

INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP APPROACHES ON WORKFORCE PERFORMANCE AT FORESTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of leadership approaches on workforce performance at the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria. A multi-staged procedure was used in selecting 160 workforces in the organization. Descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient were used in analysing the data collected. Results showed that the exhibited organizational leadership approaches were democratic (5.08), transformational (4.73), autocratic (4.41) and laissez-faire (3.87) while the workforces in the organization had a very good level of workforce performance (5.62). The organizational leadership approaches exhibited ($r = 0.34$; $p \leq 0.05$) had a positive and significant relationship with workforce performance. The study concluded that the management of the institution endeavour to stimulate the exhibition of these leadership approaches to enhance the managerial influences, workforce performance and the achieving organizational objectives success.

Keywords: democratic, transformational, autocratic, laissez-faire, workforce, performance

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the lifeblood of any organization and its importance cannot be underestimated (Rahman et al., 2019). Many authors have studied this phenomenon, but there is no conscious definition of what leadership is, no dominant paradigm for studying it, and little agreement regarding the best strategies for developing and exercising it (Renesch & FutureShapers, 2014; Martins, 2018). Wo et al., (2019) perceived leadership to be a reciprocal process of social influence, in which leaders and subordinates influence each other to achieve organizational goals. It involves using one's role and ability to influence others in some way, which delivers business results and contributes to the organization's overall success. It is a process of influencing the workforce's behaviour in achieving institutional goals and performance (Ibrahim & Daniel, 2019). Daniëls et al., (2019), maintained that leadership is the process of

influencing people and providing an environment for them to achieve team or organizational objectives. Popoola, (2019) simplified leadership as the ability to persuade others willingly to behave differently for achieving the task set for them with the help of the group. Eide et al., (2020) viewed leadership as a strategic process of offering inspiration to enhance the workforce's potential for growth and development of the leader. Gandolfi & Stone (2018) asserted that leadership is where any individual influences a group of people to achieve common goals. The contribution of these researchers to the concept of leadership points to the fact that leadership is a positive but persuasive (influential) action which generates inspiration among followers and directs effort towards accomplishing specified individual, team, and organizational objectives (Zhu et al., 2018). Leadership is indispensable; it is needed in business, political, educational, and social organizations for the attainment of goals (Leroy et al., 2018).

Leadership is a process of influencing others' commitment to realizing their full potential in achieving a value-added, shared vision, with passion and integrity (Daniëls et al., 2019). The nature of this influence is such that the members of the team cooperate voluntarily with each other to achieve the objectives which the leader has set for each member, as well as for the group. The relationships between the leader and the workforce, as well as the quality of the workforce performance, are significantly influenced by the leadership approach adopted by the leader (Vipraprastha, et al., 2018). The leadership approach in an organization is one of the factors that play a significant role in enhancing or retarding the interest and commitment of the individuals in the organization (Ezenwafor & Hafsat, 2019). Today's workplaces are more complex and sophisticated requiring erudite leadership due to global economic competitiveness as leaders are confronted with unpredictable challenges which require different degrees of leadership management (Tepe & Chekirova, 2022).

Purwanto et al., (2019) thought that the kind of leadership approaches exhibited by managers to a large extent influenced organizational valued outcomes such as low workforce turnover, reduced absenteeism, customer satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. Similarly, leadership approaches to control interpersonal relationship, rewards and punishment that shape workforce behaviours, motivation and attitude which impacts organizational performance (Lee et al., 2019). It can either lead to inspiration or disenchantment among workforces resulting in increased or decreased performance (Kimakwa et al., 2021). Furthermore, leadership approaches at the workplace can affect the workforce's self-image either positively or negatively particularly the workforce's health and energy level by creating a stimulating work climate or one filled with tension or fear (Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2020).

The broad objective of this study was to determine the influence of leadership approaches on workforce performance at the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of this study were to

1. examine the perceived types of leadership approaches exhibited in the studied organization.
2. assess the workforce's performance in the studied organization.

The following hypotheses were tested

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the leadership approaches exhibited in the organization and workforce performance.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between the workforce's perception of organizational leadership approaches exhibited in the organization and workforce performance.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out at the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria (FRIN). The Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria was established in 1973. The headquarters is situated in Ibadan, Oyo State. Its mandate is to research while the vision is to ensure true scientific research activities and manpower development, sustainable forest resources production, management utilization, biodiversity conservation, forest-based raw materials provision, food production and security through agroforestry and wildlife employment opportunities thereby alleviating poverty, and environmental conservation and management.

Cross-sectional primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire with open and closed-ended questions. A stratified sampling technique was subsequently implemented for selecting workforces based on workforce status at management, senior and junior staff levels from the list of workforces delivered from a selection of four research and training stations by simple random sampling technique (*Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria headquarters Ibadan, Federal Colleges of Forestry in Ibadan and Jos, and Federal College of Wildlife Management, New-Bussa, Niger State*) aiding as the sample frame. A set of two hundred questionnaire was administered. However, only a set of one hundred and sixty questionnaire, which was 80% of the sample size, were used in the ensuing examination.

The respondents were asked about their perception of the leadership approach used in the institute. This was measured by adopting the leadership approach on the workforce performance survey scale developed by Basit, Sebastian & Hassan, (2017). It is a 7-point scale of always (7) to never (1). Descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient were used in analysing the data collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 showed the respondents' perception of the autocratic leadership approach exhibited in the organization. The following are the dominant statement that expressed the workforce's perception of the autocratic leadership approach; that their bosses regularly monitor them to ensure that they are doing their jobs appropriately (5.10) and tell them what to do, how to do it, and when they want it done (4.65).

Table 1: Workforces' perception of the autocratic leadership approach exhibited

Perceived autocratic leadership approach	Sub-Mean
Workforces are driven by a need for safety.	4.26
Workforces require clear incentives.	3.93
My bosses regularly monitor their workforce to ensure they are doing their jobs appropriately.	5.10
My bosses tell me what to do, how to do it, and when they want it done.	4.65
My superiors like the power that comes with being a leader over their followers.	4.35
New hires are not permitted to make choices unless they are approved by my superiors.	4.27
When someone makes a mistake, my supervisors admonish him or her not to do it again and write it down.	4.47
When something goes wrong, my bosses inform their staff that a procedure isn't operating well and create a new one.	4.24
Within the group, my superiors retain final decision-making authority.	4.44
Mean	4.41

Table 2 showed the respondents' perception of the democratic leadership approach in the organization. The following are the dominant statement that articulated the workforce's perception of the democratic leadership approach: that their bosses enjoy using their authority to assist their subordinates' development (5.31) and they will practice self-direction if they are dedicated to the goals (5.14).

Table 2: Workforces' perception of the democratic leadership approach exhibited

Perceived democratic leadership approach exhibited	Sub-Mean
Workforces understand how to apply their imagination and inventiveness to solve difficulties in the workplace.	5.04
Workforces will practice self-direction if they are dedicated to the goals.	5.14
My bosses collaborate with workforces to settle disagreements in role expectations when they arise.	5.07
My bosses enjoy using their authority to assist their subordinates develop.	5.31
My bosses solicit staff thoughts and feedback on upcoming plans and projects.	5.05
My bosses strive to involve one or more workforces in deciding what to do and how to execute it. My superiors, however, retain final decision-making authority.	4.96
When anything goes wrong and my supervisors need to devise a strategy to keep a project or procedure on track, they convene a meeting to solicit feedback from their workforce.	5.01
Mean	5.08

Table 3 showed the respondents' perception of the laissez-faire leadership approach in the organization. The following are the dominant statements that enunciated the workforce's perception of the laissez-faire leadership approach: that everyone is accountable for defining his or her job (4.21) and their bosses gave information to them via e-mail, memo, or voicemail, thus, meetings are rarely called and they are required to take action based on the information. (4.20).

Table 3: Workforces' perception of laissez-faire leadership approach exhibited

Perceived autocratic leadership approach exhibited	Sub-Mean
Each person is accountable for defining his or her job.	4.21
Workforces are more knowledgeable about their jobs than their superiors, thus my bosses delegate decision-making authority to them.	3.46
Major organizational choices are approved by a majority of the workforce.	3.51
My bosses delegate responsibilities to other members of my group.	3.88
My bosses desire that choices be made by group consensus.	3.85
My bosses give information to me via e-mail, memo, or voicemail, thus, meetings are rarely called and we are then required to take action based on the information.	4.20
My bosses let staff decide what needs to be done and how to execute it.	3.99
Mean	3.87

Table 4 showed the respondents' perception of the transformational leadership

approach in the organization. The following are the dominant statements that envisage the workforce's perception of the transformational leadership approach: that their bosses make certain that poor performance is corrected (5.01) and they listen to the ideas in addition to the concerns of their superiors, not out of fear, but because of their superiors' talents, knowledge, and personality (4.93).

Table 4: Workforces' perception of the transformational leadership approach exhibited

Perceived transformational leadership approach exhibited	Sub-Mean
My bosses make certain that poor performance is corrected.	5.01
Workforces listen to the ideas and concerns of their superiors not out of fear, but because of their superiors' talents, knowledge, and personality.	4.93
My bosses assist their workforces in their personal development.	4.82
My bosses routinely provide coaching feedback to their staff so that they know how they are doing.	4.76
My bosses make certain that their personnel are recognized and rewarded when they achieve difficult or complex goals.	4.62
My bosses provide challenges for their workforces to help them grow.	4.54
My bosses go out of their way to make their workforces feel comfortable with them.	4.41
Mean	4.73

Table 5 showed the level of workforce performance in the organization. The following are the dominant statements that conveyed the level of workforce performance in the organization: that as needed, they confer with managers and co-workers to identify problems (5.74) and make good use of my time (5.71).

Table 5. Workforces' performance

Anticipated workforces performance	Sub-Mean
As needed, I confer with managers and co-workers, and I identify problems.	5.74
I demonstrate appropriate interactions with students.	5.52
I demonstrate effective leadership skills as needed.	5.60
I demonstrate initiative as needed.	5.56
I effectively collaborate with other department members as needed.	5.61
I make good use of my time.	5.71
I provide solutions to difficulties.	5.63
I set appropriate priorities for tasks.	5.50
I take appropriate action on problems when necessary.	5.67

I work without supervision when necessary.	5.68
Mean	5.62

Table 6 presented the test of the relationship between the leadership approaches exhibited and the workforce performance. The result revealed that there was a significant relationship between autocratic leadership approach ($r = 0.42$; $p \leq 0.05$), democratic leadership approach ($r = 0.27$; $p \leq 0.05$), laissez-faire leadership approach ($\beta = 0.33$; $p \leq 0.05$), transformational leadership approach ($\beta = 0.39$; $p \leq 0.05$) and workforce performance. This result implied that autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire and transformational leadership approaches were correlated predictors of workforce performance at the Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis.

Table 6: Relationship between leadership approaches exhibited and workforce performance

Variables	r	Decision
Autocratic Leadership	0.42**	Significant
Democratic Leadership	0.27**	Significant
Laissez-Faire Leadership	0.33**	Significant
Transformational Leadership	0.39**	Significant

Note = ** represents $p \leq 0.05$

Relationship between workforces' perception of organizational leadership approaches exhibited and workforce performance.

Table 7 presented the test of the relationship between the workforce's perception of organizational leadership approaches exhibited and their workforce performance. The result revealed that there is a significant relationship between the workforce's perception of organizational leadership approaches exhibited and workforce performance ($r = 0.34$; $p \leq 0.05$). This implied that the workforce's positive performance is directly proportional to the way they perceived the leadership approach exhibited in the organization. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis.

Table 7. Test of the relationship between the workforce's perception of organizational leadership approaches and workforce performance

Variable	r - value	Decision
Relationship between workforce's perception of organizational leadership approaches and workforce performance	0.34**	Significant

Note = ** represents $p \leq 0.05$

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was established that democratic and transformational leadership approaches were the leadership approach frequently exhibited in the organization. Thus, the workforce in the organization had a very good level of workforce performance. However, the organizational leadership approaches exhibited (democratic, autocratic transformational and laissez-faire) had a positive and significant relationship with workforce performance.

On this note, it is important to reference that workforces will highly be effective in performing their duties if these organizational approaches are exhibited when necessary. Therefore, the management of the institution should try to stimulate the exhibition of this leadership approaches to enhance managerial powers, workforce performance and the accomplishment of the organizational objectives.

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