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DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARIANS IN SELECTED UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

Purpose: *The study was carried out to investigate democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians in selected university libraries in Nigeria.*

Design/Methodology/Approach: *The research design for the study is a descriptive survey. The population of the study consists of 113 librarians. Self Google constructed questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Descriptive statistics were used to extract 95 of the 113 copies of the questionnaire that were disseminated. A mean score of 2.5 or above and a percentage score of 50% were deemed satisfactory.*

Findings: *The study revealed that the extent of adopting the democratic leadership in the university libraries under review was high. The study further affirmed that impact of democratic leadership style on the job performance of librarians in librarians in selected university libraries in Nigeria as team trust, higher productivity, better job satisfaction, shared choices and positive decision taking.*

Implication: *The study recommends that there is need therefore for the management of university libraries to provide groundwork for implementing leadership style that positively correlate with job performance to enhance the job involvement of library staff.*

Originality/Value: *Democratic leadership style was first described as a truly original because it broke away from other leadership style, because in democratic power is shared.*

Keywords: *Democratic leadership style, job performance, librarians, university libraries*

Introduction

Libraries continue to be the centers of knowledge and information, without which the dissemination of knowledge and information would be incomplete. These libraries play a significant role in preserving cultural heritage and promoting national integrity. Due to its affiliation with a university, the university library is a structured institution under the direction of a librarian known as the University Librarian. It has established goals that align with those of the parent institution, the university, which must be fulfilled by both the staff and the university library management team, which is led by the University Librarian. It might be appropriate to quote Segun-Adeniran (2015), who stressed that without appropriate leadership styles developed and implemented by university librarians and management teams, it is hard to attain desirable and high levels of staff productivity in university libraries. For

staff management and academic library operations, university librarians primarily employ transformational, democratic, and transactional leadership approaches. These various leadership styles have a direct impact on how successfully employees perform their tasks, how content they are at work, and how readily the library can embrace new ideas.

Democratic leadership, also known as participative leadership, permits a large number of library staff to take part in the decision-making process in the library. A collaborative approach to decision-making that solicits employee feedback and opinions is a hallmark of this leadership style. Democratic leadership involves the leader selecting the best possibilities during the decision-making process and promoting dialogue and the exchange of ideas, information, and knowledge (Psychologia, 2021). Democratic leadership in university libraries entails staff involvement, open communication, and collaborative decision-making. By making each employee feel appreciated, this approach enhances job performance, raises employee morale, and boosts productivity.

Job performance evaluates an individual's ability to carry out a task effectively. A key factor in determining the success and outcomes of any organization is job performance. Campbell et al. (2021) define job performance as behaviuors that are pertinent to organizational goals and quantifiable in terms of each individual's contribution to organisational effectiveness. Updating knowledge and abilities, offering solutions to work-related issues, and actively participating in decision-making processes are important components (García-Salirrosas., 2025). Democratic leadership has a significant favourable effect on librarians' job performance by enhancing staff productivity.

This approach depends on open communication, collaborative decision-making, and active team involvement. The exact antithesis of an authoritarian leadership style, a democratic leadership style holds that followers ought to participate in decision-making. According to Kalu and Okpokwasili (2018), this type of leadership sees employees as collaborators in advancement and promotes their involvement in issues that impact the workplace. Because team members are enthusiastic about their work and participate in decision-making, which improves their performance at work, these leaders work as a team to accomplish goals. It is in the light of the above benefits that the researcher inspired to embark on the study on democratic

leadership style and job performance of librarians in selected university libraries in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

To achieve effective leadership in the library, a leader will take whatever steps and actions are necessary and should also be prepared to take responsibility for the product of his actions, whether positive or negative. The level of efficiency of a leader can be measured by the value of output produced, and the value of output is easily measured by the kind of leadership style being used by that leader. Observations inside the library system indicate that the leadership style of librarians as department heads may influence the job performance of their subordinates, and that the job performance of subordinates ultimately impacts the total work performance of librarians. The leadership styles of university librarians in tertiary institution libraries may have a substantial effect on subordinates' performance. In that scenario, bossy librarians may use an inappropriate leadership style that either hinders or enhances the work performance of their subordinates. Therefore, the goal of this study was to ascertain how librarians' work performance in Nigerian university libraries was affected by democratic leadership ideas.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the extent the antecedents of democratic leadership style are practiced in the selected in selected university libraries in Nigeria
2. To investigate the impact of democratic leadership style on the job performance of librarians in selected university libraries in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Democratic leadership is a leadership style that encourages team participation in decision-making while the leader guides discussions and makes final decisions. Polston-Murdoch (2013) asserts that democratic leaders achieve higher employee performance than non-democratic leaders. Yana and Syamsuri (2022) opined that in democratic leadership everyone can participate, ideas are exchanged freely, and discussion is encouraged**.** According to Thoha (2015), a democratic leadership style is one that employs personal strength and promotes followers' active participation in decision-making and problem-solving. The ability to influence others and motivate them to work together toward a predefined goal is referred to as the democratic leadership style. This is achieved by the leader and subordinates working together to carry out a variety of tasks (Khaeruman et al.,

2021). Often referred to as a subordinate-centered leadership style, this approach promotes equality in leadership by having the leader confer with subordinates to reach shared decisions (Khaeruman et al., 2021). Collaboration is a defining characteristic of democratic leadership. This strategy is predicated on the idea that workers who actively engage in decision-making are more likely to show a greater commitment to the goals and objectives of the company (Nanda, 2017).

Before making a decision, a democratic leader actively seeks out and takes into account the opinions of their team members (Sundari et al., 2022). Workers who are led democratically feel empowered, respected, and united. According to Enite Urhefe-Okotie and Rosemary (2023) opined that democratic leadership style have the capability of influencing workers with the necessary leadership ability in order to ensure optimal job performance towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives, which in turn impacts organizational success. Menz (2010) is of the opinion that employee performance is influenced by the leadership style used and has an impact on workers' capacity to accomplish company goals and objectives. According to Northouse (2014), a motivating leadership style is essential for attaining high performance. According to Sougui, Bon, and Hassan (2016), in the Four Path-Goal Theory leadership styles directive, accomplishment, supportive, and unable to affect employees' performance had a substantial impact on organizations. According to Otieno (2015), democratic leadership styles increased employee engagement, which in turn improved worker performance within the company. Democratic leadership has many benefits, especially when it comes to improving staff performance and creating a healthy library culture.

According to Hassnain (2022), library employees who feel that their opinions are valued and heard are more likely to be dedicated to the institution and have higher job satisfaction. Alam (2021) asserts that innovative and creative problem-solving can be fostered by democratic leaders. According to Rosing (2022), cooperative decision-making procedures can improve team cohesiveness and promote a feeling of solidarity and common goal. In a different development, Barthold (2020) believes that using a variety of viewpoints when making decisions can result in more informed and well-rounded choices, while Alam (2021) contends that giving employees decision-making responsibilities can help them grow both personally and professionally.

A crucial component of the literature assessment is the wider effects of leadership styles on organizational performance indicators. Productivity, creativity, staff retention, and general effectiveness are just a few of the aspects that make up organizational performance. In his publication, Bwalya (2023) explained how organizational leaders' leadership style is crucial in determining these results. Positive organizational results, such as increased creativity, increased productivity, and better staff retention, have been frequently linked to democratic leadership. Democratic leadership's collaborative style encourages a culture of adaptability and constant improvement, both of which are essential for an organization's success in changing circumstances.

García-Morales (2008), asserted that democratic leadership greatly promotes new innovation in academic libraries by utilizing a variety of viewpoints and cultivating an environment of open communication and trust. Additionally, because workers feel more involved and dedicated to their jobs, companies with democratic management frequently have stronger employee loyalty and lower turnover rates. The following studies looked into the connection between democratic leadership style and organizational performance. Chua et al. (2018) investigated "leadership style and its impact on employee performance" using a non-probability convenience sampling technique and a casual research design. A study was conducted on 250 middle management workers in Malaysia's Klang Valley. The study's findings came from inferential statistics based on regression analysis. Employee performance was found to be significantly and favorably impacted by democratic leadership style (β =.285, t = 4.862, p <.05). This gave indication of the role of democratic leadership style in improving the corporate image of the organization.

A study by Kalu and Okpokwasili (2018) investigated the “impact of democratic leadership style on job performance of subordinates in academic libraries in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.” A survey research design was used to study seventy four professionals and para-profession staff working in the libraries. Data were collected for five statements on a four-point scale that ranged from strongly agree, 4, to strongly disagree, 1 and were analyzed based on descriptive statistics. The results indicated that responses for four out of the five statements were above 2.5 critical values. It was reported that the results implied that democratic leadership style led to high

performance of subordinates of academic libraries. The results indicated that responses for four out of the five statements were above 2.5 critical value. It was reported that the results implied that democratic leadership style led to high performance of subordinates of academic libraries. This meant that it had potential to improve institutional image. The recommendation of the study encouraged library heads to adopt democratic leadership style by involving team members in decision making. Wachira et al. (2018) studied the influence of democratic leadership style on the performance of state corporations in Kenya. The study used a cross-sectional research design to study 384 middle-level staff of twenty state commercial corporations. Positive relationship ($r = .352$, $p < .05$) between democratic style and organizational performance was indicated. This implied a tendency of the application of democratic leadership style to result in increased corporate image. The recommendation of the study was that management of the state corporations should involve team members in decision making to generate ideas and contribute to evaluating alternatives so as to make the implementation of agreed decisions effective.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used in this investigation. One hundred and thirteen (113) librarians from a few chosen Nigerian university libraries make up the study's population. A Google constructed questionnaire was used for the study. Descriptive statistics were used, out of the 113 copies of instrument distributed, 95 copies were returned. Method of data collections were retrieved via electronic mails. A mean score of 2.5 or above and a percentage score of 50% were deemed satisfactory.

Table 1

Data Analyses and Presentation

Population of the study

S/N	Academic libraries in selected Universities	Librarians
1	University of Ibadan Library	37
2	Lagos state university Library	18
3	University of Portharcourt Library	19
4	Ahmedu Bello University Library Kano	21
	Total	**95**

Table 1 above shows the population of librarians who responded to the questionnaire in the following order**:** University of Ibadan Library (37), Lagos state university Library (18), University of Portharcourt Library (19) and Ahmedu Bello University Library Kano (21) librarians respectively.

Table 2

Extent the antecedents of democratic leadership style are practiced in the selected in selected university libraries in Nigeria

Keys: Strongly agreed, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree

S/N	Items	VHE	HE	LE	NA	-x	Decision
1	Shared Input	16	23	47	9	2.4	Rejected
2	Final Authority	42	44	6	3	3.3	Accepted
3	Redistribution of Power	12	23	41	19	2.2	Rejected
4	Skilled Teams	34	49	10	2	3.1	Accepted
5	High Engagement Goals	12	18	43	22	2.2	Rejected

Table 2 shows the Extent the antecedents of democratic leadership style are practiced in the selected in selected university libraries in Nigerian the following others: Shared input (2.4), final authority (3.3), redistribution of power (2.2), skilled teams (3.1) high engagement goals (2.2) repetitively. The results indicate that the extent of antecedents of democratic leadership style are practiced in the selected in selected university libraries in Nigeria was high.

Table 3

Impact of democratic leadership style on the job performance of librarians in librarians in selected university libraries in Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	-x	Decision
1	Higher Productivity	34	47	6	8	3.1	Accepted
2	Better Job Satisfaction	33	49	9	4	3.1	Accepted
3	Team Trust	43	38	7	7	3.2	Accepted
4	Shared Choices	42	38	9	6	3.2	Accepted
5	Positive decision taking	47	42	6	0	3.4	Accepted

Table 3 indicates the Impact of democratic leadership style on the job performance of librarians in selected university libraries in Nigeria as team trust (3.2), higher productivity (3.1), better job satisfaction (3.1), shared choices (3.2) and positive decision taking (3.4) respectively. This findings show that the adoption of the democratic leadership styles will have positive impact in the management of the university libraries under study.

Discussion of findings

The significant finding of this study was that there is a very high positive relationship between perceived democratic leadership of librarians and job performance of library staff because they will be happy carrying out their job. Because a successful leadership help to develop a climate in which followers are well motivated to give out their very best on the job.

Recommendations

1. There is need therefore for the management of university libraries to provide groundwork for implementing leadership style that positively correlate with job performance to enhance the job involvement of library staff.
2. The study recommends that leaders in other organizations should apply this leadership style frequently. They should get employees input when making decisions that affect the employees and the organization in general.

Conclusion

Democratic leadership style improves the job performance of librarians by boosting staff morale, encouraging teamwork, and increasing overall productivity. This participative approach relies on shared decision-making, open communication, and valuing staff input. The major aspect of this study was to determine librarian's leadership style as it affects their performance. Hence, the findings of the study suggested that librarians' use of democratic leadership style will increase job performance of staff of university libraries in Nigeria and so positively affect the attainment of the goals of these libraries.

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