

AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE AND LIBRARY STAFF SATISFACTION IN STATE-OWNED UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-EAST, NIGERIA.

By

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between autocratic leadership style and staff satisfaction in libraries of state-owned universities in South-East, Nigeria. The study adopted the correlation research design which involved the linear method. The population of the study was three hundred and sixty-six (366) library staff which also served as the sample for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. Pearson r correlation statistics was used to answer the research question while t-test of significance of simple linear correlation statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that there was a very low negative but significant relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that library management should be mindful of the way they exhibit autocratic style of leadership in order not to jeopardize staff satisfaction on the job.

Keywords: Leadership, Autocratic Leadership, Library Staff and Job Satisfaction.

Introduction

The role of leadership in an organization is crucial in terms of creating vision, designing strategies, policies, and methods to achieve the organizational objectives effectively and efficiently (Ebrahim,2018). Top quality leadership is essential to achieve the mission and vision along with coping with the changes occurring in the external environment (Ebrahim,2018). Since the main aim of many companies is to accomplish stated objectives, there is a need for effective leaders to coordinate and motivate the employees (Vigoda-Gadot, 2012) and the library is not an exception. Effective leadership brings about satisfaction and effective performance. Leaders are therefore encouraged to adopt and combine styles to

encourage staff satisfaction on the job and enhance performance in order to achieve the objective of the organization.

In the context of state-owned universities in South-East Nigeria where bureaucratic structures and hierarchical management are often prevalent, the autocratic leadership style can significantly influence how library staff perceive their roles, interact with leadership and experience job satisfaction. While this style may lead to efficiency in decision-making and task execution, it can also result in reduced staff morale, lack of motivation, and limited professional growth if not applied with caution.

Given the crucial role library staff play in supporting teaching, learning, and research activities, understanding how autocratic leadership affects their job satisfaction is both timely and essential. Library managers practice autocratic leadership from the negative point, leading to lack of job satisfaction among library staff, therefore this study was conducted to find out the relationship between library managers' autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state-owned universities in South-East, Nigeria namely Abia State University, Uturu, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Uli, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, Imo State University, Owerri, University of Agriculture and Environmental Studies, Umuagwo and K.O. Mbadiwe University, Ogboko, Ideato North, Imo State.

Research Question

This research question was posed to be answered by the study:

1. What is the coefficient of relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

This null hypothesis was formulated to guide this study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: The coefficient of relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria is not significant.

Review of literature

The leadership approaches employed by library leaders play a significant role in determining organizational effectiveness (Chung & Al-Khaled, 2022). Autocratic leadership often measured as the classical approach is one in which the manager keeps as much power and decision-making authority as possible. The manager does not discuss with employees during decision making process, nor are they allowed to make any input. Employees are expected to follow orders without right to any explanations. The motivational environment is produced by creating a structured set of rewards and punishments. Chiang et al (2020) defines autocratic leadership as a type of leadership style that involves high level of control over subordinates thereby limiting their autonomy and self-determination. Autocratic leadership as described by de Hoogh et al and as cited by Towler (2021) is characterized by the centralization of decision making and directive power in a single dominant leader. Here, the autocratic leaders tend to use their authority by employing organizational hierarchies to demand total obedience from their followers. A leader such as a university librarian adopting this style of leadership is inclined to make decisions and impose them on his/her own subjects. There will be no room for collaboration and the UL would prefer to remain

unquestionable. Obviously, this will breed grumbling and discontent among the subordinates and may adversely affect how the leader's instructions are carried out.

Autocratic leadership may possibly be beneficial in some occasions such as when decisions need to be made speedily without discussing with a large group of people. Nevertheless, Maqsood, Bilal, Nazir and Baig (2015) argued that during military conflicts, group members may actually prefer a coercive style. This style allows staff to focus on executing specific tasks without worrying about making intricate decisions and to become highly skilled at performing certain duties which can be beneficial to the organization. Like other leadership styles, the autocratic style has both some benefits and some weaknesses. While those who rely on this approach too heavily are often seen as bossy or dictator-like, this level of control can have benefits and be useful in certain situations. When and where the authoritarian style is most useful can depend on factors such as the situation, the type of task the group is working on, and characteristics of the team members. Oranefo (2022) opined that the main advantage of autocratic leadership is that tasks are completed quickly and the leader's supremacy is ensured but however if followers are not properly utilized they may become dissatisfied which may have an impact on organizational results.

However, for the objectives of the university library to be achieved, willing minds are expected to be at the forefront of affairs to execute their expected roles. This is based on the fact that in librarianship, only dedicated librarians will be able to understand the needs of the people and ensure that they make good use of the library. This, however, boils down to the issue of ensuring librarians satisfaction in their duty posts as researchers like Ebrahim (2018), Cemil, Bryar and Akar (2020) among others have found that leadership style has influence on librarians' satisfaction and performance. The success of any university library in providing,

preserving and protecting the intellectual capital of the university will depend on its employees' ability to effectively and efficiently carry out their job activities which is directly related to the leadership style employed by the university librarian to get tasks executed. The human element (man) stands out as the most important of the generally recognized factors of production.

According to Dziuba, Ingaldi & Zhuravskaya (2020), staff satisfaction is seen as a sense of employee achievements and successes. It is directly associated to productivity and work performance, as well as to personnel well-being. Staff satisfaction describes how happy staff members are with their jobs. It refers to the degree of contentment that staff experience concerning their roles in the organization. The relationship between autocratic leadership and job satisfaction can be associated with intelligence on employee emotions as well as employees who are motivated towards their commitment in an organization (Juati et al., as cited by Abdullah and Wahab, 2023).

Research Methodology

This research adopted correlation research design which involved the linear method. The population of the study was three hundred and sixty-six (366) library staff in the state-owned universities in South-East Nigeria. The study adopted the census method to ensure that the opinions of the library staff in the studied state-owned universities were captured. Questionnaires was used to collect data for the study. Pearson r Correlation statistics was used to answer the research question while t-test of significance of simple linear correlation statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analyses and Presentation

Research Question 1: What is the coefficient of relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Summaries of some statistics concerning the simple linear coefficient of relationship between autocratic style of leadership (X) and library staff satisfaction (Y) in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria

V	N	Σ	R	MR	DR	Remarks
X	366	10012	-0.15	Very Low	Negative	Very Low
Y	366	9959				Negative Relationship

Size (N), Summation (Σ), Pearson r (r), Magnitude of Relationship (MR), Direction of Relationship (DR) and Remarks

Table 1 shows the coefficient of relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The result is that the obtained coefficient of -0.15 indicates that there is a very low negative relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria. This coefficient also indicates that the direction of the relationship is inverse, and as such indicates that as one variable increases, the other variable decreases. The answer to the above question is that there is a very low negative relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1: The coefficient of relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria is not significant.

Table 2: Summaries of some statistics involved in the t-test of significance of (Pearson r) the simple linear coefficient of relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria

V	N	Σ	R	A	Df	t_{cal}	t_{tab}	Decision
X	366	10012	-0.15	0.05	364	2.899	1.96	Reject H_{01}
Y	366	9959						

Sample Size (N), Summation (Σ), Coefficient of Relationship (r), Alpha Level (α), Degree of Freedom (df) and t-test of Significance of Simple Linear Correlation between two Variables

Table 2 shows the test of the significance of the coefficient of relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The result indicates the degree of freedom as 364, t-calculated value as 2.899 and t-tabulated value as 1.96. This shows that the t-calculated value is greater than the t-tabulated value. The researcher rejected the null hypothesis; therefore, concludes that the coefficient of relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria is significant.

Discussion of Findings

It was found in this study that there is a very low negative but significant relationship between autocratic style of leadership and library staff satisfaction in state owned university libraries in South-East, Nigeria. This means that the practise of autocratic style of leadership breeds dissatisfaction among library staff and therefore should not be practised more by library managers but they should adopt styles like democratic and transformational. The result is in line with the findings of Chiang et al (2020) that autocratic leadership is a type of leadership style that involves high level of control over subordinates thereby limiting their autonomy and self-determination. Also, the result supported the views of researchers like

Ebrahim (2018), Cemil, Bryar and Akar (2020) among others that leadership style has influence on librarians' satisfaction and performance.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. The library management should avoid autocratic style of leadership by introducing styles that are capable of making the staff comfortable and highly motivated to contribute new ideas that are capable of transforming the library organization, and their job performance.
2. The library management should be mindful of the way they exhibit autocratic style of leadership in order not to jeopardize staff satisfaction on the job.
3. The library management should ensure staff remain up-to-date with the latest trends and practices in LIS by encouraging staff professional development.
4. The library management should balance autocratic leadership with staff satisfaction by fostering a motivated workforce in order to create an active environment that will enhance knowledge in LIS.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was revealed that autocratic style of leadership negatively affects library staff job satisfaction. This implies that staff will not likely put in their best to work since their rights are not really considered in such an organization where autocracy exists.

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