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## Leadership Styles: Is Organizational Management One Size Fits All? A Discuss

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### **Abstract**

*Leadership plays an important role in determining the success or the failure of an organization. A leader influences on followers either positively or negatively making the role of a leader very crucial in any organization. But, is there a particular leadership style that is suitable for all situations? There are different types of leaders and leadership styles and in observing the different leadership styles, we can conclude that there is no single right way to lead that is suitable for all situations. No leadership style is completely irrelevant, and it is believed that leadership styles affect the performance of the employees as well as the productivity of the organization, therefore, it is important for leaders to apply the right leadership style to the right situation in order for an organization to be productive. The purpose of this paper is to examine the various leadership styles and how each leadership style can enhance organizational productivity if applied to the right situation. This study adopts discourse content analysis, using secondary information of available literatures on leadership styles to draw up a conclusion on the effect of leadership styles on organizational productivity.*

**Keyword:** Leadership Styles, Organizational Productivity, Employee Performance, Transactional Leadership Style, Transformational Leadership Style, Autocratic Leadership Style, Democratic Leadership Style and Laissez-faire Leadership

### **1. Introduction**

A major role of a leader in an organization is to lead the employees to achieve organizational goals. A leader is an individual who has the capacity to influence the behavior of others and also holds a central position in leadership situations (Genty, 2014). Leadership plays a significant role in an organization by developing a mission, vision and establishing ideas, designing strategies, developing policies and methods so as to achieve the organizational objectives efficiently as well as directing and coordinating efforts and activities of the organization (Xu and Wang, 2008, cited by Ebrahim, 2018). According to Burian, Francis, Burian and Pieffer (2014), 'Leadership is the blending of vision, and contribution to society, turning ideas into reality through others that share the same vision.' An organization needs well competent, capable and skilled workforce in order to achieve the organizations' strategic goals and employees do have the ability to increase or decrease the productivity and profitability of an organization and so in order to achieve their goals leadership style is believed to be a factor that can influence employee's efficiency at work (Muhammad, Qin, Amir and Aruba, 2017).

A good leader is able to make a success out of a poor business plan while a poor leader can make a failure of a good business plan, as leadership ability brings valuable asset to an organization which can improve an organization's growth and revenue generation which will result out of the organization spending so much on the subject of leadership training and development (Kemal, 2015). However, good leadership is essential for an organization to attain its mission, goals and objectives as well as manage the changes happening in the external environment. It is believed that a lot of organizations are faced with problems related to unethical practices, high labor turn-over, poor performances amongst others, which may be as a result of poor leadership style (Ebrahim, 2018).

'Leadership brings in a required change to influence learning and development of required skills, performance and creates a platform for individual growth in an organization' (Sunil, 2018). This results into a need for effective leaders that are able to recognize the difficulties of the fast-changing global environment and equally know what to do. If a task is well structured and there is a good relationship between the leader and the employees, both the employees will be effective and the organization will be productive (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014). There are various factors

influencing the success or otherwise of an organization, however, the quality of leadership available to an organization is the most critical determinant of the success or failure of an organization (Kalu and Okpokwasili, 2018). Many companies aim to achieve their stated objectives, making having an effective leader necessary to motivate as well as coordinate the employees, even though some organizations still do not take into account the leadership styles implemented by their managers (Ebrahim, 2018). There is no one way to leadership and leadership style is not a one size fits all. Leaders need to adopt a style that fits a particular situation or an exact group, which makes gaining an understanding of other leadership styles necessary so as to be able to apply the right leadership style to the right situation (Mindtool.com, 2013).

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Concept of Leadership

Leadership as a study can be traced back to philosophers such as Plato, Socrates and Aristotle (Kumar, 2018). About 2500 years ago, Socrates claimed that leadership is situational. He pointed out that a leader has different qualities and that the most important quality is the professional or technical knowledge that are precise to a situation which is impossible to be transferred and he also argued that an efficient business leader would also make a good military commander and possess some basic leadership skills such as the ability to select the right people to work with and the ability to recognize and work with the right associates (Muhammad, Irfanulla, Qamar, Hafiz, Hamid, Abdul and Muhammad, 2015). According to Manoj and Shilpa (2013), 'Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent.' It is the ability of a superior to impact the behavior of their juniors and encourage them to pursue a certain goal and objective (Linge, Shikalieh and Asiime, 2016). Leadership involves leading, directing, controlling and monitoring the activities of people who are willing to be led by a person (Genty, 2014). Leadership is influenced by situations, culture, context, working environment, Philosophy, laws and organizational intricacies (Khan, Nawaz and Khan, 2016), which makes it impossible to apply a particular leadership style to different situations. Leadership and management should not be separated from each other, although they are not the same, they are linked to each other and complement each other and should not be separated from each other in order for an organization to achieve its goals (Manoj and Shilpa, 2013). Leaders motivate their followers, while managers inspire their staff and inspired individuals are self-motivated who like what they do which leads to good results and high productivity in the achievement of their task (Bhargavi and Yaseen, 2016).

However, there are individuals who hold managerial positions but do not possess leadership abilities whereas there are individuals who are informal leaders, who inspire and influence others but do not occupy managerial positions; hence they are leaders and not managers (Genty, 2014) but it is important for individuals occupying managerial roles to possess leadership abilities as the goal of leadership is to influence individuals to work towards achieving the group and organizational goal (Genty, 2014). Leadership is the behavior of a leader and their ability to direct and guide the actions of the employees towards achieving the organizational goals which depends on the leader's capacity to successfully organize and utilize the human and material resources accessible to him and this depends on the leader's leadership style (Philip, 2014).

### 2.2. Leadership Style

Leadership style can be said to be a type of technique or method that a leader adopts in a particular situation which allows for the leader to achieve organizational goals or objectives (Genty, 2014). The first study of leadership style is drawn from the work of Kurt Lewin (1939) who led a group of researchers and resulted into different leadership styles (Bhargavi and Yaseen, 2016). The dominance of leadership styles has been a topic of interest to many researchers while the transformational and transactional leadership are believed to be the most prominent and most extensively researched style of leadership (Diaz-Saenz, 2011). Leadership style involves providing directions, implementing plans and motivating people (Ojokuku, Odetayo and Sajuyigbe, 2012). According to Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy (2014), leadership styles, organizational commitment and work satisfaction are interrelated which he concludes that leadership styles can affect the quality of work life. Leadership style can influence employees either positively or negatively, positive in terms of reward and negative in terms of punishment, and also affects the attitude of the employee as well as their motivation which, in turn, impacts organizational performance (Sunil, 2018).

A leader does not necessarily have to exhibit a particular leadership style. People are different in terms of behavior and what motivates them and what motivates a particular person might not motivate another person, as a result, different people require different leadership styles and a leader should be able to understand the human nature, such as people's needs, their emotions and what motivates them (Manoj, 2013). However, the significance of any leadership style rests on the context in which it is applied and the style, that fits a particular situation, and the way a leader uses power, will indicate the leader's leadership style (Genty, 2014).

### 2.3. Discuss on Types of Leadership Styles

#### 2.3.1. Transformational Leadership Style

Transformational leadership is believed to be established by Burns (1978) and extended by Bass (1985) who described transformational leaders as change agents who transform their followers' beliefs, attitudes and motivation (Cavazotte, Moreno and Bernardo, 2013). Transformational leadership style is a style aimed to influence people towards realizing the organizations' goals by modifying the needs, values and beliefs of the followers (Hamed, Mohd and Wan, 2014). Leadership focuses on the needs of the subordinates as well as their development and leaders, who exhibit

transformational leadership style, emphasizes on the growth of the employees, their level of motivation and standards and the growth of their skills (Ismail et al, 2009, cited by Ojokuku, Odetayo and Sajuyigbe, 2012). A transformational leader motivates and transforms others to achieve positive outcomes; they change their followers' awareness of the way they handle problems by helping them view pending problems in a new light and also encourage their subordinates to put in more effort to attain group or organizational objectives (Odumeru and Ifeanyi, 2013). It is a leadership style in which the leader builds a connection with their followers by becoming an exemplary leader to them and to also influence and inspire the followers to work harder to achieve the set targets of the organization through collaboration and cooperation with other members of the team and also to follow change and development and ensure that the organization strives for success at all times (Yeliz, Ozge and Fatma, 2018).

According to Bass *et al* (2003), Avolio, Bass and Jung (1999) and Antonakis (2001) acknowledged four mechanisms of transformational leadership which are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and idealized consideration. It is believed that the transformational leader exhibits each of the components so as to bring out the desired organizational outcomes through their followers (Wang, Yang-Shui and Tung-Chun, 2009). The idealized influence involves leadership admiration, respect and trust, inspirational motivation involves the leaders providing meaning and challenges to the work of their followers, thereby motivating them, intellectual stimulation centers on the leaders urging their followers to be creative and innovative while individualized consideration, the leaders pay attention to their followers' need for growth and serve as mentors or coach to them (Bass et al, 2003). Research often groups the idealized influence and inspirational motivation together as charisma (Bass and Riggio, 2006 cited by McCleskey, 2014). A charismatic leader attracts feeling of love and sometimes hatred from their followers; they are enthusiastic about assignments, they inspire loyalty, command respect and are able to see what is really important and what is not which makes their followers want to be associated with them and want to identify with them (Bass, 1985)

Transformational leadership has the potential to inspire the followers to do their best for their organization, to develop their skills so as to advance intellectually and also motivates their followers to achieve their best (Alqatawenh, 2018). They provide constructive feedbacks to their subordinates and they encourage them to reason productively about the issues they are faced with which will be beneficial to the subordinates and achieve a higher level of formal performance (Cavazotte, Moreno and Bernardo, 2013). Transformational leaders believe in improving their organization by improving their followers. Employees need to develop their skills and their ability and in doing so impact the organization in which they work. Transformational leadership is believed to set a clear vision for the organization in which it is practiced (Alaqatawenh, 2018). The leaders and the followers support each other to advance to a higher level of self-confidence and enthusiasm, working towards the benefit of the team, organization or community and empower their followers to accept more troublesome tasks (Hamed, Mohd, and Wan, 2014). It is believed that the transformational leadership style is one of the most implemented leadership styles which defines clear goals, exhibits integrity and encourages clear steps to communication and focus on making change happen in oneself, others, groups and the organization (Kaleem, Asad and Khan, 2016).

Top management plays important roles in an organization and organizations are interested in increasing the effectiveness of their organization; a suitable type of leadership is required to enable effectiveness of the employees in the organization as well as the effectiveness of the organization itself and transformational leaders motivate their followers to strive for supreme objectives rather than focus on financial benefits (Hammed, Mohd and Wan, 2014). Employees are encouraged to look beyond their need and their self-interest. Top management carries the organization in a diplomatic manner by making sure that the employees feel to be a part of the organization which encourages the employees to support a leadership style in which their suggestion and their decisions are viewed as important which motivates the employees and results into a positive outcome (Hammad, 2015). According to Bass (1985), General Omar Bradley pointed out that the best way to develop the leadership in an individual is to give them the task that involves responsibilities and letting them work it out themselves and when employees' views are taken into account, they get motivated and motivated employees give in their best to their organizations in and ensure that their performance is effective and also that the organization is productive.

According to Hamed, Mohd and Wan (2014), 'Research has demonstrated that transformational leadership is related to organizational effectiveness' and transformational leaders play important roles in generating innovative ideas as well as in implementing them and it is also a critical factor in affecting innovation hence making an organization more effective in terms of achieving their goals. The positive effect of transformational leadership may have been established; however, little is known on how its effectiveness and emergence is influenced by circumstances (Tafvelin, 2013).

### 2.3.2. Transactional Leadership Style

Transactional leadership was introduced by Max Weber in his study on socio-economic consideration of the organization. He defined a transactional leader as 'a leader who earns leadership through normative rules and regulations, strict discipline and systematic control' (Ohunakin, Adeniji and Akintayo, 2016). A transactional leader views the connection between the leaders and their followers as a procedure of exchange in which the leaders motivate their workers by rewarding them with status, positions and money in exchange for a successful performance without having much interest in the characteristics of their worker or how innovative they are but apply present management practices effectively and in line with the rules of the organization (Yeliz, Ozge and Fatma, 2018). It is a form of transaction between the employees and the employers where the employers pay the employees for their effort and they can also punish them if their work does not meet up to the organization's set standards.

Transactional leaders recognize the needs and want of their subordinates and realize that necessary efforts must be made to satisfy the subordinates' needs (Bass, 1985). According to Bass, Avolio, Jung and Berson (2003), 'Exhibiting

transactional leadership meant that followers agreed with, accepted, or complied with the leader in exchange for praise, rewards, and resources or the avoidance of disciplinary action. Rewards and recognition were provided contingent on followers successfully carrying out their roles and assignments.' Unlike transformational leadership, the commitment of the followers of the transactional leaders is associated with the rewards, agreement and expectations which has been negotiated with the leader rather than been motivated by the charisma of the leader or as a result of fear or respect for the classical leader but the transactional leaders motivate their followers using contingent rewards depending on their performance (Mahdinezhad, Suandi, Silon and Omar, 2013), as well as use corrective actions and rule of enforcement to get the followers' cooperation (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014). They give their followers incentives in return for following them which can be in form of promotion, a raise, a good performance appraisal report, more responsibilities or a desired change in duties and they focus on making deals that motivate their employees which can prove to be beneficial to the organization (Kabeyi, 2018). The reward of the employee is connected to the performance of the employees and how effective the employee is to the organization (Chaudhry and Javed, 2012).

They are attentive to their subordinates' work in order to find faults or deviations and they could focus on errors, avoid responses and delay decisions, which can be referred to as 'management-by-exception' which can be said to be passive or active depending on the timing of the leaders' involvement, where the passive, the leader is never around, waits for a problem to happen before taking any action or does not take any action at all and avoids taking decisions and the active situations, where the leader constantly monitors the activities of the followers, steps in to correct mistakes immediately, prevent the employees from deviating from the objectives of the organization and proffer solutions to areas that are problematic (Zakeer, Allah and Irfanullah, 2016). Contingent reward can be described as praise for a work well done recommendation and also can be in form of praises for their effort or public appreciation and admirations for outstanding service (Bass, 1985). The behavior of the transactional leader is both corrective and constructive, they reward exceptional contributions and compliance and they punish followers who do not comply with the set standards (Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa and Nwankwere, 2011). The transactional leadership style uses power in their relationship with their followers and takes corrective actions when the need arises (Sunil, 2018). However, from various studies, transactional leadership can only be practiced in organizations where the leader has the authority to reward as well as to discipline which, according to Yelizet *et al* (2018), is lacking in most public sector organizations.

### 2.3.3. Autocratic Leadership Style

Autocratic leadership style is a style where the leader makes most decisions and does not involve or consult the followers, nor do they allow them make any contribution but are expected to follow instructions without given them any explanations (Muhammad *et al*, 2015). Autocratic leaders are always at the center of all the activities in the organization, they determine the action to be taken and all authority comes from them and ends with them, they take decisions all alone, they believe they are superior to others and that their ideas are better than the ideas of their subordinates and so do not see a need to involve them in the decision making (Kaleem, 2016). Autocratic leadership is coercive in nature and can be said to be a leadership that is imposed on an organization, and hardly will the inputs of the followers be taken into consideration (Chukwusa, 2018). They pay much emphasis on the performance of the followers rather than the followers themselves; the leader has all the decision-making power and all interaction within the group moves towards the leader (Muhammad, 2017). The leaders do not consult with their subordinates; rather they impose their decision on their subordinates (Genty, 2014).

The autocratic leader expects their subordinates to work according to their dictates. They do not share decision making with their subordinates and force their followers to execute their duties according to the narrow way (Ebrahim, 2018). Autocratic leaders can be aggressive, domineering, and strong-willed; they do not listen to their followers' views and do not take suggestions from others. Instead, they depend solely on their own ideas (Sunil, 2018). The leader makes all the decision without the agreement of the employee and the leaders do not allow the employees participate in decision-making and are usually tough on the employees, uncompromising and do not give explanations for their behaviors (Chukwusa, 2018). They are at the center of all decisions and activities, they determine the steps to be taken and work to be carried out by their subordinates and they determine the techniques, and also the policies. They are usually not active in groups but they are usually personal in their criticism and praise of their subordinates' work (Sangban, 2007). According to Philip (2014), 'Autocratic leaders believe that human beings are evil, weak, unwilling to work, incapable of self-determination, and have limited reasoning. Therefore, they must be directed, pushed and forced to do work.' The leaders do not trust their subordinates and so they do not consult them or engage them in decision making but they impose their ready-made decision on their subordinates without previous discussion or exchange of ideas (Genty, 2014). The leaders are never around; they only come in contact with their subordinates when they are giving them instructions (Kala and Okpokwasili, 2018). They do not care about building relationships with their subordinates but engage only in formal, professional relationship with their subordinates.

They also do not consult with the subordinates but expect acceptance without questioning, and this may cause them to miss out on opportunities and also underestimate problems which may affect the organization achieving its goals (Dyczkowski and Dyczkowski, 2018). The employees have little or no opportunity to make decisions or to make suggestions even if it will be beneficial to them as a team or even beneficial to the organization itself. They do not give explanations for the decisions they make or give reasons behind their intentions (Kalu and Okpokwasili, 2018). The leaders are not willing to share power and authority with others; rather they hold all the power and authority. Employees are motivated through an organized set of rewards and punishments. However, the autocratic leadership style has faced various critiques by various scholars who have pointed out that the organizations that practice autocratic leadership style experience higher employee turnover and absenteeism than other organizations that do not (Muhammad *et al*, 2015).

Autocratic leaders see their followers merely as tools to carry out a function and have no feelings of helping their followers; rather they focus more on the task than the people (Sunil, 2018).

However, some leaders may be successful in practicing this leadership style because it leads to quick decision making which allows the organization to make use of less competent leaders to carry out managerial work which may result to a drop of production when the leader is absent and good production only when the leader is present (Genty, 2014). Autocratic leaders are able to achieve result quickly. However, in a situation where the leader is absent from work, the followers are usually not able to carry out their duties due to the lack of instructions from the leader or lack of innovations on the part of the followers. The followers may not be fulfilled in their place of work and may hate the methods of the leader which might lead to high absenteeism and labor turnover but there is still much use for the autocratic leadership style (Yusraet *al*, 2018). An autocratic leadership style can be effective and used on new and untrained employees who have no idea on the tasks they are expected to perform or the method to follow and also when time is limited with the belief that efficient supervision can be provided only through thorough orders and commands which followers only answer to (Pagewise, 2002).

The Autocratic Leadership style can be valuable at times, but it can also be ineffective on many occasions where this leadership style could be a cause for inaction or unnecessary delay in achieving specific goals in organizations, because when the staff are not consulted, they will be unable to contribute, hence innovative ideas may elude organizations and this may be why leaders, who misuse or exploit autocratic leadership style, may be viewed as being overbearing (Northhose, 2015). Therefore, managers should find the situation in an organization and apply the most suitable leadership style to a situation to achieve organizational success.

#### 2.3.4. Democratic Leadership Style

Democratic leadership style can be linked to the democratic movement in the 1980s and the 1990s which promoted human rights, liberty, freedom and democracy (Sanghan, 2007). Democratic leadership played a crucial role in liberating British ruled Nigeria in the democratic movement in the 1960s. Democratic leadership may lack conceptual precision, however democratic leadership can be said to be a behavior that impacts individuals in ways that are consistent with the basic democratic processes and procedures, such as equal participation, deliberation, autonomy and comprehensiveness (Dahl, 1989; Fishkin, 1991; cited in Gastil, 1994). Democratic leaders provide guidance, reward commitment, and empower their subordinates to effectively utilize their competencies and talents; they do not penalize their employees for their mistakes but work towards finding a solution, and encourage employees to prioritize social aspect of group work (Dyczkowski and Dyczkowski, 2018).

The democratic leadership style enables the followers contribute, participate and exchange their ideas and believes in decision making, determines their work method, seeks advice and allows for a flow of communication between the leaders and their subordinates (Genty, 2018). It is an open and inter-connected leadership style of running a team and a situation where ideas move freely among the groups, open discussions are encouraged and in which group members participate in the policymaking process (Sarapriya and Ishita, 2012). The leader keeps the followers involved in all that affects their work or prevent them from achieving organizational goals, while the problem-solving responsibilities are shared between the leader and the subordinate (Muhammad *et al*, 2015). The leader usually takes on one or more subordinates while making decisions and he/she considers all the ideas of the subordinates but he/she usually makes the final decision and maintains authority (Bhargavi and Yaseen, 2016). The subordinates are motivated to share their opinions and although the leader might have the final decision, the subordinates feel involved and their innovations and originality are encouraged (Chukwusa, 2019). The leader tries as much as possible to make each employee feel that they are significant members of the organization (Kalu and Okpokwasili, 2018).

The democratic leadership style can also be referred to as a participative style because of its nature to encourage the employees to join in the organization's decision-making process. Even though the superior makes the final decision and maintains the authority, a democratic leader treats their followers as partners and encourages them to participate in decisions affecting them and the organization (Kalu and Okpokwasili, 2018). The democratic leadership style allows employees to work as a member of a social group which enables new ideas and changes, leading to improvement in productivity as well as in enhancing the morale of the subordinates (Genty, 2014). It helps in facilitating conversation, employee participation, motivating employees to share thoughts and then combine every accessible information into the best solution (Sarapriya and Ishita, 2012). It accentuates the participation of the subordinates and the leader in the formulation of policies that guides the operations in the organization (Chukwusa, 2019). This style is believed to be effective in a dynamic and changing environment, where a particular situation cannot be taken as constant (Sarapriya and Ishita, 2012).

However, every leadership style has its advantage and disadvantage. A number of researches have revealed that democratic leadership style leads to higher productivity between followers and it is flexible that it can fit into a changing situation and adapt to a better way of doing things. Even though it can lead to slow decision-making and while it may embrace a better and newer way of doing things, it may be slow in doing it (Sarapriya and Ishita, 2012). However, some researchers are of the opinion that democratic style of leadership, which can also be called people-oriented style of leadership, is more efficient than the autocratic style of leadership also known as the production-oriented style of leadership, although they both have their advantages and disadvantages (Kalu and Okpokwasili 2018).

#### 2.3.5. Laissez-Faire

Laissez-faire leadership style is defined by Robins (2007) as 'Abdicates responsibilities avoid making decisions', where the leader avoids decision making and leaves the decision-making power to his/her subordinates (Chaudhry and

Javed 2012). It is also referred to as the 'hands-off style', in which the leader offers little or no support in the decision making, but gives the employee the freedom to make decisions (Nor, Norliya and Nurhidayah, 2014). Although laissez faire leadership style gives the employees opportunity to make decisions, it has been described as a negative style of leadership by some scholars, because it indicates absence of leadership, delayed decision making and a lack of effort to encourage employees, motivate them, listen to them or to meet up with their needs (Bass and Avolio, 1990; Skogstad *et al*, 2007, cited by Nguyen, Teo, Grover and Nguyen, 2017). Laissez-fair leaders are leaders who take up leadership positions but have relinquished the duties and the responsibilities they have been assigned (Lewi, Lippitt and White, 1939, cited by Bergen and Bressier, 2014).

Laissez-fair leadership style gives the followers all the power and authority to make decisions, set goals, and to resolve issues on their own (Muhammad, Irfanullah, Qamar, Hafiz, Hamid, Abdul, and Muhammad, 2015). This type of leadership style inspires employees and lower-level management to be inventive and creative in their duties and to work in a way that best suits them regardless of the leader's contribution (Linge, Shikalleh, and Asiimwe, 2016). The leaders avoid making any form of decisions and do not get involved with any working units, but give the employees full rights to make decisions, and they let the employees know that they are free to carry out their duties in their own way and also to be responsible for their decisions (Chaudhry and Javed, 2012). Laissez-fair leadership style is believed to lead to role conflict, low productivity, role ambiguity and also low job satisfaction, as a result of the leaders' refusal to take charge but leave the employees with the tasks of dealing with problems, making employees feel ignored and isolated (Nguyen, Teo, Grover and Nguyen, 2017).

Although some researchers view laissez-faire leadership style as absence of leadership, Bass and Avolio (1997) believe that laissez-faire style of leadership is not an effective leadership style which involves focusing on followers' mistakes and leading by monitoring and the leader waiting for things to go wrong before they intervene (Tosunoglu and Ekmekci, 2016). It is believed that laissez-faire leaders give their subordinates total autonomy to carry out their work and decide their own targets, but may provide them with resources and advice, when necessary, but they usually do not get involved (Mindtools.com, 2013). However, this leadership style is believed to be operative in situations where the employees are highly skilled and believed to be experts in their field (Linge, Shikalleh, and Asiimwe, 2016).

#### 2.4. Empirical Review from Some Researchers

A research on the influence of leadership styles on organizational performance in Nigeria was conducted by Ukaidi (2016). The result showed that democratic leadership style relates significantly to organizational performance than the laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles. According to Ukaidi, democratic leadership style allows sharing of decision making with members, while criticism and commendation are given accurately and there is a feeling of responsibility among the group. The findings also showed that Laissez-faire and autocratic leadership styles may have low value among the groups. There was less freedom, hostility, aggression, and a high level of mediocrity among group members. It also showed low motivational level among the group. However, the research showed that a leadership style, adopted by an organization, greatly influences workplace performance as well as organizational productivity. In a research on democratic style of leadership by Sharma and Singh (2013), they concluded that in regards to their study sample, a significant factor that makes democratic leadership style effective is that majority of the samples are leaders from the government and public sector organizations, where the final decision is usually made by a higher authority.

More than one leadership style can be adopted in an organization, and this can be found in research by Ebrahim (2018) on the impact of leadership styles on organizational performance. The findings showed that transformational leadership, transactional leadership, democratic leadership and autocratic leadership styles are predictors of organizational performance. Transformational, democratic and autocratic leadership styles have positively influenced organizational performance, while, transactional, charismatic and bureaucratic leadership styles have negative impact on the organization that was used for the study. Prajna and Ina (2018) carried out research on the impact of leadership styles on the effectiveness of higher educational institutions. The influence of both transactional and transformational leadership styles was empirically investigated, and the result showed that even though both transactional and transformational leadership styles positively relate with organizational effectiveness, only transactional leadership style has significant impact on organizational effectiveness among the study used for the research.

In a study on the relationship between Laissez-faire leadership style and SMEs growth in the top 100 SMEs in Kenya by Linge, Shikalleh, and Asiimwe (2016), the findings showed that although laissez-faire leadership often offers little or no supervision to subordinates or employees and leaves the decision making to them, it showed that the leadership style and the growth of SMEs are significantly related, indicating that the application of laissez-faire leadership in SMEs will positively affect the growth of the firms, since the employees of the SMEs are experts and highly qualified in their duties.

#### 2.5. Objective of the Study

To review the various leadership styles and discuss if organizational management leadership style is 'one size fits all'?

### 3. Methodology

This study adopts discourse content analysis. The study is an attempt of exploratory research, using secondary data sourced from various journals, articles, books and media reports. Having the objective of the study in mind, the research design adopted for the study is the descriptive type in order to have greater accuracy and in-depth analysis of the research study. The researcher, hereby, made use of secondary data to gather information through available literatures,

articles, journals, books and media reports on leadership styles to draw up a conclusion on the effect of leadership styles on organizational productivity.

#### 4. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

##### 4.1. Discussion

###### 4.1.1. Leadership Style Managers Should Adopt

Organizations have different situations that are peculiar to them, and managers have a certain kind of leadership that is expected of them, which is peculiar to their organization's situation (Bass, 1985). A leader needs to be able to influence an organization both internally and externally, and must be able to gain the approval of everyone involved in the organization in order to turn an idea into a reality (Vojta). Thus, there has been a shift in leadership style, a result of constant innovation in technology, as well as the development and self-motivating nature of the employees in organizations, brought about as a result of a better understanding that the needs and expectations of people in the organization change (Pandit 2005; Mullins, 2007). Leaders need to understand that the different styles of leadership have their advantages as well as their disadvantages, and leadership is situational.

Form the reviewed literatures, democratic leadership style is suitable in situation with highly qualified and morally developed people, while in situations with underdeveloped people, autocratic leadership style is presumed to be the most suitable, and laissez-faire leadership style is better in situation with the most qualified people (Muhammad *et al*, 2015). Leaders should realize that all situations are not the same; a particular leadership style that worked in a certain situation may not work in another situation, and should use their judgment to decide the best course of action and the leadership style that is needed for each situation (Mischel, 1968).

In a situation where the employees are professionals, experienced, motivated, highly skilled and are capable of working on their own, laissez-faire leadership style may enable visionary employees, freedom to work, highly motivated employees with a high sense of responsibility towards their duties, but a situation where the employees are entry level or mid-level employees, laissez-faire leadership style may not be an effective leadership style, because the leader needs to be involved in the workings of the organization and be aware of what is needed to attain positive results from the employees so as to improve performance (Linge, Shikalleh, and Asiimwe, 2016).

Transformational leadership may be believed to be the most effective leadership style in business because they have integrity, inspire their subordinates with shared vision of the future, set strong goals, motivate their employees to achieve these goals and have good communications with their employees (Mindtools.com, 2013).

##### 4.2. Conclusion

This paper discussed and presented various literatures, arguments and findings on the importance of leadership to organizations, and has reviewed the findings on the importance of having the right leadership style to achieve success. The review has made us realize that the success or failure of any organization depends on the leadership of the organization. Leadership is essential in achieving organizational effectiveness, and for any organization to be effective, the role of leadership is inevitable (Garima, Pushpa, Silky and Varsha, 2015).

Nevertheless, we have established that leadership is not 'one-size-fit-all'. Different situations require different leadership approach. Leaders need to have a proper understanding of a situation, and adapt a style that fits a specific situation or group. Therefore, a leader needs to understand the situations in their work environment to achieve effective leadership in the organization (Linge, Shikalleh, and Asiimwe, 2016). It is also important to note that more than one leadership style can be adopted in an organization, depending on the various situations the organization may be faced with. All leadership styles are important and relevant in different situations, and adopting a single leadership style in all situations will be an error (Muhammad *et al*, 2015).

The review can help answer questions on, if there is a leadership style that is suitable for all situations or if leadership styles should be situational.

##### 4.3. Researchers Recommendation

Based on the review of various literature and empirical findings, the researcher has made the following recommendations:

- Leadership is essential to the success of every organization.
- Adoption of leadership style should be situational.
- There is no one superior leadership style.
- Adoption of the right leadership style is essential for organizational productivity.
- Transformational leadership style should be applied in situations where the followers are well-motivated and highly innovative.
- Transactional leadership style is best suitable in situations where the employees are motivated by being rewarded for good performance.
- Autocratic leadership style is suitable in situations where the employees are morally low or untrained.
- Democratic leadership style should be adopted if the employees are involved and participate in decision making.
- Laissez-faire leadership style is a style that should be adopted if the employees are highly skilled and experts.

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