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Impact of Leadership Styles on Employees' Work Performance in Some South-Western Nigerian Private Universities

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of leadership styles on employees' work performance in some selected South-western Nigerian private Universities. For employees' to perform at their utmost best, Universities need leaders who can adapt to different situations and possess various leadership styles that fit in every situation and at any given point in time. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting 10 private universities majorly in Ondo, Ekiti and Osun state respectively out of the 36 private universities in south–west, Nigeria. To measure transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles, a subordinate's perception of his/her superior's leadership style was collected by reviewing Multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ-Form 5X) by Bass and Avolio, (2000). The researchers personally designed questions to measure the impact of autocratic leadership style. Data collected were analysed based on descriptive analyses of demographic information. The four hypotheses presumed for this study were tested using linear regression and Pearson correlation. All the hypotheses are examined at 0.01 and 0.05 alpha levels of significance. The study concluded that Universities driven by the desire to achieve better performance from his/her employees should try to exhibit more of transformational and transactional leadership styles and less of laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles. This study recommends that good and effective leadership style is what Universities need to survive in this competitive and hostile business environment. Therefore, Universities should implement leadership training and development programmes in order to meet the essential knowledge and skills necessary in developing the leadership capabilities of employees.

Keywords: *Leadership styles; employees' work performance; South-western Nigerian private Universities; transformational leadership; transactional leadership*

JEL Classification: *M10; M12; M21*

Introduction

Today's Universities need effective and influential leaders who understand the challenges of the rapidly changing global educational environment. For employees' to perform at their utmost best, organisations need leaders who can adapt to different situations and possess various leadership styles that fit in every situation and at any given point in time. The best leadership style adopted by an organisation is based on so many factors depending on the industry of the business and the sector or type of business in which the organisation is operating. The success

and failure of any organisation depends on the leadership style practiced by the leaders of such organisation. Therefore, leadership styles are ways and procedures used by leaders to direct, dictate and decide the attitude and actions of their followers in order to attain their set goals and objectives. According to Goleman (2000), there is not only one successful leadership style. Goleman (2000) stated that most effective leaders are able to switch their leadership styles in different situations in order to receive the best results from their influence, which complies with the theory of situational leadership. 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; after all, the more approaches the manager is familiar with, the more tools they will be able to use to lead effectively (Murray, 2013).

In today's dynamic global working environment there is growing evidence to suggest that organisations are now recognizing the impact leadership styles have on both employees' wellbeing and organisational outcomes (McCarthy, Almeida and Ahrens, 2011). Leadership is a major factor that contributes immensely to the general wellbeing of organisations and nations (Odumeru and Ifeanyi, 2013). Leaders motivate employees by encouraging them to contribute ideas and innovations, which results in a fulfilling and enriching work environment (Khaliq, 2001). Effective leadership behaviour according to Buelens, Broeck, Vanderheyden, Kreitner, and Kinicki, (2006), is based on both the willingness of the manager to help subordinates and the need of subordinates for help. Building a good relationship between a leader and his/her followers requires an appreciation from the leader for the personal values of those who would be willing to give their energy and talents to accomplish shared objectives (Bass, 1985). Because organisations seek motivated employees in order to be successful, leadership plays a vital role in organisational performance (Jones and Olken, 2005).

Employees are valuable assets of an organisation and the leaders of profitable companies place a high premium on increasing employees' performance levels (Leigh, 2009). Leadership best practices are a powerful way to enhance individual growth and development, employee performance, and organisational productivity (McNeese-Smith, 1996). Many leadership models differentiate two main types of leadership behaviours: task-oriented, which has a strong focus on targets, close supervision, and control of subordinate actions, and relationship-oriented behaviour, which focuses on sensitivity to individual and group needs, care for group tensions and focus on harmonic working relations (Euwema, Wendt and Van Emmerik, 2007). These leadership behaviours are also referred to as directive and supportive leadership respectively (Northouse, 2013). According to Adamaechi and Romaine (2002), leadership is very essential in any kind of group or organisation and it can mean the difference between success and failure of any group or joint activity.

Leadership is an important aspect in any organisation. The style that leaders of Universities adopt in the day-to-day running of their activities will have impact on the human resources of such Universities. An effective leader should be able to influence his or her followers to reach the goals of the organisation. According to Covey (2007), leadership is an interpersonal process through which one person is able to influence the activities of individuals or groups towards the attainment of given objectives within a particular situation by means of communication. Different leadership styles may affect employees' work performance, attitude and behaviours towards the organisation. Mullins (2005) defined leadership style as the manner that a manager chooses to behave towards employee. Leadership style is the most prevalent factor that influences employees' attitudes and behaviours including organisational performance. According to Chiang and Wang, (2012); and Clark, Hartline and Jones, (2009), leaders have adopted various styles when they lead others in the organisation. It is important to note that different leadership styles exist for varying situations, human beings, cultures, tasks and organisational goals.

Therefore, this study investigated the impact of leadership styles on employees' work performance in some south-western Nigerian private Universities. The leadership styles that

were investigated are transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles. None of these leadership styles is wrong or right to be adopted by a leader but the usage depends on the situation he /she is confronted with. Based on the research, transformational and transactional leadership styles are the most accepted styles by the followers. Followers do not always view leadership style the way and manner a leaders view it; they only view it from the perspective of how it favours them. A follower can only know the reason why a leader chose a particular leadership style at any given point in time, only if they are in a leadership position. A Romanian proverb opined that "No one but the wearer knows where the shoe pinches". This applies to how a leader determines the leadership style to be adapted to different situations.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the perceived impact of leadership styles on employees' work performance in some south-western Nigerian private Universities. Other objectives are:
1. To determine the impact of transformational leadership style on employees' work performance.
2. To examine the impact of transactional leadership style on employees' work performance.
3. To investigate the impact laissez-faire leadership style will have on employees' work performance.
4. To determine the impact autocratic leadership style will have on employees' work performance.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Transformational leadership style does not have significant positive impact on employees' work performance.

H2: Transactional leadership style does not have significant positive impact on employees' work performance.

H3: There is no positive significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and employees' work performance.

H4: There is no positive significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and employees' work performance.

Literature Review

Review of Leadership and Leadership Styles

Schmoker, (2001), opined that leadership consists of method, not magic. Leadership and the different associated styles have an immense impact on how employees perform and grow, which lead to positive organisational outcomes. Leaders provide direction, leading by example, maintaining appropriate tools for process measurement, and creating a high level of credibility as time progresses in influencing employees' work performance (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). Northouse (2004) defined leadership as a process whereby one individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. An effective leader is able to influence his or her followers to reach the goals of the organisation. Although, employees' performance can be highly affected by many factors arising from within and outside organisational context but good leadership style cannot be over-looked (Islam, Khan, Shafiq, and Ahmad, 2012). Leadership is

the process whereby a leader inspires individuals to accomplish common goals (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2010).

Mullins (2004) defined a leader as a person who delegates or influences others to act and to carry out specified objectives. According to Mintzberg (2010), true leaders engage others with their consideration and modesty because they involve themselves in what they are actually doing which is not for individual gains. Leaders are an essential part of any organisation, as they affect the self-respect and self-sufficiency of employees (Deci, Connell, and Ryan, 1989). Bunmi (2007), defined leadership as a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organisation goals. Gregoire and Arendt (2004) viewed leadership as the behaviour of an individual directing the activities of a group towards a shared goal. Kouzes and Posner (2007), described leadership as an interaction between two or more people that result in some kind of action leading to an output to satisfy a set agreement or criteria. Ngoka (2000) defined leadership as the process of influencing others towards organisational performance and achievement of goals. Cole (2005) defined leadership as a dynamic process whereby one man influences others to contribute voluntarily to the realisation and attainment of the goals, objectives and aspiration of an organisation. Yukl (2006), further defined leadership as the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives. Moorhead and Griffin (2012) defined leadership as a process that focuses on shaping or influencing people to obtain organisational goals.

Mullins (2000) defined leadership style as the way in which the functions of leadership are carried out and the manner that a manager chooses to behave towards employee. Scholl (2000), referred to leadership style as the pattern of behaviour used by a leader in attempting to influence group members and make decision regarding the mission strategy and operation of group activities. Clark (2000), perceived leadership style as the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people. Leadership style is the combination of traits, characteristics, skills and behaviours that leaders use when interacting with their subordinates (Jeremy, Melinde and Ciller, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the following leadership styles are considered: transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles. Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli, (2003), opined that transformational (supportive), transactional (directive), and laissez-faire (non-involvement) styles has been shown to reflect the full-range of leadership styles. Billig, (2015), defined three classical styles of leadership in decision-making: autocratic, laissez-faire and democratic.

Review of Transformational Leadership Style

Leadership expert James MacGregor Burns initially introduced the concept of transformational leadership style in 1978. Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as a process that occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. The four dimensions of transformational leadership are: Idealized influence, which deals with building confidence and trust; inspirational motivation, which deals with motivating the entire organisation; intellectual stimulation, which involves arousing and changing followers' awareness of problems and their capacity to solve those problems; and individualized consideration, which involves responding to the specific, unique needs of followers to ensure they are included in the transformation process of the organisation. These four dimensions enable leaders to behave as strong role models fostering followers' transformation into more successful and productive individuals (Hay, 1995). Inspirational motivation, idealised influence, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation are the key dimensions of transformational leadership (Avolio, Zhu, Koh and Bhatia, 2004). Transformational leaders are suggested to promote intellectual development, confidence, team spirit and enthusiasm among the followers, thereby encouraging followers to

be more focused on collective wellbeing and achieving organisational goals (Aydin, Sarier, and Uysal, 2013; Cho and Dansereau, 2010).

Transformational leadership behaviours are influential in motivating employee change and transforming them to be more aware of task outcomes, activating their highest order needs and stretching them beyond their own self-interest for the benefit of the organisation (Bass and Avolio, 1990). According to Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009), transformational leadership approach is behaviours that transform and inspire followers to perform beyond expectations while transcending self-interest for the good of the organisation. Transformational leaders are socially and emotionally intelligent; they are inspiring (McKee 2014), charismatic, know how emotions affect them and how they should use their emotions and their vision to increase excitement, optimism and inspiration among employees. As suggested by Jin (2010), transformational leadership integrates the elements of empathy, compassion, sensitivity, relationship building, and innovation. According to Aldoory and Toth (2004), transformational leadership includes the elements of participative decision making and sharing of power. Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnely and Konopaske (2012), explained that transformational leaders have the ability to inspire and motivate followers to achieve results greater than originally planned by re-inventing the entire philosophy, system and culture of the organisation.

Review of Transactional Leadership Style

Transactional leadership style is implies that reward or punishment is premised on individual performance. This is because reward is contingent to performance and punishment for failure to performance effectively. According to Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, (2009), transactional leadership style is the exchange of rewards contingent on performance. Transactional leaders set up requirements as well as conditions and rewards that employees get, when they fulfil the requirements (Bass and Riggio 2006). Transactional leaders use conventional reward and punishment to gain compliance from their followers (Burns, 1978). Bass (1999) opined that transactional leadership style could take three forms namely: contingent reward, active management by exception, and passive leadership. According to Bass, Contingent reward is the degree to which the leader clarifies expectations and establishes the rewards for meeting these expectations (Judge and Piccolo, 2004). Secondly, transactional leadership style can take the form of active management by exception, in which the leader monitors the followers' performance and takes corrective actions if the follower fails to meet standards' (Bass, 1999). Finally, it can also take the form of passive leadership. In this case, the leader only takes corrective actions when problems arise or avoids taking action at all.

Transactional leadership style is the method of getting subordinates to meet job requirements by reinforcing rewards or punishments (Avery, 2004). Transactional leadership style is based on extrinsic motivation for improved productivity of employees (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2010). Transactional leaders identify, define and communicate what needs to be done and how the instruction will be carried out (Piccolo and Calquitt, 2006). Organisations tend to adopt transactional leadership in an attempt to increase performance of their employees (Varol and Varol, 2012). According to Marques (2007), the trait of transactional leaders of setting goals and promising reward motivate the followers that ultimately can lead to improved performance. Reward and recognition are provided contingent on followers to successfully carry out their roles and assignments (Bass, Avolio, Jung and Berson, 2003). Transactional leaders allows followers to fulfill their own self-interest, minimize workplace anxiety, and concentrate on clear organisational objectives such as increased quality, customer service, reduced costs, and increased production (Sadeghi and Pihie, 2012). Unsar, (2014), described transactional leaders as leaders that practice the style of doing work or making other people do the work by making their on-going activities more proficient and developed.

Review of Laissez-faire Leadership Style

Avolio and Bass (2004) attributed Laissez-faire leadership to the leaders who avoid interfering when serious issues arise, this could also be described as non-leadership. According to Asare (2012) laissez-faire leaders delegate their responsibility to take decisions to the subordinates and gives them all the authority and control to go about their actions and accomplishments. Gastil (1994) postulated that laissez-faire leadership style has low involvement of activities, leaving matters to their followers and very little involvement in decisions making. Sometimes laissez-faire leadership style is considered as no leadership (Aydin, Sarier and Uysal, 2013) or destructive leadership style (Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland, and Hetland, 2007). According to Unsar (2014), this leader will give followers a goal, the followers are completely free to achieve these goals with their skills, and the leader will only be responsible for the supply of the resources. Also, laissez-faire leaders avoid responsibilities, do not take care of the needs of the followers, do not provide feedback, and delay decision-making (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Laissez-faire leaders in reality provide information, but no direction for their staff and do not get involved with followers; hence, employees become frustrated and dis-organised, which results in low work quality (Nahavandi 2000). Cilliers, Van Eeden and Van Deventer (2008), stated that laissez-faire leaders avoid active participation in responsibility of goals setting and avoid being involved when leadership direction is needed. This type of leadership can also occur when managers do not have sufficient control over their staff (Ololube, 2013). Laissez-faire style is an avoidant leader who may not either intervene in the work affairs of subordinates or may completely avoid responsibilities as a superior. In addition, when Laissez-faire leader observes that the members of the group are performing well, the leader allows the members to have liberty of action (Ohuoha, 2013). Laissez-Faire leadership style is that style of leadership where the authority and power is given to employees to determine the goals; the manager provides little or no direction to employees (Richard and Robert, 2009).

Review of Autocratic Leadership Style

Adebakin and Gbadamosi (1996) described an autocratic leader as one who is very conscious of his position and has little trust or faith in the subordinates, he feels that pay is a just reward for work and it is only the reward that can motivate. Melling and Little (2004), defined autocratic leader as a leader who is high-handed in his administration. Autocratic leader is the centre and pillar of all the activities that go on in the organisation where he is a leader. Autocratic leaders make their decisions alone (Nahavandi 2000), manage the group tightly and only command the individual goals and actions of each employee, so that staff does not understand the overall goals (Lumpe 2008). An autocratic leader mostly selects based on their own judgments and ideas that rarely include follower's advice and these leaders have absolute control over the group (Zareen, Razzaq and Mujtaba, 2015). Autocratic leadership represents all those leaders who makes decision without the consent of team members and applied when quick decision is to be taken and team agreement is not important for acquisition of successful results (Boehm, Dwertmann, Bruch and Shamir, 2015).

According to Pagewise (2002), autocratic leadership style is effective for new and untrained employees who do not know which tasks to perform or which procedures to follow in carrying out the task assigned to them. Iqbal, Anwar and Haider, (2015), suggested that autocratic leaders are characterized by an *"I tell"* philosophy; autocratic leaders tell other people what to do. Nwankwo (2001), defined autocratic leadership style as a leadership style where leaders exclusively make decisions because the leaders believes that human beings are weak, unwilling to work and have limited reasoning. The Canadian Association of Student Activity Advisers (2004) opined that autocratic leadership style is effective and should be used when time is limited. Khan, Khan, Qureshi, Ismail, Rauf, Latif and Tahir (2015), suggested that autocratic leadership is when manager retains as much power and decision-making authorisation as

possible. Similarly, Dairo, (2014), stressed that in autocratic leadership method, the hub of authority is with the leader and all communications within the group shift toward the leader alone.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was developed after review of existing literature on the variables to investigate the research hypotheses postulated for this study. The framework shows leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire and autocratic) as the independent variables used to explain employees' work performance as the dependent variable for this study. Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework for this study.
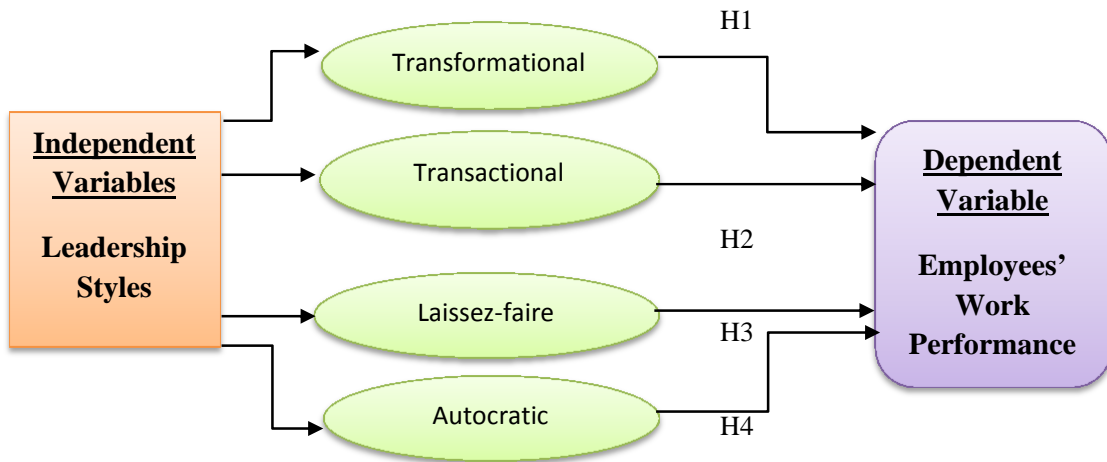

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework for this study

Source: Researcher's construction.

Methodology

This study makes use of Survey research design to determine the impact of leadership styles on employees' work performance in some South-Western Nigerian Private Universities. The study focused on South-west of Nigeria because it has the highest number of private Universities compared to all other geo-political zones in the country. The population for this study consists of all academic and non-academic staff in all the 36 private Universities in South-West, Nigeira (http://nuc.edu.ng/nigerian-univerisities/private-univeristies/, April 2019). The purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting ten 10 private Universities majorly in Ondo State, Ekiti State and Osun State respectively out of the 36 private Universities in South-west. Random sampling technique was used to select 30 respondents (15 Academic and 15 Non-academic Staff) from each of the private Universities selected for the study making a total number of 300 respondents. The instrument used to collect data was a questionnaire. Two hundred and seventy-eight (278) questionnaires out of the 300 questionnaires distributed were properly filled by the respondents and were retrieved for analysis, which represented 92.67% of the total questionnaires distributed for this study.

The study covers all respondents with different socio-demographic information such as sex, educational qualification, designation (academic and non-academic), years of experience and the most preferred style of leadership to the employees. To measure transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles, a subordinate's perception of his or her

superior's leadership style was collected by reviewing Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-Form 5X) Short Rater Form (Bass and Avolio, 2000). The researchers personally reviewed and designed questions to measure the impact of autocratic leadership style on employees' work performance. Pilot study of the questions was done by conducting reliability tests to assess the internal consistency of each question. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were reported as follows: 0.83 for transformational leadership style, 0.81 for transactional leadership style, 0.78 for laissez-faire leadership style and 0.73 for autocratic leadership style. Necessary adjustment were made to ensure that the instrument measure what it is expected to measure. The instrument was adjudged good for the study. All questions were close ended using a four-point Likert Scale which ranged from 4 = 'strongly agree' to 1 = 'strongly disagree'. It consisted of two sections. Section A consists of demographic information of respondents. Section B consists of questions on transformational, transactional laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles. Data collected for this study were analysed and interpreted accordingly using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The four hypotheses presumed for this study were tested using Regression analysis and Pearson correlation. All the hypotheses were examined at 0.01 and 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

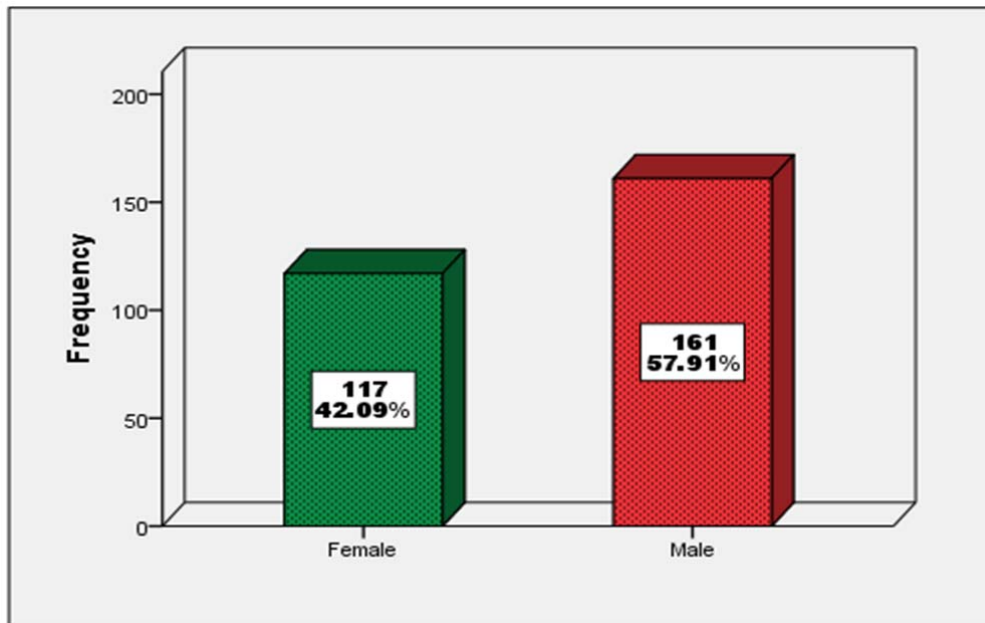### Section A: Demographic Information of Respondents (n=278)

Fig. 2. Demographic Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of respondents by sex. Both male and female employees of the selected south-western Nigerian private Universities participated in this study. Majority of the respondents were male with 57.91% while female respondents are 42.09%.
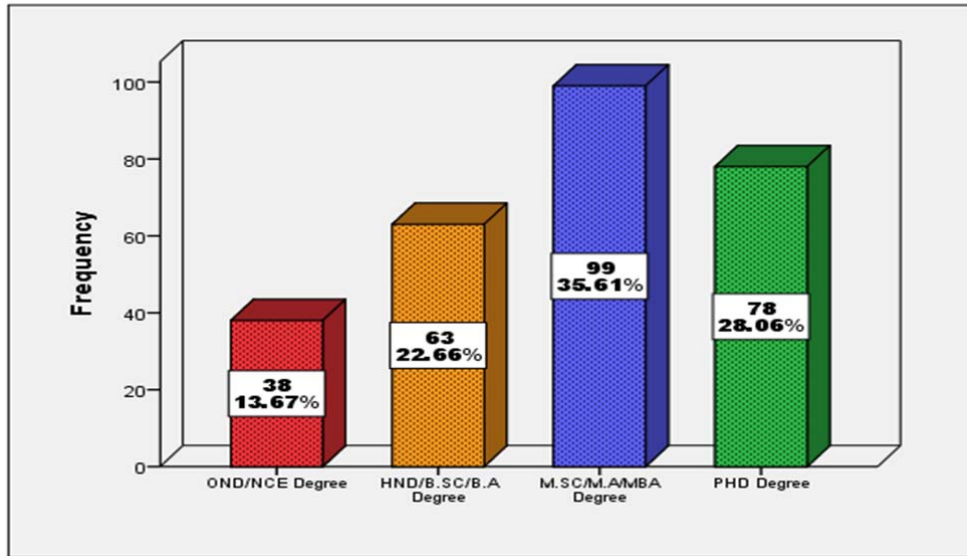
Fig. 3. Demographic Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of respondent's educational qualification in the selected south-western Nigerian private Universities. Majority of the respondents with 35.61% had M.Sc./M.A./MBA degree as their highest academic qualification, followed by respondents who had PHD degree 28.06%, while 22.66% of the respondents had HND/B.Sc./B.A degree and respondent with OND/NCE degree with 13.67% are least. Since the study majorly focused on educational institutions, there are highly educated respondents who participated in the study.
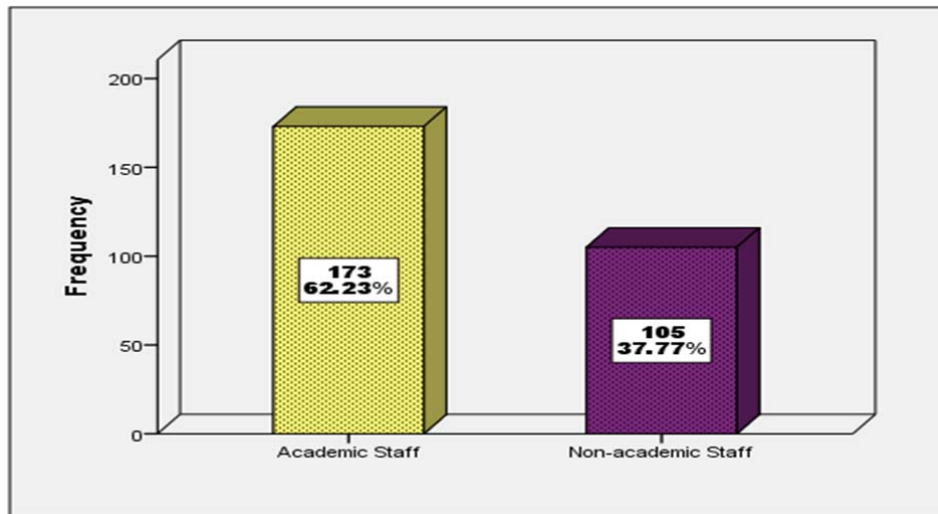
Fig. 4. Distribution of Respondents by Designation

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of respondents by designation in the selected south western Nigerian private Universities. Academic staff is 62.23% while non-academic staff are 37.77%. This shows that academic staff is more represented in the study than non-academic staff. This research is not confined towards possible biases associated with academic and non-academic

staff of Universities in Nigeria. This was because Non-academic staff was reluctant in responding to the questions.
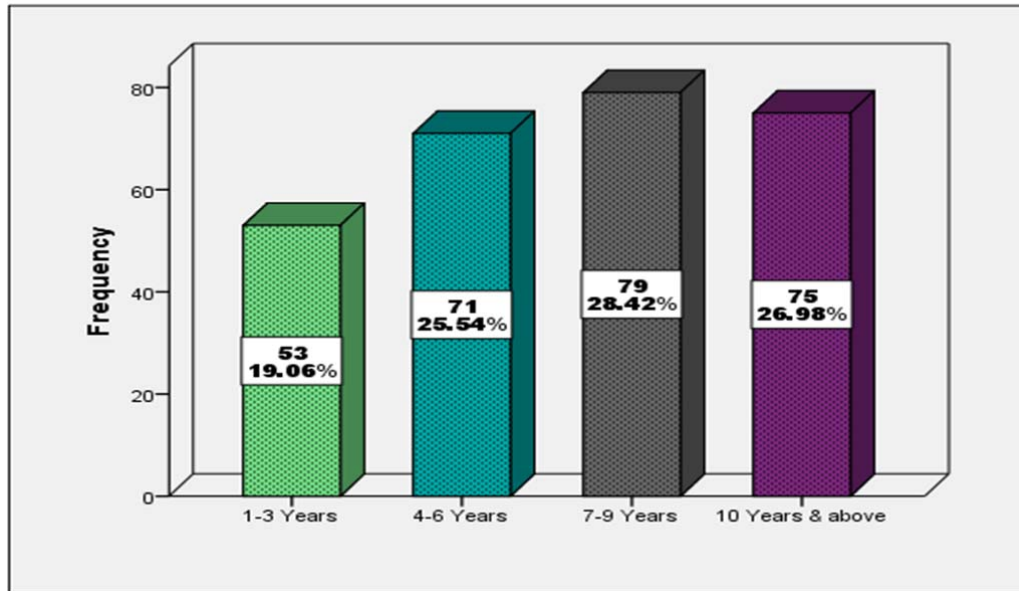
Fig. 5. Distribution of Respondents by Years of Experience

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of respondent's years of experience in the selected south-western Nigerian private Universities. Majority of the respondents with 28.42% had 7-9 years working experience, followed by respondents with 10 years and above working experience, which are 26.98%, respondents with 4-6 years working experience are 25.54% while respondents with 1-3 years working experience are the least with 19.06%.

Fig. 6. Employees' Preferred Leadership Style

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

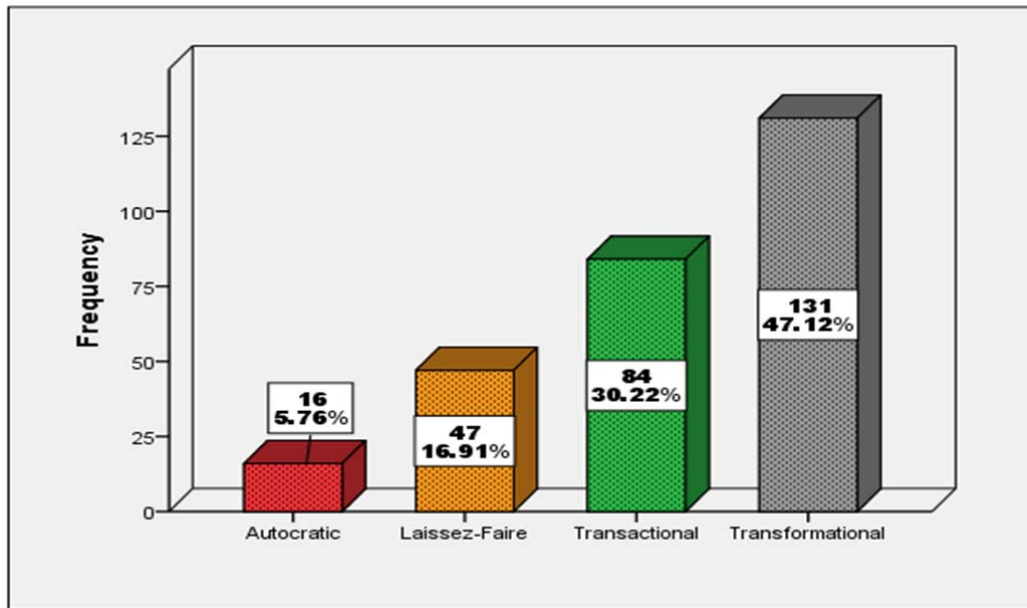Figure 6 shows the analysis of employees' most preferred leadership style in the selected south-western Nigerian private Universities. Among the 278 respondents selected for this study, majority of the respondents with 56.83% agreed that transformational leadership style is their most preferred leadership style, followed by transactional leadership style with 26.26%, Laissez-faire leadership style with 13.67% while autocratic leadership style is the least preferred leadership style by the respondents with 3.24%.

Section B: Analyses of Research Hypotheses

1. Research Hypothesis One

H1: Transformational leadership style does not have significant positive impact on employees' work Performance.

Tables 1 and 2 show the Regression Model summary and the ANOVA summary on the significant impact of transformational leadership style on employees' work performance.

Table 1. Regression Model Summaryb on Transformational Leadership Style and Employees' Work Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	DF 1	DF 2	Sig. F Change
1	.791[a]	.625	.624	.268	.625	460.788	1	276	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational Leadership Style
b. Dependent Variable: Employees' Work Performance

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Decision Rule: The regression analysis results presented in table 1 shows that coefficient of R-square (R^2) which is 0.625 shows that transformational leadership style (independent variable) accounts for 62.5% of the total variance, which is a high coefficient in the determination of employees' work performance (dependent variable). This shows that transformational leadership style has a positive significant impact on employees' work performance in the selected south western Nigerian private Universities.

Table 2. ANOVAa on Transformational Leadership Style and Employees' Work Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.973	1	32.973	460.788	.000[b]
	Residual	19.750	276	.072		
	Total	52.723	277			

a. Dependent Variable: Employees' Work Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Transformational Leadership style

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Decision Rule: The ANOVA results presented in table 2 shows that the statistically calculated F-value of 460.788 is greater than the critical F-value of 6.63 at (0.01) level of significance at 276 degree of freedom, therefore the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted which state that transformational leadership style has a significant positive impact on employees' work performance.

2. Research Hypothesis Two

H2: Transactional leadership style does not have significant positive impact on employees' work performance.

Tables 3 and 4 show the Regression Model summary and the ANOVA summary on the significant impact of transactional leadership style on employees' work performance.

Table 3. Regression Model Summaryb on Transactional Leadership Style and Employees' Work Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	DF1	DF 2	Sig. F Change
1	.696ᵃ	.484	.482	.314	.484	259.115	1	276	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional Leadership Style
b. Dependent Variable: Employees' Work Performance

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Decision Rule: The regression analysis results presented in table 3 shows that the coefficient of R-square (R^2) which is 0.484 indicates that transactional leadership style (independent variable) accounts for 48.4% of the total variance, which is a slightly high coefficient in the determination of employees' work performance (dependent variable). This means that transactional leadership style has a significant impact on employees' work performance in the selected south western Nigerian private Universities.

Table 4. ANOVAa on Transactional Leadership Style and Employees' Work Performance

	Model	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.530	1	25.530	259.115	.000ᵇ
	Residual	27.193	276	.099		
	Total	52.723	277			

a. Dependent Variable: Employees' Work Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Transactional Leadership Style

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Decision Rule: The ANOVA results presented in table 4 shows that the statistically calculated F-value of 259.115 is greater than the critical F-value of 6.63 at (0.01) level of significance at 276 degree of freedom, therefore the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted which state that transactional leadership style has a significant positive impact on employees' work performance.

3. Research Hypothesis Three

H3: There is no positive significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and employees' work performance.

Tables 5 and 6 show the Correlation analysis and descriptive statistics of the mean and standard deviation results on the relationship between laissez-Faire leadership style and employees' work performance.

Table 5. Correlation between Laissez-Faire Leadership Style and Employees' Work Performance

Variables		Laissez-Faire Leadership Style	Employees' Work Performance
Laissez-Faire Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	1	.50**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	278	278
Employees' Work Performance	Pearson correlation	.50**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	278	278

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Decision Rule: From analysis of the result in table 5, it shows the Pearson correlation analysis which indicate that there is positive significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and employees' work performance ($r = 0.5$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and therefore the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted which state that there is significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and employees' work performance in the selected south-western Nigerian private Universities.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Laissez-Faire Leadership style	3.24	.696	278
Employees' Work Performance	3.77	.436	278

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Decision Rule: The descriptive statistic results in table 6, show that laissez-faire leadership style mean value is 3.24 while that of employees' work performance is 3.77. The mean difference between the independent variable (laissez-faire leadership style) and dependent variable (employees' work performance) is 0.53 which is slightly high and shows a positive correlation in the determination of employees' work performance, indicating that laissez-faire leadership style is fairly correlated with employees' work performance.

4. Research Hypothesis Four

H4: There is no positive significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and employees' work performance.

Tables 7 and 8 show the Correlation analysis and descriptive statistics of the mean and standard deviation results on the relationship between autocratic leadership style and employees' work performance.

Table 7. Correlation between Autocratic Leadership Style and Employees' Work Performance

Variables		Autocratic Leadership Style	Employees' Work Performance
Autocratic Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	1	.076
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.207
	N	278	278
Employees' Work Performance	Pearson correlation	.076	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.207	
	N	278	278

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Decision Rule: From analysis of the result in table 7, it shows the Pearson correlation analysis which shows that there is no positive significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and employees' work performance ($r = 0.076$, $p > 0.05$). Thus, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is

rejected and therefore the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted which state that there is no significant positive relationship between autocratic leadership style and employees' work performance in the selected south western Nigerian private Universities.

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Autocratic Leadership Style	3.35	1.197	278
Employees' Work Performance	3.77	.436	278

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Decision Rule: The descriptive statistic results in table 8, show that autocratic leadership style mean value is 3.35 while that of employees' work performance is 3.77. The mean difference between the independent variable (autocratic leadership style) and dependent variable (employees' work performance) is 0.42 which is low and show a negative correlation in the determination of employees' work performance, indicating that laissez-faire leadership style is poorly correlated with employees' work performance.

Discussion of Findings

The results provided in this study do not support hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 but do support hypothesis 4 proposed for this study. Table 9 includes a review of the hypotheses developed for this study with a review of the results as they relate to the data analysis conducted for this study.

Table 9. Summary of Results in Relation to Research Hypotheses

No	Hypotheses	Sig.	Findings
H1:	Transformational leadership style does not have significant positive impact on employees' work performance.	.000	Rejected
H2:	Transactional leadership style does not have significant positive impact on employees' work performance.	.000	Rejected
H3:	There is no positive significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and employees' work performance.	.000	Rejected
H4:	There is no positive significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and employees' work performance.	.207	Accepted

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019.

Hypothesis 1 concluded that transformational leadership style has a significant positive impact on employees' work performance. Organisations that practice transformational leadership style have the ability to motivate and encourage employees to give their best through learning and communication. These leaders positively influence their employees to work toward reaching the established vision and objectives of the organisation (Nortje, 2010). Bassi and McMurrer (2007) found out that transformational leadership behaviours are influential in motivating employee change and transforming them to be more aware of task outcomes, activating their highest order needs and stretching them beyond their own self-interest for the benefit of the organisation. This finding corroborate with the finding of Bass and Riggio (2006), which demonstrated that transformational leaders care about individual needs of staff and motivate and inspire employees to perform excellent. Research on transformational leadership style has found that organisations led by transformational leaders (who are more relationship-oriented) perform better than groups led by leaders who employ other leadership styles (Lussier, 2008).

The second hypothesis established the fact that transactional leadership style has a significant positive impact on employees' work performance. Transactional leadership style is based on giving rewards for high performance and punishment for low performance. Similarly, Varol and

Varol, (2012), opined that organisations tend to adopt transactional leadership style in an attempt to increase performance of their employees. This study coincide with the study of Marques (2007), which confirmed that the trait of transactional leaders of setting goals and promising reward motivate the followers, which ultimately can lead to improved performance. Transactional leadership style is based on the exchange of rewards contingent on performance (Avolio et al., 2009). This style of leadership focuses on close monitoring, in detecting mistakes and errors and putting in place corrective actions to solve those (Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa, & Nwankwere, 2011).

Hypothesis 3 confirmed that there is positive significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and employees' work performance. This finding coincides with the study of Teresia, Damary, and Judith (2016), their findings indicated that increasing the application of laissez faire leadership style would affect the growth of firms positively. This finding is similar to the study conducted by Chaudhry and Javed (2012), they postulated that there is positive and significant relationship between laissez faire leadership and employee performance. These findings supported the findings of Bernard and O'Driscoll (2011), they found out that laissez-faire style of leadership lead to improve employee performance and it is effective in situations where employees are highly qualified in an area of expertise. This study had been supported by the study of Teresia, Damary, and Judith (2016), they found that laissez-faire style of leadership in an organisation allows full freedom and power to employees and this motivates employees and other low-level management to be creative and approach work in a manner that is best for them without the leaders' micro managing them.

Finally, hypothesis four revealed that there is a negative significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and employees' work performance. Employees working in organisations that are supervised by an autocratic leader may be seen as working under pressure, frustration and stress most of the time and they often show dissatisfaction to this kind of leaders by various means such as indulging in absenteeism, eye service, lateness to work, presenteeism, seeking transfer or voluntarily resigning from the organisation. This finding corroborates with the findings of Chartered Management Institute (2015), they reported that autocratic leaders exert authority on their followers by issuing orders and uses fear and punishment as motivators. Frandsen (2014) found out that autocratic leader makes all decisions without considering input from staff and because they see knowledge as power, they tend to withheld critical information from the team and the blame placed on individuals rather than on faulty processes. An autocratic leader is not bothered about attitudes of the staff toward a decision but rather concerned about getting the task done (Dubrin 1998). The study of Tan & Yazdanifard, (2013), Van Vugt, Hart, Jepson, and De Cremer, (2004), confirmed that autocratic leaders are poor in retaining members and recruiting new members to replace them, thus the group led by such managers may be very unstable.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to find the impact of leadership styles on employees' work performance in some selected South-western Nigerian private Universities comprising of both academic and non-academic staff of 10 private Universities majorly in Ondo, Ekiti and Osun state respectively out of the 36 private universities in south–west, Nigeria. This study makes use of survey research design and random sampling technique was used to select 30 respondents from each University. For the purpose of this study MLQ-Form 5X questionnaire by Bass and Avolio, (2000) was adopted for transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles whiles questions on autocratic leadership style were designed by the researcher. All questions were close ended and it was administered to 300 respondents but 278 were retrieved by the researcher for analysis. Data collected were analysed based on descriptive and inferential statistics to

analyses demographic variables and research hypotheses. The finding of this study, concussion and recommendation were discussed.

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that transformational leadership style has a positive significant impact on employees' work performance. Trmal, Bustamam, and Mohamed (2015) support this assertion by noting that transformational leadership is effective because it drives changes in individual behaviour which leads to the achievement of organisational goals. Pradeep and Prabhu (2011) carried out a study in India and results of their study showed a positive association between transformational leadership styles and employee performance. Therefore, employees of a transformational leader have high levels of performance (Bass & Riggio 2006).

This study concluded that transactional leadership style has a significant positive impact on employees' work performance. This coincides with the study of Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa and Nwankere (2011), they found that transactional leadership style had a significant positive relation with employee performance. In Russia, Elenkov (2002) initiated a study to investigate the impact of leadership on organisational performance and found that Russian managers who practice transactional leadership behaviour have positive impact on organisational performance. Howell and Hall-Merenda (1999) concluded that transactional leadership positively predicts employees' performance.

The study also concluded that there is significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and employees' work performance. This is in accordance with the study of Martin, (2013) who stated that laissez-faire leadership style had led to better performance of employees. This finding is similar to a study conducted by Chaudhry & Javed (2012) in which the result indicated that there is positive and significant relationship between laissez faire leadership and employee performance.

This study concluded that there is no significant positive relationship between autocratic leadership style and employees' work performance. This finding is similar to the studies of Jayasingam and Cheng (2009); Akor (2014), where they found that autocratic power produces negative influence on employee performance. This is in accordance to Nwankwo (2001) who described autocratic style as a leadership style where leaders exclusively make decisions and production is emphasized at the expense of any human consideration (cited in Akor, 2014).

Finally, from the findings, this study concluded that Universities that are driven by the desire to achieve better performance from his/her employees should try to exhibit more of transformational and transactional leadership styles and less of laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles. The best leadership style to adopt at times is dependent on the present situation of the organisation and how quick decisions needs to be made to achieve its set goals and objectives. It was obvious from the findings of this study that autocratic leadership style is not an effective leadership style. Therefore, Universities management should try to avoid autocratic leadership style and should not be encouraged by administrators.

This study recommends that good and effective leadership style is what Universities need to survive in this competitive and hostile educational business environment. Therefore, Universities should implement leadership training and development programmes in order to meet the essential knowledge, skills and abilities necessary in developing the leadership capabilities of employees. Good relationship between management and employees will motivate employees to perform at their best which will result in increase in employees' performance, which tends to improve organisational productivity. Universities management should be aware of the importance of effective leadership style to the growth and effectiveness of employees, students' academic performance and the organisations as a whole.

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