

# ***RESEARCH PROPOSAL***

***What is the impact of leadership style and strategy on Business Performance and Transformation?***

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## **AC 1.1. Formulate and record possible research project outline specifications.**

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Abstract

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## AC 1.2. Identify the factors that contribute to the process of research project selection

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### The Problem

Rolsen n.d) suggested Five Questions for Good Research:

1. *What is the problem to be solved?*
2. *Who cares about this problem and why?*
3. *What have others done?*
4. *What is your solution to the problem?*
5. *How can you demonstrate that your solution is a good one?*

### The Research Question/Topic

The research question evolves from the problem/s identified to be researched. It guides and focuses the research. Because it is the topic it must be 'clear and focused....to present your unique argument' (Duke Writing Studio, 2017, sec 1).

The requirements for the RESEARCH PROPOSAL as provided by (Wong, n.d; Colbourne College, 2017):

### The Abstract

Summarizes the topics in the major issues in the research, the methods and methodology used to approach the study, and the justification and results of the study.

### The Introduction

Provides the background or context for the study, the objectives of the research – that is what the study aims to achieve, and the scope and key terms of reference associated with the research topic.

### The Literature Review

Takes a critical evaluation of the literature in the topic areas and discusses how these impact the issues to be studied. That is, the literature review identifies and highlights the major works, themes and models in the field that will be guiding the study and critically review them.

### The Methodology and methods of the research

The research methods describe how you will be doing the research and justifies various elements of the approach such as: *'the methodological approach you intend to employ. What implications does your approach have for your research design and methods? Research Context (e.g. industry sector, organization) What is the context of your proposed research? Key features, characteristics! Why is it a suitable context? Who will be studied? How many? How will they be selected (i.e. sampling)?'* (p. 2). It also looks at the methods for data collection, steps in the process, ethical concerns, and how the data will be collected and analyzed.

### Discussion section

This section of the research paper organizes and analyses the findings in the research using various analytical methods.

### Conclusion

This is a discussion of the main findings and interpretation of the results produced by the study.

### Recommendation

Allows the researcher to make specific commendations based on the results of the findings. These recommendations must be implementable with specific actions, timelines, and resources.

## AC 1.3 Undertake a critical review of key references.

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*See the Literature Review section in AC 1.4 below.*

### ABSTRACT

The research is carried out to assess the impact of leadership styles and strategies on Business Performance and Transformation. The mixed method study was undertaken in the higher education context in Jamaica and surveyed 40 participants ranging from leaders, administrators, employees and students to achieve the research objectives: (1) to assess the business needs and requirements of higher education in Jamaica; (2) to evaluate leadership role in business success; (3) to explore different leadership approaches with strong track-record of successful organizational change and transformational leadership; and (4) to justify exemplary and effective leadership strategies and practices for higher education in Jamaica.

Critical review of the literature finds that today's competitive business environment requires the effective use of leadership styles that will encourage buy-in and positive behaviors. Authentic leadership, transformational leadership, and change management models such as Lewin's force field, three stages of organizational change, ADKAR, and Kotter's eight steps were commonly recommended models for improving leadership and for sustainable change. Further, the survey uses questionnaires to assess how people work through the lens of how the leadership style of managers in their organizations hinder or increase their productivity and motivation them. The analysis of the findings took the form of mixed methods: qualitative analysis where it was necessary to interpret the answers from the participants using theory to construct meanings; and quantitative methods to study the frequency of certain answers to identify and compare trends and themes to reach a conclusion. The underpinning findings is that leaders' actions towards workers directly impact the quality of employees work and their level of customer care.

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Background: Purpose And Scope Of The Research*

This paper is undertaken to develop research skills and demonstrate learning outcome stated in unit 4: Research Project. The research question enabled the exploration of leadership styles and strategies that anyone can use for leadership effectiveness in higher education institutions for a more productive, profitability and effective system that can meet its stakeholders' needs. To achieve the objectives, the researcher will: study different leadership styles and models; examine stakeholders' experiences to determine how workers' productivity and certain leadership styles align; critically evaluate the styles and strategies of effective leaders; and why others fail. The researchers are undertaking this study to find literature relevant to the research question: *What is the impact of leadership style and strategy on Business Performance and Transformation?* The literature review will serve two primary reasons: the first is to identify and summarize existing research on leadership approaches to assess prior studies on the impacts of the leadership strategies on the employee performances and the second reason is to evaluate approaches as it apply to the research question and provide the solutions for exemplary and positive change leadership behaviors in higher education business (smumn.edu, 2015). Quantitative and qualitative research methods are two acceptable ways of conducting research. However, a combination of the two is acceptable and represent a mixed approach. Quantitative research uses two main design approaches: experimental and sway design. Experimental designs use random or non-random research subjects for defined conditions or testing environments. On the other hand, qualitative research methods enable valuable data through observations (Bcps.org, 2015).

#### *Aims And Objectives Of The Research*

1. To assess the business needs and requirements of higher education in Jamaica.
2. To explore different leadership approaches with strong track-record of successful organizational change and transformation in higher education.
3. To justify exemplary and effective leadership strategies recommended and in the context of higher education business and marketing leadership in Jamaica.

## CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **Leadership Requirements In The Business Environment**

There are many possibilities as there are complexities to successfully navigate the business of higher education to provide wider access, reduce cost, and improve student services. As the world changes, so do society. The new world requires leaders and managers who are forward-looking and forward-thinking at the helm (Drucker, 2001) to competently direct institutions through these daunting and multi-faceted challenges resulting from globalizing economy and ever-changing technology, and the new generation of workers with specific needs (Fallon, 2014). Considering these many challenges institutions face today, their successes are defined by leadership effectiveness but because leadership is multi dimension and there are no rules of the thumb to identify the genuine leaders who are likely to succeed.

### **Leadership Strategies**

Leadership strategy is everything that the organization does to gain competitive advantage (Lowell, 2014) in this environment. This includes all actions and practices, which must be brought in line with the vision. The ultimate objective of leaders in higher education system is to meet the needs and requirements of the stakeholders (**Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action, 1998**) for a customer-focused and profitable system.

### **Style Theory**

The assumption from House and Mitchell's Path-Goal Theory assumption reinforces the theory that people are best motivated to higher performance, thus more effectively and productively, when leadership styles are applied more appropriately. In so saying, one leader can garner higher performance from the worker than another leader who employs a different style. Hammuda & Dulaimi (1997) noted that leadership styles can be assessed along the directive and participative continuum with major differences based on the way the leader makes decisions in the organization. The variance they identified are "from an extreme directive leader, decisions are made without referring to follower's suggestions... However, in the participative style, group members actively participate in the decision-making process." Tannenbaum and W.H. Schmidt provided an interesting perspective that there are ranges of styles between the two extremes on the leadership continuum and where a leader is positioned is based on "his/her personality, the nature of the individuals in the work group, the nature of the traditions and values of the organization, and the pressures of time on decision making" (cited by Hammuda & Dulaimi, 1997 p. 26). Kurt Lewin also contributed three styles of leading people which are commonly referred to: democratic or participative, autocratic, and laissez faire leadership styles. Here the democrat engages people in the decisional processes, the autocrat makes the decision and pass the outcomes down to the workers for action, and the laissez faire leader allows the workers (primarily skilled people) to make the decisions concerning the work processes (Changingminds.org, 2015).

### **Human Relations Theory**

The Hawthorne Studies and the research of Mayo and Roethlisberger found that interpersonal relationships and influences of others were directly linked to worker's productivity. Participation can influence how worker's view work and if "they were given the opportunity to discuss them and exercise some influence on the decisions that affected their jobs", the result is higher performance (2012books.lardbucket.org, 2015, sec. 2). Bennis, (2014) framed the metric of leadership effectiveness - 'core competencies' - as leadership strategy-to partner capability. That is, the ability to liaise the task successfully with others to expand the organizational capacities. He expressed effective leadership as relationships with others and the ability to inspire hope but on the same hand, an awareness of the dangerous and inflexible devices than bring the organization down. This knowledge he deemed important in the fast changing and global economy today with seemingly insurmountable challenges that are impacting organizational environments and forcing rapid change actions.

### ***Transforming The Organisation***

For lasting change, Lewin's unfreeze, change and freeze change model provides leaders in higher education to take their organizations through a three-step process of change. That is, the leaders should clearly identify the problem, create broad vision for everyone to succeed, and impress upon everyone the

urgency of solving the challenges identified (Kotter, 2006). Once everyone agrees to the change plan for improving behavioral practices and better meeting the needs of the people can be implemented, unfreeze the organization. During the change process, leaders should encourage communication (Bennis, 2009), input in decision-making, feedback, training, and creativity while the organization is changing. Once relationships improve between leaders and workers in the organization, a more desirable culture will replace the old. Leaders will be more emotionally and socially intelligent (Goleman, 2005), leadership styles will improve, workers' productivity and efficiency levels will be optimized and customers will be happy. Freeze the organization at this point of goal attainment and continue to managing its development.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

### ***Selecting the Appropriate Methods of Study.***

To carry out this research the mixed research method is used to study leadership approaches that have, and will generate positive outcomes to meet organizational desirable targets in higher education business. Literature review (using secondary data) and surveying and interviewing real people (primary data) were the primary methodology selected to accomplish the research objectives.

### ***Secondary Search***

This is the critical review of published literature: books, journals, dissertations, computer databases, and internet material were evaluated and used (Learning, n.d.). Google scholar was used to find contemporary books on leadership study; various websites such as Forbes, Harvard Business Review; Kotter International and other leadership, change management and higher education articles were identified. These provided useful sources for literature on leadership studies that enable a wide and critical discussion around business and leadership issues and strategies in higher education.

### ***Primary Search***

*Questionnaires/Surveys:* specific questions and other prompts were created for the 40 participants - leaders, administrators, workers, and students in the higher education sector in Jamaica - to share their experiences of leadership and the results studied. The participants for the survey were selected through industry networking, and social media over an eight-week period. Ethical concerns such as how to protect the participants' confidentiality were addressed by assigning each respondent a fictitious name that we used consistently in labelling and transcribing the conversations (Learning, n.d.).

### ***Justifying The Mixed Method Approach Selected To Achieve The Research Objectives***

Both qualitative and quantitative research techniques are used to evaluate and share the important findings that emerged from the research. The Qualitative method is used to interpret the findings from the surveys and interviews. For the interview the following steps were followed (Bcps.org, 2015):

1. Transcription and organization of the data as the first stage of the analysis.
2. After, there is the systematical analyzing of the transcripts,
3. Grouping together comments on similar themes and
4. Attempting to assess, compare and interpret them. Discourse Analysis allows for a number of different approaches to analyzing the written, spoken and sign language assessed.
5. Finally, drawing conclusions and making recommendations.



The data was further grouped and analyzed using quantitative methods to identify the frequency of common themes and trends. The implications of this mixed method are that both qualitative and quantitative research techniques are used to analyze, find common themes, compare, and share the important findings that emerged to achieve the research objectives (Learning, n.d.).

## DISCUSSION

The research question was appropriate because there is keen interest today in leadership. Effective leaders are required for organizational sustainability and despite innumerable works and many established models to support the field, there are still gaps that exist in developing genuine leaders today to effectively transform their institutions in a positive way. The research produced a body of findings that add value to the profession through depth of analysis of leadership styles and strategies using both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Research success included getting people engaged in reflecting on how leaders handling of workers can impact their morale and productivity, how good leadership styles and strategies can help to make the business of education to succeed, and hold themselves accountable for their development and success.

### **Assessing Validity and Limitations of the Research Sources**

The advantages and disadvantages of different sources used in the literature search as identified by (Sagepub.com, 2015) are: “books take longer to be published than journal articles. Internet material might be very recent, but its quality is highly variable. Journal articles are typically the best source for knowledge of recent research and articles in good journals undergo rigorous review before being published”.

The main disadvantage of the quantitative method is that people experience things differently and so the accounts they provide of their interactions and perspectives may be biased as well as they may not be wholly honest. Also, if the questions are ineffective, the data collected will also be ineffective (Learning, n.d.).

The major limitations were time and evidencing. The study was conducted over an eight weeks’ period so the time was insufficient time to visit the participants at work in their environments and on a case-by-case basis, effectively observe the interactions between leaders and workers and match the emerging themes from the study in the work contexts. If any or all the respondents were biased in their presentation of leadership behavior in their institutions, then the analysis of this flawed data will produce equally unreliable research results.

### **Further Study**

An extensive case study inside the work organization will be more effective to evaluate leadership in practice ‘to find out how much, how many, how often, to what extent’ by looking at the direct encounters and analyzing and describing (Learning, n.d. sec. 2) the responsiveness or reticence of the workers to the leader’s style of governing situationally and wholly.

**AC 1.5. Provide an appropriate plan and procedures for the agreed research specification**

TIME PERIOD, DEADLINES, AND BENCHMARKS FOR JANUARY 9 – MARCH 10, 2017

<b>Timeframes</b>	<b>Research Activities</b>	<b>Costs</b>
JAN 9 - 13	Review the requirements for the term-paper. Forming Discussion Forum Groups (GDF)	n/a
JAN 16-20	Reviewing literature on Research Projects And Methods Completing Research Assignments In The GDF Discussing and agreeing on appropriate research methods and methodology for the assignment with my peers Agreeing On the Resources Availability And Cost Reviewing Secondary Literature For The 'Critical Review Of Literature' Section of my paper. Developing Questionnaires for the Survey *	* \$50
JAN 23-27	Reviewing literature on Research Projects And Methods Completing Research Assignments In The GDF Discussing the Research Specification Discussing the Secondary Literature For The 'Critical Review Of Literature' Section Contacting participants for the Study via Social Media And Phone* Conducting the Field Research*	*250 *1,500
JAN 30-3	Reviewing literature on Research Projects And Methods Completing Research Assignments In The GDF Collating and analyzing the Literature collected Writing up the report in the Literature Review Organizing the Findings from the survey and transcribing the interview notes	
FEB 6-10	Reviewing literature on Research Projects And Methods Completing Research Assignments In The GDF Organizing the Findings from the survey and transcribing the interview notes	
FEB 13-17	Completing Research Assignments In The GDF Analyzing the Research Findings	
FEB 20-24	Completing Research Assignments In The GDF Compiling The Research Report	
FEB 27-3	Reviewing and editing per the specifications Printing The Report	*\$1,000
MAR 6-10	Submitting the Research Proposal	
MAR 13-17	Celebrating the completion of the Research Proposal – Good Job!	
<b>TOTAL COST:</b>		<b>\$2, 800</b>

## REFERENCE LIST

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