



## **Leadership Behaviours: Sources of Trust and Job Satisfaction**

*by*

Awah, Florence Elochukwu  
Department of Human Resource Management  
Sheffield Hallam University  
City Campus, Howard Street, Sheffield,  
S1 1WB, UK.  
[Flora.elochukwu@yahoo.com](mailto:Flora.elochukwu@yahoo.com)

### **Abstract**

*Job satisfaction is important to organisational progress. Numerous researches suggest that job satisfaction can be achieved in organisation through trust in leadership. Studies show that trust in leadership can be gained through transactional leadership behaviours. But, the findings in the literature on some of the transactional leadership behaviours which lead to trust in leadership and job satisfaction show inconsistency with each other. So, the current study aims to explore the transactional leadership behaviours that could engender trust and job satisfaction within their employees. Qualitative research was conducted and data were collected from employees of one of the private organisation in Sheffield, United Kingdom, using semi-structured interview. The data were analysed using thematic method and the transactional leadership behaviours which could attract trust in leadership and job satisfaction were detected.*

**Key words:** Transactional leadership behaviours, Job satisfaction, Trust, Employee, Organisations.

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### **1. Introduction**

In 2016, job satisfaction in the United Kingdom is said to be at its lowest for over two years. Although, job satisfaction reduced in all sectors, low levels of job satisfaction were most significant amongst private sector organisations (CIPD, 2016). This is argued to have resulted in 24% of employees in the United Kingdom to seek new job opportunities (CIPD, 2016). However, Job satisfaction is important for organisational success as well as employees' wellbeing. Research on previous literature indicates that organisational performance depends very much on the satisfaction of its employees (Gilstrap and Collins, 2012; Spector, 1997). Due to when employees are satisfied in the workplace, they exhibit positive attitudes which can add to organisational success (Baron

et al, 2006 cited in Chiboiwa et al. 2011). Evidence from Robbins and Judge (2015) affirm that organisations which consist of employees with high level of job satisfaction are likely to have better organisational performance than those with less satisfied workers. This is as a result of unsatisfied employees being less committed and less inclined to work towards organisational goals.

Moreover, when employees are not satisfied with their work, there will be high tendency of them searching for alternative job opportunities (CIPD, 2016; Lok and Crawford, 2004). A key concept which has been found to have significant influence on job satisfaction is trust in leadership. Research shows that when there is trust in leadership, it will have a positive influence in increasing individual's job satisfaction (Casmir, 2006; Braun et al, 2013). In investigating how trust can be gained in leadership in order to have job satisfaction, studies indicate that transactional leadership behaviours can attract trust in leadership and job satisfaction. (Gillespie and Mann, 2004; Sayadi, 2016).

However, despite the existence of numerous literatures which identified that transactional leadership behaviours can lead to trust in leadership as well as job satisfaction, there are inconsistency in almost each of the leadership behaviours which can engender trust in leadership and job satisfaction. The current study therefore, aims to determine the leadership behaviours that could engender trust and job satisfaction of employees. In facilitating this aim, the following question will be answered: what are the transactional leadership behaviours being experienced by the employees that could engender trust in leadership as well as job satisfaction?

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***Trust***

The magnitude of trust has been stressed by many researchers (Vickers, 2008; Kramer, 1999; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Kramer and Cook, 2004). Although there is an argument that it has little if at all any impact in business (Williamson, 1993). Research shows that having trust in an organisation is essential for competitive advantage (Lamsa and Pucetaite, 2006; Barney and Hansen, 1994) in the war for talent (Hurley, 2006). However, according to Galford and Drapeau (2000), if there is no existence of trust in an organisation, employees will spend more time on politics; rumour as well as searching for a better place. Furthermore, terminal and expensive problem can occur as a result of distrustful environment (Hurley, 2006). The preceding argument suggests that trust is important in an organisation. Therefore, any organisation that wants to succeed as well as retain its employees should build trust in its employees. Before reviewing the literature that focused on trust in leadership, it will be ideal to understand the meaning of trust.

### ***Definition of trust***

Different people have given different definition of trust. According to Mayer et al (1995) trust is a willingness of a party to take risk and accept the actions of another party with expectation that the trustee will carry out the function that trustor is in need of, even

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without being monitored or controlled by the trustor. Rousseau et al (1998, p 395) defined trust as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intention or behaviour of another”. Even though different researchers have different definition of trust, they all realized that trust involves taking risk. In other words, people can only accept to develop trust when they know that their expectation will be fulfilled in return.

### ***Trust in leadership***

The importance of trust in leadership has been highlighted by many scholars (Bass 1997, 1990; Grover et al, 2014; Dirks and Ferrin, 2002). Study of the previous literature shows that leadership which is made up of trust offers numerous positive outcomes in organisations. Trustworthiness is one of the elements that matters a lot to employees. Bass (1990); Mineo (2014) identify that effectiveness of leadership can be supported when employees perceive that their leader is trustworthy. For example, Madjar and Ortiz-Walter (2009) found that psychological safe environment can be promoted when employees have trust in their supervisor. This is because existence of trust between leaders and followers enables settling of dispute politely (Galford and Drapeau, 2000). Also, Davis et al (2000) report that turnover can decrease in an organisation as a result of management being trustworthy. When employees perceive that their manager is trustworthy, they will be satisfied with their organisational leadership which will in turn affect their behaviour and reduce their intent to leave.

### ***Leadership theory***

Leadership according to Yozgat and Mesekiran (2016) is an attribution that depends on the perception of employees. Northouse (2015) defined it as a process that occurs between individual and group by which an individual influence a group in order to achieve a set goal. According to Bass (2003) transactional leadership is one of the leadership theories that have played part in understanding of leadership. Studies show that transactional leaders build trust amongst their followers (Podsakoff et al, 1996; Gillespie and Mann, 2004).

### ***Transactional leadership***

Transactional leadership according to Northouse (2015) is a type of leadership that exchange gift. It uses three factors to ensure that followers respond to organisational goal: contingent reward; active management by exception and passive management by exception (Bass, 1997). The first factor is contingent reward. It implies that transactional leader uses reward to exchange effort of the followers (Northouse, 2015; Bass, 1985 cited in Jung and Avolio, 2000). Leaders and followers make an agreement on what needs to be done and what the reward will be on completion of the task (Sayadi, 2016; Northouse, 2015). The reward encourages followers to work towards expectation of their leaders. But, when promises are not fulfilled, it damages trust and makes employees to feel betrayed (Robinson and Rousseau, 1994).

When leaders clarify employees on what they need to do, recognize and reward them on completion of their tasks, employees identify them as being competent. Therefore, they can gain employees trust. However, second factor is active management by exception. This is where leaders ensure that followers do not deviate from what is expected of them by monitoring their performance and intervening with corrective action immediately when noticed any deviation (Bass, 1997). Consequently, followers can be punished for not complying with the expected standard (Bass et al, 2003). Then, the last factor is passive management by exception. According to Bass (1997), in passive management by exception, leaders fail to intervene with warning about deviation from what is required, but intervene only when mistake is noted.

Nevertheless, numerous research have found that there is relationship between transactional leadership and trust (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Jung and Avolio, 2000; Gillespie and Mann, 2004). But, the extent to which followers will trust their leader will depend on the followers' perception of the leadership behaviours of their organisation. Gillespie and Mann (2004) identified that transactional leader can develop trust in their follower by offering reward that depends upon attainment of goal. But, Podsakoff et al (1990); Jung and Avolio (2000) reported that contingent reward of transactional leadership does not have any effect on followers trust in their leaders. However, the above reports shows that the transactional leadership behaviours which could influence employee trust and job satisfaction are contradicting.

### ***Job satisfaction***

One of the most studied phenomena is job satisfaction (Liao et al, 2009; Chiboiwa et al, 2012; Hosie, et al, 2006). Spector (1997) simply defines job satisfaction as the extent to which individual appreciate their job. Locke (1976, p 1300) refers to job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience”. The importance of it to organisation as well as to employees has been recognized in literature (Spector, 1997; Tesfaw, 2014; Kim and Min-Park, 2014). Study shows that job satisfaction is an antecedent to organisational performance (Gilstrap and Collins, 2012; Spector, 1997). This is due to job satisfaction can have impact on how employees behave in an organisation such as, behaviour towards customers (Arnett et al, 2002), organisational commitment (Liao et al, 2009; Kim et al, 2005) and absenteeism (Shield, 2007). According to Chiboiwa et al (2012); Kim et al (2005) satisfied employees take additional steps in carrying out their task which is vital for the attainment of organisational target.

However, dissatisfied employee will be less committed and also have intention to find another job (Robinson and Rousseau, 2014; Lok and Crawford, 2004, Robbins and Judge, 2015). Though, Kim et al (2005) found that job satisfaction does not affect intention to leave present job.

### **3. Job satisfaction theories**

Job satisfaction is underpinned by Herzberg motivational theory. Herzberg (1987) propounded motivational theory which identified the factors that lead to satisfaction and dissatisfaction. According to Herzberg cited in Shield (2007) two different sets of factors determines employees work behaviour: motivators which comprises of recognition, work itself, achievement, responsibility and advancement; and hygiene factors which comprises of supervision, working condition, interpersonal work relation, pay, security, status and employer policy and administration. Motivators are determinants of job satisfaction and they are intrinsic in nature whereas, hygiene factors do not satisfy or motivate instead, reduction of it leads to dissatisfaction and they are extrinsic in nature (Shield, 2007).

#### ***Job satisfaction and trust in leadership***

According to Shield (2007) job satisfaction do not accidentally occur. Research shows that one of the causes of employees' job satisfaction is trust in leadership (Gibson and Petrosko, 2014; Podsakoff et al, 1996; Butler et al 1999; Gilstrap and Collins, 2012). Managers are responsible for most of the duties that plays major role in employee's job satisfaction such as job performance appraisal (Rich 1997), feedback which has also been identified as sources of trust in leadership that leads to employees' job satisfaction (Podsakoff et al, 1996, 1990; Butler et al, 1999). More so, Mcneese (2001) reports that, recognitions; praise and thanks; were described by nurses as important to job satisfaction. When there is trust in leadership, due to the positive emotions that are linked with trust, followers are likely to have higher level of satisfactions.

### **4. Research Methodology**

In order to gain a better understanding of the leadership behaviours that could engender trust and job satisfaction of employees, qualitative approach was used to gather data following semi-structured format from employees of one private organisation in Sheffield, United Kingdom. Sample of eight participants were drawn. Sampling was adopted to enable in-depth understanding of the leadership behaviours that engender trust and job satisfaction in employees. However, with qualitative interview, research shows that researcher can collect reliable and valid data which are relevant to the research aim and objective (Saunders et al, 2012). Before conducting the main interview, two pilot studies were carried out to determine the reliability of the questions in achieving the objective and answering of the research questions. The studies were also conducted to test if participants will understand what is required of them in the interview questions. The researcher used the ideas gathered in the pilot study to restructure the wordings of the main interview questions. Furthermore, the strategy helped the researcher to take note of the questions that participants might not be comfortable to answer.

Nevertheless, before commencing the research, the researcher obtained permission from the organisation's manager who approved that the company staff should participate in the study but, indicated that the organisation's name should not be used in the research. The researcher sent a copy of participant information form together with

consent form through email to the manager of the organisation who then emailed same to the participants. The forms were read and signed by the employees who indicated their interest to participate. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed to respondents through the use of consent form not only to protect participants' privacy but as well to encourage honesty and evade bias responses. A face to face interview was conducted between the researcher and a single participant at a time. The interview took place in one of the meeting rooms in the organisation.

Furthermore, Participants were encouraged to share their experience through the use of open-ended questions and probing. During the interview, the interviewees were able to answer questions from their own experience and as well gave example for clarification. The researcher also asked participants for clarification on any response that was not clear in order to get what the participant meant. The interviews were audio-recorded as well as written on paper. Just as Ritchie et al (2014) states, some of the interviewees used gesture to communicate their meaning. After the data collection, the researcher downloaded transcription software (Transcribe player) which helped to slow down the recording for easy transcription.

As Bryman and Bell (2015) noted, conducting interview, transcribing it and analysing the transcript consumes time. Qualitative interview gives opportunity to generate rich detailed answer compared to quantitative study (Bryman and Bell, 2015). In analysing the findings, a verbatim transcription of the audio records were carried out by the researcher. After the transcription, the scripts were read again while listening to the recording and signs were included were appropriate. The transcripts were anonymized to avoid identification of the participants. Moreover, the researcher analysed the data collected qualitatively using thematic analysis. In order to identify the emerging themes from the data collected, every respondent script was read in-between lines and the statements were assigned code (that is, phrase or word that captured action). After the coding, some of the codes appeared many times. The scripts were read again and the recurring codes and the related ones were made concise by categorizing them together. However, some of the coded data that were not relevant to the research question or the research objective were dropped. Nevertheless, after categorizing the coded data, the researcher revised the categories and the related categories were grouped under one theme. Each theme will be used as a heading of a section during results discussion.

## **5. Results and Findings**

The respondents communicated the transactional leadership behaviours that influence their trust and job satisfaction.

### ***Reward and feedback***

Financial reward is one of the behaviours that all participants mentioned but, they talked about it in different ways. For some of the participants, it is the main reason why people work, whereas for others, financial reward may not necessarily satisfy them. But, for the remaining interviewees it is the condition in which the reward is administered that

will determine their trust in the leadership and their satisfaction. For instance, one of the participant states that it is the main reason why people engage in employment but, it does not grant people full job satisfaction.

*“I think the first reason why people work is because they need money maybe to pay rent, pay expenses and so on. I think is the first motivator. I don't think it's the motivator that keeps people in the job and I don't think is the motivator that makes people hundred per cent happy or satisfied. But, if you take that out everything else falls down. It's a bit like the foundation of a building if we use that as an example. If we didn't have a foundation we can still have a building but, I don't think the building will last long. It will fall down but, it's not something that people focus on every day, when you go to building you focus on the building, Oh! It is a nice building. You don't go that's a nice foundation. So, people can be motivated financially and it's not just about how much people are paid but, it is also about making sure that they get paid on time or paid correctly because that can also be a problem. So, in financial reward it is important to remember that it's not just how much you are paying that satisfies employees, it's the way in which they are paid”.*

For some of the participants, financial reward has an influence on job satisfaction. But, it is more about the condition in which they are paid. Another Participant argues that:

*“If you are not being paid very well for something that you feel you are doing very well, it can lead to bad feeling. I am quite comfortable in terms of I know or I feel I am getting a good pay for the work that I do”.*

Although some of the participants illustrated that money does not influence them, they recognized that money can lead to trust and job satisfaction when you pay people fairly and at the right time. One shared:

*“I think paying people at appropriate time and fairly can also make them to know that their organisation is capable and make them satisfied. Ermm... giving them some quid for good work can help as well. Though, my salary doesn't really make a big difference to me, am more about having fun doing what am doing before money to be honest”.*

For others, financial reward is not enough to make one have job satisfaction. For example one participant notifies that:

*“... money is important but, I don't like if I was in this job and there was another job that is paying me more money but didn't have the same element that would make me feel good at the end of the day. I will rather stay in the job that makes me feel good and paid me less than take more money for a job that wouldn't make me feel happy”.*

Similarly another participant illustrates that:

*“If you do a good job and you get paid it doesn't make you feel more satisfied because you know you have done it good and you deserve the money”.*

Participants also highlighted their manager providing them with feedback. Most of them pointed out that recognizing that they have done things well and telling them thank you, you have done a good job make them to feel happy with their job. Furthermore, some emphasised that providing them with negative feedback without atom of positive feedback does not make sense. They stressed that there has to be element of where they are doing well in their negative feedback for it to capture their trust and satisfaction. But, others said that providing them with negative feedback makes them feel emotional. For example, one participant revealed that giving people positive feedback can go a long way in satisfying them. He said:

*“... I think if you stop people in the corridor and just say thank you, you have really done a good job, keep up the good work. Just that kind of constant motivation, it might not just be ermm... giving him hundreds of pound as over time”.*

But, another participant pointed out that given only negative feedback can demoralize employees. Therefore, it needs to be mixed up. This is what he said:

*“The bad feedback I think it's extremely important that there are some positive element in there otherwise it can seriously demotivate the employees.*

In contrast, some of participants prefers only positive feedback and never appreciated negative feedback. This is what one stated:

*“So, we have been told hey guys you really did good job today or am very impressed or thanks a lot for doing that. ...And whenever am being appreciated it makes me feel satisfied and makes me to work harder. It's like positive reinforcement. So, if am told am good am doing so really well it makes me feel great but, if am told am doing rubbish it makes me feel what's the point [...].*

### ***Providing clear ambition and clear strategy***

It was also noted from the data collected that providing clear ambition and clear strategy is something that all participants talked about in relation to trust and job satisfaction. For example, some participants discussed it as things a leader supposed to be clear of. One of them said:

*“I think it's important that you need to know exactly where you want to take the organisation, in order to be able to take it forward. And to be able to a kind of use the support you have gotten within the team to make that happen. I think he got a kind of clear strategy of where he wants the organisation to be”.*

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Another interviewee made it clear that knowing exactly what the organisation ought to achieve and how to achieve it will help employees to work towards achieving that target. He said:

*“Being clear of what the organisational goals and priorities are I think makes it really good for us to understand what we are working towards. At least people know that the items one, two and three are the priorities and these are the things that we need to do to get those things done”.*

## **6. Discussion**

The main reason of the current study is to understand the transactional leadership behaviours being experienced by the employees that can lead to trust in leadership and job satisfaction.

### ***Reward and feedback***

The current study discovered that rewards obtained from transactional leadership do not directly engender trust in leadership nor influence job satisfaction. Reports from early research show that provision of contingent reward by transactional leader does not have any effect on employees trust in leadership (Herzberg, 1987; Podsakoff et al, 1990; Jung and Avolio, 2000) but, it has influence on job satisfaction (Sayadi 2016). The findings from the current study contradict with Sayadi (2016) findings. However, it correlate with Podsakoff et al (1990); Jung and Avolio (2000) argument as most of the participants shared that with financial reward they may not necessarily have trust in their organisation’s leadership as well as job satisfaction. But, it seems to be different from their findings as participants’ responses show that financial reward can only have indirect positive influence on trust in leadership and job satisfaction.

Most of the participants shared that being paid on time, being paid correctly and fairly are the only conditions that can make contingent reward have influence in their trust in leadership and job satisfaction. This confirms Dirks and Ferrin (2002) statement that the extent to which followers will trust their leader will depend on fairness they perceive in the leadership behaviours of their organisation.

However, it was also found that participants recognised provision of feedback as one of the leadership behaviours that leads to trust in leadership as well as job satisfaction. This finding seems fit with Podsakoff et al (1996, 1990); Butler et al (1999); Mcneese-Smith (1997) report that giving employees feedback are source of trust in leadership and job satisfaction. Moreover, Herzberg (2003) motivational theory reveals that job satisfaction occurs as a result of intrinsic motivator caused by employees’ recognition. Responses from all the participants of this study support Herzberg (2003) theory since they shared that praise and recognition make them to feel satisfied with their job. More so, some of the participants also made it clear that positive feedback makes them feel great and that they are never comfortable with negative feedback. This is also in line with Mcneese-Smith (1997) reports that positive comment by managers was

perceived by nurses to have the main effect on job satisfaction, that negative feedback especially in the time of stress reduces job satisfaction.

### ***Providing clear ambition and clear strategy***

Responses in the current research show that participants see providing clear ambition and clear strategy as behaviour that leads to trust in the leadership and job satisfaction. Some of the participants illustrated that making clear what the organisational goals are and how those goals can be achieved help them to know what they are working towards. Therefore they will be willing to trust their leader and as well have job satisfaction. Findings from the current study align with the Jung and Avolio (2000); Zhu et al (2013) statement that by making expectations clear to employees and the extent to which their contribution can lead to the achievement of the vision, transactional leader can develop some trust in employees.

## **7. Practical implications**

Job satisfaction has often been shown as the main cause of employees' turnover. However, it has emerged that most of leadership behaviours are strong determinant of job satisfaction. As a result of this, the findings of the current research suggest that there is need for human resource development professionals to consider leadership behaviours when offering training to leaders in organisations. Additionally, human resource practitioners should use leadership behaviours as a measure for evaluation of people in the leadership.

The study further revealed that contingent rewards can only indirectly lead to trust in leadership and job satisfaction. Therefore, leaders should make sure that they fulfil their promises through making sure that their employees are paid fairly, timely and completely in order to develop trust amongst their employees and enhance job satisfaction levels.

It further recommends that organisations should ensure that there are sufficient mechanisms in place during the recruitment process to assess the abilities of applicants to develop trust when applying for leadership positions. This in essence will help to increase the level of employees' job satisfaction because employees would have trust in their organisational leadership which will in turn reduce the level of intent to leave present job.

## **8. Limitation and implication for future research**

Even though this study has helped in gaining insight on transactional leadership behaviours which could lead to trust in leadership and job satisfaction, some limitations were noted during the study. The limitations and suggestions for future study are highlighted below:

This study involved only employees as participants. A future research should undertake similar study with employees and managers combined as subject in order to compare employee's perception of the transactional leadership behaviours that could lead to trust in leadership and job satisfaction with the management perception. Furthermore,

this study made use of qualitative approach; qualitative research is a method that gathers data in which participants have different perception and different answers for a particular question or event. Even though interpretation of responses in qualitative research may lead to bias of meanings, qualitative research adds depth to the findings of this study. It also gives account of how participant perceived the leadership behaviours which may not be as meaningful if quantitative methods were used. This is due to quantitative method focus on numerical representation which may not be as effective when looking at personal issues.

The current research used small organisation as case study. Some of the participants during their interview responses highlighted that leaders in small organisation are more supportive than leaders in large organisation. It would be prudent for future research to be conducted in a large organisation for better understanding of employees' perception on providing support. Moreover, some of the leadership behaviours as compounded by Podsakoff et al (1990) did not emerge in this study. Maybe future research should study employees from different organisation instead of employees of one organisation.

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