



LEADERSHIP STYLES AND STAFF PERFORMANCE IN SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract:

This study examined leadership styles and staff performance in sports organizations. Five hundred and thirty two management staff were purposively selected from five states Sports Councils. The “*Management Staff Response Questionnaire*” (MSRQ) was administered to measure the level of performance of staff of the councils, identify the leadership styles in operation and the extent to which leadership styles enhanced performance of the staff of the councils. The leadership styles most often used by leaders of the councils were autocratic, democratic and pseudo-democratic. The finding also revealed that, there was a high level of job performance of Sports Councils’ staff of South-eastern Nigeria and that leadership styles significantly influenced the job performance of staff. The study concluded that among the several organizational factors which could enhance job performance of Sports Council workers, the style employed by the leader of the Sports Council most of the time play a significant role.

Keywords: administration, employee, sports council, autocratic, democratic

1. Introduction

Productive system or organization such as Sports Councils must have leadership and direction [3]. Leadership is therefore accepted as a driving force for any successful organization and as a key to the success of programmes and investment, in the public and private sectors. The present-day yearning of Nigerians is that of finding leaders, who will give purposeful direction to administration. The need for quality

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administrative leadership requires urgent attention as the functions of governments and organizations keep increasing, [8].

Reference [17] reported that political leaders changed sports administration in Tanzania by assigning high priority to sports, thus making the enterprise to be treated as part of the nation's culture, occupying the same status with other national development projects. This decision of the Tanzanian government was influenced by the fame won by Kenyan athletes in track and field at the Mexico Olympic Games, and it is on this basis [15] suggested that sports should be incorporated into Nigeria's national policy to serve as a means for mobilizing the citizenry to adopt a national political will.

There is a prevalence of leadership challenges in the administration of sports in Nigeria, both at the states and at the national levels. The failure of Nigerian athletes to perform to expectation at local and international competitions, have been attributed to poor leadership and administration. Reference [4] lamented that the administration of sports in Nigeria (particularly football), have been plagued by bad administration and incompetent leadership. This and other factors like finance, facilities, and government policies could influence success in organizing sports. Although these other factors are not always listed among the reasons for failure in the practice of sports in Nigeria.

The reason could be attributed to the believe that organizational resources are better mobilized and motivated through good leadership, which in turn, depends on the leadership styles in operation at any given time [10]. Reference [7] described leadership style as the way one presents himself or herself to others. Reference [12] described leadership style as the manifestation of the dominant pattern of an executive for the purpose of carrying out assignments. Reference [11] and [20] submitted that leadership style is of great importance in administration as it influences the acceptance (or rejection) of the leader or manager by the subordinates.

The type of leadership behaviour or style exhibited by a leader (Director of Sports) will have a significant effect on staff work performance as well as their psychological or emotional well-being. This concept encompasses many dimensions of leaders' leadership behaviour or style, the processes used in making decisions, the type and frequency of feedback they give in response to staff and athletes' performance, the techniques used to motivate individual staff or athletes, and the type of relationship they establish with them.

Leadership styles and its impact on job performance of workers have been the focus of some studies in many parts of the world. For instance, [13] in their study on 'the role of ethical behaviours in relation to leadership style and job performance' found out that the style of leadership adopted by a leader would influence the staff to achieve the set goals of the organization, or alternatively, it could be retrogressive.

Reference [22] said that people who work under autocratic leaders tend to become aggressive with each other, they work when the leader is present and are generally submissive to the leader. Workers under a democratic leader are more consistent in their approach to work and continue to work when left alone. Analysing which one leadership style is most appropriate to improve the performance of the employees in an organization, Reference [16] concluded that participative style has a greater positive effect on employee performance, the autocratic style leaders make employee to feel inferior in doing jobs and in democratic style employees to some extent are empowered to do their work so their performance is better than workers in autocratic style. The Laissez-faire though generally believed to be a style can be useful in certain situations. Reference [6] believed that when the leadership has established confidence in the capacity of the employees who are professionals and are already highly motivated to produce, it is often best to sit back and let them get on with their assigned tasks without interference. Few research works have been conducted in Nigeria with the view of analyzing the relationship between leadership styles and job performance of employees of sports organizations. The research therefore investigated the effect of leadership styles of some selected sports councils managers/directors on workers' job performance.

2. Methodology

2.1 Subjects

For the purpose of this study, five Sports Councils from the Southeastern part of Nigeria were purposively selected. The study adopted the descriptive survey method. Subjects for this study consisted of all managerial staff of Abia State, Anambra State, Ebonyi State, Enugu State and Imo State Sports Councils. Five hundred and thirty-two (532) respondents participated in the study.

2.2 Research Instrumentation and Procedure

Data were collected through structured questionnaire. The questionnaire tagged the "*Management Staff Response Questionnaire*" (MSRQ) was used to measure the progress of activities in the councils as a result of the styles employed by the directors.

2.3 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Both the face and content validity of the questionnaire was determined by two experts who assisted in making necessary corrections on the questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to a pilot study carried out on 30 purposively selected officials of Bayelsa State Sports Council. The council was not part of those used for the main study. It was

administered twice for the purpose of testing for vagueness and clarity of items in the questionnaire, using the test-retest design with 2 - weeks between tests. In the test, the internal consistency and then the Cronbach values of the two tests were compared and computed. The Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Co-efficient (PPMCC) was used to determine the Reliability Coefficient (r) of the instrument. A reliability co-efficient of 0.87 was obtained. According to [9], such result was adequate for the internal consistency of questionnaires.

2.4 Data Analysis

Frequency counts, percentages, means and Chi-square tests were used in analysing the data collected from the respondents through the questionnaire from the various sports units, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS/PC). The level of statistical significance for each analysis was set at $p < 0.05$.

3. Results

The following major findings were observed on the stated objectives:

3.1 Leadership Styles Employed by Directors of Sports

Table 1: Leadership Styles Employed by Leaders of Sport Organizations

S/N	Leadership Styles Employed by Directors of Sports		Yes	No	Total	Weighted Average	%	RSI	Rank
			2	1					
1	Autocratic	F	405	681	1086	1.373	100.00	0.687	1
		%	37.29	62.71					
		Fx	810	681	1491				
2	Pseudo-democratic	F	150	936	1086	1.138	100.00	0.569	4
		%	13.81	86.19					
		Fx	300	936	1236				
3	Laissez-faire	F	150	936	1086	1.138	100.00	0.569	4
		%	13.81	86.19					
		Fx	300	936	1236				
4	Transactional	F	305	781	1086	1.281	100.00	0.641	3
		%	28.08	71.92					
		Fx	610	781	1391				
5	Democratic	F	381	705	1086	1.351	100.00	0.676	2
		%	35.08	64.92					
		Fx	762	705	1467				
6	Emergency style	F	98	988	1086	1.090		0.545	

		%	9.02	90.98			100.00		6
		Fx	196	988	1184				
7	Preventive	F	145	941	1086	1.134		0.567	5
		%	13.35	86.65			100.00		
		Fx	290	941	1231				

KEY:

S/N - Means Serial Number;

RSI - Relative Significance Index

Table 1, shows that the leadership styles most often employed by Directors of Sports, were autocratic style, 37.29%, democratic style, 35.08% and transactional style, 28.08%. They were ranked in descending order, with 1 being most often and 6 the least. Thus, in order of statistical significance, using the relative significance index analysis, the autocratic (RSI= 0.6865) and democratic (RSI= 0.6755) leadership styles were ranked as 1 and 2 respectively. These were followed by transactional (RSI=0.6405), pseudo-democratic (RSI=0.569), laissez-faire (RSI=0.569) and preventive (RSI=0.567) with statistical significance of 3, 4 and 5 respectively. The least popular was the emergency leadership style (RSI=0.545).

3.2 Level of performance of Sports Council staff

Table 2: States' Level of Staff Performance

Level of Job Performance	Percentage Score of Respondents by States Sports Councils									
	Abia		Anambra		Ebonyi		Enugu		Imo	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Low	3	3.6	5	6.8	19	21.6	14	17.7	13	16.4
Average	18	21.4	16	21.6	22	25	13	16.5	37	27.0
High	63	75	53	71.6	47	53.4	52	65.8	87	63.7
Total	84	100	74	100	88	100	79	100	137	100

Based on the respondents' assessment on the level of job performance of each state sports council (Table 2), it appeared that all the five states were generally considered to perform high using percentage scores; Abia (75.8%) Anambra (71.6%) Ebonyi (53.4%) Enugu (65.8%) and Imo (63.5%) respectively.

The data in Table 2 above showed that 462 from the total of 532 respondents responded to the question showing the level of job performance of workers. Few of the

respondents appeared to be indifferent since they failed to identify with any of the options.

3.3 Extent of Influence of Leadership Style

Table 3: Extent of Influence of Leadership Style on the Level of Performance of Staff in Discharging their Responsibilities

Leadership styles	Level of Job Performance			χ^2	P
	Low level of Job Performance Count	Average level of Job Performance Count	High level of Job Performance Count		
Autocratic	38	69	217	17.137	0.071
Pseudo-democratic	22	31	63		
Laissez-faire	5	13	19		
Transactional	5	15	24		
Democratic	11	9	38		
Emergency style	0	0	0		
Preventive	4	2	13		
Total	85	139	374		

As regards the influence of leadership styles on the different levels of performance of staff in discharging their responsibilities the calculated Chi-Square value of the scores was 17.137 while the 'p' value of 0.071 was greater than 0.05 ($\chi^2 (598) = 1030.472, p > 0.05$). Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, this implies that there was significant influence. It therefore means that the leadership styles significantly influenced the level of job performance of sports councils' staff, although there was no statistical analysis to ascertain which of the styles made the significant influence.

4. Discussion

The data presented revealed that the leadership styles most often employed by the leaders of the Sports Councils were autocratic, democratic and transactional styles. What is the right leadership style for a manager, administrator or director appears a difficult question to answer. This is so because what may appear to be an effective leadership style for a manager in an organization may not be equally appropriate to others in different organizations [8]. This implies that no two leaders administer and lead their organizations in the same way [14]. As established by [2] the various styles of leadership have advantages and disadvantages. Reference [21] argued that workers'

performance depends on leadership style that is operational within an organizational setting; hence no leader uses any of the styles exclusively.

Also based on the data of this study, it was observed that staff performance of all the sports councils was relatively high. There are other forces beside leadership styles within the organization that are capable of enhancing job performance. Reference [1] stated that coordinating, integrating efforts and harmonising the forces to raise standards of performance in sports is vital. Besides, a good work environment that would require acceptable working conditions are essential for staff job performance [5], [18].

The study further revealed that the leadership styles employed by the Director of Sports had significant influence on job performance of workers. Although it was not statistically ascertained which of the styles had the influence, the fact remains that leadership styles play significant role in determining the level of employee job performance [21]. However, [16], [19] found out that leader's style alone cannot be responsible for the performance of workers. The workers too play important role in that workers perception of their leader's style and their feelings about their ability to perform appear to influence performance.

It was found out in the study that autocratic style was one of the styles most often used by the directors of Sports under study. The use of autocratic style does not receive high approval of many contemporary researchers as excessive use of authority may distort productivity in the long term. This is because workers get bored, dissatisfied and demotivated. Reference [16] in their conclusion favoured participative style of leadership because it has greater positive effect on employee performance; employees have confidence in doing their job when they are adequately empowered.

It can be concluded that the level of performance of staff of all the sports councils studied was high possibly as a result of the leadership styles used by the directors. This implies that the achievement of sports councils' workers in lifting the standard of sports in Nigeria is possible if appropriate styles of leadership were applied and combining it with the provision of suitable environment and resources.

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:

- The directors of sports in the different sports council should begin to experiment the participative style which experts recommend for leaders of contemporary industries.
- Other State Sports Councils outside the ones studied could also adopt some of the styles used in order to raise the standard sports in Nigeria.

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