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Supportive Leadership Style and Staff Motivation in Private Universities in Uganda: Case of Kampala International University

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Supportive Leadership Style and Staff Motivation in Private Universities in Uganda: Case of Kampala International University

Chrisostom Oketch [α] & Tumwijukye Ruth Komunda [σ]

Abstract- This study examined the effect of supportive leadership style on staff motivation in private universities in Uganda taking a case of Kampala International University. The study was guided by two specific objectives: (i) to examine the effect of supportive leadership style on energy to work among staff in Kampala International University, and (ii) to examine the effect of supportive leadership style on sustenance of behavior among staff in Kampala International University. The study hypothesized that (i) "supportive leadership style has no significant effect on energy to work among staff in private universities in Uganda" and (ii) "supportive leadership style has no significant effect on sustenance of behavior among staff in private universities in Uganda". The study adopted a descriptive correlational design to collect data from a sample of 111 respondents with the aid of self –administered questionnaire. Research findings on objective one revealed that managers of Kampala International University offer support to staff by being friendly and approachable. However, they don't show concern to employee general welfare, and do not equitably treat them so as to create a conducive work environment for all. Objective two findings revealed that employees report to work on a daily basis as a result of support received and that there's cooperation with co-workers. However, it was discovered that supervisors don't help staff overcome challenging assignments. The study concludes that supportive leadership style has a positive and significant effect on staff motivation in private universities in Uganda calling the need for supervisors to support employee needs and aspirations. The study recommends that management of private universities in Uganda should treat employees with fairness and equity so as to create a conducive work environment, and reconsider strategies of task accomplishment especially helping their employees overcome challenging assignments.

I. Introduction

In modern academic and scholarly environments where universities and other tertiary institutions are confronted with stiff competition, the need to have managers who exhibit appropriate leadership style that can allow employees accomplish their tasks with ease becomes very paramount. As a result, every institution of higher learning has a responsibility of getting the best out of their workforce and in this respect, the leadership style applied plays such a crucial role since it is the key to directing workers towards the performance of certain behavior desired as being beneficial to the institution's goal accomplishment (Chaleff, 1995). In addition, for leadership to be capable of enhancing institutional goal attainment, it is important that the style applied is congruent to the motivational needs of employees. (Argyris, 1976; Maslow, 1954).

Supportive leadership aids the accomplishment of goals and objectives among subordinates through identification of particular courses of action, the provision of help and ensuring that the set organizational goals have got a bearing on how individual/ employee goals will be attained as well. In this respect therefore, a supportive leadership approach that puts emphasis on attending to the general welfare of subordinates by attending to their needs and aspirations leads to an energized workforce who feel loved by their leaders and this boosts their motivation to work. The above requires leaders who know their day to day mandate of supporting others through counseling, mentorship and guidance along goal attainment. Therefore, such deep rooted leaders help their followers through the creation of favourable work environments that promote respect, trust, cooperation, and psychological support (Daft, 2005; Gibson et al., 2000). Therefore, a workplace enriched with supportive leadership style ushers in positive outcomes where both organizational and individual goals are accomplished simultaneously.

Oluseyi and Ayo (2009) present effective leadership styles where the role of the leader is to devise mechanisms of getting things done with and through the people. Therefore, Leadership becomes an important characteristic that enhances improved institutional productivity since the support rendered by the leader induces employee motivation and hence their psychological commitment to the organization. Avolio and Bass (1995) argue that supportive leaders show concern towards their subordinate's plight by ensuring that all employees in the organization achieve desires end that are organizational related and individual since they are helped on how best to face reality. Research by Dumdum *et al*., (2002) and Judge and Piccolo (2004) study on supportive leadership style found out that there is a direct effect of supportive leadership on employee performance. Therefore, where the leader is concerned

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with their employee's needs and aspirations, goal attainment becomes a reality and this induces employee motivation to work.

II. Problem Statement

Supportive leadership style is believed to motivate staff members as a result of the help rendered to staff by the managers towards task and goal accomplishment and this in turn, enhance employee dedication and commitment to the organization since the environment is deemed conducive for performance (Steinmetz, 2000). Apparently, leadership behaviors in private universities in Uganda seem to take more of directive style so as to create a work atmosphere of employee engagement as well as a defined chain of command. However, whereas directive leadership style is appropriate to management of staff in private universities in Uganda, it is not sufficient enough to trigger intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among staff as a result of feelings of being pushed. As a result, motivation of staff remains a big concern evidenced from high turnover rates that has a negative bearing on the quality of education given to students. Therefore, if this situation is not addressed, many graduates from private universities will remain unemployed as a result of lacking appropriate skills required by employers. It is against the above atmosphere that this study set out to examine the contribution of supportive leadership style on staff motivation in private universities with a view of fostering an appropriate management of staff which in turn ushers in commitment on the part of employees as a result of the support and help received from their super-ordinates.

a) General Objective

The study examined the effect of supportive leadership style on staff motivation in Private Universities in Uganda taking the case of Kampala International University.

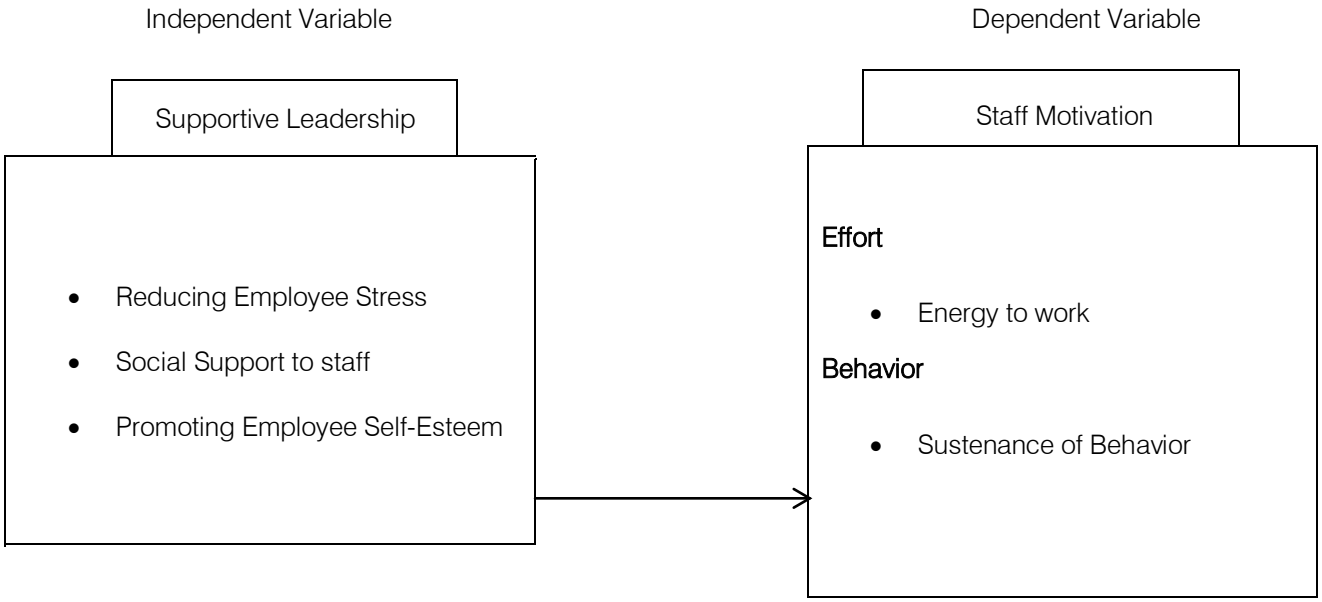
b) Specific Objectives

1. To examine the effect of supportive leadership style on energy to work among staff in Kampala International University.
2. To examine the effect of supportive leadership style on sustenance of behavior among staff in Kampala International University.

c) Hypotheses

3. Supportive leadership style has no significant effect on energy to work among staff in Private Universities in Uganda.
4. Supportive leadership style has no significant effect on sustenance of behavior among staff in Private Universities in Uganda.

d) Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher developed using ideas of House (1971) and Fiedler (1967)

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework depicting the nexus between supportive leadership style and staff motivation

Figure 1 above depicts the relationship between supportive leadership style and staff motivation in private universities in Uganda. The independent variable (supportive leadership) is measured in terms of (reducing employee stress, social support to staff & promoting employee self-esteem) conceptualized to have a significant effect on staff motivation measured in terms of (energy to work &sustenance of behavior).

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From the afore going, the study hypothesizes that once managers set the pace by supporting employee needs and aspirations, their effort and behavior to work takes a positive direction and vise-versa.

III. Literature Review

a) Supportive leadership style and staff motivation

According to House (1971), a manager's responsibility is to aid the accomplishment of goals and objectives among his subordinates through identification of particular courses of action, the provision of help and ensuring that the set organizational goals have got a bearing on how individual/ employee goals will be attained as well. In this respect therefore, a supportive leadership approach that puts emphasis on attending to the general welfare of subordinates by attending to their needs and aspirations leads to an energized workforce who feel loved by their leaders and this boosts their motivation to work. The above requires leaders who know their day to day mandate of supporting others through counseling, mentorship and guidance along goal attainment. Therefore, such deep rooted leaders help their followers through the creation of favourable work environments that promote respect, trust, cooperation, and psychological support (Daft, 2005; Gibson et al., 2000). Therefore, a workplace enriched with supportive leadership styles ushers in positive outcomes where both organizational and individual goals are accomplished simultaneously.

According to Leka *et al*., (2004), one of the main factors behind stress at work is the failure to apply supportive leadership style. This has been compounded by House (1996) who reported that when employees are faced with psychological and psychical issues at work, supportive leadership becomes paramount to offer the needed support ranging from confidence building, counseling and guidance to allow such employees deal with their stressors. In his study in the education sector, Chan (1998) observed that faculty employees who were faced with high stress levels were more prone to psychological distress. Therefore, the help given by the supportive leader helps deal with anxiety and feelings of frustrations which in turn induces staff motivation. In this case, the Ugandan Educational Sector needs to devise appropriate mechanisms capable of helping staff deal with stressors at the workplace.

According to Rowld and Schlotz (2009), supportive leadership (individualized consideration) improves job performance. This is because workers perceive the helping hand and behavior from the leader to be instrumental towards dealing with stressful environments and circumstances in which they find themselves in. Not only do employees need support from their leaders but from their fellow colleagues as well. This is because they spend a great deal of time socializing and sharing their issues together. Therefore, finding workmates who are supportive to one another also boosts employee morale to work.

In their study, Beehr and Love (1980) affirmed that workers who get social support from both their co-workers and leaders get it easy to deal with any stressing factor or issue at the workplace given that they share their challenges on a daily basis and hence, a problem shared is a problem half solved. Such findings therefore, confirm the notion that employees prefer a supportive work environment where they are helped to deal with a number of challenges that comes their way in the course of performing their day to day cores. These findings are in congruence with the Path Goal Theory as developed by House and Mitchell (1974).

Imtiaz and Ahmed (2009) in their study further established that subordinates without adequate help and support from their supervisors and managers are more likely to register low productivity relative to those who receive the help desired to help accomplish their day to day assignments. From the above evidence from their research, it can be argued that employees without adequate support both from their supervisors and co-workers are more likely to register low performance as a result of the stressing situations in which they find themselves in. This as a matter of fact reduces their motivation to work and vice versa (Rose, 2003).

In a related event, Bass (1990) points out that supportive leadership style has the potential of creating a significant effect on staff motivation. In with the above, Bass, *et al*.; (1999) observe that there are at least five leadership behaviors that can induce motivation among employees. These ranges from team building initiatives, ability to delegate and involve staff in decision making, offering support to employees, ability to develop employees to their full potential, and being in position to recognize their contributions towards attaining organizational desired ends. This was further proven by Butler et al, (1990) whose study established that supportive leadership behavior reduces labour turnover as a result of individualized support which in turn induces employee motivation to work.

In their study on the effect of leadership styles on employee motivation, Khuong and Hoang (2015) established that supportive oriented leadership style has a significant influence on motivation of staff. Under the leadership style, organizational workers gain a number of advantages ranging from skill building and the need to develop a cooperative work environment which in turn leads to better performance and hence being motivated to work. Therefore, supervisors and managers ought to follow such a leadership behavior that shows concern to their subordinates since it helps buy their commitment and psychological contract to the organization as a result of being motivated by the actions of their leaders.

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Literature on supportive leader behavior reviewed reveal the importance of helping employees get their tasks accomplished with much ease. This is the direction adopted for this study as well though with a critical emphasis on how best employees need to be supported so as to arouse their motivation. This has not been the focus of the reviewed studies since most of them relate supportive leadership to employee performance. But the assumptions adopted for the current study is that motivation induces job satisfaction and hence staff motivation which in turn leads to task accomplishment. Research findings established that that supportive leadership style is positively correlated to staff motivation in Kampala International University and at the same time, it is a good predictor variable of staff motivation.

IV. Methodology

The study used a descriptive correlational design in collecting data from respondents who consisted of academic and administrative staff. The design enabled the investigation of contemporary phenomena in the area of management (leadership styles and staff motivation) thereby enabling the respondents to describe real phenomenon of the problem under investigation let alone enabling the researcher in measuring the extent of the relationship between the variables under consideration.

From a population of 173, 120respondents were chosen using Slovens Formula who participated in the study through answering a self-administered questionnaire. However, One Hundred Eleven (111) questionnaires were retrieved, edited, coded and analyzed by the researcher.

In ensuring validity and reliability, the research instrument was subjected to review by content experts who rated them for wording, relevancy, and omissions, from where a content validity index of (CVI = .814 and .877) made the instrument to be declared reasonably content validity (Amin, 2005). Reliability was ensured through pre-testing and Cronbach Alpha reliability statistics of (.876 & .887) was computed and hence rendering the instrument reliable and consistent (Cronbach & Shevelson, 2004) as illustrated on Table 1 below.

Table 1: Showing validity and reliability test

Factor	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha	Content Validity Index
Staff motivation	14	0.876	0.814
Supportive leadership style	06	0.887	0.877

Data obtained from questionnaires was edited, coded and responses entered into computer using Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) software from where frequencies, percentages, means, correlations and regression analysis tests were computed as presented below.

V. Results

a) *Objective One: Effect of supportive leadership style on energy to work among staff in Kampala International University*

The first objective of the study examined the effect of supportive leadership style on staff energy to work in Kampala International University. The objective was measured using Five (5) items and respondents were requested to rate their opinion on a likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4= Agree; to 5= Strongly Agree. Their responses were edited, coded and analyzed as summarized in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Descriptive results for Supportive leadership style and energy to work among staff in Kampala International University

Supportive leadership styles	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	Mean	
Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
Your Head of Department/ Supervisor is friendly to you at work and this induces your motivation to work	1.8		10.8	47.7	39.6	4.234	0.785
Your managers are easily approachable and this makes you motivated to work	2.7	5.4	9	48.6	34.2	4.063	0.946
Managers show concern for your general welfare and in the process buy your motivation to work	9	24.3	24.3	34.2	8.1	3.081	1.129

You are treated equally by your respective managers and this makes you motivated to work	9	20.7	23.4	36.9	9.9	3.180	1.145
Managers create a conducive work environment for all which ushers in motivation to work	8.1	15.3	28.8	36.9	10.8	3.270	1.103

Source: Primary Data, 2016

Table 2 above suggests that whereas the respondents agreed that their supervisors are friendly (Mean = 4.234) and are approachable (Mean=4.063), they expressed being unaware as to whether managers show concern for their general welfare (Mean=3.081); being treated equally (Mean=3.180), and creating a conducive work environment for all (Mean=3.270). This gives the implication that issues of staff general welfare have not been given the due attention it deserves, staff are not treated equally across the board and staff operate in un conducive environment.

All the three areas missing out above in the university have a strong bearing on staff motivation given that employees prefer employers that look into their general welfare, able to treat them equally according to their respective ranks in line with the equity theory of motivation and they also desire conducive work environments.

b) Hypothesis One Testing

From the first objective of this study, it was hypothesized that "supportive leadership style has no significant effect on energy to work among staff in private universities in Uganda." To test the null hypothesis, a correlation analysis was computed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and significance statistics and below are the results Table 4.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation results between supportive leadership style and energy to work among staff (Level of significance = 0.05)

		Supportive leadership style	Staff energy to work
1. Supportive leadership style	Pearson Correlation	1	.575**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	111	111
2. Staff energy to work	Pearson Correlation	.575**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	111	111

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).p≤ 0.05*
Source: Primary data, 2016

Results in Table 4 above indicate a positive and significant effect between supportive leadership style and staff energy to work (r = .575; p = .000) at the 0.05 significance level. Thus, staff energy to work is affected by the leader's ability to support employees accomplish their tasks through appreciation of the efforts they put forth in the workplace.

c) Regression Analysis

So as to establish the extent to which supportive leadership style affects staff energy to work, a regression test was conducted and results are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 4: Regression Analysis results between supportive leadership style and staff energy to work

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	575[a]	.330	.324	.42553

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supportive Leadership
b. Dependent Variable: Staff energy to work

The Coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square) value is .324 indicating that supportive leadership style explains 32.4% variation in staff energy to work in Kampala International University.

The researcher further carried out a regression Coefficient statistics on supportive leadership style and staff energy to work as presented in Table 6 below.

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Table 5: Regression Analysis Coefficient on supportive leadership and staff energy to work

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	2.086	.181		11.553	.000
Supportive leadership	.362	.049	.575	7.332	.000

a. Dependent Variable: staff energy to work

Source: Primary Data, 2016

Table 6 suggests a positive and significant effect between supportive leadership style and staff energy to work (t = 11.553; Sig. = .000). Table 6 further suggests that supportive leadership style is a good predictor variable of staff energy to work (β = .575; Sig. = .000) implying that for every increase in value of supportive leadership style by .575, staff energy to work increases by one unit and vice versa. This indicates that supportive leadership style significantly affect staff energy to work. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant effect between supportive leadership style and staff energy to work is rejected leading to acceptance of the alternative hypothesis to the effect that "there is a significant and positive effect between supportive leadership style and staff energy to work in private universities in Uganda".

d) Objective Two: Effect of supportive leadership style on sustenance of behavior among staff in Kampala International University

The second objective of the study examined the effect of supportive leadership style on sustenance of behavior among staff in Kampala International University. The objective was measured using Six (6) items and respondents were requested to rate their opinion on a likert scale ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4= Agree; to 5= Strongly Agree. Their responses were edited, coded and analyzed as summarized in Table 7 below:

Table 6: Descriptive results for Supportive leadership style and sustenance of behavior among staff in Kampala International University

Sustenance of behavior	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)		
Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev.
The support received from work make you report for work on a daily basis	6.3	11.7	9.0	19.8	53.2	4.018	1.293
Your supervisors create and help with overcoming challenging assignments	22	35	19.8	15.1	8.1	2.409	0.889
The support you receive at work is appropriate in enabling you accomplish your assignments in time	1.8	3.6	19.8	38.7	36	4.036	0.933
You receive adequate support from your co-workers and this induces substance of behavior	00	00	3.6	44.1	52.3	4.486	0.569
The support you receive from supervisors is adequate in enabling you accomplish work expected of you	26.1	47.7	18	6.3	1.9	2.336	0.887
You like challenging assignments and this induces your motivation to worker harder	3.6	8.1	11.7	45.9	30.6	3.918	1.036

Source: Primary Data, 2016

Table 7 reveals that respondents agreed about reporting to work on a daily basis as a result of support received (Mean = 4.018), support received at work is appropriate in enabling accomplishment of assignments in time (Mean = 4.036), cooperating with co-workers (Mean = 4.486), and liking challenging assignments (Mean = 3.918). However, they disagreed about supervisors creating and helping overcoming challenging assignments (Mean = 2.409), and support received from supervisors being adequate in enabling accomplishment of work expected (Mean = 2.336). These findings indicate that whereas staff of Kampala International University are able to sustain appropriate behavior as a result of support received from their supervisors, they are not helped in areas of overcoming challenging assignments as well as being helped accomplish work expected of them and this in one way or the other affect their ability to sustain appropriate behavior relevant to accomplishment of the organizations goals and objectives.

e) Hypothesis Two Testing

From the second objective of this study, it was hypothesized that "supportive leadership style has no significant effect on sustenance of behavior among staff in private universities in Uganda." To test the null

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hypothesis, a correlation analysis was computed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and significance statistics and below are the results Table 8.

Table 7: Pearson Correlation results between supportive leadership style and sustenance of behavior among staff (Level of significance = 0.05)

		Supportive leadership style	Sustenance of behaviour
1. Supportive leadership style	Pearson Correlation	1	.268**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	111	111
2. Sustenance of behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.268**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	111	111

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).p≤ 0.05*
Source: Primary data, 2016

Results in Table 8above indicate a positive and significant effect between supportive leadership style and sustenance of behavior (r = .268; p = .004) at the 0.05 significance level. Thus, staff sustenance of behavior is affected by the leader's ability to support employees overcome challenging assignments and accomplish tasks expected of them.

f) Regression Analysis

So as to establish the extent to which supportive leadership style affects staff sustenance of behavior, a regression test was conducted and results are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 8: Regression Analysis results between supportive leadership style and staff sustenance of behavior

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.268[a]	.072	.063	.51320

c. Predictors: (Constant), Supportive leadership
d. Dependent Variable: Staff sustenance of behavior

The Coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square) value is .063 indicating that supportive leadership style explains only 06.3% variation in staff sustenance of behavior in Kampala International University.

The researcher further carried out a regression Coefficient statistics on supportive leadership style and staff sustenance of behavior as presented in Table 10 below.

Table 9: Regression Analysis Coefficient on supportive leadership and staff sustenance of behavior

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	3.436	.217		15.815	.000
Supportive leadership	.173	.059	.268	2.907	.004

b. Dependent Variable: staff sustenance of behavior
Source: Primary Data, 2016

Table 10 suggests a positive and significant effect between supportive leadership style and staff sustenance of behavior (t = 15.815; Sig. = .000). Table 10 further suggests that supportive leadership style is a good predictor variable of staff sustenance of behavior (β = .268; Sig. = .004) implying that for every increase in value of supportive leadership style by .268, staff sustenance of behavior increases by one unit and vice versa. This indicates that supportive leadership style significantly affects staff sustenance of behavior. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant effect between supportive leadership style and staff sustenance of behavior is rejected leading to acceptance of the alternative hypothesis to the effect that "there is a significant and positive effect between supportive leadership style and staff sustenance of behavior in private universities in Uganda".

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VI. Discussion

Regarding objective one, research findings revealed that supportive leadership style is applied in the university to some extent by managers being friendly to their subordinates and approachable. However, employees also need to be supported in areas of showing concern to their general welfare and above all the need to create a conducive work environment all staff are treated with fairness and equity. Fairness and equity are two important variables that should be pursued by managers if they are to get the best out their subordinates since any feelings of inequality will result into frustration on the part of employees and henceforth, degenerate into demotivation to work.

It was also revealed that supportive leadership style has a positive and significant effect on staff energy to work. Besides, regression analysis results indicated that supportive leadership style is a good predictor variable of energy to work among employees in private universities in Uganda. As a result, managers have to be committed towards looking into their staff general welfare since a disturbed employee on issues of his/ her welfare cannot promote a conducive environment for work as a result of feeling depressed.

From the second objective of the study, it was revealed that supportive leadership style has enabled staff to sustain their behavior by reporting for work on a daily basis as a result of support received and that the support received at work is appropriate in enabling accomplishment of assignments in time. However, it was established that managers do not provide alternatives to employees on how to overcome challenging assignments. This indicates a deficiency on the part of managers who fail to provide directions on how certain work aspects ought to be handled in the most efficient and effective ways possible.

Research findings further indicated that supportive leadership style has a positive and significant effect on staff sustenance of behavior in private universities in Uganda. Results from regression analysis further revealed that supportive leadership style is a good predictor variable of staff sustenance of behavior in private universities in Uganda. The above therefore attest the need for managers to be supportive by helping employees overcome challenging assignment and being in position to offer guidance on general task accomplishment.

VII. Conclusions

Supportive leadership style has a positive and significant effect on staff energy to work in private universities in Uganda. As a result, employees need to be supported right from showing concern to their general welfare, being treated with fairness and equity, and creating a conducive work environment for all. The above are some of the parameters for inducing employee energy to work as a result of being motivated.

Secondly, supportive leadership style has a positive and significant effect on staff sustenance of behavior among staff in private universities in Uganda. However, whereas staff of private universities in Uganda are able to sustain appropriate behavior as a result of support received from their supervisors, they are not helped in areas of overcoming challenging assignments as well as being helped accomplish work expected of them and this in one way or the other affect their motivation to work.

VIII. Recommendations

Management of private universities in Uganda should take the lead in supporting employee needs and aspirations such as showing concern to their general welfare, treating them with fairness and equity so as to create a conducive work environment capable of inducing employee motivation reflected in the energy they put forth in their task accomplishments. To be realized, line Heads of departments and Deans of faculties should regularly take keen interest not only in responding to employee needs and aspirations but also in identifying their issues and concerns in advance. Besides, fairness and equality should be fostered in areas of allocating workload and compensations so that all staff develop feelings of being treated well which in turn will boost their energy to work hard.

Management of private universities in Uganda should reconsider their strategy on task accomplishment especially helping their employees overcome challenging assignments with ease. This is because not every employee is skilled on some task accomplishment strategies. To be possible, Heads of Departments and units should regularly call for meetings as well as workshops to enhance skills development on the part of their employees on how to go about certain assignments. As a matter of fact, feelings of challenging tasks accomplishment will result in motivations to work as hence continue sustaining appropriate behavior at the right place and the right timing.

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