



# INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARIANS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN IMO STATE

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study was conducted to ascertain the influence of leadership styles on job performance of librarians in public university libraries in Imo State. Five research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Survey design and correlational research design were used. The population of the study was 61 librarians in university libraries in Imo State. Using the census enumeration sampling technique, the entire population was adopted as sample for the study. Rating scale was the instrument employed for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research question one. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer research questions two to four and multiple linear regression was used to answer research question five. Hypotheses one to three were tested using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for hypothesis four, all at 0.05 level of significance.

**Findings:** The findings revealed that majority of the librarians perform their jobs to a high extent; the relationship between the autocratic leadership style and job performance of librarians is high, positive and significant; the relationship between the democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians is also high, positive and significant; while the relationship between the laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of librarians is low, negative but significant. The joint influence of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of librarians is significant.

**Implication:** It was recommended among others that the library management should continue to guide the librarians in a manner that will allow them to maintain their performance so as to contribute effectively to the achievement of the overall goal of the library. Furthermore, the library management should endeavour as much as possible to introduce more innovative ways of carrying the staff along to boost their performance.

**Originality and Value:** This work has not been published before. The finding of this study revealed that the joint influence of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of librarians is significant. This finding implies that if there is a combination of attributes of the different leadership styles, job performance will improve.

**Keywords:** Leadership Style, Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez-Faire, Librarians, Job Performance.

## Introduction

The aim of every organization is to sustain its goals and objectives and ensure the progress of their businesses. The progress, however, is dependent on the manager's ability to lead the subordinates effectively. Leading involves planning, staffing directing, controlling, organising, supervising of activities. It is a complex process by which a person influences others to accomplish a mission, task or objectives and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent

(Brumbach, 2008). It involves inducement, persuasion, and motivations of subordinates to enable them contribute willingly to the organizational goals based on the employee's maximum capacities (Nwachukwu, 2000). In libraries, the role of the leader (librarian) is significant for the success or failure of its activities. It is the focus of activity through which the goals and objectives of the library are accomplished. The act of leading is however referred to as leadership. Leadership has assumed greater importance in today's organizations including the library. It is one of

the basic strategies of achieving effective job performance in an organization. The university library is an organised formal institution headed by the university librarian. He is in a unique position as the manager and leads the activities of the library for the purpose of attaining organizational goals. The effectiveness of his position depends on the leadership style that he adopts in the library. That is why Akpanabia (2015) asserts that there is nothing as elusive as leadership.

It is important to note that the leader must employ the various ways of making sure that the employees stay at work, feel contented, ready to put in their best and that their expectations are met without neglecting the overall corporate objectives of the organization. Sabnett and Ross (2007) submits that leadership styles are important for effectiveness of services and that directors should possess leadership skills to appropriately lead and manage their departments. There are various kinds of leadership styles that can be employed in an organisation which can enhance librarians' job performance. They include autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership style, human relations leadership style, transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style and laissez-faire leadership style (Ubah, 2015). Leadership style of library managers is one of the basic strategies of achieving effective job performance in the library. Mgbodileas cited in Omeke and Onah (2012) stated that despite the varying terminologies used by experts to describe management styles of leadership, it has been generally agreed that styles used by men in leadership position can be put into three main types namely; autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles.

The autocratic leader monopolizes the decision-making process and takes decisions all alone. Issues that concern staff matters, equipment and welfare of library personnel are based on personal discretion and rigid application of rules and regulations. Tasks are assigned without consultation and the leader expects acceptance without questioning. Autocratic style of leadership widens the communication gap and sometimes creates suspicion between the leaders and staff. The democratic leadership

style involves consultations and discussions at meetings before arriving at decisions. The leader involves staff in the decision-making process and actively supports staff in attaining career goals. The employees are informed about everything that affects their work which gives them confidence to build team spirit that will result to improved job performance. Laissez-faire or hands-off leadership style is the method where the leader gives the employees freedom to make decisions in the organization. Such leaders are often inactive in taking decision-making whilst important staff matters and welfare are treated with a nonchalant attitude. The leaders believe that employees should be left alone to perform their responsibilities and duties in their own ways. The leadership style adopted by the librarian notwithstanding, the intent is to ensure and encourage effective job performance.

Job performance is how employees perform their duties and responsibilities. Ojo as cited in Ugwu and Ugwu (2017) defines job performance as an extent to which the day-to-day work is being carried out. Leadership styles play a very important role in enhancing employees' work performance. Ali, Elmi and Mohammed as cited in Ogu (2016) maintains that although many factors may influence the performance of an organization, there can be little doubt that the quality of leadership available to it will be one of the most critical determinants of ultimate success. These leadership styles are subjected to test in this study to examine their influence on job performance of librarians. It is against this background that this study on leadership styles and job performance of librarians in public university libraries in Imo State is carried out.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of leadership styles and job performance of librarians in public universities in Imo State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. ascertain the extent librarians perform their jobs in the university libraries studied;
2. determine the relationship between autocratic leadership style and job

performance of librarians in the universities studied;

3. ascertain the relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians in the universities studied;
4. examine the relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of librarians in the universities studied;
5. determine the joint influence of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on job performance of librarians.

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. The coefficient of correlation between the autocratic leadership style and job performance of librarians is not significant.
2. The coefficient of correlation between the democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians is not significant.
3. The coefficient of correlation between the laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of librarians is not significant.
4. There is no significant multiple relationships between autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles and job performance of librarians.

### **Literature Review**

Every organisation or institution is established with laid down objectives which are expected to be attained in the process of performing stipulated jobs of the organisation. Human beings (the workforce) are pivotal to the execution of the jobs. However, the set objectives cannot be achieved without the calculated and effective input of a leader who oversees the activities of the organisation. Ogbonna (2009) defined an effective leader as an individual with the capacity to consistently succeed in a given condition and be viewed as

meeting the expectations of an organization or society. Every leader in every organisation performs certain roles/tasks for the smooth operation of the organisation and improvement of organisational performance (Yusuf-Habeeb& Ibrahim, 2017). He (the leader) adopts a particular leadership style in order to succeed, enable organisations to survive in a dynamic environment and improve organisational job performance. Such styles include: human relations leadership style, transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, laissez-faire leadership style, democratic leadership style, autocratic leadership style among others. Employee performance depends on the manner in which the leader operates and the leadership styles adopted. It should however be noted that each of the styles may or may not influence job performance of librarians. The leadership styles as focused in this study are autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.

Autocratic leadership style is referred to as non-participative leadership style that does not allow for contributions from the employees. This is why Segun-Adeniran (2015) asserted that it is a highly non-participatory leadership style because there is no expected input or feedback from employees. In autocratic leadership style, the focus of power lies in the hands of the leader and work is done through fear. This often has a negative effect on the workers' morale. Gordon (2013) pointed out that organizations with an autocratic style of leadership have instances of employee absenteeism and unusually high turnover. The workers expect to be consulted in the decision-making process and a workplace that will offer them the opportunity to share ideas and show case their talents. Workers sometimes become tensed, more passive, withdrawn and there is low employee morale, invariably affecting workers' performance. Hence, Nwokocha and Iheriohanma (2015) emphasized 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 implies that when workers are not given the opportunity to be creative and innovative in

their workplace, there is a tendency for them to decrease performance.

Democratic leadership style is the opposite of autocratic leadership style. This type of leadership style allows for contributions from the employees which invariably allow employees to participate in decision making and solving problems in the organization. Fanimihin and Popoola (2013) stated that leaders using a democratic style of leadership involves staff in the decision-making process and actively supports staff in attaining career goals. Thus, the contributions of employees are very important because it will help the leader to gather suggestions before taking the final decision. In democratic leadership communication is multidirectional, ideas are exchanged between employees and the leader (Heenan & Bennis, 1999), and a high degree of staff morale is always enhanced (Mba, 2004). It is imperative to note that this kind of leadership style gives employees a high sense of belonging thereby getting the best inputs from them (Segun-Adeniran, 2015). This is because a working environment with democratic leadership style creates opportunities for employees' empowerment, creativity, initiative, participation, career growth, development, succession, and also provides for a safe future with the organization (Nwokocha & Iheriohanma, 2015). This explains the relationship between democratic leadership style, employee performance and organizational productivity.

Laissez-faire leadership style allows free exchange of ideas among employees and the leader plays minimal role in decision making process. It is described by Tarsik, Kassim and Nasharudin (2014) as one in which the manager provides little or no direction and gives employees as much freedom as possible. This leadership style is used when employees are highly trained, experienced and skilled (Jerome, 2018). Therefore, it is a leadership style where the employees perform their duties with little or no supervision from the leaders. Obi (2003) maintained that such style predisposes to unproductive activities very often and could be detrimental to organization's welfare. Conversely, Muhammad and Usman (2012) in their contributions maintained that the motive

behind this style of leadership is that the leaders perceive that employees perform extraordinarily when they are accorded the chance to respond to responsibilities and duties in their own ways. Thus, when employees are experienced, skilled and perform their duties with little or no supervision in the workplace, can inspire employees to perform beyond expectations and increase productivity.

Performance in an organization is the execution of a given task aimed at achieving their goals. Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, & Sager (1993) described performance as what the organization hires one to do, and do well. Ugwu (2013) noted that employee effectiveness, and efficiency are variables which could be used to measure performance while effective leadership is instrumental in ensuring organisational performance (Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Klopfer, Louw & Oosthuizen, 2004). In a study conducted by Nwaigbo (2018) it was discovered that university library staff are rated high in job performance. This could be attributed to the fact that, as noted by McGrath & MacMillan (2000), effective styles of leadership can contribute to the enhancement of performance when new challenges arise. On this note, recognizing the leadership's effects on performance is essential as some researchers view leadership as a main motivating force for enhancing job performance.

No one style could be said to be very perfect. The combination of these leadership styles is essential but this depends on the situation the leader operates. No wonder Ogbah (2013) emphasized that, a good leader does not depend on only one style but uses all three, depending on the situation he is faced with. Invariably, the leadership styles employed by a leader go a very long way in determining the extent or rate of performance of the librarians.

### **Methodology**

The survey design and correlational design were adopted for this study. The survey design was used to get the opinions of the respondents on their extent of job performance while correlational design was used to determine the relationship between leadership styles and job performance of librarians. The population of the

study is 61, made up of 27 librarians working in Imo State University Owerri, Library and 34 librarians working in Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Library. A census enumeration was used to adopt the entire population of 61 librarians as sample. Fifty-six out of 61 copies of the instruments distributed were filled and found valid for the study. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer research question one. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer research questions two to four and multiple linear regression was used to answer research question five. Hypotheses one to three were tested using t-test and Analysis of

Variance (ANOVA) was used for hypothesis four, all at 0.05 level of significance. For the correlation analyses, the decision rule is as follows: 0.00 – 0.20 = very low relationship, 0.21 – 0.40 = low relationship, 0.41 – 0.60 = moderate/fair relationship, 0.61 – 0.80 = high relationship and 0.81 – 1.00 = very high relationship. The decision rule for the t-test states that if p-value ≤ 0.05, reject null (H<sub>0</sub>) and accept the alternative (H<sub>A</sub>) and vice versa.

**Data Analyses and Presentation**

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do librarians perform their jobs in the university libraries studied?

**Table 1: Extent of Librarians’ Job Performance in the university libraries studied.**

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Std Dev.	$\bar{X}$	REMARK
1.	Reference Services	12 (21.4)	36 (64.3)	4 (7.1)	4 (7.1)	0.75	3.00	HE
2.	Cataloguing and Classification	15 (26.8)	36 (64.3)	2 (3.6)	3 (5.4)	0.71	3.13	HE
3.	Referral Services	13 (23.2)	32 (57.1)	5 (8.9)	6 (10.7)	0.86	2.93	HE
4.	Charging and Discharging of Books	10 (17.9)	34 (60.7)	7 (12.5)	5 (8.9)	0.91	2.86	HE
5.	Indexing and Abstracting	12 (21.4)	32 (57.1)	6 (10.7)	6 (10.7)	0.86	2.89	HE
6.	Internet Services	11 (19.6)	39 (69.6)	4 (7.1)	2 (3.6)	0.64	3.05	HE
7.	Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	12 (21.4)	35 (62.5)	5 (8.9)	4 (7.1)	0.77	2.98	HE
8.	Current Awareness Services (CAS)	13 (23.2)	35 (62.5)	4 (7.1)	4 (7.1)	0.75	3.01	HE
9.	Photocopying Services	10 (17.9)	34 (60.7)	6 (10.7)	6 (10.7)	0.84	2.86	HE
10.	Bindery Services	14 (25.0)	35 (62.5)	5 (8.9)	2 (3.6)	0.69	3.09	HE
11.	Supervising Subordinates	13 (23.2)	33 (58.9)	5 (8.9)	5 (8.9)	0.82	2.96	HE
<b>Overall Mean</b>							<b>32.67</b>	

Presented in Table 1 are the item-by-item mean and standard deviation rating scores of librarians’ job performance in university libraries studied. From the table, the mean rating scores of the items are above the criterion mean of 2.5 which shows that majority of the librarians in the university libraries are rated high in job performance.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between autocratic leadership style and job performance of librarians in the universities studied?

**H<sub>01</sub>:** The coefficient of relationship between the autocratic leadership style and job performance of librarians is not significant.

**Table 2: Relationship between Autocratic Leadership Style and Job Performance**

	$\bar{X}_{JP}$	$n$	$r_{xy}$	$df$	$t_{Cal}$	$t_{tab}$	Decision
19.23	32.67	56	0.715	23	4.874	1.960	Significant
( Rejected)							

Key:  $\bar{X}_{ALS}$  = autocratic leadership,  $\bar{X}_{JP}$  =job performance,  $n$  = sample size,  $r_{xy}$  = index of relationship,  $df$  = degree of freedom,  $t_{cal}$ = calculated value of  $t$ ,  $t_{tab}$ =tabulated value of  $t$ .

Table 2 presents the relationship between the autocratic leadership style and job performance of librarians. From the analysis, the mean scores of autocratic leadership style and job performance are 19.23 and 32.67 respectively. The index of relationship between the two variables is 0.715. This indicates that there is a high positive relationship between autocratic leadership style and job performance. That is autocratic leadership style increases job performance of librarians. The t-calculated of 4.874 which is greater than the tabulated t-value of 1.960 revealed that the coefficient is

significant at 0.05 confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that the relationship between the autocratic leadership style and job performance of librarians is significant.

**Research Question 3:** What is the relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians?

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** The coefficient of relationship between the democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians is not significant.

**Table 3: Relationship between Democratic Leadership Style and Job Performance**

	$\bar{X}_{DLS}$	$\bar{X}_{JP}$	$n$	$r_{xy}$	$df$	$t_{Cal}$	$t_{tab}$	Decision
19.1	32.67	56	0.702	23	5.241	1.960	Significant	
( Rejected)								

Key:  $\bar{X}_{DLS}$  = democratic leadership,  $\bar{X}_{JP}$  =job performance,  $n$  = sample size,  $r_{xy}$  = index of relationship,  $df$  = degree of freedom,  $t_{cal}$ =calculated value of  $t$ ,  $t_{tab}$ =tabulated value of  $t$ .

The relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance is presented in Table 3. From the analysis, the mean scores of democratic leadership style and job performance are 19.1 and 32.67. The index of relationship between the two variables is 0.702. This indicates that there is a high positive relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance. That is democratic leadership style increases job performance of librarians. The t-calculated of 5.241 which is greater than the tabulated t- value of 1.960

shows that the coefficient is significant at 0.05 confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This revealed that the relationship between the democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians is significant.

**Research Question 4:** What is the relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of librarians?

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** The coefficient of relationship between the laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of librarians is not significant.

**Table 4: Relationship between Laissez-faire Leadership Style and Job Performance**

	$\bar{X}_{LLS}$	$\bar{X}_{JP}$	$n$	$r_{xy}$	$df$	$t_{Cal}$	$t_{tab}$	Decision
14.69	32.67	56	-0.550	19	5.492	1.960	Significant	
( Rejected)								

Key:  $\bar{X}_{LLS}$  = laissez – faire leadership,  $\bar{X}_{JP}$  =job performance,  $n$  = sample size,  $r_{xy}$  = index of relationship,  $df$  = degree of freedom,  $t_{cal}$ =calculated value of  $t$ ,  $t_{tab}$ =tabulated value of  $t$ .

Table 4 shows the relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance.

From the analysis, the mean scores of democratic leadership style and job performance are 14.69 and 32.67. The index of

relationship between the two variables is - 0.550. This indicates that there is a moderate negative relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance. That is laissez-faire leadership style decreases job performance of librarians. The t-calculated of 5.492 which is greater than the tabulated t-value of 1.960 shows that the coefficient is significant at 0.05 confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This revealed that the coefficient of relationship between the

laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of librarians is significant.

**Research Question 5:** What is the joint influence of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on job performance of librarians?

**Ho<sub>4</sub>:** The joint influence of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on job performance of librarians is not significant.

**Table 5: Joint Test of Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-faire Leadership Styles on Job Performance of Librarians using ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-cal	p-value
1	Regression	112.085	3	37.362	27.133	0.019 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	71.629	52	1.377		
	Total	183.714	55			

**Key:** *df*=degree of freedom, *F-cal*=calculated value of *F*.

Table 5 presents the joint influence of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on job performance of librarians. Data in the table shows that the p-value of the F-calculated is less than 0.05 critical value which indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, the joint influence of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on job performance of librarians is significant.

**Discussion of Findings**

**Extent of Librarians’ Job Performance in the university libraries studied.**

The finding of the study concerning the extent of librarians’ job performance in the university libraries revealed that majority of the librarians perform their jobs to a high extent. This finding supports Nwaigbo’s (2018) study on motivational factors and job performance of library staff in university libraries in Imo State where she discovered that library staff in the university libraries studied are rated high in job performance.

**Coefficient of Relationship between Autocratic Leadership Style and Job Performance of Librarians**

The finding of the study concerning the coefficient of relationship between the autocratic leadership style and job performance of librarians revealed that job performance of librarians under autocratic leadership style is high, positive and

significant. This indicates that autocratic leadership style has a great influence on job performance of librarians. This is in disagreement with Gordon (2013) opinion that organizations with an autocratic style of leadership have instances of employee absenteeism and unusually high turnover. It does not also tally with Nwokocha and Iheriohanma’s (2015) observation 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.

**Coefficient of Relationship between Democratic Leadership Style and Job Performance of Librarians**

The coefficient of relationship between the democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians is high, positive and significant. This indicates that democratic leadership style allows librarians to participate in decision making and develop their competency and morale thereby boosting their productivity. This finding is also in line with Nwokocha and Iheriohanma (2015) who stated that a working environment with democratic leadership style creates opportunities for employees’ empowerment, creativity, initiative, participation, career growth, development, succession, and also provides for a safe future with the organization. It is also in consonance with the finding made by Mba (2004) where it was emphasized that in democratic style

of leadership, a high degree of staff morale is always enhanced and tantamount to improved job performance. Still in tandem with this result, is Segun-Adeniran (2015) who noted that this kind of leadership style gives employees a high sense of belonging thereby getting the best inputs from them.

#### **Coefficient of Relationship between Laissez-faire Leadership Style and Job Performance of Librarians**

The finding of the study concerning the coefficient of correlation between the laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of librarians is low, negative but significant. This shows that laissez-faire leadership style decreases job performance drastically. This finding tallies with Obi (2003) who maintained that such style (laissez-faire) predisposes to unproductive activities very often and could be detrimental to organization's welfare. The finding however negates Muhammad and Usman (2012) assertion that the motive behind this style of leadership is that the leaders perceive that employees perform extraordinarily when they are accorded the chance to respond to responsibilities and duties in their own ways.

#### **Joint Influence of Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-faire Leadership Styles on Job Performance of Librarians**

The joint influence of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on job performance of librarians is significant. This result shows that the three leadership styles have major roles to play in enhancing the job performance of the librarians at every point in time. This finding is in consonance with Ogbah (2013) who stressed that a good leader does not depend on only one style but uses all three, depending on the situation he is faced with at the moment.

#### **Conclusion**

This study establishes the relationship between leadership styles and job performance of librarians in university libraries in Imo State. It revealed that majority of the librarians perform their jobs to a high extent. It also revealed that autocratic leadership style, democratic leadership style and laissez-faire leadership style have both significant individual and joint effect on job performance of

the librarians. However, the autocratic leadership style has a higher correlation coefficient with job performance than democratic leadership style due to its rigid and non-inclusive nature. Laissez-faire leadership style had a very poor correlation with job performance with a negative coefficient of -55%. Therefore, the leadership style employed in the libraries studied determines the level of job performance of the librarians.

#### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Despite the fact that librarians perform their jobs to a high extent, the library management and its sponsoring body should provide conducive environment, good working relations among the librarians, keep the librarians motivated and make available financial resources for the librarians to perform their jobs optimally and effectively.
2. Library management should continue to guide the librarians in a manner that will allow them to maintain their performance so as to contribute effectively to the achievement of the overall goal of the library.
3. Although the democratic leadership style has been proven to bring out the best out of librarians over a long run period. The library management should endeavour as much as possible to introduce more innovative ways of carrying the staff along to boost their performance.
4. University management should supervise and monitor closely the library management to ensure that laissez-faire leadership style is not practiced. This will encourage librarians to perform their duties effectively and contribute to the success of the library.
5. The library management should have a mixed approach to leadership styles. This will help build a highly committed workforce and spur the performance of the librarians because variety is the spice of life.



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