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LEADERSHIP STYLES AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARY STAFF IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

Purpose*: This paper examined leadership styles and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria.*

Design/Methodology/Approach*: Correlation and survey designs were adopted for the study. The study's population comprised 267 library staff in institutions in Imo State which was also used as sample. Hence the adoption of census sampling technique. The data for the study were collected using researcher-designed rating scales titled: Job Performance of Library Staff (JPLS) and Leadership Style Rating Scale (LSRS). Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to answer research question one while Pearson's (r) was used to answer the other research questions. T-test statistics for significance of 'r' was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.*

Findings: *Results showed that: the extent of job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria is to a high extent; there is a low, positive and significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria; the relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria is moderate and positive and significant and there is a very low, positive and non-significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria.*

Implications: *The study concluded that job performance is not influenced by a single leadership approach in isolation; rather, it is shaped by a complex interplay of various behavioural styles. A leader's capacity to blend vision with participation (democratic) and, when strictly necessary, structural enforcement (autocratic), creates a robust administrative framework. By implication, educational management training should move away from promoting a single perfect style, and instead focus on developing situational agility. To optimize performance, administrators must understand when to inspire, when to collaborate, and when to enforce institutional regulations.*

Originality/Value*: This work has not been published before. Its value lies in its ability to identify that leaders need to blend aspects of the various leadership styles for optimal job performance of library staff.*

Key Words: *Leadership styles, Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez-faire, library staff, Academic libraries*

Introduction

Leadership involves influence, change, people in a relationship, a shared purpose of achieving a desired future, and taking personal responsibility to make things happen. In libraries, like any other organization, there are leaders whose behaviour and personality traits influence others to perform their legitimate duty. In other words, leaders must possess style

which enables them to achieve desired goals through proper coordination and direction of the path goal. These styles determine, to a large extent, what leaders see and how they respond to situations around them. The influence of any style of leadership on the workforce, especially on the subordinate librarians will be bearable if the library leadership will achieve set goal.

Various leadership styles have been identified and these include: autocratic, transformational, participative, democratic and declarative or laissez-faire**.** There are different types of leadership styles and there is no particular style considered as the most effective at all-time because each leadership style has advantages and disadvantages, depending on the situation. In line with this, Popli and Rizvi (2016) believe that effective leaders know how to switch between the different styles and are able to choose an appropriate style to maximize influence in the organization. As such, different scholars like Nwaigwe (2015), Nwokocha and Iheriohanma (2015), Osabiya and Ikenga (2015) identified different types of leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic, charismatic, bureaucratic, situational, laissez-faire, transformational and transactional.

Autocratic leadership style implies a situation in which the leader has absolute power. Members of his team or subordinates make little or no contribution. He takes decisions without consulting his team members, and as a result, there is little or no synergy. According to Segun-Adeniran (2015), it is a non-participatory leadership style since employees are not expected to provide opinions or comments. The leader is considered the all-powerful person when making decisions, even those involving his employees; he has the last say. It is important to emphasize that the decision-making process under an autocratic leadership style is swift since all input originates from the leader. The autocratic leader monopolizes the decision making process and takes decisions all alone. Issues that concern staff matters, equipment and welfare of library personnel are based on personal discretion and rigid application of rules and regulations. Tasks are assigned without consultation and the leader expects acceptance without questioning. Autocratic style of leadership widens the communication gap and sometimes creates suspicion between the leaders and staff.

However, in a democratically led organization, the leader does not make all decisions; instead, it is a highly participative decision-making process in which subordinates are included in the decision-making process (Khan, 2015). In a democratic leadership style, authority is concentrated more with the group, and there

is more communication among members. Management duties are shared among group members, with each member allowed to contribute to decision making, establishing norms, and carrying out processes (Onuoha, Oyegun & Ugbebor, 2021). Employee creativity and inventiveness are often on the rise due to the democratic leader's participative nature. This participatory leadership style instills a strong sense of responsibility in workers simply by including them in decision-making and rewarding or penalizing them for actions taken, resulting in a stakeholder mindset. The democratic leadership style involves consultations and discussions at meetings before arriving at decisions. The leader involves staff in the decision-making process and actively supports staff in attaining career goals. The employees are informed about everything that affects their work which gives them confidence to build team spirit that will result to improved job performance.

Laissez-faire leadership, on the other hand, is a style of leadership that denotes a ‘'carefree' sort of leadership. This is because employees in the organization are given freehand when completing jobs or assignments. The laissez-faire leader recognizes that the group members perform well; the leader allows them to pursue their interests (Norris Ghahremani & Lemoine, 2021). This leadership style is used when workers are highly trained, experienced, and skillful. Laissez-faire or hands-off leadership style is the method where the leader gives the employees freedom to make decisions in the organization. Such leaders are often inactive in taking decisions, whilst important staff matters and welfare are treated with a nonchalant attitude. The leaders believe that employees should be left alone to perform their responsibilities and duties in their own ways.

Job performance is an important measure in managing organizational performance. Wirawa in Napitupulu, Trisnamansyah, Insan and Warta. (2019) defined performance as the output produced by functions or indicators of a job or profession in a certain time. In this case, job performance is the output produced by functions or indicators of a job done in the library in a particular time. Such job assists the library in meeting its objective of supporting its parent organization's goal of teaching, learning, and research. Job performance refers to the degree of output attained when completing a specific work or project. It could be described as a procedure or method of carrying out a duty or task or as the accomplishment of a specific task concerning the correctness, thoroughness, and cost of already established standards. Correspondingly, Anyim (2020) believed that performance

reflects how effectively the workforce achieves the organization's mission and objectives. Librarians' work promotes and enhances the reputation of the higher institutions and also helps students achieve academic success in their various examinations. Circulation services, reference services, bibliographic verification services, current awareness services (CAS), reprographic services, extension and community services, technical services, and interlibrary cooperation are among the tasks performed by librarians in libraries (Dickson & Robert cited in Urhefe-Okotie & Odiachi, 2023).

It is based on this background that this study was carried to examine the relationship between various leadership styles and the job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed to guide this research:

1. What is the extent of job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria?
2. What is the coefficient of relationship between autocratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria?
3. What is the coefficient of relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria?
4. What is the coefficient of relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H_{O1}: The extent of job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria do not differ significantly with the criterion mean of 37.5.

H_{O2}: There is no significant coefficient of relationship between autocratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria.

H_{O3}: The coefficient of relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria is not significant.

H_{O4}: There is no significant coefficient of relationship between laissez-faire

leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria.

Review of Empirical Studies

Extent of Job Performance

Job performance is an important measure in managing organizational performance. Napitupulu, Trisnamansyah, Insan and Warta. (2019) defined performance as the output produced by functions or indicators of a job or profession in a certain time. In this case, job performance is the output produced by functions or indicators of a job done in the library in a particular time. Such job assists the library in meeting its objective of supporting its parent organization's goal of teaching, learning, and research. Job performance refers to the degree of output attained when completing a specific work or project. It could be described as a procedure or method of carrying out a duty or task or as the accomplishment of a specific task concerning the correctness, thoroughness, and cost of already established standards. Correspondingly, Anyim (2020) believed that performance reflects how effectively the workforce achieves the organization's mission and objectives. The definition of job performance is the application of one's abilities to produce products and services that satisfy a specified need.

The extent librarians carry out their day-to-day jobs is termed job performance. Librarians perform different duties such as administrative, technical and readers' services in university libraries. According to Eyo (2021), library activities could be outputs of jobs performed by library personnel/librarian, measured in terms of quality and quantity. For example, tasks performed by librarians in Technical Services Department is adjudged by the balanced collections built, number of books catalogued, number of books classified, number of books processed, number of damaged books repaired and returned to readers' services department for circulation using the available work tools. Similarly, tasks performed in readers' services department is adjudged by the number of loan transactions (adequate use of information materials on reserved books shelves, open books shelves, reference shelves), arrangement of books on the shelves and shelf-reading for easy location and retrieval of books and reference queries attended to. Job performance according to Uwandu, Udo-Anyanwu and Okorie (2022) can help to measure how well the workers fulfil the employers' expectations to achieve organizational goals. It comprises what an employee does in the workplace, the achievement of organizational goals and the outcomes of his actions which are measurable.

Saidat and Sunmade (2019) who examined the influence of staff motivation on the job performance of the library staff in Osun State University. The result showed that promotion, wages and salary among others are the factors that motivate library staff to perform their job. Also, the study found that the level of job performance of library staff is high while the motivational parameters identified influence the performance of the library staff to a great extent except recognition of service and award that influences their performance to some extent. Adetayo, Abata-Ebire and Babarinde (2023) examined the influence of leadership styles and staff motivation on job satisfaction in private university libraries in Osun State, recorded high level of job performance among the studied respondents. Also, Nwokike and Unegbu (2019) evaluated the job performance of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria. The study found that the level of job performance of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria was high (Mean= 3.03, SD=0.67).

Autocratic Leadership Style

Oranefo (2022) examined the effect of autocratic leadership styles on employee productivity in pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. Qualtrics survey research design was adopted for the study. The study's population consists of twenty (20) pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria. The sample size was determined using the purposeful sampling technique. The sample is chosen in this method based on what the researcher believes is appropriate for the study. During the data collection process, ten (10) employees were chosen from each of Nigeria's twenty (20) pharmaceutical companies. The research relied on primary data collection to achieve its objectives. The researcher created a Qualtrics research instrument for primary data collection. Data were analyzed and hypotheses were tested with regression analysis. The result shows that autocratic leadership style has a positive significant effect on employee productivity in pharmaceutical companies in Nigeria.

Kalu and Okpokwasili (2018) examined the impact of autocratic leadership style on the job performance of subordinates in academic libraries in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions. The research design was a survey. The respondents were the 74 professional and paraprofessional staff working in the libraries studied. Data collection was through questionnaire titled Autocratic Leadership Style on Job Performance of Subordinates in Academic Libraries (ALSJPSAL) consisting of five (5) item statements. Analysis was done using frequency and mean for the research

question. Findings of the study revealed that autocratic leadership style tends to develop dependent and uncreative subordinates who are afraid to take up responsibility. Autocratic leadership style, however, shows a significant negative impact on employee performance. This style of leadership tended to have work groups that were less productive and subordinates showed a high degree of dissatisfaction on the job. Therefore, autocratic leaders tend to limit the performance of subordinates.

Democratic Leadership Style

Urhefe-Okotie and Odiachi (2023) investigated the relationship between democratic leadership style and the job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Two (2) research questions were posed to guide the study, along with a null hypothesis that was tested at the 0.5 level of significance. A correlational research design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised 98 librarians in the six federal universities spread across the six states of South-South, Nigeria. No sample was drawn due to the controllable size of the population. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-constructed questionnaire titled "Democratic Leadership Style and Job Performance Questionnaire (DLSJPQ)". The questionnaire was face-validated by two experts in the Department of Library and Information Science and one expert in Measurement and Evaluation from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The overall reliability of the instrument yielded 0.92 with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The collected data were analysed with the use of Linear Regression analysis for answering the research questions, and regression analysis was utilised in testing the research hypotheses. The study revealed that leadership style has a positive influence on the job performance of librarians. It was also revealed in the study that there is a positive relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance among librarians.

Mwove, Mwania and Kasivu (2023) examined the influence of democratic leadership style on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Mwala sub-county, Kenya. The study was guided by two research questions and one hypothesis. This study used a descriptive survey research design. Target population of the study was all the 72 schools, all the 72 principals, and all the 471 teachers in Mwala sub-county public secondary schools. Out of the population of 72 schools, 36 were chosen through stratified random sampling technique. All the 36 principals of the sampled schools were purposively included in the study. Yamene

(1967) formula was used to give a sample of 216 teachers. Proportional allocation method was used to identify a weighted teachers' sample for each school. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select the participating teachers in each school. Questionnaires were the main instruments of collecting data used in this study. The instruments were validated by research experts to ascertain content validity while reliability was achieved through piloting using the test-retest reliability technique. Data were coded and entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 for analysis. Inferential statistics which involved running correlation analysis at a 0.05 level of significance were employed to test the nature and strength of relationships between variables. The results established that there was a weak positive but statistically significant correlation between democratic leadership style and students' academic performance (R=.365, *p=.043*).

Onwuegbuna, Ajayi and Abodunrin (2022) examined the impact of democratic leadership style on employees' performance in selected private universities in Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives, two research questions and two hypotheses. A survey design was adopted as the research design of the study. The population of the study comprised three hundred and eighty (380) teaching staff of Bells University of Technology, Ota and Crawford University, Igbesa, Ogun State. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted to determine the sample size. The sampling technique is appropriate in the current study because of the heterogeneous population of the study. Using 50% of the population from each university, the sample size is 190 teaching staff. Descriptive statistics (frequency, simple percentage, and grand mean) and inferential statistics (simple linear regression) were adopted as data analysis techniques. While descriptive statistics was used to analyze the demographics information of the respondents and to achieve research objective one, the inferential statistic was used to achieve research objective two. The research hypothesis formulated was tested at a 5% level of significance. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 was employed to carry out the data analysis. The findings indicate that democratic leadership style has an impact on employees' performance in Nigerian private universities.

Laissez-faire Leadership Style

Urhefe- Okotie and Eruvwe's (2025) study focused on laissez-faire leadership style and work performances of librarians. To guild the study, two (2) research questions were posed, and a null hypothesis was also formulated at a 0.5

level of significance. The study adopted a correlational research design. A total of ninety-eight (98) librarians in six federal universities spread across six states in South- South geo-political zone of Nigeria were used. No sampling was done because the population was small enough to be managed by the researcher. The researcher-created "Laissez-faire Leadership Styles as correlate of work Performance Questionnaire" (LLSQ) as the tool for data collection which was face- validated by three research experts. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient got a reliability score of 0.92 for the instrument. Regression analysis was used to test the null hypothesis that matched the data collected through the questionnaire and to analyse the results using linear regression. The study's findings indicate that laissez-faire of leadership style does not impact positively on the work performance of librarians.

The study of Linge, Shikalieh and Asiimwe (2016) sought to establish the relationship between laissez-fair leadership style and SMEs growth in the Top 100 SMEs in Kenya. Three research questions were posed and one hypothesis formulated. The study adopted a pragmatic philosophical approach in order to facilitate data triangulation so as to have a clear understanding of the research problem and used a causal research design. The target population comprised 553 personnel including owners and managers of the top 100 SMEs of 2013. A sample of 227 managers was selected through a proportionate sampling and 25 top managers were purposely selected for the study. The study relied on primary data that was collected using closed-ended questionnaires as well as structured interview guides. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarize the data while inferential statistics were used to make inferences and draw conclusions about the quantitative data. Inferential statistics included Pearson's correlation to test the association between the variables and chi-square test that was applied to test the research hypothesis. The study findings established that Laissez-faire leadership style and SMEs growth was positively correlated and significantly related to SMEs growth ($r= 0.792$, $P= 0.011$ ($p< 0.025$); the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted since the p value was less than alpha ($\chi 2 =213.143$; d.f. = 60; $P= 0.021$ ($P<0.05$). The study concluded that the effectiveness of the leaders in utilizing laissez-faire leadership style greatly influenced the performance and SME growth as the employees were able to execute their duties successfully.

Generally, Emuchay, Udo-Anyanwu and Chiekezie (2024) examined Leadership styles and job security as

predictors of staff productivity in polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses. A correlation research design involving simple linear correlation was adopted for the study. The population of the study consists of one hundred and sixty (160) professional and para-professional library staff of seven polytechnic libraries in South-East, Nigeria which was also used as the sample of the study. A researchers' designed questionnaire rated with 4-point scale and titled: Leadership styles and Job Security as predictors of Staff Productivity in Polytechnic Libraries in South- East, Nigeria (LSJPPPL) was used for data collection. The research questions were answered using Pearson (r) and the hypotheses tested using t-test statistics at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The findings revealed that: there is significant positive and moderate relationship between leadership styles, job security, and library staff productivity in the libraries studied.

Methodology

Survey and correlation designs were adopted for the study. The study's population comprised 267 library staff in institutions in Imo State which was also used as sample. Hence the adoption of census sampling technique. The data for the study were collected using researcher-made rating scales titled: Job Performance of Library Staff (JPLS) and Leadership Style Rating Scale (LSRS). The responses were rated with Very High Extent (VHE=4), High Extent (HE=3), Low Extent (LE-2) and Very Low Extent (VLE=1). Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to answer research question one while Pearson's (r) was used to answer research question 2. T-test statistics for significance of 'r' was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analyses and Presentation

Research question 1: What is the extent of job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean responses of librarians on extent of job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria.

S/N	Item statements	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	S.D	Remark
1	Provision of e-mail reference services to users	77	105	72	13	2.92	0.86	High extent
2	Cataloguing and classification of library materials	85	97	66	19	2.93	0.92	High extent
3	Providing users access to resources outside the library through referral	84	106	64	13	2.98	0.86	High extent

	services							
4	Provision of lending services	83	109	55	20	2.96	0.90	High extent
5	Indexing and abstracting of library materials.	87	91	73	16	2.93	0.91	High extent
6	Employment of social media to alert users on new arrivals and upcoming events.	84	101	68	14	2.96	0.88	High extent
7	Provision of internet services.	76	107	68	16	2.91	0.88	High extent
8	Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI)	79	92	82	14	2.88	0.89	High extent
9	Current Awareness Services (CAS)	77	106	75	9	2.94	0.83	High extent
10	Provision of reprographic services	81	104	68	14	2.94	0.87	High extent
11	Digitization of information resources in the library.	78	91	79	19	2.85	0.92	High extent
12	Supervision of subordinates	93	93	69	12	3.00	0.88	High extent
13	Organization of information literacy and user education programmes	86	93	78	10	2.96	0.87	High extent
14	Access to both hardcopies and softcopies of theses and dissertations.	80	92	75	20	2.87	0.93	High extent
15	Preparation of Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC).	84	94	65	24	2.89	0.95	High extent
	Mean of item means					**2.92**	**0.89**	**High Extent**

Data on Table 1 show the responses of the library staff on the extent of job performance of their libraries. A close look at the table shows that all the items in the rating scale have their mean responses above 2.50 which is the criterion mean mark for a 4-point Likert scale. This implies that majority of the respondents are in agreement with all the items in the rating scale. The mean of item means is 2.92 which is also greater than 2.50. This clearly means that the job performance of library staff is good to an acceptable extent.

Ho_1: The extent of job performance of library staff of academic libraries in Imo State does not differ significantly from the criterion mean of 37.5

Table 2: One sample t-test of significant difference in the mean responses of library staff on their job performance

Variable	N	Criterion mean	mean	SD	df	t-statistic	α-value	p-value	Decision
Job performance	267	37.5	43.92	9.56	266	10.965	0.05	**.000**	**Ho rejected**

Table 2 shows the one sample t-test of significant difference in the mean response of library staff on their level of job performance from the criterion mean of 37.50. The mean of the library staff on the rating scale is 43.98 which literally stands greater than the expected criterion mean of 37.50. The p-value of 0.000 which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, further confirms that the mean response of the library staff exceeds the criterion mean. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and this implies that the mean rating score on extent of job performance of library staff of academic libraries in Imo State differs significantly from the criterion mean of 37.5

Research question 2: What is the coefficient of relationship between autocratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Summary statistics for coefficient of relationship between autocratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria.

Variable	N	∑	r	Df	Extent of relationship
Autocratic leadership	267	4080	0.295	265	Low and positive relationship
Job performance	267	11726			

Table 3 shows the summary of the relationship between autocratic leadership and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria. The correlation coefficient (r) is 0.295. This form of relationship is considered low and positive. The positive nature of the relationship implies that an increment in the variable of autocratic leadership is associated by a similar increment in the variable of job performance of library staff. However, this relationship is low.

H_{O2}: There is no significant coefficient of relationship between autocratic leadership

style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Summary statistics for significant correlation between autocratic leadership style and job performance of library staff

Variable	N	R	df	α value	p-value	Decision
Autocratic leadership	267	0.295	265	0.05	0.001	**Reject H_{O1}**
Job performance	267					

Data on Table 4 show the test of significance of Pearson correlation between autocratic leadership style and job performance of library staff. The low correlation coefficient of 0.295 has a corresponding p-value of 0.001 which is less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is therefore concluded that though the relationship between autocratic leadership and job performance of library staff is low, the relationship is statistically significant.

Research question 3: What is the coefficient of relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State?

Table 5: Summary statistics for coefficient of relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of library staff

Variable	N	∑	r	df	Extent of relationship
Democratic leadership	267	4473	0.597	265	Moderate and positive relationship
Job performance	267	11726			

Data on Table 5 depicts the relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State. The correlation coefficient is 0.597 which is a moderate and positive relationship, implying that an increment in democratic leadership is associated with a moderate level of increment in job performance of library staff and vice versa.

H_{O3}: The coefficient of relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State is not significant.

Table 6: Summary statistics for coefficient of significant correlation between democratic leadership style and job performance of library staff

Variable	N	R	df	α value	p-value	Decision
Democratic leadership	267	0.597	265	0.05	0.000	**Reject H_{O2}**
Job performance	267					

From the data on Table 6, the significance of relationship between democratic leadership and job performance of library staff in academic libraries is given. The correlation coefficient which is 0.597 is associated with a p-value of 0.000. The p-value is less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and this implies that the relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of library staff is statistically significant.

Research Question 4: What is the coefficient of relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria?

Table 7: Summary statistics for coefficient of relationship between laissez-faire leadership and job performance of library staff

Variable	N	∑	r	df	Extent of relationship
Laissez-faire	267	3745	0.017	265	Very low and positive relationship
Job performance	267	11726			

Data on Table 7 is the summary of relationship between laissez-faire leadership and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State. The correlation coefficient (r) is 0.017, (df=265) which is a very low (almost negligible) and positive relationship. This means that increment or decrease in laissez-faire leadership style is associated with an extremely minute increment or decrease in job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State.

H_{O4}: There is no significant coefficient of relationship between laissez-faire

leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State, Nigeria.

Table 8: Summary statistics for significant correlation between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of library staff

Variable	N	R	df	α value	p-value	Decision
Laissez-faire	267	0.017	265	0.05	0.786	**Accept H_{O3}**
Job performance	267					

On Table 8, the corresponding hypothesis on the test of significant correlation between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of library staff is presented. The p-value associated with the correlation coefficient (0.017) is 0.786. This p-value is greater than 0.05. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is not rejected and it is confirmed that the very low relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of library staff is not significant.

Discussion of Findings

Extent of Job Performance of Library staff in academic libraries in Imo State

The study's finding revealed that there is a high extent of job performance among the library staff in academic libraries in Imo State. This finding indicates that despite the prevailing infrastructural and socio-economic challenges often facing tertiary institutions in Nigeria, library personnel maintain a strong commitment to their duties. A high level of job performance suggests that staff are meeting institutional expectations regarding information resource management, cataloging, user services, and digital literacy support. This resilience can be attributed to strong professional ethics, intrinsic motivation, or effective internal institutional peer structures that compel staff to deliver quality services despite external constraints. In line with this finding, Nwokike and Unegbu (2019) who evaluated the job performance of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria, found that the level of job performance of librarians in universities in South-East, Nigeria was high. Adetayo, Abata-Ebire and Babarinde (2023) examined the influence of leadership styles and staff motivation on job satisfaction in private university libraries in Osun State, and recorded high level of job performance among the studied respondents. Similarly, Saidat and Sunmade (2019) recorded high job performance levels among librarians in Osun State.

Autocratic Leadership Style and Job Performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State

The findings further showed that there is a low, positive, and significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State. This low but significant positive relationship suggests that while authoritarian leadership style which is characterized by strict compliance, top-down communication, and centralized decision-making can compel performance, their efficacy is highly limited. In a library setting, there is huge reliance on information management and rigid supervision (characteristic of the authoritarian leadership style) may actually enforce basic compliance and attendance. However, the low level of the relationship implies that it may do little to inspire innovation or discretionary effort. The statistical significance indicates that this trend is not random; a strict regulatory framework does yield baseline performance, likely because staff clear certain tasks out of a fear of administrative sanctions. This finding aligns with previous findings from Oranefo (2022) who recorded low but positive and significant relationship between personnel performance of library staff and autocratic leadership styles. Similarly, Kalu and Okpokwasili (2018) reported that autocratic leadership, while yielding a forced sort of compliance, led to dependent and uncreative subordinates who are afraid to take up responsibility.

Democratic Leadership Style and Job Performance of library staff in academic libraries

The findings of the study further showed that the relationship between democratic leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State is moderate, positive, and statistically significant. Democratic leadership style is a participatory type of leadership which is characterized by engagement of staff in decision making, delegation of responsibilities and encouragement of open communication. The finding suggests that this mode of leadership yields a substantially stronger performance response than autocratic methods. This finding also shows that the democratic leadership style makes library staff feel valued, which enhances their motivation to assist users, curate relevant academic collections, and collaborate across departments. This finding corroborates with that of Urhefe-Okotie and Odiachi (2023), Mwove, Mwania, and Kasivu (2023) and Onwuegbuna, Ajayi and Abodunrin (2022) who in their respective studies, reported positive and significant relationships between democratic leadership styles and job performance of

librarians and academic performance of students respectively.

Laissez-Faire Leadership Style and Job Performance of library staff in academic libraries

The results from the study further revealed a very low, positive, and non-significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State. A laissez-faire style, characterized by a hands-off approach and complete autonomy for subordinates, shows virtually no meaningful connection to job performance in this study. The non-significant nature of this relationship implies that leaving library staff entirely to their own devices without guidance, feedback, or strategic oversight does not reliably contribute to performance. While professional librarians require a degree of operational autonomy, a complete absence of leadership creates ambiguity, delays in library functions, and inconsistencies in user service delivery. This finding gives credence to the findings of Urhefe- Okotie and Eruvwe (2025) which indicated a negative relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job performance of librarians in federal universities. However, in contrast with the previous findings, Linge, Shikalieh and Asiimwe (2016) recorded a positive and significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and SMEs growth. This implies that various contextual factors may mediate relationships between laissez-faire relationship and performance of different organisations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made:

1. Tertiary institutions' authorities must safeguard this assets by providing modern working tools, regular access to professional development funding, and timely promotional pathways to prevent burnout and brain drain' given that staff performance is currently high,.
2. Library managers should move away from rigid, top-down enforcement and avoid complete administrative detachment. Autocratic methods should be strictly reserved for emergency compliance scenarios.
3. Library management should actively involve staff in decision-making, encourage open communication, and create an environment where feedback is valued. This approach can significantly enhance staff performance.
4. Laissez-faire leadership should be selective, particularly in scenarios where staff are highly skilled and require minimal supervision. However, leaders should also provide necessary support and guidance to ensure that

performance does not decline due to a lack of direction.

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