



Democratic Leadership Style and Job Performance of Librarians in Federal University Libraries in South-South Nigeria: A Correlational Study

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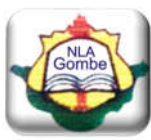
Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between Democratic leadership style and the job performance of librarians in Federal University libraries in South-South, Nigeria. A correlational research design was used for the study. Two (2) research questions were raised to guide the study, along with a null hypothesis that was tested at the 0.5 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 98 librarians in the six Federal universities spread across the six states of South-South, Nigeria. No sample was drawn due to the controllable size of the population. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-constructed questionnaire titled "Democratic Leadership Style and Job Performance Questionnaire (DLSJPO)". The questionnaire was face-validated by two experts in the Department of Library and Information Science and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The overall reliability of the instrument yielded 0.92 with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The collected data was analysed with the use of Linear Regression analysis for answering the research questions, and regression analysis was utilised in testing the research hypotheses. The study revealed that leadership style has a positive influence on the job performance of librarians. It was also revealed in the study that there is a positive relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance among librarians. The study recommended that University librarians encourage librarians as management staff of the library to adopt a democratic leadership style since it yields higher job performance.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, University Libraries, Democratic leadership style

INTRODUCTION

Librarians are the management staff of the libraries and adopt various leadership styles that can ensure maximum job performance. Leadership styles are ways and patterns employed by a leader in controlling and directing subordinates towards the achievement of organisational goals and objectives. According to Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy (2014), leadership is a pattern of influence a leader uses to entice subordinates' submission to achieve organisational goals. Melling and Little (2004) outlined and discussed different types of leadership styles, such as Autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles. While there are differences in leadership styles among libraries, most librarians adapt their style to the needs and surroundings of their staff and the library itself. It is crucial to keep in mind that different leadership philosophies can be used in any organisation. Examples of these philosophies include autocratic, democratic, transactional, transformational, bureaucratic, laissez-faire, and democratic leadership styles.



A democratic leadership style, which is the direct opposite of an autocratic leadership style, believes that followers should be part of the decision-making process. Kalu and Okpweisili (2018) assert that this kind of leadership encourages subordinates participation in matters affecting the job and views them as partners in progress. These leaders operate as a team to achieve results because team members are passionate about their work and are part of decision-making, which boosts their performance on the job. This means a democratic leadership style is a system of leadership in which the leader allows input from subordinates in decision-making, even though the leader still holds the right to either accept or reject the subordinate's suggestion. It is a participatory leadership style, and a striking advantage of this style is that it creates a sense of belonging for followers, and as such, they ensure that decisions taken are implemented because they are part of the decision. Daft (2014) explained that democratic leadership styles encourage delegation of authority to subordinates, which in turn encourages them to use their initiative in taking decisions.

Libraries provide students with access to current and relevant library materials that would complement their lecture notes and academic programmes at the university. Librarians' work promotes and enhances the reputation of the university and also helps students achieve academic success in their various examinations. Circulation services, reference services, bibliographic verification services, current awareness services (CAS), reprographic services, extension and community services, technical services, and interlibrary cooperation are among the tasks performed by librarians in university libraries (Dickson and Robert, 2010). It is crucial to remember that when talking about a librarian's work performance, its metrics matter just as much. According to Porter and Lawler, cited by Mohammed and Uli (2010), there are three measures of job performance. They include output rating, rating of individuals by someone other than the person whose performance is being considered, and self-appraisal and self-rating. Because job performance is considered at the individual level, self-appraisal and self-rating will be allowed in this study.

Problem Statement

Observation in the library system indicates that librarians' leadership style as department heads in the library may influence the job performance of their subordinates, and that subordinate job performance ultimately defines the general work performance of librarians. Nwaigwe (2015) studied the "influence of head librarians leadership styles on job satisfaction of librarians' in tertiary institution libraries in Imo State, Nigeria", and found that the leadership style adopted by head librarians in tertiary institutions has a high impact on the performance level of subordinates. In that instance, it is possible that the inappropriate leadership style used by librarians who serve as bosses may hinder or encourage subordinates job performance. Therefore, the goal of this study was to ascertain how democratic leadership philosophies affected librarians' performance on the job in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To find out the correlation between Democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria.
- To investigate the impact of Democratic leadership style on the job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.



Hypotheses

A null hypothesis was formulated and tested at the 0.5 level of significance.

- There is no significant relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

Leadership Style Theory by Lewin, Lippett, and White (1939)

Lewin, Lippitt, and White's study in 1939 examined different leadership styles, including the democratic leadership style. They identified three primary leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. The democratic leadership style, as described by Lewin, Lippitt, and White, is characterised by the involvement of group members in the decision-making process. In this style, leaders encourage active participation, input, and collaboration from their team members.

Important features of the democratic leadership style as highlighted in the theory include:

1. *Inclusion of group members:* Democratic leaders value the opinions, ideas, and contributions of their team members. They actively involve them in the decision-making process and seek their input before finalising any decision.
2. *Collaboration and participation:* Democratic leaders foster a collaborative environment where team members are encouraged to participate and share their thoughts, experiences, and expertise. They facilitate open discussions and brainstorming sessions to gather diverse perspectives.
3. *Shared decision-making:* Rather than making decisions unilaterally, democratic leaders prefer to reach a consensus or majority agreement. They consider the input and viewpoints of the group members and ensure that decisions are made collectively.
4. *Support for autonomy and skill development:* Democratic leaders empower their team members by providing them with autonomy and the freedom to make decisions within their areas of responsibility. They also promote skill development and encourage personal and professional growth.
5. *Effective communication:* Democratic leaders maintain open lines of communication with their team members. They listen attentively, provide feedback, and ensure that information flows freely within the group.

The democratic leadership style has several advantages. It promotes teamwork, enhances employee motivation and satisfaction, and fosters creativity and innovation. It also allows for diverse perspectives to be considered, which increases

Review of Related Literature

Leadership styles and job performance

Leadership simply means influencing or affecting a group of people to take collective action in a certain direction in order to achieve an organisational goal. Every organisation or institution is founded with clearly defined goals that are anticipated to be accomplished. Since people are essential to achieving these goals and objectives, leadership becomes an important consideration. According to Ogbah (2013), leadership is defined as the way a leader directs and inspires his team members to achieve the corporate objective. In this regard, Haenisch (2012) emphasised that leadership style is unquestionably the most important factor affecting productivity in the workplace in the 21st century. Leaders in every organisation are charged with ensuring the achievement of predetermined goals based on their operational strategies, compensation plans, communication strategies, and policy-making processes. Likewise,



Segun-Adeniran (2015) and Root (2015) emphasised in the same vein that ‘the way in which a leader makes decisions, delegates responsibility, and interacts with subordinates could either affect the organisation positively or negatively’. Matira and Awolusi (2020) emphasise that achievement in most human endeavours can be attributed to leadership quality.

To achieve effective leadership in the library, a leader will take whatever steps and actions are necessary and should also be prepared to take responsibility for the product of his actions, whether positive or negative. The level of efficiency of a leader can be measured by the value of output produced, and the value of output is easily measured by the kind of leadership style being used by that leader; hence, Obiwuru *et al.* (2011) noted that ‘leadership styles are predictors of leadership effectiveness, whereby leadership style in an organisation is one of the factors that play a significant role in enhancing or retarding the interest and commitment of the individuals in the organisation’.

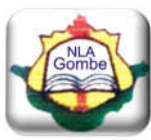
Okpamen (2017) evaluated the impact of leadership styles on the job performance of the Federal University Wukari staff in Taraba State, Nigeria, in an empirical review. A random sample of 310 workers was chosen from the population of 1384, with 205 (66.1%) senior staff members and 94 (30.3%) junior staff members, with males making up 173 (55.8%) and females making up 137 (44.2%). The range of ages was 18 to 66. To examine the independent and joint influences on work performance, three hypotheses were developed and tested using conventional multiple regression. The findings indicate that democratic and autocratic leadership styles have a significant impact on work performance, with democratic leadership having a positive effect and autocratic leadership having a negative effect. Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore recommended that university management encourage a democratic style of leadership at all levels of leadership in order to enhance high work performance among staff and create room for innovation, a sense of belonging, and teamwork among staff.

Democratic leadership style and job performance

A democratic leadership style is one that is participatory in nature. Most times, the leader interacts with subordinates before decisions are taken, even though the leader still holds the right to either accept or reject the input from subordinates. According to Cherry (2015), this type of leadership style is also called participatory leadership style. Participatory leadership style suggests that the inputs of subordinates should be taken into consideration. A leader who encourages participation and contributions from group members and wants to help members feel more relevant and committed to the decision-making process uses a democratic leadership style. The democratic leadership style is one of the most effective leadership styles that leads to higher productivity, better contributions from group members, and increased group morale.

This leadership style allows the leader to retain the right to either accept or reject the input of his subordinates. Stroh in Urhefe (2014) states that participatory leadership gives authority to employees to deal with situations that require their discretion.

Johnson (2015) views democratic leadership style as a direct opposite of autocratic leadership style; it creates room for contributions and inputs from employees in the organisation, thereby making place for innovation and creativity in their day-to-day operations. Iqbal *et al.* (2015) stated that this style affords subordinates self-reliance in handling issues and meeting deadlines and encourages team input.



Nwaigwe (2015) discovered in research conducted on the "influence of head librarian's leadership styles on job satisfaction of librarians in tertiary institution libraries in Imo State, Nigeria," democratic leadership style was found to be the most prevalent style of leadership adopted by head librarians at tertiary institutions. 65 individuals were surveyed, and 33 (54%) of them preferred democratic leadership, 18 (30%) liked authoritarian leadership, and 10 (16%) selected laissez-faire leadership. The study agrees with Ajibade (2010) that democratic leadership is the kind of leadership that is most commonly used. The results demonstrate that democratic leadership styles have a higher impact on the performance of subordinate employees than autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. She found that head librarians who use democratic leadership practises are more likely to have staff members who perform at their best.

The findings from the above also agree with the findings of Iyaiya (2000), who concluded that democratic leaders see their subordinates as colleagues and partners in progress with objective ideas for solving organisational problems.

Methodology

This is a correlational study that employed a questionnaire to collect data. *A structured interview was also used to gather additional data.* The study involved all ninety-eight (98) academic librarians in the federal university libraries in southern Nigeria. The University of Benin (UNIBEN), Federal University Petroleum Resources, Effurun (FUPRE), University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), University of Uyo (UNIUYO), University of Calabar (UNICAL), and Federal University, Otuoke (12) are the libraries that were investigated, for a total of 98 librarians. A total of 98 questionnaires were distributed, and 96 of them were returned, for a 98% return rate.

Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Table 1: Regression analysis of the relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South-South

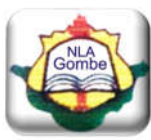
Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
Democratic Leadership Style and Job Performance	0.58	0.34	0.31	5.87

(R²) = Coefficient of Determination

The result in Table 2 shows that the degree of correlation between democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in the South was 0.58. This means that there exists a positive relationship between democratic leadership style and the job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in the South. The result also revealed that the coefficient of determination (R²) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.58 was 0.34. This coefficient of determination (R²) indicates that 34% of the variation in librarians' job performance is attributed to democratic leadership style.

Hypothesis

Table 2: H02. There is no significant relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in the South.



Regression analysis of the relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South-South

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	546.216	1	546.216	15.862	.000 ^a
	Residual	3237.024	94	34.436		
	Total	3783.240	95			

The result in Table 4 shows that an F-ratio of 15.862 with an associated exact probability value of 0.000 was obtained. This probability value of 0.000 was compared with 0.05 set as the level of significance for testing the hypothesis, and it was found to be significant since 0.000 is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was rejected. The researcher therefore concludes that there is a significant relationship between democratic leadership style and the job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in the South.

Discussion of the Results

The study discovered that a democratic leadership style has an influence on the job performance of librarians. The approach a leader used in decision-making, assigning responsibility, and relating with staff could either affect the organisation positively or negatively. In agreement with the result, Obiwuru *et al.* (2011) pointed out that leadership styles are catalysts for leadership effectiveness. Leadership style in any organisation is a major factor that plays a significant role in increasing or reducing the interest and commitment of employees in the organisation.

The findings of this study reveal a positive relationship between democratic leadership style and the job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in the South. The study also reveals that the impact democratic leadership style has on librarians' job performance is high. This agrees with Maryam *et al.* (2013), who state that there is a positive relationship between democratic style and the negative influence of autocracy on job performance. Also, the findings agree with the findings of Azhar (2013), who asserts that leadership styles that encourage team spirit will allow everyone to work visibly in synergy to ensure high levels of client satisfaction, which in the library context is high job performance. More so, the findings of the study also agree with Fatokun, Salaam, and Ajegbomogun (2010) when they reiterated that employees in the library will make noticeable contributions to the attainment of corporate goals when the leader communicates with the staff regularly on personal and not just official issues.

The result of the study implies that democratic leadership styles have a high degree of influence on the job performance of librarians.

Conclusion

The study focuses on librarians who adopt a democratic leadership style while dealing with subordinates and how it affects their own job performance. Leadership styles, as revealed in the study, have the capability of influencing workers with the necessary leadership ability in order to ensure optimal job performance towards the achievement of organisational goals and objectives, which in turn impacts organisational success. Based on the results, democratic leadership style has a significant positive influence on academic library personnel and has a great impact on librarians' job performance. This points to the fact that, when a democratic leadership style is adopted by leaders, the performance of subordinates increases, and the leaders (librarians) job performance is automatically rated high. Therefore, library management staff are encouraged to adopt a democratic leadership style and involve team members in the



decision-making process since it is established that workers performance is at its best under this style of leadership.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend that:

1. Librarians in academic libraries should be encouraged to adopt a democratic leadership style since it yields higher job performance.
2. Librarians, as heads of the various units of the library, should make efforts to maintain cordial relationships with their subordinates.

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