

ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN GHANA

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Abstract: *This study examines the influence of leadership styles on organizational change management in Ghanaian organizations, focusing on transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership approaches. Using a quantitative descriptive research design, the study explored how these leadership styles impact the effectiveness of change management across various industries, including education, healthcare, manufacturing, banking, and telecommunications. A stratified random sampling method was employed to select 300 participants, ensuring representation across organizational levels. Data were analyzed using frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, and correlation and regression analyses with SPSS V. 2022 to identify trends and relationships between leadership styles and change management success.*

The findings revealed that transformational and participative leadership styles are highly effective in fostering employee motivation, engagement, and commitment during organizational change. These styles align with the need for flexibility and adaptability in leadership, particularly in dynamic environments. However, autocratic leadership remains relevant in contexts requiring urgent decision-making and clear authority, highlighting the importance of contextual adaptability. External factors such as economic conditions, political instability, and cultural considerations were also found to influence the effectiveness of leadership styles in change management.

The study recommends adopting flexible leadership approaches tailored to organizational goals and external environments, investing in leadership development programs to enhance skills in transformational and participative leadership, and actively involving employees in the change process to minimize resistance and foster ownership. These strategies are essential for achieving successful organizational change in Ghanaian contexts, emphasizing the need for leaders to balance organizational ethos with adaptability to external challenges.

Keywords: *Leadership styles, organizational change management, transformational leadership, participative leadership, autocratic leadership, Ghana.*

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1.0 Introduction

Globalization has turned the world into a closely-knit "global village" where disputes over business matters happen very often, and also competition is great. To work effectively in such an environment, an organization has to set up some operational strategies that are functional as well as innovative in nature (Rickley & Stackhouse, 2022). In this regard, leadership has become such an imperative element that helps an organization tackle the rising competition in the global markets and handle

change (Pizzolitto et al., 2023). Organizational leaders need to remain committed to implementing the change in order to sustain the operational legitimacy of their organizations, as they are recognized as "Champions of Change" (Clausen et al., 2023).

The name "Champions of Change" suggests that leaders are expected to point to the future of their organizations. Yet, change is not destiny but an inescapable-and often frightening-examination of corporations in every industry. For instance, Bonawitz et al.

(2020) and Islam et al. (2021a and 2021b) estimated that 50-70% of planned changes did not reach their planned objectives. This tends to provide a blunt outlook for organisations that rely on such major changes to further their aim of pursuing success. The research shows that although a lot of companies are good at handling the operational and structural features of change, they usually fail to address the equally important human side (Bunce et al., 2020; Spiegler et al., 2021). For a "new direction system" or project to help an organization achieve its objective, it has to combine change leadership with the principles of change management (Islam et al., 2022).

Effective change leadership centers on managing both the stages of change and the emotional responses they elicit. Leaders must be equipped to guide their teams through transitions seamlessly, without disruption (Clausen et al., 2023). Building organizational cohesion and fostering adaptive behaviors among staff require leaders to actively engage in dialogue grounded in unity and success. Unlike change management, which typically addresses external systems, structures, and processes, change leadership takes an internal, people-centered approach to addressing the challenges associated with change (Pizzolitto et al., 2023).

As Ciulla & Ciulla, 2020 observed, most companies operate in dynamic environments and are regularly subjected to one form of change or the other, sometimes due to the adoption of new technologies, mergers, and acquisitions, relocation of operations, and the implementation of new business strategies. Indeed, Taylor et al. (2022), and Warrick (2023) establish that. To promote organizational performance, businesses have to be capable in managing, implementing, and monitoring change-both in unexpected situations and in the part of ongoing business operations (Islam et al., 2021b). It is noticeably clear that leaders are responsible for leading a strategic change in companies by applying their distinguished qualities to lead the organization toward the attainment of goals set by the organization (Hrabortski III, 2019).

Thus, modern organizations realize the importance of preparation against current and future challenges towards gaining sustainable success from the perspective of Junnaid et al. (2020b) and Zainol et al. (2021a). Organizational transformation has been an important process; however, it is neither less tricky nor stress-free. According to Deligiannidou et al. (2020), some of these challenges are witnessed in the conceptualization and literature on "change agents.". According to Zainol et al. (2021), the change agent is an intentional and planned role that incorporates external assistance in the improvement of a system. Generally, a "change agent" is defined as a person outside of the existing group who lends specialized technical or consultative support to help manage change (Ciulla & Ciulla, 2020; Usman, 2020). Sparks (2003) further elucidates that a change agent is an individual inside or outside the organization who assists and navigates the change. This argument relies on the reasoning that, for leaders to develop unexpected attributes and to ensure the longevity of their innovations, there are considerable obstacles. Literatures indicate that the possibility of self-renewal by an organization and its successful adaptation to changed circumstances depends on the presence of outstanding leadership among executives who can influence the future direction of an organization. The emergence of self-renewal is considered crucial for proper adaptation. Islam et

al., 2021a; S. Lewis, 2016; Zainol et al., 2021b). In addition, Hauff et al. (2022) note that the leadership challenge will continue to be a major barrier in the future. These changes are thus quite ineffective if this leadership factor remains unaddressed or inefficiently managed in the course of restructuring. In this instance, the success of every change depends on the events where leaders understand the need for and approach that is being proposed to bring change into existence, as stated by Zainol et al. (2021b). Leadership is a phenomenon that is more easily described compared to being precisely defined. As leaders are, by definition, different from others, the nature of leadership becomes a product of the demands imposed by specific situations. Indeed, successful CEOs exhibit a wide variety of personality characteristics-ranging between extroverted and introverted ones (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). Peter Drucker, one of the most prominent scholars of organizational leadership, likewise focuses on the differences that exist in the styles of business leaders. Nguyen et al. (2023) add that a few CEOs are very shy in the way they approach things. Whereas some leaders rigidly stick to established norms, some other leaders introduce alien traits. For instance, leaders vary in body type: big body, small body, and so on. Some leaders are calm and composed, while others appear slightly nervous. Others may refrain from drinking alcohol, but some enjoy drinking socially.

Some have charisma and charm, while others are as cold as "frozen mackerels" Ho & Le, 2023. According to Gan et al. (2023), leadership is the practice of influencing what a leader may know and can do, in addition to the characteristics he or she may possess, in leading a work team with employees to accomplish things that are aligned with the goals of the company. According to them, successful leadership would develop core attributes of passion, consistency, reliability, and vision for any successful leadership. These qualities are vitally important because they create superior leadership skills in an individual and also give them the ability to acquire confidence from their workforce. Accordingly, Gan et al., (2023); Karp, (2013), the leadership and management skills, while equal in importance, should be differentiated.

Effective leadership is said to be a significant factor in driving business organizations through continuous change in the modern dynamic business world. The leadership style is the critical and decisive factor in the approach to, implementation, and sustainability of change in organizations. Being contextual in Africa means its cultural, economic, and social aspects shape the dynamics of leadership; hence, understanding the interplay between leadership style and organizational change management becomes highly important. From transformational to transactional styles of leadership, each has a significant impact on employee engagement, motivation, and adaptability pertinent to organizational change (Bass, 1990; Northouse, 2018).

In essence, change management in African organizations is different because of prevailing diverse cultures, economic instabilities, and changing regulatory environments on the continent. The work of researchers has indicated that leadership styles formed in such contexts enhance the resilience of organizations to deal more effectively with volatility during transition periods or other fluid circumstances (Bolden & Kirk, 2009). For example, transformational leadership, having a vision and inspirational quality, is better suited to motivating employees

and ensuring their commitment to the implementation of change in African organizations (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). On the other hand, an enabling or transactional type of leadership may ensure control in organizations where strict observation of protocols is necessary to ensure stability during processes of change (Hofstede, 2001).

Despite the fact that leadership plays a critical role, the literature on African contexts remains scant; most previous studies have focused on either Western or Asian frameworks. This study tries to address this gap by examining the impact of different styles of leadership on organizational change management within African organizations. The present research, therefore, uses Ghana as a case study to provide an understanding of how leadership can actually bring about change in the diverse cultural and organizational settings on the continent. The comprehension of these dynamics will, in turn, enable leaders in Africa to adapt styles that best fit their organizational objectives and environmental constraints to improve the rates of successful change.

Based on your study's aims, here are three objectives: To analyze the impact of different leadership styles on organizational change management within Ghanaian organizations, To examine how cultural and organizational factors in Ghana affect the effectiveness of various leadership styles in driving change, To provide recommendations for African leaders on adopting leadership styles that align with their organizational objectives and environmental constraints to improve change management outcomes.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Leadership Styles

The style of leadership denotes how the leader motivates, influences, and manages the teams. It therefore, has a strong bearing on the ethos of the organization, employee engagement, and overall performance. Several theories and models have been developed, each representing different approaches as far as interacting with employees and overcoming obstacles is concerned.

Perhaps the most famous is Lewin's (1939) division of leadership styles into the autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire categories. In an autocratic style, decisions are made solely by the leader, and a strict compliance is expected by subordinates. While effective in urgent situations, since there is no need to consult others when decisions have to be made, it does have the possible risk that employees might feel a lack of autonomy and, as a result, dissatisfaction. The democratic style involves team members in decision-making by allowing them to participate, thus giving them a sense of ownership and cooperation. It has been associated with high job satisfaction and high teams' performances according to Lewin, 1939. In fact, the laissez-faire style will provide employees with much freedom in how they can do their work. While this may be motivating for a highly skilled team, if not handled carefully, there will be no direction or accountability. Lewin, 1939

Another well-known theory is the transformational and transactional leadership model proposed by Bass (1985). Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers to go beyond their own interests for the sake of the organization and can often do so through a compelling vision and attention to personal development. Transactional leaders emphasize routine and

structure, focusing on rewards and punishments to control performance. Innovation, employee satisfaction, and commitment to the organization have been identified with transformational leadership, while transactional leadership might be more effective in contexts where efficiency and control are at the fore (Bass, 1985).

Goleman (2000) further expanded these into six leadership styles: coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, and coaching. Each style has a different kind of organizational need and situation to which it would be appropriate. The authoritative style, for instance, is considered as one of the most effective because it combines vision with guidance. While the coercive style, relying on the control of behavior, is vital in crisis situations but generally works less effectively to create long-term engagement among employees (Goleman, 2000).

Leadership has been the subject of extensive research, represented in the thousands of academic studies on the subject completed using interviews and surveys compiled by Maisyura et al. (2022). Empirical research in this regard has been informative in terms of going a long way to underpin aspects of human behavior and assumptions that are normally associated with good leadership. Findings have also revealed beliefs surrounding the attributes and qualities that define good leadership. Despite these advances, many still cling to the old thinking that there exists some special blend of traits-like dominance and articulateness, decisiveness, and traditional masculinity-that turns a person into an effective leader (Shah, 2023a).

Gan et al. (2023) explained leadership as a social influence process wherein a leader actively involves subordinates in pursuing organizational goals. However, Virkus & Salman (2021) describe leadership in terms of inspiring others to work towards predetermined results. In this fast-changing world, organizations require professional leaders with profound understanding of modern world intricacies. Generally, an organization's success is deeply dependent on its effective job design and leader's potential to establish good working relationships with its employees (Junnaid et al., 2020b). Results obtained from Checklist 256 confirm that early theories on management and leadership were basically about how the leaders exert power within organizational contexts.

2.2 Forms of Leadership Styles

Leadership styles are the approaches or methods used by leaders to guide, influence, and motivate their teams towards achieving organizational goals. These styles are not uniform and can vary greatly depending on the leader's personality, the organizational culture, and the context in which the leadership is exercised. Over time, scholars and practitioners have identified various leadership styles, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. Understanding these different leadership styles is crucial because they influence employee behavior, job satisfaction, and organizational performance. In this section, we explore several of the most widely recognized leadership styles, providing a deeper insight into their characteristics and implications.

Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leadership is one of the most traditional and straightforward styles, characterized by a leader who makes decisions independently, without input from their subordinates. In

this style, the leader maintains full control over decision-making, giving clear instructions and expecting these to be followed without question. Autocratic leaders tend to exert high levels of control and often engage in a top-down communication approach. While this style can be efficient in situations requiring quick decisions, such as in a crisis or when dealing with routine tasks, it has its drawbacks. Over time, the autocratic approach can lead to a decline in employee morale, creativity, and job satisfaction, as team members may feel disempowered and undervalued (Virkus & Salman, 2021). Moreover, this style may limit innovation, as employees are discouraged from offering their input or creative solutions (Shah, 2023a).

Democratic Leadership

In contrast to autocratic leadership, democratic leadership promotes greater collaboration between leaders and their teams. Leaders who adopt this style encourage participation and input from subordinates when making decisions. Democratic leaders value open communication, idea-sharing, and team cooperation, fostering an environment where employees feel empowered and respected. This leadership style is often linked to higher levels of employee satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty, as workers feel a sense of ownership over decisions and the direction of the organization. Moreover, it has been shown to encourage creativity and problem-solving, as employees are more likely to contribute innovative ideas in a supportive environment (Gan et al., 2023). However, the democratic approach may be less effective in fast-paced environments where quick decision-making is necessary, as the process of gathering input from all team members can delay the decision-making process.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a dynamic and visionary leadership style that focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve higher levels of performance than they initially thought possible. Transformational leaders are known for their ability to inspire change, articulate a clear vision, and motivate employees to align with the organization's goals and values. They encourage personal development and provide support for individuals to grow professionally and personally. This leadership style is particularly effective in organizations undergoing significant change or facing challenges that require creative solutions (Maisyura et al., 2022). Transformational leaders foster a sense of excitement and enthusiasm, and they often lead by example, showing commitment and passion for the work. As a result, transformational leadership is associated with improved organizational performance, innovation, and employee satisfaction. However, its effectiveness relies heavily on the leader's ability to communicate a compelling vision and build strong, trust-based relationships with team members (Shah, 2023a).

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is based on a system of rewards and punishments, where leaders establish clear expectations and provide rewards for meeting those expectations. This leadership style is rooted in the idea of transactions between the leader and the followers: the leader offers rewards for good performance, and employees are expected to meet predefined goals and objectives. Transactional leadership works well in structured environments where tasks are routine and performance needs to be closely monitored (Gan et al., 2023). It is often seen in organizations that

prioritize efficiency and productivity, such as in manufacturing or sales settings. While transactional leadership can be effective for short-term goals and ensuring tasks are completed on time, it has limitations in fostering long-term innovation and employee engagement. Since it focuses on extrinsic rewards, it may fail to inspire intrinsic motivation or promote a culture of creativity and innovation (Junnaid et al., 2020b).

Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership is a more hands-off approach, where leaders provide minimal supervision and allow team members to make decisions on their own. In this style, leaders trust their team members to take responsibility for their work and assume a more passive role in managing daily tasks. Laissez-faire leadership is particularly effective in organizations with highly skilled and self-motivated employees, as it allows individuals to use their expertise and creativity to drive results. This style can foster a sense of autonomy and innovation, as employees are given the freedom to approach tasks in their own way. However, laissez-faire leadership can be problematic in situations where employees lack direction or require more guidance and support. Without clear leadership, teams may struggle with accountability, and important decisions may be delayed (Virkus & Salman, 2021). Additionally, this style can lead to confusion regarding roles and responsibilities, particularly in larger organizations or in teams that require close coordination.

2.3 Organizational Change Management

Organizational change management (OCM) refers to the structured approach used to transition individuals, teams, and entire organizations from a current state to a desired future state, enhancing organizational effectiveness and alignment with evolving business goals. Change management is essential for managing the dynamic shifts organizations encounter, such as technological advancements, mergers, or strategic redirections (Hiatt & Creasey, 2012).

A core concept of OCM is the process model of change; many are familiar with Lewin's three-stage model of "unfreezing, changing, and refreezing." This model proposes that for effective change to take place, organizations must first "unfreeze" existing processes and mindsets, introduce and implement new changes, and then "refreeze" those changes in place as the new norm (Lewin, 1951). While foundational, this model has been extended with more contemporary frameworks, which include Kotter's eight-step model that emphasizes setting the vision, stakeholder engagement, and creating short-term wins to keep the momentum going (Kotter, 1996).

The other important concept of OCM is resistance to change. People may resist change for several reasons: the fear of the unknown, loss of control, and disruption of established routines (Ford et al., 2008). This resistance needs to be identified and managed, as resistance, if left unmanaged, really minimizes the scope of successful change (Dent & Goldberg, 1999). Leaders are also at the center to ensure minimal resistance through effective communications, training, and participation that promote a culture for change to take place (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999).

Cropley and Dark, 2009 outline the three main phases of managing change to include "adjusting to change," "managing change," and "achieving change." During the first phase, the

organizations evaluate whether the people are willing to accept the change at hand and are ready to adapt to other changes afterwards. The second phase deals with the plan and implementation of change in routine matters. Here, the ability to accept change and change incrementally as the process continues, which would facilitate the transition process, is essential. Indeed, Clegg and Walsh (2004) argue that change management today is viewed as one of the most important functions, and it demands strong leadership on the part of management. This strategy recognizes that managing change is a significant activity that requires a responsible assessment of the need for change, an appropriate resource investment to manage internal and external change and the provision of viable alternatives (Mento et al., 2002).

Sirkin et al. (2005) cited that in the early 1990s, Mento et al. (2002) undertook a comprehensive review of organizational change theories, literature, and empirical studies to identify types of organizational change. They explained the use of distinction between planned and unplanned changes and first-order and second-order changes. According to their model, "unplanned change" involves responses to "external influences," while "planned change" is a deliberate act or process that is intended to further the development of an organization's progress (Mento et al., 2002). Moreover, external influences, including the introduction of new technology or the rise of new competitors, may also impact an organization's key operations (Diefenbach, 2007).

Here, organizations should take a positive lead in expanding their ability to change and implement planned changes. First-order changes are those that constitute a modification of some sort in existing systems or processes. Examples include changes to the structure of an organization. These kinds of changes are viewed as "continuous improvement" and have very little impact on the core operations for the company (Sirkin et al., 2005). Whereas, second-order changes are larger in their scope and have deeper reverberations. These changes according to Oakland and Tanner, 2007 are "revolutionary change", as the shifts were not predicted in advance.

Organizational Change research is extended by L. Lewis, 2019. The study discovered that corporate change is very common, though in most instances, it poses huge difficulties for businesses. Innovations, the appearance of new contenders, or changes in customers' expectations force organizations often to strategically change, redistribute resources, or put into action new technologies. Most of the time, they are not at liberty to choose which option to take. It is, therefore, important for the survival and long-term success of such businesses that they be capable of adaptation. Lewis, in 2019, has articulated organizational transformation in the face of new policies and regulatory changes, among other factors like the pursuit of higher profitability, resource management, and overall effectiveness. Zainol et al. (2021a) categorized the driving forces for change initiatives into varying magnitudes and differing impact but all aimed at improving organizational performance.

2.4 Steps to Implement Organizational Change

Novelli Jr et al. (1995) contend that, in general, the successful flow of organizational change hinges on three critical factors: organization culture, leadership, and style of communication. These factors, therefore, lie at the heart of change, irrespective of the underlying catalysts that may have created the need for change. Hansen continues to postulate that the result of

organizational change may culminate into the complete development of new concepts and practices that might, in turn, begin to clash with the previously set standards. This inherent clash could be the main driving force for a change in attitude within the organization to begin to adapt to other new ways of doing things or other strategies.

Hence, the process of organizational change is not only confined to introducing new practices or technologies, but also involves ensuring that employees are actively engaged, motivated, and aligned with the new direction through improved communication, supportive and adaptive organizational culture, and strong leadership to guide and lead inspiration to the workforce. Integrated properly, they can make up an enabling environment that can promote transformational change within the organization. This is more so important, as change has become inevitable in business operations today's dynamic environment, as Naeem (2020) well asserted. However, it should be realized that an overall understanding of the degree to which they facilitation enable change remains incomplete.

Although these uncertainties are present, several organizations still maintain their competitive advantage through constant adjustments in business strategies according to changing market conditions and the adoption of new technological innovations. It is through continuous adaptation that businesses remain relevant and efficient in a constantly changing environment (Naeem, 2020). Therefore, change management has become one of the core philosophies underlying the operations of modern organizations due to its definition of processes and approaches towards initiating, managing, and sustaining organizational change.

Although change management is quite an intricate process, it has to be done if organizational change is to be truly effective. In spite of the fact that they are required to bear challenges and difficulties, the steps involved in managing change have been quite consistent. These include:

- **Strategic Plan Formulation:** The change management process begins with the formulation of a well-articulated and comprehensive strategic plan. By goal, objectives, steps: all these define and summarize the strategic path that needs to be followed to affect the change desired. In simple terms, this provides a roadmap to the organization on how to proceed with this particular issue or change; thus, the purpose and direction will be communicated to all people concerned.
- **Engaging Key Stakeholders:** The next step is to actively involve key stakeholders throughout the organization. This is crucial because a sense of active involvement and collaboration at all levels ensures that employees at every level are invested in the process of change. A positive impact can be created if their buy-in and participation are ensured, leading to ownership and commitment to change that will greatly raise the success rate of implementation.
- **Minimizing ineffectiveness:** The third important ingredient of the process is clear, transparent communication. The employees need to be continuously informed and involved in every step of the change process. Regular communication about the progress, feedback mechanisms, and channels for any communications help to minimize uncertainty and

mitigate concerns that everybody is on board with respect to the goals and action plans of the change initiative. Effective communication will also give clarity to the vision and benefits of the change; thus, it would be easy for the employees to understand and move along with the transition.

- **Supervision and Monitoring:** Lastly, careful supervision and monitoring should be carried out with regards to the implementation of the change to make it successful. This step involves tracking progress, assessing the effectiveness of the change efforts, and making necessary adjustments in order to triumph over challenges or obstacles. By supervising the process of change, organizations are in a position to make real-time corrections and fine-tune their approach so that the change is implemented as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Monitoring also assists in evaluating the outcomes of the change and whether further modifications are needed.

Change in this scenario, as Clegg and Walsh (2004) believes, will target the most critical issues that affect the overall well-being of the organization. This means that it is in such aspects that companies face difficulties in managing increasing challenges. Change management, therefore, highlights the essence of organizational development. Therefore, implementation of a set structured change approach will help companies to navigate the complexities of growth with improved overall performance. Change management, consequently, is not only a process of implementing new ways of practice but also one strategic way of ensuring an organization is able to cope with and surmount rising challenges.

Diefenbach 2007, goes further in explaining the process of change, saying it encompasses various distinct phases that take a specified period of time to be achieved. These phases are interlinked and, in themselves, important to the overall success of the change initiative. None of the phases can be skipped, as this would give the impression of quicker movement while not necessarily pulling along the less dramatic work needed in each stage. The risk here is that the organization may appear to be moving forward at a rapid pace but, in fact, may be making itself less effective in the change process since critical issues are not being fully addressed.

To avoid such pitfalls, Diefenbach (2007) recommends an eight-step approach necessary for realizing organizational change. These steps will guide activities for executing the process of change to ensure that each stage is carried out with the seriousness it deserves. In following this model, an organization will not result in superficial but ingrained and deep-rooted changes that are not only conducive to present challenges but also future ones.

2.5 The Influence of Leadership Styles on on Organizational Change Management

Autocratic Leadership and Organizational Change

Autocratic leadership is characterized by centralized decision-making with a high level of control, usually having a narrow scope regarding facilitating organizational change. In an autocratic structure, the leader himself makes the decisions without collaborating or asking for input from the members of his team. Even though this kind of leadership could be effective in time of

crisis or in situations requiring immediate action, it may face huge challenges when the question of implementing change arises. Organizational change necessitates employee buy-in and involvement; thus, an autocratic leadership approach can deter employees from participating, leading to disengagement and, finally, a decrease in morale, according to Virkus & Salman (2021). For that matter, they might be alienated from the change process and, subsequently, be resistant or not committed to the change process. Besides, autocratic leadership may not accommodate innovation and adaptability, conditions which are vital in managing effective change. However, this style may accelerate the process of change in high-stakes or emergency situations where quick decisions are imperative, though at the cost of long-term employee engagement and satisfaction in general, as Shah (2023a) points out.

Democratic Leadership and Organizational Change

On the other hand, it has been observed that democratic leadership brings more change to organizations. It is a kind of leadership that involves participation and collaboration, wherein the leader elicits contributions from the employees and actively involves them in the decision-making process. Democratic leaders, by including the team members in the process of change, create ownership and accountability, which is vital for the success of any change. Valuing their opinions and making them part of the process would increase employee acceptance of the change (Gan et al., 2023). It provides greater commitment, trust, and innovation since employees feel motivated enough to contribute ideas and solutions. Democratic leadership provides the ground for a resilient workforce amidst complex changes and hence develops the ability of people to respond to new challenges for the success of organizations in the long run. However, the key limitation of democratic leadership in managing change pertains to the tendency for slower decision-making, as extensive consultations may delay actions in rapidly changing environments (Junnaid et al., 2020b).

Transformational Leadership and Organizational Change

Transformational leadership is often considered one of the best leadership styles that can effectively facilitate organizational change. Transformational leaders inspire their teams through a vision of the future and urge employees to perform beyond expectations. They are characterized by their ability to motivate followers to accept changes, innovate, and align their goals with the goals of the organization. The use of transformational leadership can lead to cultural shifts, the inspiration of new ways of thinking and shared sense of purpose, innovation in work, and commitment toward an organization, as argued by Maisyura et al. (2022). Rather, leaders emphasize personal empowerment, growth, and development, which enables employees to more easily assume new responsibilities and adjust to any type of change.

Transformational leaders establish an atmosphere in which employees are not only receptive to change, but also actively engaged in the process and leading the charge with vision and passion (Shah, 2023a).. This could be quite effective when the culture of the organization needs to see a major overhaul or if huge transformation is required. The art of creating a shared vision and mobilizing the employees towards it makes transformational leadership a driver of change. Transactional Leadership and Organizational Change Transactional leadership is based on a reward-punishment philosophy whereby an attempt at stability is

made by seeing that the job is done within set parameters. This can be very effective in cases of large-scale transformation or when the organizational culture needs significant alteration. The art of creating a shared vision and mobilizing the employees towards it makes transformational leadership a driver of change.

Transactional Leadership and Organizational Change

Transactional leadership is based on a reward-punishment philosophy whereby an attempt at stability is made by seeing that the job is done within set parameters. It does not have the grand, inspirational value of transformational leadership; however, in settings where efficiency, performance, and compliance are paramount, transactional leadership may also play its part in managing change. Transactional leaders set clear expectations and provide feedback, often rewarding employees for meeting goals and punishing them for failing to do so.

This type of leadership style can ensure, in a change management perspective, that the employees will strictly follow new processes or guidelines and meet certain milestones of a change venture (Gan et al., 2023). However, the concept of transactional leadership is related to a lack of intrinsic motivation among the employees, who might comply with the change out of obligation rather than commitment or enthusiasm. This might be a reason that people superficially comply with the change instead of fully engaging themselves, which limits the successful long-term outcomes of organizational change. This is also claimed by Junnaid et al. (2020b). Besides, transactional leadership is ineffective in driving innovative initiatives or embracing complex, transformational change.

Laissez-Faire Leadership and Organizational Change

Laissez-faire leadership can be effective and ineffective when considering organizational change. Little supervision is given to members of the team, and most decisions are left to the team itself. On the positive side, laissez-faire leadership allows autonomy and empowers the employees to take responsibility in implementing change that may work effectively for a highly skilled and self-motivated team. This approach can lead to innovation and inventive problem-solving since employees are allowed to test new ideas and solutions; Virkus & Salman (2021). However, without any direction and supervision, the laissez-faire method of leadership may result in fragmented efforts, lack of accountability, and confusion during organizational change. Without clear guidance and leadership, the teams cannot set priorities for the change initiatives and focus their efforts toward the goals of the organization, which leads to ineffective or failed change management.

As stated by Gan et al. (2023), laissez-faire leadership works when employees possess high skills, motivation, and independence. However, this type of leadership may not be functional in those organizations where clear leadership and coordination are required to overcome complex change processes. Unable or less-effective management of change arises because of the teams' failure to prioritize the change initiatives and dedicate their efforts towards the realization of the organization's objectives due to lack of effective direction and leadership. According to Gan et al. 2023, laissez-faire leadership is effective whenever the employees demonstrate independence, self-motivation, as well as high levels of ability and competence in service delivery. However, such leadership might not work in the organizations that require

clear and distinct leadership and coordination within complex change processes.

3.0 Method

This quantitative research design was descriptive in nature and focused on the impact of leadership styles on organizational change management in Ghanaian organizations. The descriptive design was appropriate because it effectively describes the relationship between variables and provides a comprehensive overview of the existing phenomena without manipulation, as stated by Creswell (2014). It focuses on the design of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles that explained how every style influenced the effectiveness of change management.

The target population for the study included employees and managers in the educational, healthcare, manufacturing, banking, and telecommunication industries of Ghana. In these organizations, the wide-ranging perception of how different leadership styles affect change management was captured by this extensive population.

It employed stratified random sampling to target both state and national levels, ensuring that all levels were given an equal opportunity until a sample size of 300 was achieved.

A stratified random sampling gave representation, without bias, from the balanced groups for good generalizability of the research study in each of the cases, Cohen et al. 2013 explains.

Analyzing the data, the occurrence of responses was summarized into frequency distribution, a way of presenting data to clearly outline any trend in the data. Furthermore, descriptive statistics were implemented to compile participant responses and characteristics, and correlation and regression analyses were implemented to ascertain the correlations between leadership styles and change management success, all with the assistance of SPSS V. 2022. This analytical method offered a structured analysis of the relationship between the effectiveness of organizational change and specific leadership styles (Virkus & Salman, 2021).

On the issue of ethical considerations, the research adhered to strict ethics. Participants had given informed consent before data collection, with full knowledge of why the study was being undertaken and that at any given time they could withdraw. Confidentiality was strictly assured by anonymizing responses to maintain participant identities for ethical integrity in the research process (Creswell, 2014).

4.0 Discussion of Result

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Information

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	160	53.3
	Female	140	46.7
	Total	300	100.0
Age	20-29 years	90	30.0
	30-39 years	120	40.0
	40-49 years	60	20.0

	50+ years	30	10.0
	Total	300	100.0
Education Level	High School	40	13.3
	Bachelor's Degree	150	50.0
	Master's Degree	90	30.0
	Doctorate	20	6.7
	Total	300	100.0
Organizational Role	Junior Staff	120	40.0
	Mid-Level Manager	100	33.3
	Senior Manager	50	16.7
	Executive	30	10.0
	Total	300	100.0
Years of Experience	0-5 years	100	33.3
	6-10 years	80	26.7
	11-15 years	70	23.3
	16+ years	50	16.7
	Total	300	100.0

The gender distribution was quite balanced, with 53.3% males and 46.7% females. This helps in balancing the view on leadership experiences and perceptions to a relatively unbiased view in this study, ensuring that insights are representative of male and female perspectives on leadership and change management.

The age group of 30-39 years was the largest among participants, taking 40.0% of the sample. This would therefore

imply a workforce that is mostly in the early to middle stages of their careers, usually the most active in the processes of organizational change. The next biggest group was 20-29 years, at 30.0%, indicating a sizable proportion of younger employees. The 40-49 years age group constituted 20.0%, while the group of employees who were 50 years and over constituted only 10.0%, indicating that the older employees were underrepresented in this study.

Most of the participants reported holding a Bachelor's degree, 50.0%, followed by those holding a Master's degree, 30.0%. A smaller proportion of the sample reported having only a high school education, 13.3%, while the Doctorate holders were the smallest group, 6.7%. This would mean that this is a well-educated workforce, as 86.7% have at least a Bachelor's degree, which may provide a subtle understanding of leadership styles and change management.

Junior staff represented the largest proportion, 40.0%, followed by middle managers at 33.3%. The share of senior managers was 16.7%, and that of executives stood at 10.0% only. This indicates that data mostly reflects the view of junior and middle-management levels of employees, who bear the brunt of the leaders' decisions and change policies. The diminished representation of senior management and executive-level employees may suggest that there are fewer high-level insights into strategic change management, but it enables a comprehensive comprehension of operational-level impacts.

Representation of the participants was quite heavy with early-career professionals, who constituted about a third (33.3%) with 0-5 years of experience. Another 26.7% of the participants had 6-10 years of experience, while 23.3% had been employed for 11-15 years. The percentage of individuals with more than 16 years of experience was a mere 16.7%. This implies that the sample comprises a variety of experience levels, with the highest proportion of participants occurring within the early and mid-career stages. The study's perspectives may be influenced by recent experiences with leadership and change, as the proportion of highly experienced respondents is relatively low.

4.2 The impact of different leadership styles on organizational change management within Ghanaian organizations

Variable	B (Unstandardized Coefficient)	SE (Standard Error)	β (Standardized Coefficient)	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval
Constant	1.180	0.330	-	3.576	0.000	[0.531, 1.829]
Transformational Leadership	0.550	0.110	0.480	5.000	0.000	[0.333, 0.767]
Transactional Leadership	0.270	0.095	0.220	2.842	0.005	[0.083, 0.457]
Laissez-Faire Leadership	-0.140	0.100	-0.120	-1.400	0.162	[-0.338, 0.058]
Autocratic Leadership	0.190	0.085	0.160	2.235	0.026	[0.022, 0.358]
Democratic Leadership	0.420	0.105	0.370	4.000	0.000	[0.212, 0.628]

Source: Field Data, 2024.

The regression results emphasize that transformational leadership is a substantial predictor of successful organizational change management. Transformational leadership is a potent force

in the pursuit of effective change, as evidenced by its high standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.480$) and p-value of 0.000. Transformational leaders, who are recognized for their vision, inspiration, and capacity to inspire employees to transcend

personal interests for the organization's benefit, establish an environment that is conducive to the adoption and execution of change (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013). In the Ghanaian context, where organizations frequently encounter swiftly evolving business landscapes, transformational leadership enables adaptation by fostering high levels of employee engagement and innovative thinking. This style's positive correlation with change effectiveness implies that transformational leaders are capable of cultivating a culture that is forward-thinking, a critical attribute in the competitive and ever-changing market of today.

In the same vein, democratic leadership has a substantial positive effect on the efficacy of change management, as evidenced by a standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.370$) and a p-value of 0.000. Democratic leaders promote participative decision-making, which enables employees of all levels to participate in the change process. This inclusivity fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among employees, as they perceive that their contributions are appreciated in the development of the organization's future (Gastil, 1994). In Ghanaian organizations, Democratic leadership can be a valuable approach for facilitating change, as employee morale and engagement are critical for seamless transitions. The data suggests that employees are more inclined to endorse organizational change initiatives when they are actively engaged in decision-making, thereby improving the overall efficacy of the organization.

Change management effectiveness is also positively correlated with transactional leadership, albeit to a lesser extent than democratic or transformational leadership ($\beta = 0.220$, $p = 0.005$). Transactional leaders emphasize explicit structure, rewards, and penalties, which can be advantageous for overseeing short-term objectives and specific tasks that are essential for the implementation of change. Bass (1990) posits that transactional leadership is beneficial for maintaining accountability and ensuring that employees meet immediate change-related goals, despite the fact that it may not inspire long-term innovation. This is supported by the style's substantial positive relationship with change effectiveness. Transactional leadership may be a beneficial addition to transformational leadership in the Ghanaian workplace, particularly when changes necessitate rigorous adherence to timelines and measurable outcomes.

In contrast, the efficacy of organizational change management is slightly diminished by laissez-faire leadership, despite the fact that this effect is statistically non-significant ($\beta = -0.120$, $p = 0.162$). Laissez-faire executives adopt a hands-off approach, providing employees with significant autonomy and providing minimal guidance. This can promote independence; however, it fails to provide the necessary direction and structure during periods of transition, frequently resulting in employee confusion or a lack of motivation (Skogstad et al., 2007). Laissez-faire leadership appears to be ineffective in Ghana, where organizational change may necessitate clear guidance and frequent communication to surmount resistance.

Interestingly, the efficacy of change management is positively and significantly correlated with autocratic leadership ($\beta = 0.160$, $p = 0.026$). Autocratic leaders are distinguished by their directive approach, which frequently involves the implementation of unilateral decisions and the provision of explicit, detailed directives (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). Autocratic leadership, while typically associated with low employee engagement, can be effective in situations where rapid, decisive action is required, such as during the early stages of change or in crisis situations. The data indicates that autocratic leadership can be effective in Ghanaian organizations for the purpose of rapidly initiating and directing change, particularly when employees require immediate direction and motivation.

The findings indicate that the most effective leadership styles for organizational change management in Ghana are democratic and transformational. In environments where change is frequently met with resistance or skepticism, the emphasis on vision, inclusivity, and employee engagement of these styles is particularly effective. Transactional leadership also makes a positive contribution by establishing the requisite structure and accountability for the successful implementation of change. Autocratic leadership, although restricted, plays a role in the facilitation of rapid change through directive action. Nevertheless, laissez-faire leadership appears to be counterproductive, as it lacks the structure and guidance required to effectively manage change.

4.3 To examine how cultural and organizational factors in Ghana affect the effectiveness of various leadership styles in driving change

Table 3: Regression Analysis for the Impact of Cultural and Organizational Factors on Change Management Effectiveness in Ghanaian Organizations

Variable	B (Unstandardized Coefficient)	SE (Standard Error)	β (Standardized Coefficient)	t-value	p-value	95% Confidence Interval
Constant	1.550	0.320	-	4.844	0.000	[0.918, 2.182]
Cultural Factors (Collectivism)	0.260	0.070	0.230	3.714	0.001	[0.122, 0.398]
Power Distance	0.150	0.060	0.180	2.500	0.014	[0.031, 0.269]
Uncertainty Avoidance	0.120	0.065	0.140	1.846	0.067	[-0.009, 0.249]
Organizational Hierarchy	0.200	0.075	0.210	2.667	0.008	[0.052, 0.348]

Source: Field Data, 2024.

Cultural Factors

Collectivism significantly predicts the efficacy of organizational change management: $B = 0.260$, $\beta = 0.230$. With a p-value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$), it is clear that a collectivist culture in Ghana, characterized by shared goals, mutual aid, and harmony, enhances cooperation and minimizes resistance to change. This

leads to the increased effectiveness of managing change by making the employees inclined to cooperate and support the goals of the organization. The p-value of 0.014 ($p < 0.05$) means that the power distance coefficient ($B = 0.150$, $\beta = 0.180$) moderately but positively influences the effectiveness of change management. A moderate power distance in Ghana shows that employees in Ghana

will generally accept a hierarchical structure and authorities in organizations, making the decision-making process less problematic during change. Greater acceptance of authority fosters an organization where employees are more willing to follow leadership's lead in times of change; hence, organizations will be more likely to make effective changes.

Uncertainty avoidance has a positive but marginal influence on organizational change management with $B = 0.120$ and $\beta = 0.140$, a p-value of 0.067 which is therefore, $p < 0.10$. This presupposes that though Ghanaian employees may prefer structured change process and clear guidelines, its correlation to the effectiveness in managing changes is less clear-cut when compared to that of the other factors. A p-value just over the common threshold for significance (0.05) would indicate that the effect is less sure but still potentially valuable, especially in industries that value predictability and stability.

Organizational Factor

The unstandardized coefficient for organizational hierarchy, at $B = 0.200$, $\beta = 0.210$, is significantly positive, related to change management effectiveness, $p = 0.008$ ($p < 0.05$). This is because in a more hierarchical organization, well-defined structures of decision-making and roles and responsibilities may

serve as guidelines to lead employees through the complications of change. In Ghanaian organizations where authority and structure are upheld with respect, a strong hierarchy aids in passing information down, giving direction and controlling the process of change, hence the easy transition.

The regression analysis shows that both cultural and organizational factors contribute significantly to the effectiveness of organizational change management in Ghana. Cultural factors, especially the collectivism aspect, engender a collaborative environment promoting teamwork and minimizing resistance to change. Power distance also greatly aids in allowing employees to accept hierarchical authority, which facilitates decision-making during change. Uncertainty avoidance, while less important, reflects an orientation towards clear instructions and stability of change processes. Last but not least, organizational hierarchy is the determining factor, in that it provides the structure needed to manage change effectively by defining roles and responsibilities within an organization.

4.4 Recommendations for African leaders on adopting leadership styles that align with their organizational objectives and environmental constraints to improve change management outcomes

Table 4: Perceptions of African Leaders on Adopting Leadership Styles for Effective Change Management

Statement	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Leaders should adapt their leadership style based on the specific organizational goals and challenges.	40%	45%	10%	4%	1%
Transformational leadership is most effective in driving organizational change in African contexts.	38%	42%	15%	4%	1%
Autocratic leadership is suitable for managing change in organizations with a strong hierarchical structure.	25%	50%	15%	7%	3%
Participative leadership helps foster employee involvement and commitment during times of organizational change.	48%	40%	8%	3%	1%
Leaders should consider environmental constraints (e.g., economic challenges, cultural differences) when adopting a leadership style.	52%	40%	5%	2%	1%
Democratic leadership styles are more effective in organizations where employees are highly skilled and independent.	44%	41%	10%	4%	1%

Source: Field Data, 2024.

An overwhelming 85% of the leaders that took part in the study agreed that leadership styles must be aligned with organizational goals and challenges, with 40% strongly agreeing and 45% agreeing. This means that leaders are aware that different organizational goals and challenges demand different approaches in leading people. Another 10% were neutral, while only 5% disagreed with the statement. Additionally, 80% in total (38% strongly agree, 42% agree) of the leaders reported their agreement that transformational leadership is effective in bringing out organizational change in an African setting. This kind of leadership has been considered particularly effective at times of change because it empowers and motivates people to higher levels of performance and inspiration. Only 15% were neutral, while 4% disagreed with this.

Also, 75% of leaders agreed that autocratic leadership is suitable for managing change in organizations with a strong hierarchical structure, while 25% strongly agreed and 50% agreed. This means that for situations where decisions are to be made quickly and with clear direction, autocratic leadership is still

perceived to be appropriate, where decisions are made at the center and authority rests at the top. The rest, 15%, were neutral, while 10% disagreed with this statement. Besides, an extremely high percentage (88%) of leaders responded that participative leadership is effective in encouraging employee involvement and commitment during organizational change, while 48% strongly agreed and 40% agreed, 8% were neutral, and only 3% disagreed. This therefore suggests a strong belief in the benefits accruable from involving employees in decision-making processes.

A full 92% (52% strongly agree, 40% agree) of leaders indicated that a leadership style should take into consideration the environmental constraints such as economic challenges, political instability, and cultural factors. Only 5% were neutral whereas 3% disagreed with this statement. Also, 85% (44% strongly agree, 41% agree) of leaders agreed that democratic leadership is effective in organizations where the employees are skilled and independent. Only 10% were indifferent, while 5% of the responses disagreed. This evidences a strong liking for the leadership style whereby the

competent employee is in a position to make the decision and own the result of their work.

Results give useful insights into how African leaders view the relationship that may exist between leadership styles, organizational culture, and environmental constraints as drivers of successful change management. A strong preference for transformational and participative leadership styles suggests that African leaders enjoy being involved, motivated, and inspired in times of change. While the leadership is still autocratic in most hierarchical organizations, leaders admit that their style has to change with external constraints such as economic conditions, political factors, and organizational culture. These findings hint at the complexity of leadership in African organizations, where leaders have to balance internal organizational dynamics with external environmental factors in managing change. The data suggest that it would be appropriate if the development of flexible approaches to leadership by African leaders continue-being sensitive to culture and in their context, both organizational goals and responsive to environmental challenges.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

In light of that, the examination of leading styles and its effects on managing change in organizations using samples of various Ghanaian organizational entities turn out to give some idea of how contemporary leadership concept evolution and organizational changes come along with greater influence exercised through the aspect of leading. It established that under the organizational perspective and specific environmental contingencies, every leadership style would eventually exercise certain unique value: transformational, autocratic, participative, or democratic.

The key findings of the research were that there was overwhelming agreement that leadership styles must be adapted to align with organizational goals and the external environment. The vast majority of leaders in Ghanaian organizations believed that flexibility and adaptability are the most important characteristics in leadership, and especially in transformational and participative leadership styles, which would help to motivate and engage employees in times of change. The preference for transformational leadership would indicate a trend toward inspiration, vision, and employee empowerment, while participative leadership is seen as necessary for building employee commitment and minimizing resistance to change.

However, it also allowed that autocratic leadership still manifests itself in organizations where there exists strong hierarchy and decision-making demands urgency and clarity in authority; therefore, despite a growing importance on more inclusive approaches, traditional autocratic style, thus, applies to more contextual situations with highly organized and centralized companies.

More critically, on how to apply an appropriate approach to leadership style, the current research provided further indications that external issues such as economic issues, political instability, as well as cultural concerns, may have to be considered down the line. According to these leaders of various Ghanaian companies, with a view to the relevance of the practice of leadership continuing and being effective for achieving organizational transformation,

leadership styles were considered as not being applied uniformly by. Instead, they believe that the external variables should be addressed in order to ensure that management styles are effective. This highlights the importance of leaders being able to safeguard the organization's ethos and principles while also being able to adapt to circumstances and respond appropriately to challenges from the outside.

5.2 Recommendation

Adopt a Flexible Leadership Style

Perhaps the core of the recommendations goes to the fact that African leaders should be flexible in leadership matters. The study established that the kind of leadership styles such as transformational and participative leadership is very important in terms of organizational change since it fosters motivation, commitment, and engagement among employees. On the other hand, these findings also denoted that leaders should be able to adapt their styles of leadership according to organizational context. It also implies that a single style of leadership could not be effective in all contexts; leaders must be willing to make adjustments in regards to organizational goals pursued, external environmental circumstances, and challenges encountered. In contrast, a flexible approach in leadership would better equip leaders for changes through which desired organizational outcomes could be achieved.

Invest in Leadership Development Programs

The study has also suggested that organizations should invest in various leadership development programs, which will enhance the leader's skills and abilities to manage change effectively. The training in leadership should also aim at a range of leadership styles, mainly transformational and participative leadership, which is evidenced to engage employees and promote successful change. Such development opportunities will enable leaders within organizations to respond to the complexities of organizational change while enhancing their motivational and inspirational role with teams. Continuous leadership development will also prepare the leaders to cope with the fast-moving business environment and lead organizations with more agility and foresight.

Engage Employees More Actively in the Change Process

The second important recommendation is to involve employees more actively in the process of change, especially within participative or democratic forms of leadership. Indeed, results suggest that employee buy-in is a critical success factor of change management. Organizational ownership develops the element of participating and contribution by employees in the formulation process. The approach will do away with resistance to change while at the same time developing employee satisfaction and commitment toward the organizational goals. Where employees feel that their views count, the chances for a successful change initiative are a little higher since they start to support the change and are more willing to actively participate in making it work.

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