding of Table 7 is that the leaders of these organisations exhibited an integrated personality in the management of the organisations, which is an important ingredient for organisational sustainability, as indicated by Wilson, Lensson and Hind (2006). In their research paper entitled, “Leadership Qualities and Management Competencies for Corporate Responsibility”, they state that the sustenance of an organisation depends on deep-seated personal qualities that are in the domain of the leader’s personal attitudes and beliefs.

Based on the analysis of Research Question 2, it can be concluded that managers of ActionAid partner organisations require a combination of leadership qualities in order to sustain their organisations.

Effective alternatives in leadership practices for organisational sustainability

The purpose of Research Question 3 was to find out the effective alternatives in leadership practices that ensure the sustainability of ActionAid’s partner organisations. Table 8 examines respondents’ views:

Table 8: Effective alternatives in leadership

LEADERSHIP STYLES	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
	%	%	%	%	%
Participative	90	5	2.5	2.5	100
Transformational	82.5	15	2.5	0	100
Situational	57.5	25	10	7.5	100
Visionary	82.5	17.5	5	5	100

SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, D - Disagree, SD - Strongly Disagree.

Workers, N=40

Table 8, Source: Field survey, October 2011

Table 8 clearly shows that majority of the respondents, 95% and 97.5% indicated participative, visionary and transformational leadership styles respectively as the most effective practices that promote productivity and organisational sustainability. This supports Bass’s (1998) assertion that transformational leadership promotes significant changes in individuals and the entire organisation. Transformative leaders introduce the new strategy to workers and motivate them to make the change. Leaders using the transformational leadership style are also able to communicate the new vision and encourage people to change quickly. According to Bass (1998), participative leadership is based on the assumption that involving those who will carry out the decisions arrived at in the decision-making process improves their understanding of the issues involved. Effective participatory leaders therefore listen closely to employees and adapt their decisions to reflect changes quickly. However the interview with managers and out-gone staff revealed that most of the leaders of ActionAid’s partners do not have any knowledge of participative, transformational and visionary leadership and skills. This skills gap, however, can have adverse effects on the productivity and ultimately the sustainability of the organisations.

On the strength of the implications discussed, there is a need to hold a workshop for the leaders on participative, visionary and transformational leadership styles to enable them to manage their organisations effectively.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of procedure

The study was conducted to examine the leadership factor in the sustenance of non-profit organisations using ActionAid's partner organisations in the Tamale Metropolis as a case study. Hence the main purpose of this research was to find out the role of leadership in the sustainability of ActionAid's partner organisations. The research was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the impact of leadership styles on ActionAid partner organisations in Tamale Metropolis?
2. How do leadership qualities affect the sustainability of the organisations?
3. What are the effective alternatives in leadership practices that would enhance the smooth running of the organisations?

The study reviewed relevant literature on leadership and the sustenance of non-profit organisations. Areas studied included the effects of leadership styles on the sustenance of NGOs, leadership qualities and alternative leadership practices for the sustenance of non-profit organisations. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Data were collected through the administration of questionnaire, interview guide and documentary review. The respondents for the study were 40 in number. This comprised four (4) managers, 28 current and six (6) out-gone staff of the organisations.

The purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents of the study. The data for the study were organised into tables of frequencies and percentages to make the analyses more meaningful.

5.2 Summary of research findings

From the analysis of data the following findings were identified:

Background information

The organisations were experiencing some form of staff turnover. Some workers in the selected organisations resigned due to poor remuneration, conditions of service and generally poor morale and low levels of staff motivation. The study also revealed that the organisations did not have clear labour policies indicating the number of years a worker should serve, period after which promotion can be earned, and motivation packages for long-serving staff.

The impact of leadership styles on ActionAid partner organisations

The organisations were characterised by the practice of the democratic leadership style which involved members in their decision-making processes. However, leaders of these organisations did not have fundraising strategies to ensure their financial sustainability. The organisations will, therefore, continue to rely on funds from ActionAid and other existing sponsors and this poses a threat to the sustenance of the organisations.

The effects of leadership qualities on the sustainability of organisations

The managers of ActionAid partner organisations exhibited a combination of leadership qualities to ensure the sustainability of their organisations. The top 10 leadership qualities identified were: good human relationships; dedication to work; strategic thinking; participatory decision-making; integrity and honesty; teamwork; creativity; effective communication; motivation; openness and transparency.

Effective alternatives in leadership practices for organisational sustainability

Participative, visionary and transformational leadership styles were identified as the three most effective practices that would ensure productivity and organisational sustainability. However, the managers were not well exposed to these leadership skills. The skill gaps could have adverse effects on the sustainability of the organisations.

5.3 Conclusion

From the findings of this study, it may be concluded that leaders of ActionAid partner organisations used the democratic leadership styles in the organisations. It can also be concluded that the sustenance of the organisation will depend on the visionary, participative and transformational leadership style of the leaders. However, the leaders of ActionAid partner organisations lack the knowledge and skills of these leadership skills.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the above findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Human resource managers of the organisations need to develop human resource policies that will recruit, train and sustain quality, committed and dedicated staff for increased productivity and sustainability of the organisations.
2. The Human Resource Manager of the organisations need to develop proactive strategies to retain staff so as to maximise productivity and ensure the sustenance of the organisations.
3. The Board of Directors of ActionAid partners should encourage participation and interaction between the leaders and their subordinates. This can be done through brainstorming, team-building exercises, open discussions and creating participative opportunities where employees can freely suggest ideas and provide suggestions on particular organizational issues and play a part in the decision-making processes in the organizations.
4. The managers of the organisations should ensure that all workers are exposed to organisational policies and procedures.
5. The Board of Directors should organise leadership programmes for the leaders in their organisations, especially on participative, visionary and transformational leadership styles, to enable them manage their organisations effectively.
6. The Board of Directors should sponsor the leaders of ActionAid partner organisations to pursue short leadership courses such as strategic management, corporate governance, organisational behaviour and human resource management.
7. The Programme Manager of ActionAid should build the capacities of leaders and staff of their partner organisations to prepare them adequately to sustain the organisations after they end their programme in Tamale Metropolis.

References

1. ActionAid Ghana, (2005). Engaging Power to End Poverty, *ActionAid Ghana Country Strategy Paper III*, 2005-2009, Accra: ActionAid Ghana.
2. Avery, G.C. (2004). *Understanding leadership: paradigms and cases*. London: Sage.
3. Avolio, B.J. (1999). *Full leadership development: building the vital forces in organisations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
4. Bass, B.M. (1985). *Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations*. New York, NY: Free Press.
5. Bass, B.M. (1998). *Transformational Leadership: Industry, Military and Educational Impact*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
6. Bass, B.M. & Avolio, B.J. (1989). Potential biases in leadership measures: How prototypes, leniency, and general satisfaction relate to ratings and rankings of transformational and transactional leadership constructs. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 49: 509-527.
7. Bass, B. M. (1990). *Handbook of leadership: Theory, research and managerial applications* (3rd Ed). New York: The Free Press.
8. Bernard, H. Russell. (1988). *Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology*. Newbury Park, California: Sage.
9. Best, J.W., & Kahn, J.V. (1999). *Research in education* (7th Ed.). New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited.
10. Burns, J.M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.
11. Bush, T. & Glover, D. (2003). *School leadership: concepts and evidence*, Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
12. Cheryl, A. (2009). *Council Chair, Women's Health London Mallee*. Issue No 28 Winter 2009.
13. Conger, J.A. & Kanungo, R.N. (1987). Toward a behavioural theory of charismatic leadership in organisational settings. *Academy of Management Review*, 12(4):637-647.
14. Greenleaf, R. (2010). *Servant Leadership* 997 Mahwah, USA: Paulist Press.
15. Guzzo, R.A. & Dickson, M.W. (1996). Teams in organisations: Recent research on performance and effectiveness. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 47(1):307-338.
16. Hirschhorn, L. (1997). *Reworking Authority: Leading & Following in the Post-Modern Organisation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
17. House, R.J. (1977). *Leadership: The cutting edge*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Press.
18. House, R.J. & Aditya, R.N. (1997). The social scientific study of leadership: Quo Vadis? *Journal of Management*, (23)3: 409-473.
19. Howell, J.M. & Avolio, B.J. (1993). Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, locus of control and support for innovation: Key predictors of consolidated-business-unit performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(6): 891-902.
20. Johnson, S. & Whittington. (2005). *Exploring Corporate Strategy*, (7th Ed), London: Prentice Hall, 519.
21. Judge, T.A. & Piccolo, R.F. (2004). Transformational & transactional leadership: A meta-analytic test of their relative validity. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(5): 755-768.
22. Kanter, R. (1989). *When Giants Learn to Dance*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
23. Lado, A.A., Boyd, N.G. & Wright, P. (1992). A competency-based model of sustainable competitive advantage: Toward a conceptual integration. *Journal of Management*, 18(1): 77-91.
24. Mankoe, J.O. & Anthony, M. (2003). *Primary School Administration and Supervision*, Winneba: The Institute for Educational Development and Extension, University of Education.

25. Mays, N. & Pope, C. (2000). Qualitative research in healthcare: assessing quality in qualitative research. *British Medical Journal*; 320: 7226, 50-52.
26. McGrath, G.R. & MacMillan, I.C. (2000). *Entrepreneurial Mindset: Strategies for Continuously Creating Opportunity in an Age of Uncertainty*. Harvard Business School Press Books.
27. McShane, S.L. & Von Glinow, M.A. (2000). *Organisational Behaviour*. Burr Ridge, IL: Irwin/McGraw-Hill.
28. Mehra, A., Smith, B.R., Dixon, A.L. & Robertson, B. (2006). Distributed leadership in teams: The networks of leadership perceptions and team performance. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17(3): 232-245.
29. Meindl, J.R. (1998). Invited Reaction: Enabling visionary leadership. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 9(1): 21-24.
30. Mullins, L.J. (2002). *Management and Organisational Behaviour*, (6th Ed), Lombarda Rotolito, Italy. FT Publishing, 904.
31. Nadler, D.A. & Tuschman, M.L. (1990). Beyond the charismatic leader: Leadership and organisational change. *California Management Review*, 32(2): 77-97.
32. Nivala, V. & Hujala, E. (2002). *Leadership in early childhood education*. Finland: University of Oulu.
33. Raelin, J. (2003). *Creating Leadership Organisations: How to Bring out Leadership in Everyone*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
34. Rothschild, J. & Whitt, J.A. (1986). *The Cooperative Work Place: Potentials and Dilemmas of Organisational Democracy and Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
35. Rowe, W.G. (2001). Creating wealth in organisations: The role of strategic leadership. *Academy of Management Executive*, 15: 81-94.
36. Santora, J.C., Seaton, W. & Sarros, J.C. (1999). Changing times: Entrepreneurial leadership in a community-based non-profit organisation. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 6(3-4):101-109.
37. Teece, D.J., Pisano, G. & Shuen, A. (1997). Dynamic capabilities and strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 18(7): 509-533.
38. Venkataraman, S. (1997). The distinctive domain of entrepreneurship research: An editor's perspective. *Advances in Entrepreneurship, Firm Emergence, and Growth*. Greenwich, CT: JAI, Press, 3: 19-38.
39. Wilson, A., Lenssen, G. & Hind, P. (2006). *Leadership Qualities and Management Competencies for Corporate Responsibility*, Ashridge
40. Yukl, G. (1999). An evaluative essay on current conceptions of effective leadership. *European Journal of Work & Organisational Psychology*, 8(1): 33-48.
41. Zhu, W., Chew, I.K. & Spangler, W.D. (2005). Transformational leadership and organizational outcomes: The mediating role of human-capital-enhancing human resource management. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(1): 39-5.