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EFFECTS OF LEADERSHIP STYLE MANAGEMENT ON WORK OUTPUT PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of leadership style management on work output performance. One research question guided the study, which adopted a descriptive survey research design. A sample size of 100 participants was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with close-ended questions. The instrument underwent face and content validity testing, and its reliability was measured using the test-retest method. The reliability test results were correlated using Cronbach alpha coefficient, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.849. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0, employing both descriptive and inferential techniques. Regression analysis was used to assess the influence of leadership styles on employee performance. The results indicated that transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles significantly positively impact employee performance, while transactional leadership negatively affects performance. Therefore, to achieve improved performance, the study recommends that leaders should emphasize transformational and laissez-faire attributes and avoid transactional leadership styles, as they diminish employee performance.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Work output performance, Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership, Laissez-faire leadership.

Introduction

Leadership style plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational culture, employee motivation, and overall work output performance. In educational institutions, effective leadership is crucial for fostering an environment conducive to academic excellence and operational efficiency.

The concept of leadership style encompasses the behaviors and strategies employed by leaders to manage and guide their teams. Common leadership styles include transformational, transactional, laissez-faire, and autocratic, each with distinct characteristics and implications for work output (Northouse, 2021). Transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees by creating a vision and fostering a sense of commitment, while transactional leaders focus on structured tasks and rewards. Laissez-faire leaders take a hands-off

approach, providing minimal direction, and autocratic leaders exert high levels of control and decision-making power.

In educational institutions, particularly in tertiary institutions like the Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze, leadership style management is crucial. These institutions require dynamic and effective leadership to foster an environment conducive to academic excellence, research, and overall institutional growth. The leadership style adopted by administrators and managers in educational settings significantly affects the morale, productivity, and job satisfaction of the academic and non-academic staff, thereby influencing the institution's overall performance.

Statement of Problem

Despite the recognition of leadership as a critical factor in organizational success, many educational institutions in Nigeria continue to grapple with issues related to ineffective leadership styles. The following problems highlight the need for this study:

Low Staff Morale and Productivity: There are indications that staff morale and productivity are significantly influenced by the leadership styles adopted by the management. Ineffective leadership can lead to low motivation, reduced job satisfaction, and high turnover rates among staff, which in turn affects their productivity and the institution's overall performance (Oduwusi, 2020).

Variability in Leadership Styles: The diversity in leadership styles among different managers and administrators within the institution creates inconsistency in management practices. This variability can lead to confusion, lack of coherence in policies, and inefficiencies in operations (Uka, 2021).

Impact on Academic Performance: The leadership style of the management also affects the academic performance of students indirectly through its impact on the teaching staff. Poor leadership can result in a demotivated and less effective teaching workforce, thereby compromising the quality of education provided (Ololube et al., 2019).

Resistance to Change: Resistance to change is a common problem in organizations with rigid leadership structures. Innovative leadership styles that promote flexibility and adaptability are often needed to address the dynamic challenges faced by educational institutions. However, the existing leadership practices may be resistant to such changes, hindering progress and development (Adeyemi & Uko-Aviomoh, 2020).

Lack of Professional Development: Continuous professional development is essential for maintaining an effective leadership cadre. However, there may be inadequate opportunities for leadership training and development at the Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze, resulting in leaders who are not equipped

with contemporary management skills (Akanbi, 2019).

Addressing these problems requires a comprehensive understanding of the effects of different leadership styles on work output performance. This approach will deepen our understanding of the relationship between leadership styles and work performance, providing valuable insights for organizations seeking to enhance their management practices and improve overall efficiency.

Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between leadership style management and work output performance, with the aim of informing policy and practice in educational management at the Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles influence work output performance in Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze?

Literature Review

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is a managerial approach that focuses on the transactions or exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers. It is characterized by a clear structure where leaders provide rewards or punishments based on performance outcomes. The fundamental principles of transactional leadership include:

Contingent Reward: Leaders set clear goals and expectations and reward employees for achieving these targets. Rewards can be in the form of bonuses, recognition, or other incentives.

Management by Exception (Active): Leaders actively monitor the work of their subordinates and take corrective actions when necessary to ensure that goals are met.

Management by Exception (Passive): Leaders intervene only when standards are not met or when problems arise.

Theoretical Foundations

The transactional leadership style is rooted in theories of exchange and reinforcement. It aligns with the work of Max Weber's theory of bureaucratic management and B.F. Skinner's theory of behaviorism. In transactional leadership, the relationship between leader and follower is based on a series of exchanges or transactions aimed at achieving performance objectives.

Several studies have examined the impact of transactional leadership on organizational performance. A Study by Breevaart et al. (2020) found that transactional leadership positively correlates with employee performance and organizational productivity, especially in environments requiring strict adherence to procedures and regulations. The contingent reward aspect was particularly effective in motivating employees to achieve specific targets.

Another research by Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2019) indicated that transactional leadership leads to improved performance in

organizations where tasks are routine and require little innovation. The study also highlighted that while transactional leadership is effective in maintaining the status quo, it may not be suitable for organizations seeking transformational change.

Findings by Wang et al. (2021) revealed that transactional leadership is most effective when combined with elements of transformational leadership. Leaders who use a blend of transactional and transformational approaches can achieve higher levels of employee satisfaction and performance.

A study by Judge and Piccolo (2019) demonstrated that transactional leadership is positively associated with employee job satisfaction when contingent rewards are used effectively. However, excessive reliance on punitive measures can lead to decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions.

Research by Li and Ling (2020) found that transactional leadership could enhance employee motivation when goals are clearly communicated and rewards are perceived as fair. However, it also noted that over time, the motivational effects of transactional leadership might diminish if not supplemented with opportunities for personal growth and development.

According to a study by Tummers and Knies (2020), transactional leadership is prevalent in public sector organizations where adherence to rules and regulations is crucial. The study found that in such settings, transactional leadership can lead to high levels of compliance and efficiency.

Research by Yang (2019) explored the application of transactional leadership in educational settings. The findings indicated that while transactional leadership could ensure adherence to academic standards and procedures, it might limit the creativity and innovation needed in educational environments.

In a study by Jiang et al. (2022), employees in a manufacturing firm reported higher intentions to leave their jobs due to the transactional leadership style practiced by their supervisors. The research indicated that the lack of emotional engagement and support from leaders led to decreased organizational commitment and increased turnover rates, which ultimately harmed work output performance.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve higher levels of performance and to engage in the pursuit of a shared vision. This leadership style was first conceptualized by James MacGregor Burns in 1978 and further expanded by Bernard Bass in the 1980s.

According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leaders are characterized by four key elements:

Idealized Influence: Leaders act as role models, exhibiting ethical behavior and gaining the trust and respect of their followers.

Inspirational Motivation: Leaders articulate a compelling vision and inspire followers to commit to the vision.

Intellectual Stimulation: Leaders encourage creativity and innovation by challenging assumptions and fostering an environment where followers feel comfortable expressing new ideas.

Individualized Consideration: Leaders provide personalized support and mentoring to help followers achieve their potential.

Transformational leadership is often contrasted with transactional leadership, which is more focused on routine and performance-based exchanges between leaders and followers (Northouse, 2018).

Recent studies have demonstrated that transformational leadership positively influences various organizational outcomes, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall performance. For instance, a study by Zhang and Chen (2019) found that transformational leadership significantly enhances employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which in turn boosts organizational performance.

Transformational leadership has been found to foster an environment conducive to creativity and innovation. A meta-analysis by Wang, Howell, and Bu (2020) highlighted that transformational leaders are effective in stimulating employees' creativity by encouraging them to think outside the box and explore new solutions to problems.

Transformational leaders have been shown to positively impact employees' well-being. Research by Arnold et al. (2020) indicated that transformational leadership is associated with higher levels of employee well-being, partly because these leaders offer support and create a supportive work environment.

Despite its benefits, transformational leadership also has some limitations. For instance, it may lead to burnout among leaders due to the high demands of continuously inspiring and motivating followers (Cummings & Worley, 2019). Additionally, the effectiveness of transformational leadership can be influenced by contextual factors such as organizational culture and external pressures.

Laissez-faire Leadership Style

Laissez-faire leadership, often described as a "hands-off" or "delegative" style, is characterized by minimal direct supervision and a high degree of autonomy given to subordinates. Leaders adopting this style generally avoid making decisions and prefer to allow their team members to make their own decisions. The concept is rooted in the idea of maximizing employee freedom and promoting self-management.

AJEMATES
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Key Characteristics:
Autonomy: Leaders provide their team with freedom to set their own goals and make decisions.
Non-interference: Leaders intervene minimally in the day-to-day activities of their team.
Trust: Emphasis on trust in team members' abilities and judgment.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Laissez-faire leadership is often contrasted with other leadership styles such as transformational or transactional leadership. It is frequently examined in the context of leadership theories, including the Full Range Leadership Model, where it represents the least active and least effective form of leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2019).

The laissez-faire style can lead to high levels of employee dissatisfaction if not managed properly. The lack of guidance and feedback can contribute to confusion, low motivation, and reduced performance, as employees may feel unsupported or unsure of their goals (Northouse, 2022).

Empirical studies suggest that laissez-faire leadership can negatively impact employee performance and organizational effectiveness. A study by Puni et al. (2020) found that laissez-faire leadership was associated with decreased employee performance and job satisfaction due to the lack of direction and support.

On the positive side, a study by Jansen et al. (2021) highlighted that in highly autonomous and innovative environments, laissez-faire leadership can foster creativity and innovation. Employees who are self-motivated and skilled might thrive under minimal supervision.

Research by Buil et al. (2019) compared laissez-faire leadership with transformational leadership and found that while laissez-faire leadership could be detrimental in structured environments, it might be less impactful in environments where employees are highly self-directed. A meta-analysis by Kark et al. (2023) examined the effects of laissez-faire leadership on employee satisfaction and concluded that the style's impact varies significantly depending on the employee's level of autonomy and the nature of their work tasks.

Research Method

A quantitative approach was employed for this study, as it was considered suitable for numerically measuring the relationships between variables, which is the primary objective of the research. The study targeted permanent staff members of Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze. A probability sampling method was utilized to select a representative sample from different departments. Each department was treated as a stratum, from which individual participants were randomly selected. This approach ensured unbiased representation from all units, reduced sampling errors, minimized bias, and increased efficiency. A sample size of 100 participants was deemed adequate, facilitating the collection of

diverse data and enhancing the reliability of the findings. Data was collected using a questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). The Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was adopted with modifications to fit this study. Employee performance was measured using the scale by Yousef (2000). Questionnaires were distributed to all prospective respondents to ensure a high response rate. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.00. Content validity was assessed by five experts who evaluated the instrument's appropriateness and adequacy. The reliability of the questionnaire was examined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which yielded a result of 0.849, indicating good reliability as it exceeds the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.700.

Presentation of Results

Table 1 Transactional leadership

Statement	N	Mean	SD
1. I am constantly reminded of what I would receive if I do what is expected.	100	3.68	0.88
2. My superior pays close attention to anomalies that may arise.	100	4.00	0.49
3. When mistakes are made disciplinary actions is instituted.	100	3.95	0.63
4. My superior closely checks for non-conformity and attend to it.	100	3.99	0.54
5. I get rewarded for exceptional performance.	100	3.69	1.05

Nearly all responses for the parameters of transactional leadership style exceeded the average score of 3.5. This indicates that respondents generally agree that their superiors extensively practice transactional leadership style.

Table 2 Laissez-faire leadership

Statement	N	Mean	SD
1. My superior stays out of my way as I do my work.	100	3.04	1.03
2. My superior gives me complete freedom to solve problems on my own.	100	2.67	1.00
3. I am allowed to pursue organisational objectives and make implementation.	100	2.83	1.06
4. I have freedom to make decisions and implement them	100	2.85	1.04

The categories of the mean range displayed in Table 2 are below the average (3.50), clearly indicating that respondents moderately agree that the laissez-faire style of leadership influences employee performance.

AJEMATES
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Table 3 Transformational leadership

Statement	N	Mean	SD
I prepare a work plan at all times.	100	3.79	0.56
I am always motivated to work.	100	3.87	0.65
I always meet set target.	100	3.69	0.85
I diligently execute my duties as scheduled	100	4.07	0.33
When executing daily duties, I collaborate with others	100	4.09	0.52
Resources are diligently utilized so as to minimize wastage.	100	4.04	0.47
I evaluate quality of my work after executing.	100	4.13	0.39
Standard on my work assignment is always met.	100	4.01	0.48
I do good job in terms of quality and quantity.	100	4.13	0.42
I am very punctual at work.	100	4.15	0.44

As observed from Table 3, the study findings indicate that respondents overwhelmingly agree that transformational leadership style significantly and positively impacts employee performance. This is evidenced by the mean range categories, which were above average (3.50)

Table 4: Work output performance

Statement	N	Mean	SD
The vision and mission are communicated to employees by leadership.	100	3.96	0.55
I understand the vision of the organization very well.	100	4.01	0.42
I acknowledge and share the leader's long term vision.	100	3.95	0.50
I accept the role of leaders in the organization.	100	4.02	0.43
High performance expectancy is always communicated by leadership.	100	4.06	0.45
I am always motivated to view things from different perspectives.	100	4.01	0.51
My superior show great determination in achieving set goals.	100	4.09	0.43
I am comfortable when my superior is around.	100	4.08	0.47
Leadership identifies and satisfies the needs of each employee.	100	3.79	0.72
I have total confidence and trust in the leadership.	100	3.78	0.74
I respect the leadership in my organization.	100	4.04	0.47

The mean range of 3.69 – 4.15, as shown in Table 4, confirms that respondents strongly agree that leadership styles influence employee performance.

AJEMATES
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
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Table 5 Regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	sig
	B	Standard error			
1(Constant)	1.913	0.317		6.037	0.000
Transactional	-0.059	0.060	-0.105	-0.988	0.326
Laissez-faire	0.068	0.028	0.211	2.462	0.016
Transformational	0.536	0.102	0.564	5.261	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance.

The results presented in Table 5 indicate that both laissez-faire and transformational leadership styles significantly influence employee work performance at $p<0.05$. Conversely, the results for the transactional leadership style show a reduction in employee performance by 10.5%. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Jiang et al. (2022).

Table 6 Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted r square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.585	0.342	0.321	0.24045

The results shown in the table indicate that the coefficient of determination (R squared) is 0.342, meaning that 34.20% of the changes in employee performance can be explained by the independent variables (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles). However, 65.80% of the variations in employee performance are not accounted for by these variables in this study.

Summary of Findings

The results of this study reveal that transformational leadership significantly enhances employee performance, making it the most effective style for influencing productivity. Leaders who adopt transformational attributes are more successful in accelerating the performance of their followers.

Conversely, the transactional leadership style has been found to negatively impact employee performance. This suggests that employees are less motivated to improve their performance when rewards for exceptional achievements are the primary incentive. Implementing transactional leadership may thus lead to decreased employee performance, and employees often perceive transactional leaders as ineffective.

On a positive note, the laissez-faire leadership style also shows a favorable influence on employee performance, albeit to a lesser extent than transformational leadership. Managers who practice laissez-

faire leadership tend to boost employee performance. In summary, the study indicates that employee performance is positively affected by transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles, while transactional leadership negatively impacts performance.

Discussion of Findings

The analyzed quantitative data from respondents revealed employees' perceptions regarding their leaders' styles of leadership. Coefficient regression analysis indicated that both transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles positively predict employee performance, while the transactional leadership style exhibited a negative influence on employees' performance.

The majority of respondents agreed that most of their leaders exhibit transformational attributes. This means that leaders motivate, encourage, and raise followers' spirits, inspiring them to perform at their best for the success of the organization (Arnold et al. (2020)). Additionally, employees are often left to make decisions and implement them as they see fit. Thus, superiors who employ both transformational and laissez-faire styles enhance performance. This view contrasts with Wang et al. (2021), who argued that both transformational and transactional approaches are effective for achieving the organization's desired performance. The current study results revealed that transformational leadership style influences employee performance more than laissez-faire. This signifies that the more superiors exhibit transformational leadership attributes, the more employees enhance their performance.

The coefficients of the regression results showed that the laissez-faire leadership style also had a positive effect on employee performance at F.C.E.(T) Umunze, confirming that this style enhances employee performance. However, other studies reviewed were contrary to these results. For instance, a study by Puni et al. (2020) found that laissez-faire leadership was associated with decreased employee performance and job satisfaction due to the lack of direction and support.

Conversely, the current study found that the transactional leadership style negatively impacts employee performance. This suggests that superiors or leaders who implement corrective, contingent reward, and management by exception traits hinder employee performance and fail to achieve higher performance levels.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

Adopt Transformational Leadership: Organizations should encourage superiors to adopt a transformational leadership style. Top management should provide training and seminars to ensure that all leaders understand the benefits of this approach for both employees and the organization.

Implement Laissez-Faire Leadership: Although less impactful than transformational leadership, the laissez-faire

style still positively influences performance. It is recommended that management implement this style to enhance performance.

Avoid Transactional Leadership: Given its negative impact on employee performance, transactional leadership should be avoided. Policies should discourage its practice, and organizations should focus on transformational and laissez-faire approaches to optimize employee performance.

Integrate Transformational and Laissez-Faire Styles: The study demonstrates that transformational and laissez-faire styles are both effective and enduring. A combination of these styles is recommended as the optimal managerial strategy. Transactional leadership should be excluded, as it undermines employee performance. Addressing current challenges, such as declining revenue and profitability, can be more effectively managed by adopting a mix of transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles.

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