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## Librarians' Leadership Styles and Attitude to Work in Delta State

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### ABSTRACT

*The paper investigated leadership styles and librarians' attitude to work in Delta State University Library, Abraka. Three research questions were formulated to aid the researcher in conducting the study with the questionnaire as the sole instrument used for data collection. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study with a population of 43 respondents (professional and para-professional library staff), while the descriptive statistical tool was used to analyze the data generated from the administered copies of the questionnaire. The findings of this study revealed that the leadership style adopted by university librarians are democratic and laissez-faire leadership style and this has a lot of influence on how dedicated, devoted and committed the library staff are to their work-related activities in the library. Thus, it was recommended that university librarians should put into considerations several issues before adopting a particular leadership style as this will either make or mar the effort(s) of the leader towards achieving the overall goal of the library which is to satisfy the information needs of its users.*

**Keywords:** Leadership style, Attitude, Librarians

### INTRODUCTION

University libraries are known as the hub of information and knowledge, it is saddled with salient responsibilities of supporting the teaching, learning and research activities of the teaching, non-teaching staff and as well as other external users of the library. The librarians in the library are the major drivers in order for the library to effectively and efficiently discharge their duties of supporting the parent institution in terms of teaching, learning and research activities of its staff and other external users. In line with this notion, Shafie, Baghersalimi and Barghi (as cited in Segun-adeniran, 2015) stated that every organization or institution are formed with established aims and objectives that are expected to be achieved and the human resources are the major drivers to the attainment of the established aims and objectives. Thus, the librarians in the library can be referred to as the oil that lubricates the engine in order for it to run smoothly. Therefore, it is crystal clear that if the library must survive then librarians must carry out their duties effectively and efficiently.

The term attitude is associated with the way a person thinks, behaves or acts. Attitude has very strong ties with the dedication to duties of a staff (employee) in his/her place of work. It therefore implies that in an organized set up, positive attitude will yield positive results and the reverse will bring about negative output. The attitude of librarians is essential in the day to day running of every library as it is a vital tool that can be used to achieve a higher profit, good reputation and overall organizational goals. The work-related activities/duties/responsibilities

that are dispensed by librarians are tasking and technical in nature, it therefore requires the professional input of librarians as a way of achieving these tasks. Some of the work-related activities/duties/responsibilities that are dispensed by librarians include: cataloguing and classification services, indexing and abstracting services, reference services, circulation services, etc. Work attitude of librarians is the bedrock that pave the way for further performance are built on and if a good foundation is laid at workers' level then there are likely to be improvement at other levels.

For the library to survive, the role of its human resources cannot be down played. Thus, the continued successful existence of the university library depends largely on its workforce. However, the leadership pattern adopted by a university librarian influences the work attitude of librarians. The satisfaction and commitment of library staff is hinged on the Leadership style of librarians and leaders which cannot be over emphasized in shaping the moral attitude and well-being of staff. Leadership, according to Levine and Crom (as cited in Fatokun, Salaam & Ajegbomogun, 2010), is all about having a listening ear to people being led, supporting, encouraging and involving the people being led in the process of decision-making and as well as problem-solving process in a given set up. Leadership is more of team building and developing the ability to make skillful and useful decision(s) among the team members. The leadership style adopted by university librarian plays an important role in achieving the overall goal of the library and also an avenue for improving on the librarians' attitude to work.

Libraries are key players in any educational set up, information storage and retrieval worldwide. The prime duty of librarians is to make available the avalanche of information resources via hard (print) or soft (non-print) copies of information bearing materials, accumulated knowledge over a long period of time. For libraries to achieve these great heights, the library needs human resources that are made up of individuals of various cadres. These individuals can be professionals (librarians) or para-professionals (library officers). Hence, they are referred to as library personnel. The leadership style exhibited by a University Librarian is important for the smooth running of the library. Unfortunately, the major obstacle associated with the attainment of the goals of libraries that are established, situated and funded by universities is poor leadership. When wrong approaches are used in handling university library programmes, it may lead to indiscipline on the part of Librarians. This may in turn affect their attitude to work and organizational commitment. Omoniyi (2006) discovered that University Librarians' leadership styles do not make room for proper followership by their subordinates. This has led to lack of co-operation between staff and the University Librarians to the extent that librarians' energy for meaningful work has been reduced drastically. Soyinka (as cited in Akor, 2009) observed that some University Librarians have awful domineering personality traits that scare most library staff members in their efforts to be more prudent in carrying out their duties. Against this background, the researcher therefore decided to investigate leadership styles and librarians' attitude to work in Delta State University Library, Abraka.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised as a guide to this study

- i. What are the types of leadership styles adopted by university librarians?

- ii. What are the work-related activities that are carried out by library staff?
- iii. What is the influence of leadership style on librarians' attitude to work?

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Leadership styles are usually a measure of the relationship that exists between the leaders (those at the management level) and the followers (those regarded as sub-ordinates). Buttressing this view, Haralombus (2001) opined that leadership style in its real sense is all about leading effectively and the leader(s) fulfilling his/her fundamental responsibilities as a leader to the sub-ordinates. Sabnett and Ross (2007) advised that leadership styles are important for effective service delivery or for discharge of duties by employees; hence, directors should adopt leadership styles that are appropriate for leading and managing their organizations. The style of leadership of a leader is therefore connected with the establishment, effective harmonization and coordination of the actions of the member of staff on a particular issue in order to achieve established goals of the organization. Limsila and Ogunlana (2007) indicated that the application of the right leadership style will guarantee employees' satisfaction and it also portends that the application of a better leadership style might lead employees to work even more effectively.

Leadership styles have different effects on the emotions of targeted followers and the most effective style a leader can use is a good mix that is customized to the situation. In line with this statement, leadership style adopted by any librarian should be guided by the beliefs, values and preferences, culture, norms, the dos and the don'ts of the organization or parent body. According to Pearce and Robinson (2005), the ability of the management team to achieve what the library is set out to achieve is library is sequel to the leadership style adopted. The most fundamental issue about leadership is how mobilize others (sub-ordinates) to want to get extra ordinary things done in organization. Leadership is about the practice adopted by leaders in transforming values into actions, visions into realities, obstacles into innovations, separateness into solidarity and risks into rewards (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Leadership provides the ample opportunity for people to turn challenging tasks into landmark success through their influence.

Effective leadership style is a major catalyst to the success in achieving every task given to staff in the library (Gharehbaghi & McManus, 2003). In the same vein, Khandwalls (1992) opined that it has been repeatedly proven over time that leadership style plays a critical role in the success or failure of an establishment and has been considered an important element affecting organizational performance. Its onus now lies on Librarians who are free to choose a leadership style that will spur librarians into putting in their best in the process/course of discharging their duties in the library. Vigoda and Cohen (2003) clearly stated that job satisfaction and leadership style are required in any working environment for fostering a friendly relationship between employees and employers. They further stated that the effect of such robust/friendly relationship between employees and employers on the overall goals and objectives of the library cannot be over emphasized.

Nevertheless, there exists different leadership styles as established by early and late theorist, however, three basic style of leadership as identified by Fatokun, Salaam, Ajegbomogun and Adedipe (2010) includes: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire.

**Autocratic** — the autocratic style of leadership is associated with authoritarian behaviour, unilateral as opposed to unanimous decision making, one-way communication of flow of order without any objection or objective opinion. The behavior of autocratic leaders is equated to that of absolute monarch with unlimited authority. The autocratic leadership style is also referred to as the authoritarian style (Adeyemi, 2011). Autocratic leadership style in a library set up will bequeath absolute power to the head librarian who will dish out orders to the sub-ordinates on the way things should be done in the library. John (2002) succinctly opined that the autocratic style of leadership in the library gives no room for the delegation of authority to sub-ordinates.

**ii) Democratic** — this form of leadership style is a direct opposite of autocratic style of leadership. The democratic style of leadership gives rooms for shared decision making, open communication among staff members and the absolute realization that conflict is inevitable and must be managed in any organization. Although, in the democratic style of leadership, the leader has the final decision to make but the inputs, opinions and wild consultation of subordinates are highly valued. Under the democratic style of leadership, the leader tries to make each individual feel that he/she is an important member of the organization by creating room for their opinions to be sought before decisions are taken. In the opinion of Mba (2004), the democratic style of leadership enhances staff morale because it is participatory in nature by carrying all staff along in the scheme of things.

**iii) Laissez-faire** — this style allows subordinates maximum authority in their job. The laissez-faire leadership style is characterized by giving room for individual decision making, freedom of exchange of information among member staff with limited or no interference from the leader in the organization. This implies that the staff members are at liberty to do whatever they feel is appropriate and those at the management level do not interfere with or participate in the course of events determined by the staff member. The laissez-faire leadership style is also known as free-reign.

However, it is worthy to note here that these leadership styles discussed above are not applicable in all situations. Their application depends on what the leader things is most suitable in any particular time and situation. There is this wild discourse that the successes of the application of each of the aforementioned leadership styles depend on how the leader applies it in any given situation, but others argued that the success depends on the personality and behaviour of the leader. However, what is of utmost important in a library set-up is that whoever is in charge of managing/coordinating the affairs of the library should choose a style of leadership (democratic, autocratic or laissez-faire) that will make library staff to be happy with their jobs and that will them participate towards the overall growth of the library in line with the library is set out to achieve.

Librarians are responsible for acquiring, organizing, managing and distributing library resources and ensuring that library provisions of the library are able to satisfy/meet the information needs of all the users. As librarians in university libraries are responsible for providing support to their parent institutions. Their work related activities may demand a degree that is relevant to a particular subject area. The role of Librarians in the library can be regarded as people-focused role that require individuals to adequately manage the information materials that are acquired in the library with the intention of satisfying the information needs of library users.

The library is set out to render information services, hence, the job related activities of library staff are centered on the various library and information services that are rendered in the library. Aina (2003) opined that the library provide unique services that should be accessible to all its users with little or no expense on the part of the users. Aina further asserted that the library and information services provided by librarians differs from one library to another depending on the type of library, size of the library, objectives, location, etc. of the library. The services that are rendered in a typical university library include but not limited to (anonymous, 2018; Aina, 2016): identifying information resources, selecting from numerous information resources, acquiring, organizing (cataloguing and classifying library resources), answering readers' enquiries, lending services, using computers and other technologies in dispensing information related services, current awareness services, effective use and harmonization of staff members (that is, hiring of new staff member(s), on the job training of new and stale staff members and/or effective supervisory roles), working/liaising/collaborating with Departmental academic staff, sister organizations (that is, others information proving agencies, institutions, libraries, etc.) and suppliers in ensuring that the provisions of the library in terms of services, operations, activities, information resources, etc. meet the needs of particular a group of users (for instance, teaching and non-teaching staff of the institution, undergraduates, graduate/postgraduate students, researchers, etc.), managing budgets and resources, assisting individuals who are carrying out one form of research or the other and learning, developing IT facilities, providing the required assistance to readers in order to use independently use computers and other modern ICT gadgets in the library, assisting users in searching online and manually for literature or information resources (print and online resources), etc., promoting/marketing the library's information resources and services to the users, information literacy programme, etc.

Leadership style is focused on the creation of the enabling environment, organizing/coordinating and deciding on the course of actions of staff members or members of a group in a specific situation towards ensuring that the objectives of the group are achieved (Adegbesan, 2013). Leadership style is all about the possession of the ability/competence/skill that will propel others (group of people) to get work done and simultaneously winning the confidence, loyalty, trust, respect and voluntarily winning the cooperation of the group members. It is a situation whereby some individual influences a group of individuals to achieve common goals (Northouse, 2007). Through leadership, teams are built and right decisions that ultimately affect the growth of the library are made. So, decisions of the head (leader) of any organization spread through every facet of that organization, hence, the importance of the leadership style adopted by an individual as this will either enhance or inhibit the progress of the organization (Chukwuma & Idris, 2009). The creation and corresponding advancement/application of technologies in all humans' activities/operations, globalization and its corresponding expectations from workers have made leadership to assume greater importance in today's organizations including the library. These forces require dynamic and efficient leadership, anchored on strong ability to not only combine resources in the most efficient ways, but to build a formidable work force that will work with enthusiasms for the achievement of goals. Different organizations including the library vary in their styles of leadership.

The leadership style adopted by a leader (for instance, chief librarian or library head) gives the organization (library) its vision and ability to translate that vision into reality (Eneh, 2008). Leadership involves inducement, persuasion and motivation of subordinates to enable them contribute willingly to the organizational goals based on the employee's maximum capabilities (Nwachukwu, 2000). However, there is no known universally accepted style of leadership rather an appropriate style depends on situations and circumstances. The influence of any style of leadership on the work force, especially on the sub-ordinate librarians will come to bear if the library leadership will achieve set goals. This is because followers are influenced when leadership and followership are properly linked (Vecchio, 2007). In this respect, librarians' attitude to work comes to bear in order to properly link leadership with followership in tertiary institution libraries.

## METHODOLOGY

The study is quantitative in nature; hence, the descriptive survey research design was employed by the researcher in order to objectively describe the current phenomenon of the leadership styles and librarians' attitude to work in delta state university library, Abraka. The population for this study is 43 respondents, consisting of 13 professional and 30 para-professional staff from Delta State University Library, Abraka. The sample size used for the study is 43 respondents which is the entire population. Due to the small and manageable size of the population, the researcher decided to use the entire population as the sample size for the study. This is in concordance with the assertion made by renowned scholars such as Baxter and Babbie (2004); Egbule and Okobia (2001) that when the population is small and manageable, the entire population can be used for the study. The sampling technique used for this study is the total enumeration sampling technique.

The researcher employed a self-structured 24-item questionnaire for the study which was rated on a 2 point Likert type scale of agreed and disagreed for research question 1 and 2, while 4 Likert type scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree were used for research question 3. The data generated from the returned copies of the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistical tool such as the simple percentage and frequency counts for the bio-date of the respondents, research question 1 and 2, while mean was used to answer research question 3. These were carried out using SPSS version 22.

## RESULTS

**Research Question One:** What are the types of leadership styles adopted by university librarians?

**Table 3: Types of Leadership Style Adopted by University Librarians**

S/N	Leadership Style	Agree		Disagree		Remark
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
1	Autocratic	8	27	22	73	Disagreed
2	Democratic	23	77	7	23	Agreed
3	Laissez-Fare	17	57	13	43	Agreed

Table 3 reveals that the leadership styles adopted by university librarians are democratic (23, 77%) and laissez-faire (17, 57%) leadership style. The opinion of the respondents reveal that not all leadership styles are favourable to the well-being of the library or in helping the university library and librarians in fulfilling its primary goal which is to support the teaching, learning and research activities of its users by meeting their information needs. This implies that different leadership styles adopted for the administration of the day to day activities or operations of the library have different effects on the staff and users of the library and the style of leadership adopted will either mar or enable the library to achieve its objectives. Therefore, librarians who are at the helm of affairs in the library should consult widely on the different types of leadership styles that exist and the one suitable for their own library, which should be guided by the beliefs, values and preferences, culture, norms, the dos and the don'ts of the university library in line with that of its parent body.

The finding from this study is in line with assertion made by Sabnett and Ross (2007) that leadership styles are important for effective service delivery or for discharge of duties by employees; hence, directors should adopt leadership styles that are appropriate for leading and managing their organizations. Sabnett and Ross went further to buttress that the style of leadership of a leader is therefore concerned with the initiation, organization and direction of the actions of the members of a group in a particular issue in order to achieve established goals of the organization. The finding from this study is also in concordance with the thought of Limsila and Ogunlana (2007) which indicated that an appropriate leadership style leads to employees' satisfaction and it is a good indicator to prove that a better style might lead employees to work effectively.

**Research Question Two:** What are the work-related activities that are carried out by library staff?

**Table 4:** Work-related Activities that are carried out by Librarians

S/N	Work Related Activities	Agree		Disagree		Remark
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
1	Collection Development	23	72	7	23	<b>Agreed</b>
2	Cataloguing/classification	17	54	13	43	<b>Agreed</b>
3	Answering readers' enquiries	21	70	9	30	<b>Agreed</b>
4	Inter-library loan activities	16	53	14	47	<b>Agreed</b>
5	Staff management	25	83	5	17	<b>Agreed</b>
6	Users' education programmes	18	60	12	40	<b>Agreed</b>
7	Marketing/promotion of library services/resources	19	63	11	37	<b>Agreed</b>
8	Self-reading	20	67	10	33	<b>Agreed</b>
9	Weeding/bindery services	23	77	7	23	<b>Agreed</b>
10	Circulation services	17	57	13	43	<b>Agreed</b>
11	Computer assisted services	19	63	11	37	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 4 reveals information on the work-related activities that are carried out by librarians, it was revealed that librarians carry out several work-related activities in the library which include: collection development (23, 72%), cataloguing and classification of library resources (17, 54%), answering readers' enquiries (21, 70%), inter-library loan activities (16, 53%), staff management (25, 83%), user's education programme (18, 60%), marketing/promotion of library services/resources (19, 63%), self-reading (20, 67%), weeding/bindery services (23, 77%), circulation services (17, 57%), and computer assisted services (19, 63). The responses from the respondents reveal that the university library is a service oriented establishment that is set out to support its parent institution in achieving its goals by satisfying the information needs of its users. This implies that the various job related activities that are carried out by library staff are not an end itself by a means to an end. That is, these job related activities are being carried out has a means of meeting the ever changing information needs of the library users.

The finding from the study corroborates that of anonymous (2018) and Aina (2016) that librarianship is a people-focused role, requiring individuals to manage learning resources while keeping the library users' needs in mind. Hence, the job related activities of librarians are tied to the services they render in the library which could be categorized as technical and readers' services.

**Research Question Three:** What is the influence of leadership style on librarians' attitude to work?

**Table 5:** Influence of Leadership Style on Librarians' Attitude to Work

S/N	Attitude to Work	Mean
1	I do not feel motivated to carry out collection development activities in the library	2.83
2	I think I will do better if my superior creates the rightful atmosphere for cataloguing and classification	3.23
3	I think with collaborative efforts, I will not have difficulty with answering users' queries	3.10
4	I think I will do better in computer assisted services if my superiors work closely with me	2.73
5	I think I will do better if proper staff welfare packages are put in place by mgt.	3.00
6	I feel relief in carrying out inter library loan activities when the necessary modalities are put in place	3.20
7	I will put in my best in users' education programmes if the enabling platform is provided	3.13
8	I feel motivated in carrying out promotional library services when I am being appreciated for a job well done	2.57
9	I think I will do better in rendering circulation services under result-oriented leadership	3.00
10	I think I will put in my best in self-reading under a friendly leader	3.20
<b>Aggregate Mean</b>		<b>2.99</b>
<b>Criterion Mean</b>		<b>2.50</b>



Table 5 shows that the aggregate mean of 2.99 is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50 which implies that leadership styles of university librarians have a great influence on librarians' attitude to work. The responses from the respondents revealed that attitude has a very strong tie with the output of an employee in his/her place of work. Thus, the type of leadership style adopted by the head of the library in piloting the day to day activities or operations of the library will directly reflect on how dedicated or committed librarians will be in discharging their duties. The finding further strengthened the opinion of Vigoda and Cohen (2003) that job satisfaction and leadership style are required in any working environment for fostering a friendly relationship between employees and employers. They further stated that the effect of such robust/friendly relationship between employees and employers on the overall goals and objectives of the library cannot be over emphasized. The finding is also in agreement with that of Northouse (2007) which stated that the ability to get work done among a group of individuals, while at the same time, winning the confidence, loyalty, respect and willing cooperation of the entire group is tied to the leadership style of the leader.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the aforementioned findings in this study, the researcher has come to a conclusion that the leadership styles that are adopted by university librarians are democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles and this has a lot of influence on how dedicated, devoted and committed the library staff are to their work-related activities in the library.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus, it was recommended that university librarians should put into considerations several issues before adopting a particular leadership style as this will either make or mar the effort(s) of the leader towards result oriented library staff that will assist in the achievement of the overall goal of the library.

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