

Leadership Styles and Employees' Performance in University System: The Case of University of Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper assessed the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance of the University of Abuja, based on the arguments propounded by modern leadership theory. It adopted a survey research design and made use of primary data obtained from structured questionnaires distributed to a sample of 380 non-academic staff members of the University. Using the OLS regression technique, the study found strong evidence in support of a positive and statistically significant association between transformational and transactional leadership style in the University of Abuja. Specifically, the result of the analysis suggests that leadership style plays crucial role in the overall performance of the employee of the University. The study concluded that leadership style be it transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire, influences employee performance. In line with the above findings, the study recommended, among others that leaders (managers) at the University of Abuja should project inspiration, encourage creativity and innovation, and reward hard work but never abdicate its responsibility to drive performance.

Keywords: *Employee Performance, Leadership Styles, Organisational Outcomes.*

Introduction

The workplace is changing dramatically and demands for the highest quality of product and service is increasing. To remain competitive in the face of these pressures, effective leadership is crucial. Successful organizations, therefore, emerge from the significant contributions of the business leaders, senior executives, and workforce. The relationship between them is interdependent on each other, and people have to work in collaboration for any organization to be successful.

This reality is applicable to all organizations, but it is of particular importance to educational institutions where the primary task is domiciled in the training of high-quality personnel that would provide the skill requirement of the next generation. Researchers such as [1] and [2] have long recognized that leadership, and indeed leadership styles, are critical factors in the success or failure equation of organizations.

Leadership style in this context refers to the pattern of thinking, feeling, and behavior that a manager uses to deal with people and situations. It is said to be unique with each leader depending on the situation and inclined paradigm. Stressing the point about leadership styles, Miller [3] brings up the question of why some leaders thrive while others flounder. According to him, professional qualifications, described as the what's of leadership, is of paramount importance, but far more often, success depends on the how's specifically, how leaders' styles mesh with their teams and organizational cultures. A survey by Amnesty international (2016) suggests that leadership style dysfunction accounts for significant non-performance of public institutions in sub-Saharan African countries. The report recommended a paradigm shift in the leadership approach in order to achieve increased efficiency and good governance.

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Leadership styles refer to behaviors or processes that leaders portray or participate in that enable extraordinary things to be done in or by the organization. The continued interest in empirical research about leadership stems from the belief that leadership styles if properly managed, can result in high levels of motivation which manifest in the form of reduced turnover and absenteeism and improved employee performance which ultimately translates into superior organizational performance.

Of particular interest to researchers, therefore, is how leadership style can be engaged as a new effective approach for managing employees and organizations at large. In this context, the traditional view of personnel administration has gradually been replaced with a broader concept known as Human Resource Management. This approach has necessitated an integration of new leadership styles into effective management of employees to improve employee performance. An administrative approach to leadership, on the other hand, stresses and reflects the contingency of leadership styles while neglecting key performance outcomes.

In explaining the need for effective leadership, Kenneth and Heresy [4] suggest that the effective leader must be a good diagnostician and adopt leadership styles to meet the demands of the situation in which they operate. A leader must therefore understand the complexities of his followership and navigate effectively through them while always having a clear picture of the overall objective of his organization. To achieve this, the leader must command respect and possess a good personality. He should possess the ability needed to direct, organize, and ensure that plans are carried out effectively. Maxwell [5] argues that the task of the 21st-century leader should include among others the potential to empower others to be leaders. The new conception of leadership, according to Maxwell [5] hinges on the capacity of leadership to create atmospheres of shared responsibilities and continuous

collaboration in the workplace, which enables them to tap everyone's ideas and intelligence. Similarly, Coleman [6] posits that leaders must aspire to be part of a great success story, such as launching a brand that dazzles customers and dominates its markets or playing a specific role in an organization that wins big or changes the course of its industry. Leaders must work toward being an executive or entrepreneur that creates jobs, generates wealth, and builds an organization bursting with energy and creativity [7].

The implication of this contemporary approach to leadership is that no matter the position of an individual on the organizational chart, they have to confront leadership issues which in turn shape their personal definition of success and what it means to make a difference and impact? What constitutes the best way to rally colleagues to organizational causes? Innovative approaches to handling complex problems and obstacles that inevitably arise in the workplace. The leadership style of a manager plays a crucial role in shaping the way and manner he or she responds to these organizational realities and in turn determines the amount of support and cooperation he or she gets from subordinates. Leadership style can therefore be assumed to be an important driver of organizational outcomes.

The relationship between the concepts of leadership and organizational & employee performance are well documented in the literature. However, there is still a lack of understanding of how leadership constructs fit into the equation of the outcomes of leadership. Moreover, as organizations and their environments change over time, new leadership styles and paradigms which suggest the adoption of leadership styles that are less bureaucratic and more democratic have taken prominence in the extant literature [8].

This has spurred a number of studies, with the results of these scholarly investigations been mixed and inconsistent largely due to the dynamics of the different contexts within which

the said studies were situated. The literature, therefore, highlights the need for more theoretical and empirical research relating to leadership and employee performance as well as organizational effectiveness. Mohamad, Silong, and Hassan [9] found that most of the leadership studies are leaning toward a Western style and, therefore, called for more localized studies. According to Snidder [10], this divergence of research outcomes on leadership styles effectively limits the applicability of a study conducted in one country to another or within organizations in the same country. The implication of the above observation is that how leadership styles affect performance should be viewed from an organizational-specific context. It is against this reality that the present study gains relevance.

In the study of Maxwell [5], where he posited that the global financial crisis has resulted in a wave of unprecedented challenges to the world's economic & political order creating massive turbulence in organizations. Osborne [11] goes further to argue that when organizations pass through such periods of disruptive interference with attendant dysfunctional effects on organizational outcomes, the choice of leadership can be an important factor in repositioning and redirecting such organizations towards a path of success. This scenario fits the University of Abuja, which over the years has gone through several periods of disruptive transitions, some arising from internal strikes which disrupted academic activities to the suspension of certain academic programmes among others. The paper argues that the occurrence of these problems has an association with the leadership styles at various time periods within the University and goes further to provide an empirical explanation to the phenomenon. It is against this background that this paper gains relevance to empirically test the extent to which leadership style influences employee performance at the University of Abuja, Nigeria. To achieve the main objective of this paper, the following

research questions are pertinent - Does transformational leadership style have a significant effect on employee performance of the University of Abuja? Does transactional leadership style have a significant effect on the performance of the employee of the University of Abuja? Does a Laissez-Faire leadership style have a significant effect on the performance of the employee of the University of Abuja? The paper is organized into five sections - part one is the introduction, part two is the literature review, and theoretical framework, part three present the research methodology while part four estimate the data and discuss the findings, and part five offers concluding remarks and recommendations.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Employee Performance

Performance is the act of executing a task or an accomplishment or achievement. Accordingly, employee performance is how well an employee is effectively fulfilling his/her job requirement or discharging his/her duties to achieve good results. Anitha [12] defined employee performance as an indicator of financial or another outcome of the employee that has a direct connection with the performance of the organization as well as its achievement, further revealed that working atmosphere, leadership, team and co-worker relationship, training and career development, reward programme, guidelines and procedures, and workstation wellbeing, as well as employee engagement, are major factors that determine employee performance. Anitha [12] additionally disclosed that the atmosphere at which employees perform the task and other schedules, relationships with bosses, co-employee relationships and that of team, compensation procedure, and engagement of an employee are determining factors for performance. Performance of an employee is a

gauge or pointer of monetary or another result of the employee that has an undeviating relationship with organization performance and accomplishment as well.

According to Ahmad and Shahzad [13], apparent employee performance embodies the whole belief of the employee about their conduct and contributions to the accomplishment of the organization and further stated that compensation practices, performance evaluation, and promotional practices as a determinants of employee performance. They argued that the seeming performance of an employee expresses the entire conviction of an employee in regard to the actions and input to the attainment of the organization's goals and mission.

Armstrong [14] suggests employee performance is seen as the way in which people get their work done. It is the interaction of an individual's behavior in relation to work. Such interaction involves the behavioural aspect of the work (job content analysis), which if not properly guided, could result into deviation from its initial planned activity in the form of poor performance. This guide is called 'work ethic'. When it is strong, it promotes the excellent performance of the job, but if otherwise, that is weak, poor performance results whether in the short or long run.

Concept of Leadership

In the empirical literature, several scholarly definitions of the concept have appeared. [27] sees leadership as the ability to influence through communication the activities of others, individually or as a group, towards the accomplishment of worthwhile, meaningful, and challenging goals. This definition suggests that leadership does not exist in a vacuum. There must be people to be lead. Viewed from this perspective, leadership revolves around the capacity to influence. The goal of leadership is, therefore, that of influencing the activities of individuals towards the attainment of some defined objectives. This influencing role is

associated with certain characteristics of the leader, which include intelligence, physical status, self-assurance, and the capacity to take the initiative. According to Mitchel [15], the leader must grasp the big picture, think outside the box and analyze issues dispassionately. A leader is, therefore a powerful force in any organization, providing direction, and managing complex group conflicts as he navigates the organization through periods of disruptive inertia. A similar view of leadership is provided by Cole [6]. He perceives leadership as a dynamic process whereby one-man influences others to contribute voluntarily to the realization and attainment of goals and objectives. As earlier stated, the essence of leadership then translates to helping a group or an organization to attain certain goals. The foregoing explanation suggests that a search for a single specific definition of leadership is at best, a very complex task as literature and studies on this topic are varied, and there is no definition that is widely and universally accepted. Some definitions describe leadership as an act of influence, some as a process, and yet others have looked at a person's trait qualities. This definitional difficulty has led scholars to discuss leadership in the context of styles of leadership rather than in isolation. Studies have shown that there are several styles of leadership.

Leadership Styles

Leadership styles can be posited as the behaviours that a leader projects when they guide or interact with others within the organization [16]. They are understood as relatively stable patterns of behaviour that are manifested by leaders [17]. Bryman [18] also discusses leadership from the 'style approach, in which leaders' behaviours as constructs indicate leadership style.

The styles of leadership include bureaucratic, laissez-faire, charismatic, democratic, transactional, and transformational, Mohammed [9] (cited in Mosadeghrad). However, Bass [19]

propose that transformational leadership and transactional leadership are the leadership styles that effective leaders should apply to motivate individual members to achieve organizational goals. Also, Burns [21] and Du, Swaen, and Sen [21] identify the two leadership styles that managers may possess as the transformational and transactional styles. Laissez-faire Leadership (LFL) refers to the 'leaderless style'.

According to Bass [19], a Laissez-faire leader is "absent when needed". In this context, a leader exists within the group, but the leader does not project or is perceived not to provide leadership in terms of direction or support. Active leadership or influence by the leaders towards the followers is absent. The impacts of Laissez-faire leaders on followers are conflicting roles or responsibilities, lack of decision-making or accountability, and lack of direction for the future. The Laissez-faire style was termed as destructive leadership behaviour as it is correlated with role conflict, role ambiguity, and conflicts with co-workers.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical bases of this paper are based on several leadership theories in the literature to explain the factors involved in the emergence of leadership, the nature of leadership, or consequences of leadership [22]. These theories attempt to identify various leadership style Fullager and Bluen [23] and can generally be grouped into two streams of thought. Thus, to put the present study in its proper context, a review of some of these theoretical underpinning became necessary.

Traditional Approaches

A critical review showed three leadership views emerging in the literature. The trait approach, the behavioural approach, and the situational approach take center stage. Each of these leadership approaches describes different dimensions of leadership and the association with organizational outcomes. The Path-Goal

theory of leadership effectiveness seems to agree with McGregor's solution on factors that affect an organization. However, there have been many criticisms of the traditional approaches discussed above. One such criticism by Bass [19], is that these approaches have not been rigidly tested in practice and are too specific either in defining leadership in terms of traits, behavior or situation.

Modern Approaches

Organizations and their environment have changed rapidly over the past years, and as a result, a new style of leadership, one that is less bureaucratic and more democratic, is needed in order to ensure the survival of organizations (Johnson, 8). There have also been numerous criticisms regarding the traditional approaches already discussed. Consequently, a new leadership style has emerged to ensure organizations' survival and overcome limitations of the past's trait, behavioural and situational theories. The new theories of leadership evolved in reaction to the increasingly sophisticated traditional models, which became difficult to implement [19]. This new leadership approach suggests that there are two views of leadership, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership [19].

Bass [19] describes the transactional leadership style as being based on traditional bureaucratic authority and legitimacy. Transactional leaders can entice subordinates to perform and thereby achieve desired outcomes by promising rewards and benefits for the accomplishment of tasks [19]. Bass [19] describes the transactional leader's relationship with the subordinates as having three phases: Firstly, he recognizes what subordinates want to get from their work and ensures that they get what they want to be given that their performance is satisfactory. Secondly, rewards and promises of rewards are exchanged for employee's effort.

Lastly, the leader responds to his employee's immediate self-interests if they can be met through completing the work. Transactional leaders are those leaders who implement structure and are understanding towards their employees.

However, the current competitive business environment requires a new style of leadership in order to ensure the organization's survival and performance, namely transformational leadership [19].

Transformational leadership has emerged as one of the most extensively researched leadership paradigms to date [19]. Perhaps the reason that research on transformational leadership has become somewhat self-sustaining is that positive results continue to emerge on the effects of transformational leadership [19]. Transformational leadership concerns the transformation of followers, beliefs, values, needs, and capabilities.

In summary, literatures indicate that transformational leadership is positively connected with a leader's effectiveness [19]. Research has also shown that transformational leadership is an extension of transactional leadership. Therefore, these two leadership styles are not mutually exclusive, as a leader may display a varying degree of transactional or transformational leadership [19].

Empirical Review

Several studies in the past have reported the effect of various leadership styles and approaches on organizational performance. For instance, Mohammed [9] used a sample of 500 Indian schools and the OLS estimation technique to investigate the effect of leadership style on performance. Results suggest the prevalence of autocratic leadership style among Indian managers. This finding corroborates a similar study conducted by Huges [22] which associated autocratic leadership style with Bangladesh managers. Though these studies are relevant to the current study, they were situated in foreign countries with different cultures and

demographic characteristics. The application of the result outcomes to the University of Abuja may be misleading and out of context.

In a related study, Huges [22] assessed the link between leader personality and transformational leadership behaviour, the study found that by controlling for transactional leadership, transformational leadership behaviour significantly predicted subordinate satisfaction with the leader, organizational commitment, work motivation, and supervisory ratings of leader effectiveness. No relationship was, however found with subordinate overall job satisfaction.

On the contrary, a number of studies carried out in the Arab world suggest that leadership in Arab culture nurtures consultative and participative tendencies. This preference is likely to be as a result of Islamic values and beliefs, which reinforce consultation in all aspects of life (Mohammed, 9) studied the link between leadership style and performance within an organization.

Their study found among others, that while management by fear can create tension that might produce the desired result in the short term, it is unlikely that success will be sustained. Leaders on the other hand, create a trusting, open environment where information is shared and an organization that can rise to any challenge. Following the leadership style scale developed by Simon Oates [24], explored the influence of leadership style on organizational performance using leadership style (Democratic, Autocratic, and laissez-faire) as predictor variables while the criterion variable was firm's performance. Cronbach alpha and one-way ANOVA were used for analysis.

The study found that managers with democratic inclinations account for more variance in performance than autocratic and laissez-faire. The study concluded that no one leadership style is ideal for every situation. Different styles are needed for different

situations, and each leader needs to know when to exhibit a particular approach.

Using 992 members of the organization and 846 personnel managers in the district, a study was conducted to determine the relationship between leadership style and performance. Data was analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), it was observed that leadership style affects organizational performance they concluded that the effectiveness of leadership to a large extent, is responsible for organizational performance.

The study of Simon Oates [24] affirmed the nine leadership factors (represented by CR, IA, IB, IM, IC, IS, MBEA, MBEP and LF) of Full Range of Leadership Style as significant predictors of leadership effectiveness.

Various studies have provided evidence that there is a relationship between Malaysian insurance salesperson's job satisfaction and Transformational and Transactional Leadership styles. Transformational Leadership factors such as Inspirational Motivation (IM) and Individualised Consideration (IC) were found to have a significant positive relationship with the employees' job satisfaction. Furthermore, Hu, Yang, and Islam [25] have found a significant statistical relationship between Transformational Leadership and job satisfaction. The authors suggest that Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS) and Individualised Consideration (IC) are predictors of sales employees' job satisfaction.

Transformational Leadership style is appreciated by followers who are satisfied that their manager's leadership is able to represent their interests. In summary, the leadership of managers is crucial in an organization, and good leaders or managers heighten both employee and organizational performance. The evidence overwhelmingly supports the positive link between the Full Range Leadership model and the Outcomes of Leadership, such as the satisfaction, efficacy, and motivation of employees.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. The survey design is said to be appropriate in answering questions that have been raised, solving problems that have been posed or observed, to assess needs and to set goals, determining whether specific objectives have been met, and establishing baselines against which future comparisons can be made, to analyze trends across time, and generally, to describe what exists, in what amount, and in what context. The population for this study consists of the 1457 employees that formed the non-academic staff of the University of Abuja as of 31st December 2021.

The number of responses in our sample was established following the work of Smith (2013), where $\text{sample size} = \frac{(Z\text{-score})^2 * \text{StdDev} * (1 - \text{StdDev})}{(\text{margin of error})^2}$, where Z-score corresponds to the 95% confidence level. According to Smith (2013), where the population is not known or is too large, the margin of error can be set at +/- 5% while the selected level of standard deviation or variance is expected in the responses (StdDev=0.5). The above formula yields a total of three hundred and eighty-five (385). In line with the computed sample, a total of 400 questionnaires were administered by classifying the respondents into groups based on their years of experience. The number of questionnaires retrieved was three hundred and eighty (380), which fairly approximates our calculated sample size. The study utilized both stratified sampling and the simple random technique. The stratified sampling was appropriate because the respondents cut across different departments, while the simple random technique was desirable because it gave each member of the sample an equal chance of being selected.

The main source of data was primarily obtained from structured questionnaires in line with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, which allows an empirical, quantitative study in the targeted research settings. The secondary data was equally utilized, which allowed for the

extraction of literatures from the internet, journal articles, and online publications.

The study adopted a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics in analyzing data. The descriptive statistics involved frequency tables and simple percentages, while inferential statistical analysis was conducted using the ordinary least squares regression (OLS). The analysis of data was aided by Statistical Package for Social Sciences 23.

Reliability Test

Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability of the instrument. The coefficient alpha values that exceed 0.7, indicate adequate reliability. To test the reliability of the Multi-Likert Questionnaire (MLQ) instrument, we considered determining the Chronbach Alpha coefficient for the variables under consideration.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

S/n	Constructs/Items	Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized items	No. of Items
1	Transformational leadership style	0.712	4
2	Transactional leadership style	0.820	4
3	Laissez- Faire leadership style	0.934	4
4	Employee Performance	0.821	4

Source: Computed with the aid of SPSS 23

According to Ndiyo, constructs/variables are internally consistent with each other if there cronbach's alpha value is equal to or more than 0.70. From Table 1 above, all the cronbach's alpha values of the constructs exceed 0.70.

This indicates the degree of internal consistency among the variables or scales used to measure the impact of leadership style on employee performance of the University of

Abuja, Nigeria. The magnitude of reliability of the scales is almost perfect.

Result and Discussion

The section presents the response rate, the correlation matrix, and regression results. Three hypotheses were raised and tested in order to draw statistical inferences.

Response Rate

Table 2. Distribution of Questionnaires

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage %	Cumulative
Returned	380	95%	95
Unreturned	20	5%	100
Total	400	100	100

Source: Field survey (2021)

The above table 2 indicates that out of 400 questionnaires distributed, 380 representing 95% were filled and returned, while 20 representing 5%, were not returned. It can

therefore be concluded that the findings of this research can be reliable as adequate information is obtained from the respondents.

Correlation Analysis

Table 3. Correlation Matrix among the Variables

		TFLS	TSLs	EMPER	LFLS
TFLS	Pearson Correlation	1	-.488**	.217**	.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.882
	N	380	380	380	380
TSLs	Pearson Correlation	-.488**	1	-.379**	.219**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	380	380	380	380
EMPER	Pearson Correlation	.217**	.379**	1	-.295**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	380	380	380	380
LFLS	Pearson Correlation	.008	.219**	-.295**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.882	.000	.000	
	N	380	380	380	380

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source SPSS output

Table 3 shows the correlation matrix between and among the study variables. Specifically, it shows that employee performance is positively correlated with transformational leadership style (TFLS). The coefficient was 0.219, significant at 0.01 level. This suggests a positive and significant relationship between employee performance and TFLS. This means that increase in the tendency of leadership to adopt TFL style results in the increase of employee performance at the University of Abuja.

Similarly, transactional leadership style (TSLs) has a coefficient of 0.379 with Employee Performance (EMPER). The implication of this positive coefficient is that increases in the tendency of the University Leadership to drift toward transactional

leadership style, the more employee performance increases and vice versa. This suggests that as the leader rewards hard work and provides followers with assistance in exchange for their effort, Employee Performance is likely to improve. Lastly, and in line with the Apriori expectation, Laissez- Faire leadership style (LFLS) reported a negative and significant correlation of (-0.295) with Employee Performance (EMPER).

This suggests that employee performance is inversely related to LFLS style at the University of Abuja. The implication of this correlation is that the more the leadership style drifts toward Laissez- Faire characteristics, Employee Performance is likely going to decline.

Regression Analysis

Table 4. Regression Result: Dependent Variable (EMPER)

Variable	Co-efficient	Standard Error	t-Statistic	Probability
C	1.191	.313	3.802	.000
TSLs	.766	.043	18.529	.000
LFLS	-.161	.033	-3.793	.000
TFLS	.150	.010	6.328	.000
R ²	0.821			

Adj. R ²	0.820
F-statistic	575.22
Prob. (F-stat.)	0.000

The regression results in table 4 show that both transactional leadership style (TSL) and transformational leadership style (TFL) has positive significant coefficients with the exception of Laissez- Faire leadership style (LFL), which is negative. This showed that a unit increase in TSL and TFL will lead to a corresponding unit increase in EMPER, while the negative coefficient of LFL indicated that a unit increase in LFL will invariably lead to a corresponding decrease in the performance of employees at the university of Abuja. The R-squared is found to be 0.821, and this implies that 82% of the total variation in EMPER was accounted for by the explanatory variables (i.e., TSL, TFL and LFL) without considering the degree of freedom. While the Adj. R-squared 0.820, implying that 82% of the total variation in the dependent variable is captured by the regressors taking into consideration the issue of degree of freedom. This implies that the estimated model has high goodness of fit.

That F-statistic value of 575.22 gives us enough evidence that the parameter estimates of the regressed model are jointly statistically significant. Thereby validating the R-squared and Adjusted R-squared, this is further affirmed by the very low probability value of the f-statistic (i.e. 0.000). Thus, the estimated model is fit for both prediction and forecasting.

Hypotheses Testing and Discussion of Findings

This section presented the analysis undertaken in order to test the hypotheses stated earlier in chapter one. The regression results displayed in table 4.3 is used to test the hypotheses. Null hypotheses are rejected at p-values less than the levels of significance 1%, 5%, and 10%.

Testing Hypothesis One

Ho1: Transformational leadership style has no significant effect on Employee performance of the University of Abuja.

Regression result shows that the transformational leadership style has a beta coefficient of 0.150 significant at 5% level. This indicates that the transformational leadership style has a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance. The positive relationship conforms to the expectation that Transformational Leadership factors such as Inspirational Motivation and Individualised Consideration often exert a significant positive relationship with the employee’s job performance and by extension, organizational effectiveness. Transformational leaders encourage and challenge the status quo by leading the followers to think out of the box or to encourage creativity and innovation. In this context, the leader as a role model or figurehead who drives shared and common vision and goals by providing a clear sense of purpose. Based on this, the study rejects the first null hypothesis of no statistical influence between transformational leadership style and employee performance.

Testing Hypothesis Two

Ho2: transactional leadership style has no significant effect on employee performance of University of Abuja. The results from the regression analysis showed that transactional leadership style has a beta coefficient of 0.766 which is significant at 5% level. The beta coefficient indicates that transactional leadership style has a positive influence on employee performance.

The higher the tendency for a leader to exhibit attributes of transactional leadership, the greater the level of employee effectiveness of that organization. This suggests that performance-driven rewards can be used to influence work attitude to achieve higher levels of performance. Leaders with Transactional attributes often place focus on processes with close monitoring and control of standards, policies, and deviations. Such are said to display management by exception and prefer to take corrective actions before or soon after a problem arises. Anitha J [12] whereas, Kotter [27] reported a positive but insignificant relationship. The second null hypothesis is consequently rejected, and the study concluded that transactional leadership style has a significant impact on the performance of the employee of the University of Abuja.

Testing Hypothesis Three

Ho₃: Laissez-Faire leadership style has no significant effect on the performance of the employee of the University of Abuja.

With a negative coefficient of -0.161 and a p-value of 0.000 significant at 5%, the degree of Laissez-Faire leadership style influences employee performance negatively. Where performance is high, the tendency to engage in a Laissez-Faire leadership style reduces, and this could be attributed to the nature of employees requiring direction and leadership. The result shields lighter on why organizations with leaders who abdicate responsibility, delay in responding to follower requests for help, not follow up on issues, and manifest passive indifference towards followers often record poor performance. The study, therefore, concluded that the Laissez-Faire leadership style has a negative and significant effect on the performance of the employee of the University of Abuja.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Leadership style be it transformational, transactional or Laissez-Faire influences

employee performance and should be taken seriously by the management of organizations. There is, therefore an urgent need for a paradigm shift in the style of leadership that leaders adopt if they must achieve higher levels of motivation for their workforce and ultimately record superior employee performance. The study concludes that transformational, transactional, and Laissez-Faire leadership style significantly influences the performance of employees at the University of Abuja. Specifically, transactional and transformational style yields significant positive influence on employee performance while the Laissez-Faire style of leadership produces significant negative effects on employee performance. The study, therefore, offer the following recommendations.

1. In order to increase employee performance and effectiveness, leaders at the University of Abuja should display behavioural charisma, which makes them role models that drive shared, and common vision by providing a clear sense of purpose.
2. Leadership should be attentive to individual's needs for achievement and growth, and they should focus on helping the followers by leveraging on their strengths and ideas by means of teaching, sharing, mentoring, and coaching.
3. Leaders at the University of Abuja should never abdicate responsibility, delay in responding to follower requests for help or display passive indifference towards followers.

Acknowledgement

I, Segun Tekun hereby declare that this research work titled "The Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Employees' Performance of the University of Abuja" submitted is a record of an original work conducted by me. The results in this project have not been submitted to any other university. All materials consulted in the process of writing this study have been referenced to the best of my knowledge and ability.

Conflict Of Interest

I certify that I have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest (such as honoraria; educational grants; participation in speakers' bureaus; membership, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, or other equity

interest; and expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements), or non-financial interest (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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