BASES OF POWER, LEADERSHIP STYLES, AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS STUDENTS IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the differences in the bases of power, leadership styles, and demographic characteristics among undergraduate business students enrolled at a public university in Ghana. Sixty-three students took part in the study. Students were chosen using simple random sampling. A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data. Means, standard deviations, t-test, ANOVA, χ^2, and Pearson's r were used to analyze the results. The results showed that men had expert and legitimate power and exhibited transactional leadership style. Women had coercive and referent power and exhibited transformational leadership style. Students, irrespective of age or programme area, had legitimate power. However, students below 40 years exhibited transactional leadership style while students who were 40 or more years exhibited transformational leadership style. Management students exhibited transformational leadership skill; marketing and executive office administration students exhibited transactional leadership skills. The t test showed no significant differences in students' bases of power and gender. Similarly, the NOVA was not significant for the differences in the bases of reward, coercive, expert, and referent power and students' age. The chi- square test was also not significant for the differences in students' bases of reward, legitimate, and referent power and programme area. The Pearson's r was significant at the 1% level and showed moderate to high levels of inter-correlations among the dimensions of bases of power (and intuitively leadership style). Overall, the results showed that students had more expert power and weaker referent power. In addition, students exhibited transactional leadership styles.

Keywords
Bases of power, demographic characteristics, leadership styles, business students, Ghana.

Introduction

People are the most important assets in organisations. Organisations need people for their effective and efficient operations. They need people to achieve their objectives. People decide on the success or failure of organisations. Thus, it is important for an organisation to be concerned with the people who carry out the functions of management. This involves the process of leadership, the choice of the right type of behaviour, and the action of leaders.

According to Yukl, Guinan, and Sottolano(1995), leaders employ many strategies to influence the behaviour of others. The use of these tactics is a function of several factors, including sources of power. According to Patrick (2012), leadership and power processes are closely related. Leaders use power to influence others ((Nelson & Quick, 2012; Pfeffer, 2011) such as government officials, media practitioners, peers, superiors, clients, suppliers, and various stakeholders in society. They also use power to get things done (Pfeffer, 2003) so that the organisation can achieve its goals (Lunenburg, 2012).

Differences in results of previous studies show that leadership styles are continually changing. Moreover, much of the past research on leadership focused on identifying personality traits, behavioral factors, and situational factors associated with effective leadership (Yukl, 2013). Unfortunately, no study exists on the bases of power, leadership styles, and the demographic profiles of workers who have returned to school in Ghana. Consequently, there is little objective understanding of the similarities and differences between the bases of power and leadership styles of these groups of students. Since students are the future leaders of industry and commerce, it is important to determine their bases of power and leadership styles.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. Section 2 describes the review of related literature; Section 3 describes the research methodology; Section 4 presents and discusses the findings and Section 5 concludes the paper.

Literature Review

This study reviews the power and influence theory and prior studies on demographic differences in bases of power and leadership styles. The power and influence theory explains the different ways leaders use power and influence to get things done and the leadership styles that emerge as a result. The theory identifies two major types of power in an organisation: position or socialized power and personal power (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2007; Yukl & Falbe, 1991). According to Ward (2001) and Yagil (2002), a person's position in an organisation provides a base for the exercise of position or socialized power. The major kinds of position or socialized power are legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, information power, and ecological power (Yukl, 2013). Position or socialized power is used to influence, to get things done, to achieve goals and to meet the needs of others (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2007).In contrast, personal power attaches to a person and stays with the person because of the person's expertise, charisma, and reputation. The major sources of personal power are expert power, referent power (Yukl, 2013), and connection power (Pedler, Burgoyne &Boydell, 2004).

Some studies show that male and female leaders exhibit different styles of leadership behaviour (Greiman, Addington, Larson, & Olander, 2007; Trinidad & Normure, 2005; Yukl, 2013). For example, Oshagbemi and Gill (2003) examined the gender differences and similarities of leadership style and behaviour of 405 UK managers based on self-report data measured by the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). A two-tailed t-test and Levene's test of the equality of variances showed that there were no significant differences in the overall leadership styles of women and men managers. In addition, other studies (Andersen & Hansson, 2011;Cliff, 2005; Kent &Schuele, 2010; Kao, 2006) found that similar leadership styles existed between male and female leaders.

Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) did a meta-analysis of 47 studies that compared the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles of women and men. In general, the meta-analysis showed that female leaders were more transformational than male leaders on idealised influence, inspirational motivation, and individualised consideration. In addition, the female leaders motivated their followers, showed optimism and excitement about future goals, and attempted to develop and mentor followers and attend to their individual needs. Furthermore, the female leaders gave their followers rewards for good performance more than the male leaders. In contrast, male leaders exceeded their female counterparts on the transactional scales of positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, and negative feedback. The male leaders paid attention to their followers' problems and mistakes more than the female leaders did. The men were also higher on laissez-faire leadership.

Burke and Collins (2001) studied gender differences in leadership styles among 1,031 male and female accountants in the USA. They used a modified version of the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to collect data. Results of the t-test suggested that female accountants practiced transformational style of leadership while male accountants used transactional style of leadership. In another study, Rosenbusch and Townsend (2004) conducted a correlational study on the transformational and transactional leadership skills of 190 Generation X college student organisational officers and members between the ages of 18-22. The results showed that female university student leaders were more transformational while male student leaders were more transactional. Others studies such as those by Foschi (1996) and Johnson (1976) have associated expert, reward, legitimate and coercive power to men. In contrast, women possess higher amounts of referent power than did men (Johnson, 1976; Williams & Best, 1990).

In a study on age differences and leadership style, Stedman and Rudd (2005) found differences in the leadership factors of 4-H county faculty by age and tenure. In addition, Kao's (2006) showed that people who were older than 50 years and those in higher positions preferred using a selling or transformational leadership style.

There is very little research evidence on differences in bases of power, leadership styles and programme area. However, empirical evidence shows that there are differences in leadership power and educational achievement. For example, Kao's (2006) study showed that Chief Executive Officers preferred using a selling or transformational leadership style than did department managers. Similar results were obtained by Ryan and Avery (2002) who found that Australian managers preferred using the selling or transformational leadership style.

In an exploratory study to determine the types of power managers used to influence subordinates and peers, Yukl and Falbe (1991) found that managers had more position power over subordinates than over peers. In contrast, reward and coercive power were greater for middle managers than for lower level managers. The study also found that effective managers had more expert and referent power than did ineffective managers.

Research Methodology

This exploratory study sought to determine the predominant bases of power and leadership styles of business students enrolled at the Kumasi Campus of the University of Education, Winneba. The study also sought to determine the differences in the bases of power and leadership styles among the students with different characteristics: (a) gender, (b) age, and (c) programme area. An exploratory study was appropriate to determine these differences and to develop a theory for further study in these unexplored areas (Creswell, 2013).

Sixty three final year evening students took part in the study. They were made up of 36 male and 27 female students. About 73% of the students were below 40 years and about 27% were between 40 and 49 years. In addition, about 40 % of the students were management students; about 35% were marketing students while the rest were executive office administration students. The lottery method of the simple random technique was used to select the students. The index numbers of the students were used as proxies for code numbers in the selection process.

A questionnaire, adapted from the questionnaire that Hunger (as cited in Wheelen, Hunger, Hoffman, & Bamford, 2014, pp.63-64)developed was used to collect the data. Spekman (1979) developed the original questionnaire to measure sources of leadership power. However, Hunter adapted it to measure leadership power as well as transactional and transformational leadership styles.

The adapted version of the questionnaire for the present study has demographic data on gender, age, and programme area. The questionnaire had two sections, A and B. Section A contained three items on the demographic data of students. Section B measured sources of leadership power (including transactional and transformational leadership styles). It contained 15 items witha 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree.

The data were edited manually for mistakes. The edited data were processed using the PSPP Statistical software version 0.8.4-g607d3c. The results were analysed using means, standard deviations, independent-samples *t*-test, one-way ANOVA, χ^2, and Pearson's *r*.

Results and Discussions

This section presents and discusses the results of the study.

Table 1: Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD)forBases of Powerand Gender

Basis of Power	Gender			
	Men (N = 36)		Women (N = 27)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Expert Power	12.83	1.66	12.74	1.43
Legitimate Power	12.31	1.82	11.85	1.77
Coercive Power	12.17	1.46	12.44	1.25
Referent Power	12.11	1.72	12.30	1.88
Reward Power	12.03	1.96	12.00	1.75

Source: Author's computations

Table 1, shows that men had more expert and legitimate power than women. However, women had more coercive and referent power than men. In addition, Table 1 shows that there was no major difference between the reward power of men and women.

According to Hunger (as cited in Wheelen, Hunger, Hoffman, & Bamford, 2014), transformational leaders tend to score highest on referent power, followed by expert and reward power. In contrast, transactional leaders tend to score highest on coercive and legitimate power, followed by reward power. Though the results of this study contain bases of power that describe transactional or transformational leadership behaviours, they do not follow Hunger's pattern. Nonetheless, this study shows that men were oriented towards transactional leadership skills (expert, legitimate, and coercive power) while women were oriented towards transformational leadership skills (expert, coercive, and referent power).

Table 2: Independent Samples T-test for Students' Bases of Power and Gender

Bases of Power		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Variances				
		F	Sig.	*T*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	MD	SED
Reward Power	Equal variances assumed	.45	.504	.06	61.00	.954	.03	.48
	Equal variances not assumed			.06	59.08	.953	.03	.47
Coercive Power	Equal variances assumed	.18	.674	-.79	61.00	.431	-.28	.35
	Equal variances not assumed			-.81	59.90	.421	-.28	.34
Legitimate Power	Equal variances assumed	.08	.778	.99	61.00	.325	.45	.46
	Equal variances not assumed			1.00	56.94	.324	.45	.46
Expert Power	Equal variances assumed	.25	.622	.23	61.00	.817	.09	.40
	Equal variances not assumed			.24	59.81	.814	.09	.39
Referent Power	Equal variances assumed	.16	.687	-.41	61.00	.686	-.19	.46
	Equal variances not assumed			-.40	53.34	.690	-.19	.46

Source: Author's computations

Note: Men (N=36), Women (N=27), MD = Mean Difference, SED = Standard Error of the Difference

Table 2 shows that the test was not significant ($\rho > .10$).This means that male and female students exhibit different bases of power and leadership styles. Together, Tables 1 and 2 show that male students on the average exhibit greater reward, legitimate, and expert power and transactional leadership style than female students. In contrast, female students on the average exhibit greater coercive and referent power and transformational leadership style than male students.

These findings support previous results (Foschi, 1996; Johnson, 1976), which showed that men possessed higher amounts of expert and legitimate power than women. They also provide support for Johnson (1976) as well as Williams and Best (1990) who found that women possessed higher amounts of referent power than men.

The results also support earlier ones (Burke & Collins, 2001; Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003; Greiman, Addington, Larson, & Olander, 2007; Rosenbusch& Townsend, 2004; Trinidad &Normure, 2005; Yukl, 2013). These earlier studies showed that female leaders were more transformational than male leaders. However, the results of this study failed to confirm other prior studies (Andersen & Hansson, 2011;Cliff, 2005; Kent & Schuele, 2010; Kao, 2006; Oshagbemi& Gill, 2003) that found no differences between the leadership styles of men and women.

Table 3: Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for Bases of Power and Age

Bases of Power	Age (Years)							
	Below 35		35-39		40-44		45-49	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Legitimate Power	12.70	1.34	13.31	1.89	12.00	1.28	12.60	.89
Reward Power	12.60	1.61	12.56	2.22	12.00	1.34	11.80	.84
Coercive Power	12.30	1.68	12.75	1.88	11.00	1.71	11.60	1.52
Expert Power	12.23	1.65	12.69	1.74	11.83	1.47	11.80	.84
Referent Power	11.97	1.67	12.44	2.37	11.25	1.54	11.60	1.14

Source: Author's computations

Table 3 shows that students below 35 years had more reward power than students who were 35 years or more. In addition, students between 35 and 39 years had more legitimate, coercive, expert, and referent powers than other groups of students. Similarly, students between 40 and 44 years had less coercive power than other groups of students.

Based on the explanation of Hunger (as cited in Wheelen, Hunger, Hoffman, & Bamford, 2014), Table 3 shows that students below 40 years exhibited transactional leadership skills. In contrast, students between 40 and 49 years exhibited transformational leadership skills. Intuitively, the results in Table 3associated younger students (below 40 years) with transactional leadership styles while older students (40 years and more) were associated with transformational leadership styles(legitimate, reward and expert power).

Table 4: One-way ANOVA for Students' Bases of Power and Age

Bases of Power	Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig. (2-tailed.
Reward Power	Between Groups	8.95	3	2.98	.85	.470
	Within Groups	206.04	59	3.49		
	Total	214.98	62			
Coercive Power	Between Groups	7.29	3	2.43	1.31	.280
	Within Groups	109.57	59	1.86		
	Total	116.86	62			
Legitimate Power	Between Groups	23.72	3	7.91	2.64	.058
	Within Groups	172.50	59	2.99		
	Total	200.22	62			
Expert Power	Between Groups	2.21	3	.74	.29	.830
	Within Groups	148.10	59	2.51		
	Total	150.32	62			
Referent Power	Between Groups	17.86	3	5.95	1.97	.128
	Within Groups	177.85	59	3.01		
	Total	195.71	62			

Source: Author's computation

Table 4 shows that the ANOVA was not significant for reward power, coercive power, expert power, and referent power(ρ >.10). However, the test was significant for legitimate power, $F(3, 59) = 2.64$, $\rho =.058$. These results mean that apart from reward, coercive, expert, and referent powers, both young and old students use their authority and position as either bosses or team leaders to get work done. These results confirm prior studies that found differences in bases of power and leadership styles by age (Kao, 2006; Stedman & Rudd, 2005).

Table 5: Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for Bases of Power and Programme Area

| Bases of Power | Programme Area | | | | | |
| | Management | | EOA | | Marketing | |
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Legitimate Power	13.16	1.62	12.38	.96	12.45	1.60
Expert Power	12.72	1.62	11.88	1.31	11.95	1.68
Reward Power	12.52	1.73	12.31	1.45	12.36	1.94
Coercive Power	12.40	1.98	12.25	1.34	11.68	1.86
Referent Power	12.32	1.70	10.92	1.73	12.18	1.84

Source: Author's computation

Table 5 shows that the dominant source of power of the students was legitimate power. In addition, management students had more legitimate, expert, reward, coercive and referent powers that the other groups of students. Similarly, executive office administration students had less legitimate, expert, reward, and referent powers compared to management and marketing students. In contrast, marketing students had less coercive power than their management and executive office administration counterparts.

Based on the explanation of Hunger (as cited in Wheelen, Hunger, Hoffman, & Bamford, 2014), Table 5 shows that management students exhibited transformational leadership skills (legitimate, expert, and reward power). However, executive office administration and marketing students were oriented towards transactional leadership style (legitimate, reward, and coercive/referent power).

Table 6: Pearson Chi-square for Students' Bases of Power and Programme Area

Bases of Power	Value	df	Approx. Sig. (2-tailed)	Cramer's V	Phi
Reward Power	22.99	16	.114	.43	.60
Coercive Power	19.81	12	.071	.40	.56
Legitimate Power	17.05	14	.253	.37	.52
Expert Power	24.03	12	.020	.44	.62
Referent Power	12.29	12	.415	.31	.44
N of Valid Cases	63				

Source: Author's computation

Table 6 shows that the test was not significant for reward power, legitimate power, and referent power ($\rho > .10$).However, there was a significant,χ^2(12, N = 63), = 19.81,ρ =.071and moderate association (Cramer's V = .40)between coercive power and programme area. Similarly, there was a significant, χ^2(12, N = 63), = 24.03,ρ =.020 and moderate association (Cramer's V = .44)between expert power and programme area.

The dominance of legitimate, expert and reward power among the students imply that the students influence others because of their positions, expertise, special skill, or knowledge. These results therefore support earlier studies by Patrick (2012). According to Patrick (2012), managers in IT firms in India used legitimate, referent and expert power largely to get work done.

The transformational leadership styles of the management students provide support for earlier work by Kao (2006) and Ryan and Avery (2002). They found that many managers in Taiwan and Australia respectively used transformational leadership style. However, the transactional leadership style of the executive office administration and marketing students does not support earlier empirical evidence (Kao, 2006; Ryan & Avery, 2002). These earlier results showed that only few managers in Taiwan and Australia respectively used the transactional style.

Table 7: Means and Standard Deviations of Bases of Power of Students

Bases of Power	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Expert Power	12.79	1.56
Coercive Power	12.29	1.37
Legitimate Power	12.11	1.80
Reward Power	12.02	1.86
Referent Power	11.19	1.78

Source: Author's computation

Table7 shows that the major source of power of the students was expert power and the least base of power was referent power. Based on the explanation of Hunger (as cited in Wheelen, Hunger, Hoffman, & Bamford, 2014), Table 7also shows that the students were oriented towards transactional leadership style (expert, coercive, and legitimate power).This indicates that the students used largely positional rather than personal power. This finding does not support the results of Atwater and Yammarino (1996) and Patrick (2012).These prior studies showed that managers used personal power largely than positional power.

Table 8: Inter-correlations among Subscales of Bases of Powerof Students

Bases of Power	Reward Power	Coercive Power	Legitimate Power	Expert Power	Referent Power
Reward Power: Pearson Correlation	1.00	.62	.67	.65	.76
Sig. (2- tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
N	63	63	63	63	63
Coercive Power: Pearson Correlation	.62	1.00	.71	.58	.65
Sig. (2- tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
N	63	63	63	63	63
Legitimate Power: Pearson Correlation					
Sig. (2- tailed)	.67	.71	1.00	.48	.73
N	.000	.000		.000	.000
	63	63	63	63	63
Expert Power: Pearson Correlation	.65	.58	.48	1.00	.61
Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
N: 63	63	63	63	63	63
Referent Power: Pearson Correlation	.76	.65	.73	.61	1.00
Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
N: 63	63	63	63	63	63

Source: Author's computation

Table 8 shows moderate to high levels of inter-correlations among the dimensions of bases of power (and intuitively leadership style). Correlation is significant ($\rho < .001$) among the dimensions of bases of power. This finding partly supports the results of Voon,Lo, Ngui, and Ayob. (2011). Voon, et al. (2011) found that the inter-correlations among the dimensions of leadership style were moderate for both transformational and transactional leadership styles but insignificant for transactional leadership style.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study show that men scored highest on expert, legitimate and coercive power. In contrast, women scored highest on expert power, followed by coercive and referent power. In terms of age, students below 35 years scored highest on legitimate power, followed by reward and coercive power. Students between 35 and 39 years scored highest on legitimate power, followed by coercive and expert power. Students above 40 years scored highest on legitimate power, followed by expert and reward power. In terms of programme area, management students scored highest on legitimate power,

followed by expert and reward power. In contrast, office administration students scored highest on legitimate power, followed by reward and coercive power. Marketing students scored highest on legitimate power, followed by reward and referent power. Overall, the students scored highest on expert power, followed by coercive and legitimate power. This implies that the students are oriented towards position or socialised power rather than personal power (Kinicki & Kreitner 2007; Yukl & Falbe, 1991). This is not likely to result in effective leadership (McClelland &Boyatzis, 1982) because as Yukl and Falbe (1991) explained, effective managers had more expert and referent power than ineffective managers. In addition, it appears that the students have mixed leadership skills. This finding supports the behavioural or situational theory of leadership. This theory emphasizes what leaders actually do on the job and the relationship of this behaviour to leader effectiveness. This implies that the students use only behaviours that are relevant for their situation.

This study provides useful insights about the bases of power and leadership styles of the students. However, more research is needed to understand how effective students adapt their behaviour to the situation and are able to be flexible as the situation changes. Specifically, it is important to conduct more research on the effects of leadership styles on employee's satisfaction, motivation, and organisational effectiveness. Other areas for further research include the relationships between education, ethnicity, religious affiliation and leadership styles/power.

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