

Leadership Style and Employees' Job Performance in Selected Federal Government Agencies in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria

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Article DOI:

10.48028/iiprds/ijdsshmss.v16.i1.07

Keywords:

Leadership Style
Practices,
Transformational
Leadership Styles,
Autocratic
Leadership Style,
Employees' Job
Performance and
Motivation

Abstract

The study sought to determine the leadership style practices and employees' job performance in selected Federal Government Agencies in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were raised and formulated for the study. This study adopted survey research design and quantitative research method. The population of this study was 7,952 and a sample size of 419 was obtained through Taro Yamane formula. Simple random sampling technique was applied and the data collected were analyzed using Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the aid of Smart PLS application software package v. 4.1.1.4. The study found out that transformational leadership significantly affects employees' job performance. Autocratic leadership, though often criticized, also positively influences job performance in government agencies. Conclusions from the findings showed that transformational and autocratic leadership styles significantly and positively affect employees' job performance in federal government agencies. The study recommends that Government agencies in FCT should integrate transformational practices such as mentorship and employee empowerment with the structure and decisiveness of autocratic leadership to optimize performance. Regular training workshops should be organized for managers to develop adaptive leadership skills that combine vision-driven inspiration with firm decision-making for effective public service delivery.

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Background to the Study

Leadership is regarded as one of the most effective tools for managing employees and organizations. Leadership in government agencies must be strategic, with leaders adapting their styles to fit the specific needs of their teams and the demands of their organizations. Leadership, in its contemporary form, demands more than just managerial control. It involves motivating, guiding, and aligning employees' personal goals with the objectives of the organization (George, 2025). Effective leaders must choose their style based on the level of direction, empowerment, and decision-making authority that their employees require. In this context, leadership is not a one-size-fits-all approach but a flexible tool that must be tailored to the specific needs of employees, the task at hand, and the organizational environment.

Man is a complex social being that can be simplistically categorized into two groups namely leaders and followers. The successes recorded by most human endeavors can be attributed to leadership quality. Over the years, various scholars have studied the concept of leadership with the aim of understanding and improving the inherent benefits of effective leadership; these studies have given rise to several definitions of leadership (Matira & Awolusi, 2020).

Historically, employee performance often suffered due to a lack of proper direction and the absence of strategic leadership in everyday work practices (Sayyadi, 2021). However, with the increased focus on leadership, particularly in government agencies and complex organizations, it has become clear that different leadership styles affect employee performance in different ways. The application of strategic leadership practices has thus become critical to ensuring that employees are well-supported, motivated, and equipped to meet their performance targets. Each leadership style has its advantages and drawbacks depending on the context in which it is applied (Sayyadi, 2021). Transformational leadership emphasizes vision, inspiration, and motivation, enabling employees to exceed expectations. Autocratic leadership is characterized by centralized authority, strict control, and unilateral decision-making.

Transformational leadership emphasizes vision, inspiration, and motivation, enabling employees to exceed expectations. Leaders adopting this style foster innovation, trust, and commitment (Bello & Chukwu, 2023). On the other hand, autocratic leadership, where decisions are made solely by the leader without employee input, can generate high employee performance in short-term, high-pressure situations, yet this style tends to cause dissatisfaction and disengagement among employees over time. An autocratic leader who gives the orders and is expected to obey immediately without argument. Plans and policies are made independently of the team. Future reasons or intentions were not disclosed when the order was issued.

Employee job performance refers to the extent to which an individual effectively carries out assigned roles, responsibilities, and tasks in line with organizational goals. It encompasses both the quality and quantity of work delivered, as well as behaviors such

as commitment, teamwork, and adaptability (Motyka, 2021). Scholars note that job performance is a multidimensional construct that includes task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance, each of which contributes to organizational success (Sultana & Johari, 2022). Recent research highlights that job performance is influenced by factors such as leadership style, work environment, employee motivation, and the use of digital technologies in modern workplaces (Alhyasat & Khasawneh, 2023). Ultimately, job performance serves as a key determinant of organizational competitiveness and sustainability, making it a central focus in performance management systems.

Consequently, employees' job performance in government agencies remains a critical determinant of public sector efficiency and service delivery in Nigeria. However, in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, evidence suggests that employee's job performance in many agencies is below expectation due to slow adoption of digital processes, poor monitoring, and weak enforcement of performance management frameworks. If unresolved, these issues could continue to undermine public trust in government institutions and stall the achievement of Nigeria's governance and development goals. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2022) reported that over 48% of citizens expressed dissatisfaction with the timeliness and effectiveness of public service delivery, citing delays, bureaucracy, and unresponsiveness.

Objectives of the Study

1. Ascertain the extent to which transformational leadership style affect employee job performance in selected federal government agencies in Abuja (FCT).
2. Investigate the effect of autocratic leadership style on employee job performance in selected federal government agencies in Abuja (FCT).

Research Questions

- i). To what extent does transformational leadership style affect employee job performance in selected federal government agencies in Abuja (FCT)?
- ii). How does autocratic leadership style affect the employee performance in selected federal government agencies in Abuja (FCT)?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of transformational leadership style on employee job performance in selected federal government agencies in Abuja (FCT).

H₀₂: Autocratic leadership style has no significant effect on employee job performance in selected federal government agencies in Abuja (FCT).

Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional research design and quantitative research method. The population for this study includes staff 7,952 both management and operational level employees at the Headquarters of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) –

2,700, the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) – 2,000, the Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) – 1,800, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) – 954, and the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) – 498. (NBS report, 2022). The sampling technique that was used in this study is simple random sampling technique. The sample for this study is 419 which was determined using Taro Yamane (1967) formula.

The computed sample size for the study was therefore, 381. This number was however, increased by 10%, as supported by Martínez-Mesa et al. (2016), which added to 419 to address non-response and invalid response problems. Therefore, the following samples were used: CBN – 142, NAFDAC – 106, SON – 95, NCC – 50, and NERC – 26. Primary data was obtained directly from the respondents. The structured questionnaires are designed to address the purpose of this study. Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) was used as procedures for data analysis. Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model is a non-parametric method that does not require that the data meet certain distributional assumptions and PLS-SEM is comprise of measurement and structural model.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity Report

Variables	Items	Factor Loadings	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Autocratic Leadership Style	AL2	0.779	0.81	0.588
	AL3	0.799		
	AL5	0.721		
Employee's Job Performance	EP1	0.736	0.85	0.586
	EP2	0.718		
	EP3	0.795		
	EP5	0.811		
Transformational Leadership Style	TL1	0.883	0.892	0.675
	TL2	0.887		
	TL4	0.72		
	TL5	0.785		

Source: Smart PLS v. 4.1.1.4 Output (2025)

Key: TL = Transformational Leadership Style, AL = Autocratic Leadership Style and EP = Employee's Job Performance

Criteria: AL1, AL4, EP4, and TL3 were deleted because they failed on factor loadings less than 0.708. The result of this study in Table 1 showed that Composite reliability (CR) was

> 0.7 and AVE was > 0.5. According to Yusuf & Hassan (2020), the CR values should be at least 0.7, AVE should be greater than 0.5.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity using Fornell-Larcker criterion

Variables	1	2	3
1. Autocratic Leadership Style	0.767		
2. Employee's Job Performance	0.541	0.766	
3. Transformational Leadership Style	0.552	0.459	0.822

Source: Smart PLS v. 4.1.1.4 Output (2025)

Discriminant validity was established among constructs at a point where the squared AVE in the diagonal in Table 2 is greater is higher than the correlation with other constructs. Factor loading show how well an item represents the underlying construct. According to Yusuf and Hassan (2022) indicators loading must be at least 0.708. Figure 3 showed the retained indicators of three constructs of transformational leadership, autocratic leadership and employee's job performance.

The result showed that the path coefficient and the p-value in Table 5 based on the direct relationships on two-tailed tests at 95% level of significance as postulated in the hypotheses. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership style and employee's job performance because the p-value of 0.000 was less than threshold of 0.05. This study is consistent with the study conducted by Wilson and Brown (2024). Their findings indicate that work autonomy and motivation significantly mediate the positive effects of transformational leadership on job performance. Transformational leaders enhance job performance by providing employees with greater autonomy and boosting their motivation. Work autonomy and motivation significantly mediate the positive impact of transformational leadership on job performance.

Autocratic leadership style revealed a positive and significant effect on employee's job performance because the p-value of 0.000 less than the threshold of 0.05. This study is in tandem with the study conducted by Ahmed and Bhatti (2024). Their findings reveal that role ambiguity acts as a mediator, intensifying the negative impact of autocratic leadership on job performance. Specifically, employees experiencing high levels of role ambiguity are more adversely affected by autocratic leadership, which hampers their job performance. These findings align with the Contingency theory which emphasizes the importance of situational variables in determining the most effective leadership style. According to Fred Fiedler's contingency model, a leader's preferred style is relatively fixed, and the effectiveness of that style depends on the favorability of the situation. Both transformational and autocratic leadership styles have a positive and significant effect on employee's job performance if used appropriately and depending on a given situation.

Conclusion

Transformational leadership significantly enhances employees' job performance by inspiring, motivating, and empowering staff to achieve organizational goals. Autocratic leadership, though often criticized, also positively influences job performance in government agencies by ensuring compliance, discipline, and task completion.

Recommendations

In line with these findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government agencies in FCT should integrate transformational practices such as mentorship and employee empowerment with the structure and decisiveness of autocratic leadership to optimize performance.
2. Regular training workshops should be organized for managers to develop adaptive leadership skills that combine vision-driven inspiration with firm decision-making for effective public service delivery.

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