IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN ORGANIZATIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to examine the leadership styles adopted by organizations and their influence on the job performance of employees in organizations in Nigeria. The objectives that guided the paper were: to find out the various types of leadership styles and the roles of a leader in an organization, and to identify the impact of leadership styles on employee performance. The study however focuses on the autocratic, democratic, bureaucratic and laissez faire styles of leadership and the relationship between these styles and job performance. The study found that laissez faire leadership style has the least impact on job performance, while the autocratic style has the highest impact. The democratic and bureaucratic styles fall in between. The study recommends that organizations adopt democratic and bureaucratic leadership styles to improve job performance.

Keywords:
Leadership styles, Autocratic, Democratic, Bureaucratic, Laissez faire, Job performance

INTRODUCTION
In a competitive business environment, organizations rely upon their leaders to facilitate the changes and innovations required to maintain competitive advantage. The role of leadership is very strategic and important for the achievement of the mission, vision and objectives of an organization (Rivai, 2017). Adwella (2014) saw leadership as the operational tool in influencing people to strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of the organizational goals. Employee participation in decision making serves to create a sense of belonging among the worker as well as a congenial environment. The study also concludes that laissez faire leadership style has the least impact on job performance, while the autocratic style has the highest impact. The democratic and bureaucratic styles fall in between. The study recommends that organizations adopt democratic and bureaucratic leadership styles to improve job performance.
between these styles and employee performance. The paper is a literary work; hence it derived its data from secondary sources: journals, textbooks, research theses, reports and reviews, etc. The path-goal theory was adopted as the theoretical framework of analysis for the study. The paper argued that leadership styles influence employees' job performance. Based on the findings and the literatures reviewed, democratic leadership has greater impact than laissez faire, autocratic and bureaucratic styles; in organizations where the leader practices democratic leadership style, there is improved employee satisfaction and performance. It was recommended, amongst other things, that the use of a democratic leadership style at all levels should be encouraged because it exerts a positive influence or impact on employees' job performance because it tends to allow room for a freer and greater involvement of employees in issues concerning the organization.

environment in which both the management and the workers voluntarily contribute to healthy industrial relations (Kuria, Namusonge & Iravo, 2016). Organizational leaders clearly communicate organizational mission, vision and policies; build employees morale, ensure efficient business operations; help employees grow professionally and contribute positively towards organizations mission. Since corporations strive to search great leaders that can lead them to success, endless efforts have been put out by researchers to identify how best leaders operate (Basit, Sebastian & Hassan, 2017). Over the years, leadership has presented a major challenge to practitioners and researchers alike (Northhouse, 2013; NawoseIng'ollan & Roussel, 2017). Leadership is not "one size fits all" thing; often, a manager must adapt their style to fit a situation or a specific group and this is why it is useful to gain a thorough understanding of various leadership styles. It has been argued that one way in which organizations have sought to cope with the increasing volatility and turbulence of the external environment is by training and developing leaders and equipping them with the skills to cope. These claims are based on the assumption of a direct link between leadership and organizational performance. Becoming an effective leader is challenging to many new managers, but offers the rewards of successfully orientating peoples' work to be most effective and achieving excellence in team
performance. An understanding of the principles of strategic thinking, direction setting, communications and motivation provides a springboard for developing skills and an effective management style to suit your personality and leadership situations (Chowdhury, 2014). Thus, this study was carried out to find out, on the one hand, if leadership styles are related to employees’ job performance and, on the other, to find out which particular leadership styles are related or are more positively and/or negatively related to employees’ job performance in organizations in Nigeria.

An Overview of Leadership
Leadership is vital in any organization. The concept has been given a wide range of meanings and interpretations by different scholars based on their schools of thought. At whatever point, leadership is given a meaning to ensure its directional focus (Goddey, 2017). Leadership is the process of motivating other people to act in particular ways in order to achieve specific goals. It entails the capacity of the leader to influence the activities of others to achieve the corporate goal of the organization. Leadership is a social influence process that seeks to elicit cooperation and support of individuals towards actualization of some set goals (Yusuf-Habeeb & Ibrahim, 2017). (Weschler & Mussarik, 1961; Ali, 2012; Basit, Sebastian & Hassan, 2017) defined leadership as interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process, toward the attainment of the specialized goal or goals. Kurfi (2013) Sees leadership as the ability to influence a group towards achievement of the organizational goals, and organizational effectiveness depends on quality of its leadership. It is the process by which leaders can direct, guide and influence the behaviour and work of others towards the accomplishment of specific goal in a given situation. (Kruse, 2013; Goddey, 2017) defined leadership as a process of social influence which maximizes the effort of others towards the achievement of goals. The ingredients of effective leadership are complex and are widely agreed to depend on the specific leadership situation, considering the difficulty of tasks, the degree of a leader's authority and the maturity and capabilities of subordinates. Leadership skills often take time to learn, because they are multi-faceted, behavioural and context dependent (Chowdhury, 2014) Leadership is the essential resource for creating and sustaining organizations, communities and societies. It involves establishing clear vision, sharing that
vision with others so that they will follow willingly, providing information, knowledge and methods to realize that vision, coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members and stakeholders (Chinwe, Chukwuma & Richard, 2017). Despite the failures, leaders will continue with passion and innovation towards success. Organizational leadership is a field of business management that specifically relates to meeting the challenges and goals brought by both individual employees and organization as a whole. Organizational leaders often rise to top administrative and executive positions of their organizations because of their abilities to manage the present while looking toward the future. It is also an attitude and a work ethic that empowers an individual in any role to lead from the top, middle, or bottom of an organization.

The Roles of a Leader in an Organization
The most fundamental role of a leader is to define the organizational goal, formulate plans and organize people to achieve the goals through the execution of plans. The main roles of a leader in an organization include:

1. **Required at all levels**: Leadership is a function which is important at all levels of management. In the top level, it is important for getting co-operation in formulation of plans and policies. In the middle and lower level, it is required for interpretation and execution of plans and programs framed by the top management. Leadership can be exercised through guidance and counseling of the subordinates at the time of execution of plans.

2. **Representative of the organization**: A leader, i.e., a manager is said to be the representative of the enterprise. He has to represent the concern at seminars, conferences, general meetings, etc. His role is to communicate the rationale of the enterprise to outside public. He is also representative of the own department which he leads.

3. **Integrates and reconciles the personal goals with organizational goals**: A leader through leadership traits helps in reconciling/integrating the personal goals of the employees with the organizational goals. He is trying to co-ordinate the efforts of people towards a common purpose and thereby achieves objectives. This can be done only if he can influence and get willing co-operation and urge to accomplish the objectives (Esterby, et al, 1995).
4. **He solicits support:** A leader is a manager and besides that he is a person who entertains and invites support and co-operation of subordinates. This he can do by his personality, intelligence, maturity and experience which can provide him positive result. In this regard, a leader has to invite suggestions and if possible implement them into plans and programs of enterprise. This way, he can solicit full support of employees which results in willingness to work and thereby effectiveness in running of a concern (Redding, 2000).

5. **As a friend, philosopher and guide:** A leader must possess the three dimensional traits in him. He can be a friend by sharing the feelings, opinions and desires with the employees. He can be a philosopher by utilizing his intelligence and experience and thereby guiding the employees as and when time requires. He can be a guide by supervising and communicating the employees the plans and policies of top management and secure their co-operation to achieve the goals of a concern. At times he can also play the role of a counselor by counseling and a problem-solving approach. He can listen to the problems of the employees and try to solve them (Nzelibe, 1986).

6. **Motivation:** A leader motivates the employees with economic and non-economic rewards and thereby gets the work from the subordinates.

7. **Creating confidence:** Confidence is an important factor which can be achieved through expressing the work efforts to the subordinates, explaining them clearly their role and giving them guidelines to achieve the goals effectively. It is also important to hear the employees with regards to their complaints and problems (Cosway and Anankum, 2006).

8. **Building morale:** Morale denotes willing co-operation of the employees towards their work and getting them into confidence and winning their trust. A leader can be a morale booster by achieving full co-operation so that they perform with best of their abilities as they work to achieve goals.

**Leadership Styles**
Leadership styles are the unique approaches adopted by head of various organizations in accomplishing a set of goal. A style of a leader reflects the personality of such a leader (Okpamen, 2017). Leadership style in a
managerial context is the general ways a leader behaved toward subordinate in order to attain given objectives. The degree to which a manager delegate authority, the modes of power a manager employs and his relative concern for human relationship or task orientation tends to reflect on the manager's leadership style. However, researches have shown that the correct style of leadership depends on the nature of the work, the preference of the employee, the leader's attitude and the situation at a point in time (Kurfi, 2013).

(Okumbe, 1998; Goddey, 2017) sees leadership style as a particular behavior applied by a leader to motivate subordinates to achieve the objectives of the organization. (Mullins & Christy 2013; Akanji, Mordi, Ajonbad & Sanni, 2018) defined leadership styles as specific methods in which leadership functions are achieved, arising from ways managers typically behave towards subordinates. It entails the ingredient of personality embedded in the leader that causes subordinates to follow them. It is the leadership style that attracts the followers to the leader. This entails that the leader applies a specific behavior when dealing with the staff, which makes the staff to respond willingly or otherwise to the directive of the leader, and also determines the type of leader in question.

Types of Leadership Styles

**Autocratic leadership style:** This leadership style is often classified as the classical approach (Swarup, 2013; Izidor & Iheriohanma, 2015). The autocratic leader is at the center of attention and usually exercises power with little trust or confidence in the followers. The subordinates cannot put forward their views even if they are best for the organization interests and they cannot criticize or question the leader’s way of getting things done. If a leader exercises an autocratic leadership style, he/she shows consistent behavioural patterns involving acting alone and making unilateral decisions (Atsebeha, 2016).

The advantage of this style is that it leads to speedy decision-making and greater productivity under leader's supervision. Drawbacks of this leadership style are that it leads to greater employee absenteeism and turnover. This leadership style works only when the job is monotonous, unskilled and routine in nature or where the project is short-term and risky. Jooste, 2009; Khoza, Cheety & Karodia (2016) also state that autocratic leadership is
appropriate in a crisis; in difficult, complex situations; or in a situation where quick decisions must be made.

In the overall assessment of the characteristics of autocratic leadership style, it implies that an organization with this style of leadership will witness a high level of employees' discontent which its resultant effect will be employees' low performance and turnover in the organization. This is because in this knowledge-based economy, employees prefer organizations that will offer them the opportunity for creativity and innovativeness in order to show case their critical talents and skills (Izidor & Iheriohanma, 2015).

**The Laissez Faire Leadership Style**: The laissez faire leadership style is also known as the hands-off style. It means leave it be in French. Here, the leader totally trusts their employees/team to perform the job themselves. He just concentrates on the intellectual/rational aspect of his work and does not focus on the management aspect of his work. The team/employees are welcomed to share their views and provide suggestions which are best for organizational interests. Basically, this style looks simple and easy-going between leaders and subordinates. Leaders who adopt the laissez faire leadership style exercise little control over the followers and let the followers have freedom to carry out their assigned tasks without direct supervision (Wu & Shiu, 2009; Aunga & Masare, 2017). Often, this style of leadership is most effective when individual employees are very experienced and skilled. This type of leadership, however, could also occur when managers do not apply sufficient control. The leaders are characterized by avoiding responsibility and decision making (Chowdhury, 2014). Although such a style under certain conditions will be effective, it was thought that this particular style of leadership indicated, in fact, the absence of leadership.

**Democratic/Participative leadership style**: Democratic leadership style, also referred to as interactive or participatory leadership is characterized by cooperation and collaboration (Aunga & Masare, 2017). The leaders invite and encourage the team members to play an important role in decision-making process, though the ultimate decision-making power rests with the leader. The style decentralizes power and authority. The leader guides the employees on what to perform and how to perform, while the employees communicate to the leader their experience and the suggestions if any, hence it increases job satisfaction through the involvement of others, and help to develop peoples' skills. It leads to an optimistic work environment and also
encourages creativity. Democratic leadership influences people in a manner consistent with the basics of democratic principles and processes, such as deliberation, equal participation, inclusiveness and self-determination (Gastil, 1994; Basit, Sebastian & Hassan, 2017). It is most suitable when working as a team is essential, and when quality is more important than speed to market or productivity. The advantages of a democratic leadership style are that every group member gets a say, and there is a transfer of power from the leader to subordinates, which can allow group members to develop their knowledge and skills (Kane & Patapan, 2010; Atsebeha, 2016). This leadership style has the only drawback that it is time-consuming.

**Bureaucratic leadership:** Bureaucratic leaders tend to follow rules rigorously. The leaders strictly adhere to the organizational rules and policies. Also, they make sure that the employees also strictly follow the rules and procedures precisely. Promotions take place on the basis of employees’ ability to adhere to organizational rules. This leadership style gradually develops over time. This leadership style is more suitable when safe work conditions and quality are required, or when large sums of money are involved. But this leadership style discourages creativity and does not make employees self-contented.

**Job Performance**
The main goal of any organization is to enhance the job performance of its employees so that it could survive in this highly competitive environment (Anyango, 2015). Employee performance is defined as the ability of employees in doing certain skills (Sinambela, 2012; Rivai, 2017). It is the result or the overall success rate of a person during a certain period in carrying out the task compared with a range of possibilities, such as the standard of the work, the target or targets or criteria that have been determined in advance and have been agreed. Performance can be viewed as a process or a result of work. However, the work itself also shows performance (Fathia, Suharto & Sodikin, 2018). Employee performance is simply the result of patterns of action carried out to satisfy an objective according to some standards (Anyango, 2015). It is also the quantity, quality and time spent in performing the task. Quantity is the amount to be completed or achieved; it is the volume of work produced under normal conditions. Quality is how a person performs his or her duties, which can be neatness, the
number of mistakes made, accuracy and so on. Working time is about the use of working periods adjusted to the discretion of the company or government agency (Fathia, Suharto & Sodikin, 2018). In performance there is a performance assessment used for performance measurement.

Job performance involves what the staffs of a given organization do at the organization, which is aimed at either improving the organizational goal or otherwise (Goddey, 2017). It is the individual-level based activities. It is more of individual (staff) behavior in the organization. The staff performance influences and determines the organizational productivity.

**Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Employee Job Performance**

It has been widely accepted that effective organizations require effective leadership and that organizational performance will suffer in direct proportion to the neglect of this (Fiedler & House, 1988; Pradeep & Prabhu, 2011). Furthermore, it is generally accepted that the effectiveness of any set of people is largely dependent on the quality of its leadership-effective leader behavior facilitates the attainment of the followers desires, which then results in effective performance (Fiedler & House, 1988; Maritz, 1995; Ristow, et al.1999, Pradeep & Prabhu, 2011).

The result of various researches has shown that leadership style has a significant influence in improving the performance of employees. Kuria, Namusonge & Iravo (2016) observed that leadership influences employee performance in the health sector in Kenya. Similarly, Imhangbe, Okecha & Obozuwa (2018) identified that democratic and laissez faire leadership styles had the most prominent influence on teachers’ job performance in Edo state, Nigeria. The democratic style, for the most part, appears to be the preferred leadership style for most of the principals captured in the study. Chowdhury (2019) argued that leadership styles positively impacted the level of employee commitment (specifically transactional and transformational styles) in selected organizations in corporate sector. Goddey (2017) in his study identified 10 different leadership styles adopted by different principals in different secondary schools in Rivers state, and emphasized that the various leadership styles have significant effect on staff job performance in the schools. Yusuf-Habeeb & Ibrahim (2017) in their study also established a significant impact of leadership style on performance of organizations with reference to Nigerian universities. They confirmed a significant positive impact of effective leadership, as per interpersonal relations of superiors and
subordinate, in creating an organizational climate that breeds commitment and performance of employees in Nigerian universities. In line with this, Okpamen (2017) also concluded that democratic leadership style positively influence performance while autocratic leadership style shows a negative influence on work performance among staff of Federal University Wukari, Taraba State.

Izidor & Iheriohanma (2015) were also able to reveal that effective leadership is crucial for achieving organizational goals in Nigeria. The study further argued that employees’ retention and performance can be achieved through the adoption of appropriate leadership styles that will align business strategies with employees’ motivation and morale. Anyango (2015) also found out that transformational and transactional leadership are the most effective leadership styles and was found to be positively correlated with both measures of employee performance as well as overall performance at BOA Kenya Limited. Finally, in their study, NawoseIng’ollan & Roussel (2017) concluded that leadership style influences employees’ performance in Turkana County, Kenya. They also argued that there is no perfect leadership style but according to their study, affiliative and authoritative leadership styles influence employees’ performance. The above literatures demonstrate the influence leadership styles have on the performance of employees in organizations.

Theoretical Framework

Path-Goal Theory

The path-Goal theory of leadership is a model which proposes that a leader should change their leadership style depending on their situation. It is a model which is based on specifying a leader’s style or behavior that best fits the employee and work environment in order to achieve a goal. It was first introduced by Martin Evans (1970) and then further developed by House (1971). The path goal can best be thought of as a process in which leaders select specific behaviours that are best suited to the employees needs and the working environment so that they may best guide the employees through their path in the obtainment of their daily work activities. The theory assumes that the most important part of the "leaders job is to assist followers in attaining their goals and to provide the necessary direction and support to ensure that their goals are compatible with the overall objectives of the group
or organization" (House, 1996: 340-314). Related to the contingency approach, it is derived from the expectancy theory of motivation. The path-goal theory belongs to a group of leadership models called contingency models. All contingency models share one thing in common. They state that your style of leadership should be contingent on the situation you face. Other theories falling under this umbrella include Fiedler's contingency theory, situational leadership theory, and Decision-Making Theory. The path-goal theory suggests that leaders motivate and satisfy employees in a particular situation by adapting the following leadership styles (Wachira, Gitumu & Mbugua, 2017):

- **Directive leadership**: a directive leader lets subordinates know what is expected of them, gives guidance and direction, and schedules work according to the expectation. He tells the subordinates precisely what he wants them to do, how they should do it, and the deadline for completing the task.

- **Participative leadership**: a participative leader always consults with subordinates, asks suggestions, and allows participation in decision making. Participative leaders had a collaborative style and involve subordinates in decision making by welcoming their ideas and input.

- **Achievement-oriented leadership**: this type of leader sets challenging goals and expects subordinates to perform at high levels. Encouraging subordinates and showing confidence in subordinate’s abilities is necessary for him. He establishes a high baseline for performance and expects continuous improvement from this baseline.

- **Supportive leadership**: this leader is friendly and approachable. He is concerned for the subordinate welfare and treating members as equals. He creates a warm and friendly environment and does his best to make work pleasant for the followers.

The path-goal theory is relevant to this study because it recognizes the impact of the leadership styles applied by leaders in organizations in the management of employees to achieve the organizational goals.

**Conclusion**

The paper examined the influence of leadership styles on employees’ job performance in organizations in Nigeria. The study focuses on the autocratic,
democratic, bureaucratic and laissez faire styles of leadership and the relationship between these styles and employee performance. Based on the findings of the research and the literatures reviewed, democratic leadership has greater impact than laissez faire, autocratic and bureaucratic styles; in organizations where the leader practices democratic leadership style, there is improved employee satisfaction and performance. This means that the democratic style appears to be the preferred style. The findings are in line with the findings of Okpamen (2017), Imhangbe, Okecha & Obozuwa (2018) and other prominent researchers. Thus, it is reasoned that the democratic leadership style most probably exerts such a positive influence or impact on employees’ job performance because it tends to allow room for a freer and greater involvement of employees in issues concerning the organization.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that leaders should adopt democratic style and involve team members in the decision making process, as it is confirmed that performance of employees is the best under this style of leadership. The adoption and use of the autocratic and laissez faire leadership styles should be done with caution and care to minimize its possible negative impact on job performance of employees. Leaders in all organizations should spend time coaching, paying attention to employees’ abilities and needs, help them develop their talent, and provide a supportive environment which would help achieve higher performance standard within the organization. Leaders should also enhance their knowledge about how their leading style influences their employees. They should also encourage employees to push the bar and challenge themselves with roles which utilize their full potential, talent and creativity. This will align employees to the organizational vision and make them more confident and eager to perform the allocated tasks. Leaders should be trained as change agents and act as role models, to create a positive influence on their employees to further enhance their commitment to performance. Finally, leaders should know the ideal situation to combine autocratic leadership style with democratic style in order to maintain high work performance of staff.

**References**


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