

PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF OSUN STATE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION IN OSUN STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The utmost desire of organisations today is to see their employees performing greatly on the job for this to manifest the style of leadership must be taking into consideration. However, this study was carried out to investigate the influence of perceived leadership styles on job performance in Osun State Civil Service Commission in Osun State, Nigeria. The specific objective of the study was to investigate democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on Job performance. The data for the study was collected using structured questionnaire. Total sampling techniques was used to capture respondents for the study in which fifty-six (56) employees of Osun State Civil Service Commission participated in the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyse the data collected. The result of the study revealed that democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles significantly influenced employees' job performance ($0.094 F_{(1,55)} = 5.571 p < 0.05$; $0.347 F_{(1,55)} = 28.632 p < 0.05$ and $0.112 F_{(1,55)} = 6.830 (p < 0.05)$). The study concluded that effective leadership is required for high and productive performance it was recommended that for higher level of performance collective knowledge and ideas of the workforce need to be considered.

KEYWORDS: *Leadership Styles and Employees' Job Performance*

1. INTRODUCTION

Employees are the most essential resources in the organisation today, likewise their performance is critical to the survival of the organisation they owe allegiance to. Also, it has been discovered that employees' performance has effect on every areas of the national economy (Ojo et al., 2024). However, the assertion of Alabi, et al., (2022), stated that high performance of employees is an utmost desire of organisation. In other words, Performance has much to do with passion and skills in what one is focused on. Nevertheless, many organisations both in Nigeria and across the globe considered employees' performance to be more important for organisation both public and private to gain a competitive advantage. Employees who are always ready to give their best for the organisation these employees have an influence on the attainment of organisational goals and objectives (Mirumbe, 2020). However, numerous variables such as human capital development, reward system and human resource management have been considered has major factors influencing employees' job performance (Ojo et al, 2024; Alabi, et al, 2022; Oginni et al, 2024). For the purpose of this study, leadership style was investigated as an influencing factor. It is also argued that, for employees to give their best in improving the performance of the organization, they need direction and psychological satisfaction (Mirumbe, 2020). This can only be achieved by organisations with effective leadership styles. The style of leadership adopted by organisation may affect the success or failure of an

organisation (Anyango, 2015). Leadership can be characterised by the act of controlling and overseeing the operations of a group that is willing and capable of being led by only one person (Ojo, et al, 2024). However, leadership is directly linked to the success of a nation, society, government, organisation and employee. According to Ricketts (2005), leadership has played a fundamental role in nearly every aspect of society (Amegayibor, 2021). Kai (2013) stated that in the operation of a company, leadership behaviors and leadership style have a decisive influence on employee performance. According to Gupta, McDaniel, and Hearth (2005), leadership establishes and transmits to employees at the organisational level the overarching direction of the organization, such as establishing a better understanding of effective employees' performance and future leader growth. Leadership has gained a great deal of attention in both public and private companies throughout the world as a result of globalisation and technological advancements, and there is a need for leaders to become more strategic in their thinking when it comes to managing their organizations. According to Punnett (2004), leadership is an important feature of all companies, but its role is becoming more challenging as firms become more involved in globalization and technological innovation. Any organization's strong or abysmal performance and its employees, departments, and the smallest unit are laid before leadership. This means that leadership cannot purge itself from the failure of organizations and their employees since the leadership styles used by leaders influence the effective performance of employees (Amegayibor, 2021).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Today, thousands of individuals are appointed to shoulder the role and responsibilities of leadership. Leadership is practiced in schools and colleges, factories and farms, business enterprises, dispensaries and hospitals, in the civil and military organizations of a country and public life, at all levels, in short in every walk of life. These leaders should promote unity, harmony, strength, prosperity and happiness in society (Itunga and Awuor, 2019). Most of organizations across the world have been striving much to adopt best leadership styles and have leaders with appropriate behaviours who would lead to attainment of organizational goals and objectives (Barasa and Kariuki, 2020). Leadership remains one of the most critical determinants of employee job performance in both public and private organizations. Concerns have continued to be raised regarding declining employee productivity, poor service delivery, low morale, and inefficiencies, which are often attributed to ineffective leadership practices and employees' negative perceptions of their leaders. The effectiveness of leadership is not only determined by the actions of leaders but also by how those actions are perceived by employees, as employees' perceptions influence their motivation, commitment, and willingness to perform assigned responsibilities. Despite various public sector reforms aimed at improving organisational performance, many organisations, continue to experience challenges relating to delayed service delivery, weak employee commitment, and inconsistent job performance. Previous studies have established that leadership behaviours significantly influence employee outcomes; however, empirical evidence on how employees' perceptions of leadership affect job performance within the Nigerian civil service remains limited, particularly in Osun State (Ojo et al., 2024). This gap in knowledge necessitates an empirical investigation into the relationship between perceived leadership and job performance among employees of the Osun State Civil Service Commission.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives were to:

- i. examine the influence of autocratic leadership style on job performance
- ii explore the influence of Democratic leadership style on job performance
- iii. assess the influence of autocratic leadership style on job performance

Research Hypotheses

- i. Autocratic leadership style will not significantly influence job performance
- ii. Democratic leadership style will not significantly influence job performance
- iii. Laissez-faire Leadership style will not significantly influence job performance

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Leadership Styles

Leadership as a concept is dynamic, flexible, and complicated, and no universally accepted definition has emerged (Peretomode, 2012). According to Eze (1982) cited in Amegayibor, (2021), leadership is a relational concept that involves both the influencer and the person being influenced. There can be no leader without followers, and the factors that interact to make an effective leader include not only the abilities and features of the group he is leading but also the features of the circumstance in which he is leading (Amegayibor, 2021). This idea encompasses not just eagerness to work but also zeal and confidence (Igbaekemen, 2014). According to Asika (2004), leadership is the process of persuading individuals to direct their efforts toward the achievement of a specific goal or goals. According to Armstrong (2002), leadership is the practice of persuading and encouraging others to work energetically toward achieving goals. According to Lawal (1993), leadership is the process of persuading others to work voluntarily and confidently toward an organizational goal. According to McGowan and Miller (2004), leadership is about both the leaders and the interactions between the many leaders in the company.

Leadership in an organization is a crucial aspect in increasing people's interest and commitment to the origination (Obiwuru, et al., 2011). It assists employees in achieving their company goals; it promotes followers to be expressive and adaptable to new and improved methods and changes in the environment (Azka, et al. 2011). Mills (2005) stressed that strong leadership helps a nation in times of crisis and makes corporate companies successful. According to Warrick (1981), leadership has power over interpersonal, material rewards, and punishments that frequently shape employee behaviour and affect performance, motivation, attitude, and self-image, potentially in a favourable or negative way. As per the definition by Kumar (2014), leadership is defined as “the process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent”. As from this definition, it is seen that for leadership to exist, there must be certain objective/objectives which are to be met. Here leadership is required in order to guide employees in an organization towards attainment of such objectives. Leadership style is the general way a leader behaves toward subordinates in order to attain objectives. The degree to which a manager delegates authority, the modes of power he employs and his or her relative concern for human relationships or task orientation all tend to reflect the manager's leadership styles (Blake & Mouton, 2005). Numerous leadership styles has been identified in the literature but for this study autocratic democratic and laissez-faire styles of leadership will be explained.

Autocratic Leadership

The autocratic leader commands and expects compliance, is dogmatic and positive and leads by the ability to withhold or give rewards and punishment (Fubara, 1985). They do not entertain any suggestions or initiatives from subordinates. This style is used when leaders tell their employees what they want done and how they want it accomplished, without getting the advice of their followers (Allan, et al., 2001). Autocratic leadership is a style whereby the boss only has decision making rights with no shared vision, little motivation, commitment, creativity and innovation (Khan, et al., 2015). Autocratic leaders typically make choices based on their ideas and judgments and rarely accept advice from followers. Autocratic leadership involves absolute, authoritarian control over a group. Most theorists have identified autocratic leaders with authoritarian leaders simply because research has proven that there is a strong positive correlation between autocratic leadership style and authoritarianism (Chemers, 2014; Schuh, et al., 2013; Svolik, 2013).

Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership style is a form of leadership in management which is participatory in decision making between the management and the subordinates through groups existing in the entity (Guneser, 2016). Democratic style the leader shares decision making abilities with groups and practices social equality

(Guneser 2016). Democratic leadership also known as participatory leadership or shared leadership, is a type of leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision making process (Wammy 2017). This type of leadership can be applied to any organization, from private businesses to schools to government.

Laissez-Faire Leadership Style

Kumar (2015) defined laissez-faire as a leadership style where employees independently decide their own matters as the leader gives maximum freedom to their subordinates. Under this type of leadership maximum freedom is allowed to subordinates to perform their duties so as to reach the required goals (Kumar, 2015). Laissez-Faire leadership style, (Mwombeki 2017) the leader maintains contact with outside people and brings in information to the group members which they need for the accomplishment of the given task. Although, the subordinates are given the power and authority to make decisions the leader still takes responsibility for the actions of his group members. This leadership style proves to be beneficial only when the group members are highly skilled, well-motivated and capable enough to accomplish the task assigned to them.

Employee Job Performance

According to Anthony (1965) cited in Amegayibor, (2021) view performance as two primary components efficacy and effectiveness. Efficacy is the inputs and outputs that result in higher volume for a given amount of inputs, while effectiveness is the degree to which planned outcomes are achieved. According to Deadrick and Gardner (1997), employee performance can be viewed as a record of outcomes achieved for each job function over a specific time period. Employee performance is typically measured in terms of outcomes; however, it can also be measured in terms of conduct (Armstrong, 2000). Employee *job* performance, according to Rath and Conchie (2009), is linked to how successfully an employee meets his or her goals and objectives. Employee performance, according to Putterill and Rohrer (1995), focuses directly on individual productivity by analyzing the number of units of acceptable quality produced by an employee in a manufacturing environment during a particular time period.

According to Sabir et al. (2012), employee performance is a critical component of every organization and the most crucial aspect of the organization's success and performance. According to Darden and Babin (1994), an increase in consumer impression of service quality is associated with high employee performance, whereas an increase in customer complaints and brand switching is associated with poor employee performance. Employee performance must be shown to recognize each employee's personal development and achievement (Hendrey, 2005). According to Mayer, Bardes, and Piccolo (2008), increased employee performance leads to higher customer focus.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Contingency Theory of Leadership

Contingency theory as one of the theory in leadership was developed by Fred Fielder in mid (1960) it's examines leaders in conjunction with the situation the leader is in. It is contingent upon a match between the leader's style and the work situation. The theory posits that leadership effectiveness depends on the interaction between a leader's personal characteristics and the specific circumstances in which leadership is exercised. The theory argues that no single leadership style is universally effective; rather, the success of a leader is contingent upon how well the chosen leadership style aligns with situational factors. In other words, the relationship between leadership style and organizational outcomes is influenced by contextual variables, which either strengthen or weaken leadership effectiveness (Ojo et al., 2024). These factors identified are those related to environment. Thus, as per the views from this theory, the outcomes of an organization cannot be determined by leadership style but rather, the existing situation (Cheng & Chan, 2002). The theory further entails that effectiveness of leadership requires leaders to adopt certain leadership style which matches with the existing situational analysis. Situational leadership theory argues that any leader can work best in any environment by changing their style accordingly.

The theory is related to the study to be undertaken as it shows how leadership style can have an influence of performance of employees. Organizational outcomes are contributed by employees working in such particular organization. This means that, the extent to which leadership style influence the performance of employees depend on the existing situation. The environments in which a leader exists have as influence on leadership style which has selected. This in turn leads to effects on performance of employees who in turn affects the overall performance of an organization.

Empirical Review

Ojo et al., (2024) investigated the influence of digital leadership style on employees work engagement in Osun State University. Data was collected through the use of structured questionnaire, 117 respondents participated in the study, data was analysed using descriptive statistic and inferential statistics. T-Test was the statistical tools used for data analysis and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was used to run the analyses. The results of the study revealed that digital leadership significantly influenced employees work engagement. It was therefore concluded that employees work engagement will increase when leader's trust and leader's communication were adopted in the organization since the study recorded positive influence of digital leadership on employees work engagement.

Sunarsi et al, (2020) examined effect of e-Leadership Style, organizational service effectiveness towards Indonesian School Performance. The study adopted qualitative research method with data processing tools using the smart PLS version 3.0 program. Data were collected through the use of online questionnaire using snowball sampling system. The result of the study shows e- leadership, organizational commitment and service quality significantly influence school performance. The study concluded that e-leadership, organizational commitment and service quality significantly influence school performance.

Alward & Phelps (2019) examined the impactful leadership traits of virtual leaders in higher education. A decisive sampling method was used in the study, Based on these themes and further evaluation, the need for specific soft skills and robust technology emerged. Specifically, organizational success partially hinges on comprehensive training for virtual leaders, the significance of trust, emotional intelligence, and effective, respectful communication.

Hassan, et al. (2018) investigated the effect of leadership styles on employee performance in the Somali National Civil Service Commission effect of leadership styles on employee performance in the Somali National Civil Service Commission. The study adopted a descriptive research design with target population of 50 respondents and a sample size of 44 respondents, primary and secondary data collection methods were used, stratified and random sampling methods. The study conclusions and recommends were drawn; transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership and servant leadership were found to play a big role in effect of leadership styles on employee performance in the Somali National Civil Service Commission.

Liridon, et al. (2017) explored the influence of leadership styles on employee's performance. Data collection was made through questionnaires, and the constructs used were adapted from prior research and already tested for reliability. The study adopted a structured questionnaire and the data analyses were made through the use of statistical package for social sciences. It was concluded that leadership style significantly influenced employee's performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study utilised descriptive survey research design because it could afford the researcher opportunity to collect data without manipulation. The population of the study comprises of Osun State Civil Service Commission in Osun State. The entire population stood at fifty-six. However, since the population is not cumbersome, the researcher utilised total population sampling method. This sampling method allows the entire population to participate in the study. Data was collected through the use of structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three (3) sections namely: section A: which focused on the socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents, section B: concentrated on perceived leadership styles

developed by Mawoli, et al. (2013). This scale has three sub-scales namely; democratic leadership style scale, autocratic sub-scale and laissez-faire leadership style with reliability coefficient of 0.753 as reported by the author of the scale. The response rating scale pattern include 5(Strongly Agree), 4(Agree), 3(Undecided) 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree). Section C focused on information on employees' job performance. It is six items of scale with reliability coefficient of 0.783 as reported by the author of the scale (Mawoli, et al. 2013). The scale has four point modified rating scale which was used to measure the response of the respondents. The response rating scale pattern include: 4(Strongly Agree), 3(Agree), 2(Disagree) and 1(Strongly Disagree). The data collected through structured questionnaire was analysed with the use of both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse demographic data while the inferential statistic was used to analyse the stated hypotheses. The regression analysis was used to test the postulated hypotheses. All the research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographics	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	41	73.2%
Female	15	26.8%
Total	56	100.0%
Age of Respondent		
Under 20	0	0.0%
21-30	28	50.0%
31-40	22	39.3%
41 and above	6	10.7%
Total	56	100.0%
Marital Status		
Single	24	42.9%
Married	27	48.2%
Divorce	5	8.9%
Widow/widower	0	0.0%
Total	56	100.0%
Educational status		
O level	2	3.6%
OND/NCE	24	42.9%
HND/B.Sc.	27	48.2%
MBA/M.Sc./PhD	3	5.4%
Others	0	0.0%
Total	56	100.0%
Work Experience		
below 5 years	4	7.1%

6-10 years	11	19.6%
11-15 years	28	50.0%
16-20 years	2	3.6%
21-25 years	8	14.3%
26 years and above	3	5.4%
Total	56	100.0%

(Author's field work, 2025)

The demographic analysis reveals that the majority of respondents are male, with 41 individuals (73.2%), while females make up 15 respondents (26.8%). This suggests a gender imbalance in the sample, with significantly more male participants. Regarding age, half of the respondents are aged 21-30, with 28 individuals (50.0%), followed by 22 respondents (39.3%) aged 31-40. A smaller group, 6 respondents (10.7%), are aged 41 and above, and no respondents are under 20. This indicates that the workforce is relatively young, with a concentration of participants in their early professional years. In terms of marital status, 24 respondents (42.9%) are single, and 27 (48.2%) are married. A smaller group of 5 respondents (8.9%) are divorced, with no widows or widowers. This data shows that the majority of the respondents are married or single, with few reporting divorced status, reflecting a more stable marital demographic. Educationally, most respondents hold OND/NCE qualifications, representing 24 individuals (42.9%), followed by 27 respondents (48.2%) with HND/B.Sc. degrees. A smaller number, 3 respondents (5.4%), hold an MBA, M.Sc., or PhD, while 2 respondents (3.6%) have an O-level qualification. This indicates that the workforce is highly educated, with most participants holding tertiary-level qualifications. In terms of work experience, the largest group, 28 respondents (50.0%), has 11-15 years of experience, followed by 11 respondents (19.6%) with 6-10 years of experience. Fewer respondents, 8 individuals (14.3%), have 21-25 years of experience. A smaller number have either less than 5 years (4 respondents, 7.1%), 16-20 years (2 respondents, 3.6%), or over 26 years of experience (3 respondents, 5.4%). This reflects a fairly experienced workforce, with most respondents having substantial time in their respective fields.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Autocratic leadership style would not significantly influence employee job performance in Osun State Civil Service Commission in Osun State, Nigeria

Table 2: A Summary Table of Linear Regression Showing Contributions of Autocratic Leadership Style to Employee Job Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.306 ^a	.094	.077	1.22524

a. Predictors: (Constant), autocratic leadership style

Table 3: Analysis of Variance Table Showing Linear Regression Showing the F ratio of the Predictive Influence of Autocratic Leadership Style on Employee Job Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.363	1	8.363	5.571	.022 ^b
	Residual	81.065	54	1.501		
	Total	89.429	55			

a. Dependent Variable: employee job performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), autocratic leadership style

Table 4: A Coefficients Table of Linear Regression Showing the Individual Contribution of Autocratic Leadership Style to Employee Job Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.989	1.166		11.139	.000
	autocratic leadership style	.284	.120	.306	2.360	.022

a. Dependent Variable: employee job performance

The regression analysis shows that autocratic leadership style has a positive but weak relationship with employee job performance in the Osun State Civil Service Commission. The R value of 0.306 indicates a low correlation, and the R Square value of 0.094 suggests that only 9.4% of the variation in employee job performance can be explained by autocratic leadership style. The adjusted R Square of 0.077 further highlights the minimal influence of this leadership style on job performance. The ANOVA results show that the model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 5.571 and a significance level of 0.022 ($p < 0.05$). This implies that autocratic leadership style does significantly influence employee job performance, even though the impact is small. The coefficient table reveals that for every unit increase in autocratic leadership style, employee job performance increases by 0.284 units ($p = 0.022$), reinforcing that while the effect is statistically significant, it is not substantial in practical terms.

The hypothesis that "autocratic leadership style would not significantly influence employee job performance" was rejected, as the analysis shows a statistically significant influence of autocratic leadership style on employee job performance.

Hypothesis 2: Democratic leadership style would not significantly influence employee job performance in Osun State Civil Service Commission in Osun State, Nigeria

Table 5: Summary Table of Linear Regression Showing Contributions of Democratic Leadership Style to Employee Job Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.589 ^a	.347	.334	1.04031

a. Predictors: (Constant), democratic leadership style

Table 6: Analysis of Variance Table Showing Linear Regression Showing the F ratio of the Predictive Influence of Democratic Leadership Style on Employee Job Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.987	1	30.987	28.632	.000 ^b
	Residual	58.442	54	1.082		
	Total	89.429	55			

a. Dependent Variable: employee job performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), democratic leadership style

Table 7: Coefficients Table of Linear Regression Showing the Individual Contribution of Democratic Leadership Style to Employee Job Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.835	.922		11.747	.000
	democratic leadership style	.420	.079	.589	5.351	.000

a. Dependent Variable: employee job performance

The regression analysis indicates that democratic leadership style has a stronger influence on employee job performance in the Osun State Civil Service Commission. The R value of 0.589 suggests a moderate positive correlation, and the R Square value of 0.347 shows that 34.7% of the variation in employee job performance is explained by democratic leadership style. The adjusted R Square of 0.334 confirms that this leadership style significantly affects job performance. The ANOVA results further support the significance of the model, with an F-value of 28.632 and a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). The coefficient table shows that for every unit increase in democratic leadership style, employee job performance increases by 0.420 units ($p = 0.000$), indicating a strong and statistically significant positive effect of democratic leadership on employee performance.

As a result, the hypothesis that "democratic leadership style would not significantly influence employee job performance" is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: laissez-faire leadership style would not significantly influence employee job performance in Osun State Civil Service Commission in Osun State, Nigeria.

Table 8: Summary Table of Linear Regression Showing Contributions of laissez-faire Leadership Style to Employee Job Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.335 ^a	.112	.096	1.21250

a. Predictors: (Constant), laissez-faire leadership style

Table 9: Analysis of Variance Table Showing Linear Regression Showing the F ratio of the Predictive Influence of Laissez-faire Leadership Style on Employee Job Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.041	1	10.041	6.830	.012 ^b
	Residual	79.388	54	1.470		
	Total	89.429	55			

a. Dependent Variable: employee job performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), laissez-faire leadership style

Table 10: Coefficients Table of Linear Regression Showing the Individual Contribution of Laissez-faire Leadership Style to Employee Job Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.890	1.093		11.797	.000
	laissez-faire leadership style	.374	.143	.335	2.613	.012

a. Dependent Variable: employee job performance

The regression analysis for laissez-faire leadership style shows a weak positive relationship with employee job performance in the Osun State Civil Service Commission. The R value of 0.335 indicates a low correlation, and the R Square value of 0.112 suggests that only 11.2% of the variation in employee job performance is explained by laissez-faire leadership style. The adjusted R Square of 0.096 reflects a slight improvement in model fit. The ANOVA results indicate that the model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 6.830 and a significance level of 0.012 ($p < 0.05$). This suggests that laissez-faire leadership style has a significant, though small, influence on employee job performance. The coefficient table reveals that for every unit increase in laissez-faire leadership style, employee job performance increases by 0.374 units ($p = 0.012$), highlighting a statistically significant but limited effect. Given these results, the hypothesis that "laissez-faire leadership style would not significantly influence employee job performance" was rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study reveals that leadership styles, particularly autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire, have varying impacts on employee job performance within the Osun State Civil Service Commission. Leadership, as established by Peretomode (2012), is a dynamic and flexible concept that hinges on the relationship between the leader and the followers. The autocratic leadership style, characterized by a command-and-control approach (Fubara, 1985), exhibited a weak but statistically significant relationship with employee job performance. This suggests that while the leader's authority can drive performance to a certain degree, this style's effectiveness may be limited by its lack of employee involvement, which aligns with Chemers' (2014) assertion that autocratic leadership is often associated with authoritarianism. The lack of shared vision or creativity under this style potentially limits long-term employee motivation and commitment. Conversely, democratic leadership showed the most substantial positive influence on employee performance, accounting for 34.7% of the variance. This aligns with Guner (2016), who describes democratic leadership as participatory, allowing employees to contribute to decision-making processes. The strong relationship between this style and performance indicates that when employees feel empowered and valued, their performance improves, consistent with theories that suggest leadership should inspire and motivate employees toward collective goals (Armstrong, 2002). In this context, democratic leadership not only promotes higher productivity but also fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among employees.

Lastly, the laissez-faire leadership style had a modest but significant effect on employee performance, supporting Kumar's (2015) view that it works best when employees are highly skilled and self-motivated. However, the weaker impact observed in this study suggests that excessive freedom without sufficient guidance may lead to suboptimal performance in the Civil Service Commission, where a balance of autonomy and direction might be more effective. These findings corroborate the results of previous studies, such as Liridon et al. (2017), which found that leadership styles significantly influence employee performance. Furthermore, the study supports the contingency theory's argument that no single leadership style is universally effective. Rather, the effectiveness of leadership depends on how well the leader's approach aligns with the organizational context and the specific needs of the employees (Cheng & Chan, 2002).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the influence of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles on employee job performance in the Osun State Civil Service Commission. The findings reveal that all three leadership styles have a statistically significant effect on job performance, though their impacts vary in magnitude. Autocratic leadership style showed a weak but significant positive relationship, suggesting that while a top-down, authoritative approach can influence performance, its effect is limited. This could be due to the restrictive nature of autocratic leadership, which may stifle creativity and reduce employee autonomy. Democratic leadership style, on the other hand, demonstrated the strongest and most positive impact on

employee performance. With 34.7% of the variance in performance explained by this leadership style, the results underscore the value of a participative and collaborative approach in the workplace. Employees tend to perform better when they are involved in decision-making processes and feel that their contributions are valued. This leadership style encourages engagement, fosters innovation, and enhances job satisfaction, all of which positively influence performance.

The laissez-faire leadership style also had a significant but smaller impact on performance. While this style offers employees greater autonomy, the relatively weaker influence suggests that, in the context of the Civil Service Commission, too much freedom without guidance may not lead to optimal performance. Employees may require a certain level of structure and direction to achieve higher levels of productivity. Given the findings, it is recommended that the Osun State Civil Service Commission actively promotes democratic leadership practices as a key approach to improving employee performance. Managers and leaders should be trained to adopt inclusive leadership methods that involve employees in decision-making, problem-solving, and policy formulation. This approach not only boosts morale but also drives higher levels of performance by leveraging the collective knowledge and ideas of the workforce.

While democratic leadership should be prioritized, the Commission may still benefit from certain aspects of laissez-faire leadership, especially in situations where employees are highly skilled and self-motivated. Managers should balance autonomy with the necessary oversight to ensure that performance does not suffer from a lack of direction or accountability. Additionally, leadership development programs should focus on equipping leaders with the flexibility to switch between different leadership styles based on the needs of their teams and tasks at hand. Finally, it is advisable for the Commission to reassess the application of autocratic leadership. Although it has a significant effect, the limited impact suggests that its overuse could undermine employee engagement and performance. In scenarios where quick decision-making is necessary, autocratic leadership may be appropriate, but for long-term effectiveness, a more balanced and participative approach should be encouraged.

Suggestion for Further Studies

Future research could expand on these findings by investigating the influence of leadership styles on employee performance across different sectors within the civil service to determine whether these patterns hold in other organizational contexts. Additionally, future studies could explore the role of mediating factors such as employee motivation, organizational culture, or job satisfaction in the relationship between leadership styles and performance. Lastly, future studies could conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of leadership styles on employee job performance and organizational outcomes.

Contribution to knowledge

This study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the influence of different leadership styles on employee job performance within the civil service commission in Nigeria. Specifically, it highlights the significant positive impact of democratic leadership on employee job performance and demonstrates the relative effectiveness of autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. The findings reinforce the importance of adopting leadership styles that promote inclusivity and employee engagement to optimize performance in public sector organisations.

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