



Management

IMPACT OF DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF SUBORDINATES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study focused on the influence of democratic leadership style on job performance of subordinates in academic libraries in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for the study was a survey, while the 74 professional and para-professional staff working in the libraries studied were the respondents. Data collection was through questionnaire instrument titled “Democratic Leadership Style on Job Performance of Subordinates in Academic Libraries (DLSJPSAL)” made up of five (5) item statements. Research question was answered using frequency counts, total score and means. Findings of the study revealed that democratic leadership style in academic libraries studied has positive influence on subordinates’ job performance because it results in high employees’ productivity. This style of leadership tends to have work groups that were very productive and subordinates showed a high degree of satisfaction on the job. Among others, the researchers recommended that heads of academic libraries should be encouraged to adopt democratic leadership style since it yields higher result in job performance of subordinates and consequently to users’ satisfaction with library services.

Keywords: Democratic Leadership Style; Job Performance; Subordinates; Academic Libraries; Rivers State; Nigeria.

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1. Introduction

Leadership involves inducement, persuasion and motivation of subordinates to enable them contribute willingly to the organizational goals based on the employee’s maximum capabilities (Nwachukwu, 2000). In libraries, like any other establishment, there are leaders whose behaviour and personality traits influence others to perform their legitimate duty. In other words, leaders

must possess style which enable them achieve desired goals through proper co-ordination and direction of the path goal. Leadership style could be described in various ways. It refers to the underlying needs of the leader that motivate his behaviour (Siskin, 1994; Okeniyi, 1995). Additionally, leadership style is the manifestation of the dominant pattern of behaviour of a leader (Olaniyan, 1999; Okurumeh, 2001). It is also a process through which persons or group influence others in the attainment of group goals (Akinwumiju and Olaniyan, 1996; Adeyemi, 2010). As these styles determine, to a large extent, what leaders see and how they respond to situations around them.

Leadership can be defined as a process whereby an individual influence a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2007). However, good leaders must understand that cordial relationships with all establishment shareholders will make the organization to succeed.

Employees are the most important assets in establishments, without which, the objectives may not be achieved. Ali, Elmi and Mohammed (2013) maintain 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. Leadership behavior plays a very important role in enhancing employees' job satisfaction, work motivation and work performance. Mwitwa, (2000) sees performance as a major multidimensional construct aimed to achieve results and has a strong link to strategic goals of organization. The influence of any style of leadership on the workforce, especially on the subordinate librarians will be bearable if the library leadership will achieve set goal. Each leadership style has effect on the job performance of librarians, who are the "engines" saddled with the task of bringing library vision and mission into reality. A good understanding of this impact is vital in supporting human resources development in libraries and is likely going to be a key factor in determining the success of both the head librarian as a leader, his subordinate librarians and the library organization as a whole. Mgbodile (2004) states that despite the varying terminologies used by experts to describe management styles of leadership, it has been generally agreed that style used by men in leadership position can be put into three main types namely; autocratic, democratic and *laissez-faire* leadership styles. Each of these leadership styles has impact on subordinate job performance in the library.

This study is limited to head librarians who adopt democratic leadership style while dealing with subordinates and how it affects the job performance of employees of academic libraries in Rivers State. Though there are many academic libraries in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, this study was carried out in these four (4) academic libraries in Rivers State as follows: University of Port Harcourt Library; Rivers State University Library, Port Harcourt; Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Library, Port Harcourt and Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic Library, Rumuola, Port Harcourt.

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following question was posed to guide and direct the study:

What is the influence of democratic leadership style on job performance of subordinates in academic libraries in Rivers State?

Does democratic leadership style adopted by some heads of academic libraries have any impact on job performance of subordinates? Common observation in the library system shows that the style of leadership of the head librarian could perhaps have serious impact on subordinates' job performance. So the subordinates in these libraries who are saddled with the responsibility of providing effective services are perhaps not satisfied with their jobs. The problem of this study therefore was to determine if there is an impact of librarians' leadership style on subordinates' job performance in academic libraries in Rivers State, Nigeria. In addressing this problem, the following research question was raised: What influence does democratic leadership style has on job performance of subordinates in academic libraries in Rivers State, Nigeria?

2. Review of Literature

Performance could be described in various ways. It could also be described as the ability to combine skillfully the right behaviour towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives (Olaniyan, 1999). Teachers' job performance could be described as the ability of teachers to combine relevant inputs for the enhancement of teaching and learning processes (Akinyemi, 1993; Okeniyi, 1995). However, Peretemode (1996) argued that job performance is determined by the worker's level of participation in the day to day running of the organization. It is noted that employees behave differently under different situations.

Mgbodile (2004) states that despite the varying terminologies used by experts to describe management styles of leadership, it has been generally agreed that style used by men in leadership position can be put into three main types; autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. Three styles of leadership have also been identified by researchers (Lieberman, Beverly & Alexander., 1994). The democratic style of leadership emphasizes group and leader participation in the making of policies. Decisions about organizational matters are arrived at after due consultation and communication with various people in the organization. The leader attempts as much as possible to make each individual feel that he is an important member of the organization. Communication is multidirectional while ideas are exchanged between employees and the leader (Heenan and Bennis, 1999). In this style of leadership, a high degree of staff morale is always enhanced (Mba, 2004).

Democratic style of leadership is also known as participative style due to the fact that it encourages one or more employees to be part of the decision making process (determining what to do and how to do it). Nevertheless, it is the leader who makes the final decision and maintains authority. Democratic style strengthens the position of the leader who is respected by his employees. Managers are not expected to be families with everything that is why they employ knowledgeable and competent employees. This leader sees the subordinates as partners in progress and encourages participation in matters/decisions affecting the subordinates. Such leaders achieve results by team work. The subordinates' job performance is usually high as team members feel involved or are part of decision making and work with enthusiasm. Several researchers have revealed that people-oriented (democratic) is more effective than production oriented (autocratic). Mba (2004) states that in this style of leadership, high degree of staff morale is always enhanced. Nwaigwe (2015) in her study on the "influence of head librarians leadership styles on job satisfaction of librarians' in tertiary institution libraries in Imo State, Nigeria", found out that democratic leadership style was the commonest style of leadership adopted by head librarians in

tertiary institutions. Out of a population of sixty-five (65) respondents who were part of the survey, 33(54%) of respondents posed for Democratic style, 18(30%) for Autocratic and 10(16%) for laissez-faire leadership styles. This finding is in agreement with earlier findings by Ajibade (2010), where he asserted that democratic leadership style is the most commonly used leadership style. The result reveals that democratic leadership style has greater influence on subordinate job performance, followed by autocratic and laissez-faire leadership style. From her study head librarians who adopt democratic leadership style are most likely to have high performance level from subordinates. Employees are most satisfied with democratic leadership because their opinion, comment and suggestions are needed for decision making (Obi, 2003). It also agrees with the findings of Iyaiya (2000) and Ezeuwa (2005), where they concluded that democratic leaders see their subordinates as colleagues and partners in progress with objective ideas for solving organizational problems. Nwaigwe (2015) in her findings revealed that though democratic leadership style is commonly adopted by head librarians autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles have influence on job performance of subordinates.

Omeka and Onah (2012) carried out a study on “the influence of principals’ leadership styles on secondary school teachers’ job satisfaction. The purpose of the study is to determine the significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the influence of principals’ leadership styles on their job satisfaction. Descriptive survey was used. The population of study was 280 teachers. The instrument for data collection was questionnaires and data collected were analysed using mean values and standard deviation while the t-test statistic was used in testing the null hypothesis. Findings of the study showed that the three leadership styles were adopted by secondary school principals; the dominant leadership style is autocratic leadership style but only democratic leadership exerts a positive influence on their job satisfaction. Also, all the teachers irrespective of gender agreed that democratic leadership enhance their job satisfactions. The study recommended that principals should undergo in-service and refresher courses on the modern rudiments of leadership style; appointment of principals should be based on competence and dedication to duty and school administrators should give teachers more opportunities to participate in decision making.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive. survey method. This design was borne out of the fact that the survey focused on sample population of democratic leadership style and its impact on subordinate job performance in academic libraries in Rivers State.

The institutions studied are all located in Rivers State which is one of the thirty-six (36) states in Nigeria and was created on 27th May 1967, with Port Harcourt as the state capital. Interestingly, Port Harcourt is the largest city and is economically significant as the centre of Nigeria’s old industry. The state is made up of twenty-three Local Government Ares. Rivers State is bounded on the South by the Atlantic Ocean, to the North by Imo, Abia and Anambra States, to the East by Akwa Ibom State and to the West by Bayelsa and Delta States. It is home to many indigenous ethnic groups: Ikwerre, Ibani, Opobo, Eleme, Okrika, and Kalabari, Etche, Ogba, Ogoni, Engenni and others. Rivers State has two major oil refineries, two major seaports, airports, and various industrial estates.

University of Port Harcourt one of the tertiary institutions in Rivers State was established by the Federal Government in 1975. Rivers State University, Port Harcourt founded in 1980 by the State Government; the School of Health Technology, Port Harcourt, established by the state government; the Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku; and the state-owned Rivers State Polytechnic at Bori; the Rivers State University of Education (Ignatius Ajuru University with three campuses at Rumuolumeni, St John and Ndele) and the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Rumeme, Port Harcourt. The Rivers State College of Arts and Science in Port Harcourt gained polytechnic status in 2016, now called Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic.

The population of the study is 74. This comprises of all the professionals and para-professionals of the academic libraries studied namely; University of Port Harcourt (41; 22 professionals and 19 para-professionals), Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (10; 7 professionals and 3 para-professionals), Rivers State University (16; 11 professionals and 5 para-professionals), and Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic Libraries (7; 3 professionals and 4 para-professionals); all in Port Harcourt. The entire population of 74 was used as sample for this study since it is not too large and can be conveniently managed by the researchers.

The study used a researcher-made questionnaires' as the basic research instrument titled "Democratic Leadership Style on Job Performance of Subordinates in Academic Libraries (DLSJPSAL)" consisting of five (5) item statements which is a collection of questions put together to answer the research questions. The questionnaire instrument consists of the questions asked to seek respondents' opinion on the various item statements of the subject of study. It consisted of a five- point Likert scale questionnaire developed to provide the respondents ease of answering the questions as per their level of agreement (McLeod, 2008). The Likert scale follows the format of: 1) Strongly Agree (SA); 2) Agree (A); 3) Disagree (D) and 4) Strongly Disagree (SD).

The face validity of the instrument was determined by two experts in Library and Information Science, and Measurement and Evaluation who examined the purpose of the study and research questions alongside with each item of the instrument in order to determine whether the instrument actually measured what it is supposed to measure. The observations made by the experts were used to effect necessary corrections on the instrument before it was finally administered to the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was trial-tested in Imo State University, Owerri Library. Split-half method was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire instrument. Their responses were analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) giving a correlation coefficient (r) is 0.94. This shows that the instrument is very strong and reliable to gather data for the study. The researchers personally administered the data collection instrument to the respondents with the help of the library staff that work in the libraries studied. For an accurate and effective analysis of data and findings, the data collected were analysed using frequency counts and means for research question

4. Data Analyses and Interpretation

Data Analyses Based on Research Question

Research Question: What is the influence of democratic leadership style on job performance of subordinates?

Table 1: Influence of Democratic Leadership Style on Job Performance of Subordinates (N=74)

S/N	Items Statement		Categories				Total Score xxx	Mean (\bar{x}) (Total Score÷74)	Remarks
			SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)			
1	Results in high employees' productivity	Freq.	17	24	15	18	188	2.54	Positive
		Score	68	72	30	18			
2	Reduces the need for control and formal rules and procedures	Freq.	16	23	19	16	187	2.53	Positive
		Score	64	69	38	16			
3	Results in low employees absenteeism and turn over	Freq.	15	18	25	16	180	2.43	Negative
		Score	60	54	50	16			
4	Develops competent people who are willing to give their best.	Freq.	23	19	15	17	196	2.65	Positive
		Score	92	57	30	17			
5	Tends to develop subordinate who think for themselves and seek responsibility.	Freq.	28	20	14	12	212	2.86	Positive
		Score	112	60	28	12			

Researchers' Field work 2017; Criterion Score = 2.50

Table 1 presents data from responses by respondents on impact of democratic leadership style on the job performance of subordinates. Items 1-5 are the different statements pertaining to the variable; democratic leadership style under the four categories of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Table 1 showed that items 1(Results in high employees' productivity), 2(Reduces the need for control and formal rules and procedures), 4 (Develops competent people who are willing to give their best) and 5 (Tends to develop subordinate who think for themselves and seek responsibility) with their corresponding mean scores of 2.54, 2.53, 2.65 and 2.86 are rated positive as the impact of democratic leadership style on job performance of subordinates, item 3 (Results in low employees absenteeism and turn over) was rated negative.

Analysis from Table 1 revealed that democratic leadership style results in high employees' productivity, reduces the need for control and formal rules and procedures, develops competent people who are willing to give their best and develops subordinate who think for themselves and seek responsibility. The result of this is that subordinates job performance is usually high as team members feel involved or are part of decision making and work with enthusiasm. This finding is similar to Ojokuku, Odetayo, & Sajuyigbe (2012) where they found that democratic leadership style, in which employees are allowed to have sense of belonging, believed higher responsibility can be carried out with little supervision, and leaders help followers achieve their visions and needs, enhance organizational efficiency. This had been supported by Iqbal, Anwar & Haider (2015) and Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hasmi & Shaikh. (2012). This is further supported by Iqbal, et al. (2015) who stated that under the influence of democratic leadership employees to some extent have discretionary power to do work that leads to a better performance. Therefore, democratic leadership produces more motivated employees that eventually lead to an increased performance.

Omeka and Onah (2012) are of the view that only democratic leadership exerts a positive influence on job performance and satisfaction. Democratic leadership style results in high employees' productivity, reduces the need for control and formal rules and procedures, develops competent people who are willing to give their best and tends to develop subordinates who think for themselves and seek responsibility.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results, democratic leadership style has a significant positive impact on academic library staff subordinates job performance. This indicates that when democratic leadership style approach is practiced, performance of subordinates would increase. Therefore, library heads are encouraged to adopt democratic leadership style and involve team members in the decision making process since it is confirmed that performance of employees is the best under this style of leadership. Academic library heads should encourage innovation, team work and creativity that lead to job satisfaction, increased productivity and subsequently increased performance.

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

- Head of academic libraries should be encouraged to adopt democratic leadership style since it yields higher result in job performance of subordinates.
- Leaders should try as much as possible to maintain cordial relationships with their subordinates.

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