

## Influence of Bureaucratic Leadership Style on The Job Performance of Para Professional Staff in University Libraries in North Central Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *The main objective of this study was to find out the influence of bureaucratic leadership style on the job performance of para-professional staff in university libraries in North Central Nigeria. In carrying out this study, three research questions were formulated. The entire population constituted all the 87 para-professional staff in the universities in North Central Nigeria and were used for the study. Two sets of data collection instruments which include bureaucratic leadership style questionnaire (BLSQ) and job performance of para-professional staff questionnaire (JPPPSQ) Mean and Standard Deviation was used to analyze data. The major findings of the study showed that university librarians in North Central Nigeria adopted more of democratic leadership style. This is followed by the bureaucratic leadership style and then laissez-faire leadership style lastly autocratic leadership style. Bureaucratic leadership style do not significantly influence the job performance of para-professional librarians. The level of performance of para-professional librarians was low. Based on the findings, it was recommended that university authorities should through seminars and workshops encourage, strengthen and enhance the use of democratic leadership style in the administration of university libraries in north central, that university librarians should be appointed on the basis of experience and high academic qualifications in the field of library and information science in order to meet up with global best practices*

**Keywords:** *Bureaucratic, leadership style, job performance, para-professional staff, North Central, Nigeria.*

### Introduction

University librarians are the central point around which all major and important university Library functions dwell. This means that the approach they adopt in directing, guiding and controlling the staff under them determine the pace of progress in their libraries. That is if the direct University Librarians control, direct or guide the staff under them properly by adopting ideal leadership style, para professional librarians will show greater commitment to their duty, but unfortunately some University Librarians are no longer effective and committed to their duties. Para professional librarians on their part become nonchalant about Library work which invariably have negative impact on their performance. Hassaan (2013) asserted that the concept of leadership was originally developed in folk psychology to explain the factor of social influence on groups. Iheriohuma (2009) considered leadership as the ability of a person to lead. He posits that leadership functions within contexts and situations. It involves possession of authority, influence and certain qualities, skills, knowledge, information and behavioural attributes. Ng'ethe, Mike and Namasonge (2012) consider leadership as a relationship through which one person influences the behaviour or actions of other people for the purpose of achieving goals and maximize results in the organization.

Ushie, Agba, Ogaboh and Chime (2010) opined that leadership style entails those characteristics of individual leaders which are typical across situations. It includes the types of control leaders exercise in a group and their behaviour towards group members. They pointed out that leadership style varies on the basis of duties the leader feels he alone should perform, the responsibilities the leader expects his followers to accept and the philosophical commitment of the leader to development and the realization, and fulfillment of subordinate expectations. Michael (2010) pointed out that current leadership theories described leaders based on traits or how the influence and power are used to achieve objective of the organization Clark (2000) perceived leadership style as the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people.

Effective leadership behaviour can facilitate the improvement of Job performance. Job performance refers to ability of university Libraries to achieve such objectives as meeting up with the users' needs. Northhouse, (2013) stated that job performance is the ability of employees to accomplish task either good or bad. Umer, Anan, Inam-ul and Hamid (2012) described good job as that which "specifies



the tasks the person staffing the job is expected to perform and thus helps ensure that individual effort serve organizational objectives. They defined performance as the quantity and quality of task contributions made by an individual at work. They further observed that. "The job or task performance is the reason for creating a particular job in the first place. It is a cornerstone of overall organizational productivity and it is the bottom line for people at work. Stephen (2013) in his study 'Achieving high performance in Library Work', identified three factors that determine high performance. They include "productivity factors- how many, how fast, how good".

Secondly, they are intermediate performance factors – how efficient, how effective, and thirdly, they are advanced excellence factors. The advanced factors relate to the basic mission of the library within an encompassing social context. This context includes: the social utility of the library as an institution, the degree to which the library enhances our democratic process and the skills and aptitudes of our population; the benefits of the library to the process of scholarly communication; and the contribution of the library to the attainment of the parent institution's goals. It should be noted that if the productivity of workers in an organization is high, then the organization is seen to be performing. The reverse is the case in a situation where workers' productivity is low. In other words, performance is a positive function of productivity.

University librarians should ensure effective leadership style that will lead to maximum job performance. Ram(2001), Mgbodile (2004), Melling and Little (2004) describe autocratic, democratic and *laissez-faire* leadership style extensively. According to them an autocratic leader is a leader who is high handed in his administration. He is the centre of all the activities that go on in the establishment where he is a leader. A prime determinant of action, all authority emanated from him and ends with him. He monopolizes the decision-making process and takes decisions all alone. He believes his ideas and thoughts to be superior to those of his subordinates and considers involving them in decision-making as a waste of time. The interest and welfare of the worker is not taken into consideration as the leader regards him as a mere tool for production. As part of his non-consideration for worker welfare he resorts to commands, harsh and abusive language to induce compliance. He uses threats and intimidation as a means of ensuring absolute obedience and dependence on him. He does not take opposition kindly as he tends to regard those with opposing

views as enemies of his administration. He clamps down on opposition with some ruthlessness and strives for conformity of all to his directive

Workers under an autocratic leader may be seen as working under pressure and fear most of the time and often show dissatisfaction to this form of leadership by various means such as indulging in eye service, lateness to work, reduction of work output, sabotaging the work, seeking transfer or voluntarily resigning from the establishment. The autocratic leader finds it difficult to get genuine love, support and cooperation from subordinates who regard his administration as a 'one man show'. The democratic leadership style is also called the participatory leadership signifying its recognition of the need for staff participation in the affairs of the organization. Decision-making and communication are based on consultation and deliberation among the group. This permits self-expression, creativity and group interaction.

The democratic leader maintains good human relations while regarding human beings as the most important assets of the organization. He is quick at praising work done and refrains from blaming workers for making mistakes, believing that valuable knowledge can be gained from mistakes so that errors can be avoided in the future. He does not believe in flagrant or exaggerated show of authority and avoids the use of threats; queries or intimidation believing that authority should be felt rather than seen. He does not demonstrate or wield his authority merely for the fun of it. Under the democratic style of leadership, workers enjoy a better work climate and feel a sense of belonging to the organization. They feel they are part of the organization and consequently show greater cooperation and commitment to the achievement of organizational goals. There is greater love and sincerity shown to the leader and work proceeds in the same way in the presence or absence of the boss. This signifies that there is the absence of eye-service or sycophancy on the part of the workers. All are interested in working towards the success of the leader and consequently towards the success of the organization.

The *laissez-faire* style of leadership is a middle-of-the-road leadership style. The *laissez-faire* of leadership which is sometimes called the loose rein leadership can be described as the detached leadership style. The word *laissez-faire* is taken from the French language meaning 'let things go their way', is used to describe the leader who allows his workers to go about their work the way they want. The *laissez-fair* leader does not believe in exercising any degree of control over the conduct of



the workers under him. He is guided by the belief that workers tend to perform better when left on their own. In line with this belief the *laissez-faire* leader exercises minimum control over the worker and his work operation. Workers are left to perform their work the way they please, to develop their own standard in their own time and to learn from their experiences without interference from the leader by way of control. This style of leadership is considered unsatisfactory because it signifies the absence of visible leadership which often leads to a number of undesirable behaviours among workers leading to poor work performance. Discipline might become a problem among the staff and a prevailing atmosphere of chaos might ensue. Some workers might pay less attention to their work while others might completely abandon their work or perform below expectation.

Bureaucratic leadership style is a style of leadership that emphasizes procedures and historical methods, even when those methods are no longer working. The tendency is to attempt to solve current problems by adding layers of control, forms or time-consuming procedures. Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa and Nwankwere (2011), Muhammad and Usman (2012), Rochelle (2012) and Hawthorne (2017) described bureaucracy as a form of organization that stresses order, system, rationality, uniformity and consistency. It is worth noting that Weber's Model gave rise to the bureaucratic principles of administration which translates into the bureaucratic principles of Library administration. Bureaucratic leadership style has been discussed by Onwubiko (2004), Ogbe, Aga and Ebeih (2005) as a highly elaborate hierarchy of authority in the organization with low officer under the control and supervision of a higher one superimposed on a highly elaborate division of labour. Onwubiko (2004) citing Max Webber (1975) stated that for many people bureaucratic leadership style encourages personnel decision to be made on a rational and consistent basis. In doing so, it seeks to avoid the influence of nepotism, personal judgment prejudices and the cult of personality or subjective influences that may affect an employee's welfare.

Bureaucratic leadership style in all its ramifications encourages disinterestedness and the adoption of the principle of due process in the discharge of organizational responsibilities by both management and subordinates. According to Obi (2003) citing Webber (1975), Bureaucratic leadership style is a reaction against the patrimony and patriarchal leadership that characterized human organization. He saw it as a type of administration which he regarded as the most efficient type of organization because it was designed to provide maximum rationality.

Eze (2010), Bushra, Ahmad and Tsvir (2011), Armstrong (2012), Alan (2013) and described characteristic features of bureaucratic leadership style as follows:

- A division of labour based on functional specialization.
- A well-defined hierarchy of authority.
- A system of ruler covering the rights and duties of employees.
- Interpersonal orientation.

Workers are to conduct their duties with a sense of personal detachment promotion and employments are based on technical competence and qualifications.

Suleman, Adil and Muhammad (2011), Stephen (2013) and Sajid, Bilal, Shafia and Nasir (2012) stated that from the behavioural standpoint, bureaucratic leadership style has been criticized in the following ways: One of the major criticisms of the style is that business is conducted in an Impersonal manner devoid of sentiment or emotions, and it failed to understand that the worker is a human being with his personal feelings, emotions and values which cannot be brushed away. Thus, the prescriptions of impersonal and formalistic relationship in the bureaucratic organizations cannot work.

Bureaucratic are conservative and as such do not easily adapt to changes. In fact, there is unnecessary devotion to precedents and rules which impedes progress. Sometimes acting irresponsibly, bureaucrats under the guise of official engagements manipulate the organizational process within the bureaucracy in order to fulfill their interest. This is corruption president Muhammad Buhari is making every effort to stop in Nigeria. According to the researcher bureaucratic leadership style has most often been associated with frustration and red tapism because of its adoption of the principle of due process. But in Library management it has really enhanced the evolutionary trend in the organization and management of Libraries, more so that Libraries today have evolved to the contemporary 21<sup>st</sup> century of the globalized information super highway alongside other organizations. Today University Librarians as a result of this growth and development talk of specialization and professional competence in the discharge of specific responsibilities to the Library users.

In University Libraries in north central Nigeria, one should reasonably assume that the leadership style of university Librarians will have a direct impact on



the productivity of Para-professional librarians under them. But the researcher's interview with para-professional librarians at the Kogi State University of Anyigba and University of Ilorin Library showed a general prevailing climate characterized by tension. The researcher was worried about non-application of motivational leadership techniques to make the para-professional librarians perform their duties efficiently. The incessant open clashes and lack of co-operation between the university Librarians and para-professional librarians working under them are very glaring. The researcher therefore became interested in this topic in order to make an in depth study on the extent the University Librarians' bureaucratic leadership style influence job performance of para-professional librarians in University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study was to determine the influence of University Librarians' bureaucratic leadership style on the job performance of para-professional librarians in North Central Nigeria.

Specifically, the research was designed to:

1. Identify the leadership styles exhibited by University Librarians in University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.
2. Find out level of performance of para-professional staff in the University Libraries in North Central Nigeria
3. Ascertain the influence of bureaucratic leadership style on the job performance of para-professional staff in the University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the leadership styles exhibited by the University Librarians in Universities in North Central Nigeria?
2. What is the level of performance of para-professional staff in the University Libraries?
3. What is the influence bureaucratic leadership style on the job performance of para-professional staff?

### **Research Methodology**

The descriptive survey research design method was used to carry out this study. The independent

variable "bureaucratic leadership style which was involved in the study was not manipulated or controlled directly by the researcher. According to Otaha (2015), the group of items to which the study relates (i.e the population may be small enough to warrant the inclusion of all of them in the study. Based on this, no sampling of this population was carried out the entire population was therefore used because of the smallness of the population size. The population of this study consisted of all 87 (including 12 University Librarians (6 Federal and 6 state) University Librarians in North Central Nigeria. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire; the instrument was face-validated before use by presenting it to three senior colleagues in the field of Library and information science. These experts were requested to examine the clarity of expression used as well as the appropriateness of language. The researcher administered and collected copies of questionnaire from the respondents. Thus there was a 100% rate of returns of copies of questionnaire distributed. The data for the study were presented in tables and analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

### **Findings and Discussions**

Out of the 87 copies of questionnaire that were administered to the Librarians, the 87 (100%) were retrieved. The data from the retrieved questionnaire are hereby presented using simple statistics like mean and standard deviation.

### **Research Question 1**

What are the leadership styles exhibited by University Librarians in North Central Nigeria?

**Table 1.**  
**Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Responses on Leadership Styles Exhibited by Librarians**

S/No	Leadership Styles	Mean (N= 87)	SD
1	Autocratic leadership style	2.46	0.30
2	Democratic leadership style	2.90	0.33
3	Bureaucratic leadership style	2.63	0.31
4	Laissez-faire leadership style	2.62	0.31

Sources: Field sources

Note: N =Number of Professional Librarians  
SD= Standard Deviation

Table 1 shows the mean of leadership styles exhibited by University Librarians in North Central Zone of Nigeria. Democratic leadership style has the highest mean score of 2.90; this is followed by the bureaucratic style with a mean of mean of 2.63. Laissez-faire leadership has a mean of mean of 2.62 and lastly followed by the autocratic with the mean of mean score of 2.46. This shows that the four leadership styles were utilized by the University Librarians at varying levels.



### Research Question 2

What is the level of performance of para-professional staff in North Central Nigeria?

**Table 2**  
Mean and SD of Responses on the Level of Performance of Para - Professional Staff.

S/No	Level of Performance of Para - Professional Staff	N	Mean	SD
1.	The para - professional Staff are exceptionally effective in the performance of their duties.	9	2.52	0.67
2.	The para - professional staff perform duties moderately.	9	2.78	0.54
3.	The para - professional staff are highly proficient in the practical application of technical knowledge.	9	2.64	0.44
4.	The para - professional staff gets a great deal done within a set of time range.	9	2.67	0.68
5.	The para - professional staff perform their duties more than generally effective but not positively outstanding.	9	2.51	0.49
6.	The para - professional staff perform their duties competently under pressure.	9	2.43	0.70
7.	The para - professional staff are definitely ineffective and are not up to the duties.	9	2.74	0.33
8.	The para - professional staff maintain high standards; and their work is virtually error proof.	9	2.49	0.48
9.	The para - professional staff grapple with problems after they arise.	9	2.55	0.51
10.	The para - professional staff anticipate problems and develop solution in advance.	9	2.54	0.62
11.	The para - professional staff get straight to the root of a problem.	9	2.66	0.48
12.	The para - professional staff seldom see beyond the surface of a problem.	9	2.55	0.33
13.	The para - professional staff proposals are consistently sound.	9	2.56	0.47
14.	The para - professional staff are tactless and cannot deal with the public.	9	2.60	0.59
15.	The para - professional staff are easily thrown off balance, and they are not reliable even under normal circumstances.	9	2.54	0.53
16.	The para - professional staff are deficient in applying technical knowledge to practical issues.	9	2.38	0.50
17.	The professional Staff are accurate in the use and interpretation of figures.	9	2.69	0.32
18.	The para - professional staff are determined to carry task through to the end.	9	2.64	0.39
	Mean of mean score	9	2.60	0.29

Source: Field Sources

Note: N = Number of University Librarians  
SD = Standard Deviation

Table 2 indicates that respondents have varying level of opinion on the level of performance of professional Staff in University libraries in North Central Zone of Nigeria. For instance, they agreed that professional librarians are exceptionally effective in the performance of their duties, perform duties moderately, gets a great work done within a set of time frame; get straight to the roots of a problem. The professional Librarians are accurate in the use and interpretation of figures and they are determined to carry task through to the end. However, the respondents stated that some of the professional Staff grapple with problems after they arise, seldom see below the surface of a problem, and are deficient in applying professional/technical knowledge to practical issues. They are tactless and cannot deal with the public. This shows that the level of job performance of professional librarians was low.

### Research Question 3

What is the influence of bureaucratic leadership style on the job performance of para-professional staff?

**Table 3**  
Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Influence of Bureaucratic Leadership Style

S/No	Bureaucratic Leadership Style	N	Mean	SD
1	The University Librarian does not allow me use my own methods in task performance	78	2.87	0.61
2	Deployment of staff is based on functional specialization.	78	2.76	0.52
3	I am discouraged to work hard because promotion is not based on merit	78	2.71	0.53
4	The University Librarian tells his subordinates exactly what to do without comment or discussion which creates low job performance.	78	2.53	0.48
5	I am not encouraged to put in my best because the University Librarian is very rigid.	78	2.60	0.42
6	The University Librarian manipulates the organizational process within the library in order to fulfill his selfish interest.	78	2.25	0.46
7	The University Librarian is noted for his excessive attachment to official formula with its characteristic delays in getting things done.	78	2.62	0.40
8	The University Librarian is considerate on issues concerning staff welfare.	78	2.67	0.41
	Mean Score		2.63	0.31

Source: Field Sources

Note: N = Number of University Librarians  
SD = Standard Deviation

From Table 3 above, the items have mean scores above 2.5 on bureaucratic leadership style and so the University Librarians are also bureaucratic to an extent. That is, the University Librarians do not allow the professional Librarians to use their own methods in task performance, deploy staff based on functional specialization. The professional Librarians are discouraged to work hard because promotions are not based on merit. The University Librarians tells the professional librarians exactly what to do without comment or discussion which creates low job performance. The professional Librarians are very rigid and manipulate the organizational process within the library in order to fulfill their selfish interest. The University Librarians are noted for their excessive attachment to official formula with its characteristic delays in getting things done and they are considerate on issues concerning staff welfare.

### Conclusion

The following conclusions are put in place from the findings of the study:

1. The University Librarians in North central Nigeria adopted more of democratic leadership style. This is followed by the bureaucratic leadership style, less autocratic leadership style and far less laissez-faire leadership style.
2. Bureaucratic leadership style does not significantly influence the job performance of para-professional staff.
3. The level of performance of para-professional staff was low.



### Recommendations

Based on this study, the following recommendations have been presented.

1. That University authority should through seminars and workshops encourage, strengthen, and enhance the usage of democratic leadership style in the administration of University Libraries in North Central Nigeria.
2. State government owned universities should endeavour to provide better conditions of service for their para-professional staff. This will encourage them to perform their duties more efficiently.
3. University Librarians should be appointed not only on the basis of experience and high academic qualifications in the field of library and information science/technology in order to meet up with global challenges.

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