Perceived Factors Influencing the Choice of Leadership Styles of Heads of Academic Libraries in Delta State

Joseph Chukwusa[1]

[1]Delta State University Library, Abraka, Nigeria

Abstract

The study is on perceived factors influencing heads of libraries' choice of leadership styles in academic libraries in Delta State. The design for this study is descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of 75 librarians. No sample was used because the population was small. The questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Findings revealed that generally, all the items on perceived factors influencing heads of libraries' leadership styles were accepted. The highest mean score recorded is 3.88 representing the position power a leader has (a leader with a relatively strong and stable position); female respondents were more favourably disposed towards the perceived factors influencing heads of libraries choice of leadership styles; there is a significant difference between male and female librarians on choice of perceived factors influencing their leadership styles. It was recommended that since librarians are aware of the factors, chief librarians should be mindful of the way they go about the influencing process so as to get positive attitude from staff.

Keywords: leadership styles, academic libraries, choice of leadership styles, heads of libraries, leadership behaviour

Introduction

One of the problems with concentrating on the leader rather than on leadership behavior is that one's perceptions of leadership can become distorted. Early research on leadership, which focuses on the leader, suffered from a sort of myopia in that it left the impression that leadership is a one way street- the leader influences the group

(Reitz, 1977). It was assumed that the leader autonomously determines his own style of leading and imposes it on the group which is then influenced to behave in a certain way. What this one-way concept failed to account for was why the leader behaves as he does. Only as researchers of leadership behavior began to ask the question did they acknowledge that leadership behavior, like other behavior, is not determined by the leader autonomously but is the product of many forces acting on the leader and influencing him to behave in different ways.

The underlying assumption of situational models of leadership styles is that appropriate leadership behavior may vary from one situation to another. McShane (2011) posited that many organizational theorists like Max Weber, Henri Fayol and others have re-echoed the need for the effective administration in goal-seeking organizations. They examined different factors which Contribute to overall organizational effectiveness and one of such factors which they considered is leadership behavior and style. Leadership styles are specific pattern of behaviour emphasized and exhibited by the leader of the group towards the accomplishment of the organizational goals (Weihrich & Koontz, 2005). It is the pattern of behaviour that enables leaders to effectively influence others.

According to Griffin (2005), the key situational factor is the favourableness of the situation from the leader's point of view. This factor according to him is determined by:

- **Leader-member relations**: This refers to the nature of the relationship between the leader and the work group. If the leader and the work group have high degree of

mutual trust, respect and confidence, and if they like one another, relations are assumed to be good. If there is little trust, respect or confidence, and if they do not like one another, relations are poor.

- **Task Structure**: This refers to the degree to which the group's task is well defined. The task is structured when it is routine, easily understood, and unambiguous and when the group has standard procedures and precedents to rely on. An unstructured task is nonroutine, ambiguous and complex with no standard procedures or precedents. You can see that high structure is more favourable for the chief librarian and low structure is less favourable.

- **Position power**: This refers to the power vested in the chief librarian's position. If the chief librarian has the power to assign work and to reward and punish staff, position power is assumed to be strong. But if the chief librarian must get job assignments approved by someone else and does not administer rewards and punishments, position power is weak, and it is more difficult to accomplish goals. From the leader's point of view, strong position power is clearly preferable to weak position power.

Schorbek, Cosier, and Aplin (1991) believed that the choice of leadership style depends on three factors. These includes: the librarians values, confidence in employees, leadership inclinations, and feeling of job security. Perhaps, a good way to understand how forces in the librarian affect leadership style is to consider the well-known Theory X – Theory Y developed by Douglas

McGregor (Mullins, 2005). Theory X managers believe that because workers find their job inherently distasteful, they require close direction and need to be coerced to work. Workers prefer direction because they dislike responsibility. By contrast, Theory Y managers believe that work is a natural, potentially satisfying, and rewarding activity. Workers can be creative and responsible. Librarians have to provide reward and opportunities that allows workers to realize their intellectual potential. Although this may require loose direction, coercion would only be a last resort (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004).

Forces in the Subordinate: This according to Schorbek et al. (1991) center on the subordinate's expectations about how the librarian should behave. They listed the following conditions for allowing subordinates greater freedom. Subordinates should:

- Have a relatively high need for independence

- Be ready to assume responsibility for their decisions

- Be interested in the problems that need solving

- Understand and identify with the goals of the library

- Have the knowledge and experience to deal with problems

- Expect to be involved in decision making.

Forces in the Situation: This include the type of organization, the effectiveness of the group, the problem itself, and the time constraints. The philosophy of top management and the organization's history of management create a management climate. If the chief librarian believes in autocratic methods and, leadership practices have been previously autocratic, then the boss-centered style of management may be

expected and rewarded throughout the library. Effective teamwork within the library may foster a high level of group effectiveness which would dictate more participative subordinate-centered leadership. In the same vein, a problem that requires group expertise would make participation appropriate. Time pressure may typically lead to less participation. Subordinates-centered leadership appears to require more decision-making time than boss-centered. Ovwigho (2004, p. 184) also observed that it is unlikely to have one leadership style that is effective for all task situations with all groups. He argued that the leadership styles of individuals (university librarians inclusive) are often influenced by situations and therefore categorized the situations within which a leader operates into:

The group –task situation: In this situation, the degree to which the group members trust

and like the leader, and are willing to follow his guidance affects his leadership style. **Job - Environment situation:** Under this, the degree to which the job is spelt out, the knowledge of the leader and the group of job and how it should be done, and the extent to which the members can perform the job influence the leadership style. **The Position Power**: a leader with a relatively strong and stable position power may have better influence and control over his followers than the one whose appointment could be terminated at the pleasure of the group.

As observed by researchers, behavioural theories may help managers develop certain leadership behaviours but give little guidance as to what constitutes effective leadership in certain situations. Instead, contingency-situation theories were developed to indicate that leadership styles to be used is contingent upon factors such as the situation, the people, the organization and

other environmental variables(Gosling & Mintzberg,2003). The main factors that influence choice of leadership styles are positive work environment when junior staff are given a possibility to challenge themselves and feedback naturally results in better decision making and more effective operations. The next factor is encouragement of creative thinking, because creative thinking is required to solve problems in every single organization, whatever its nature. Reduced staff turnover could be the last of the factors. When staff feels empowered through leadership development, a company will experience lower rates of staff turnover which has numerous benefits (UK Essays, 2015). Furthermore, Mooney (2015) discussed the following as factors influencing the leadership patterns of leaders:

- Your personality: aligning an individual's basic nature with a particular method of management is most often successful because the leader will be comfortable with it.

- Belief system: a manager's professional ethics is often a factor that influences his method of leadership. For example, the person who believes strongly in teamwork as the most successful approach to work often adopts a democratic leadership style.

- Library culture: if there is strong culture of motivated and well trained staff, the librarian can adopts a laissez-faire style.

- Staff diversity: the library is likely to employ people of different races, gender (Appelbaum and Shapiro (1993) and Mano – Negrin (2003) asserted that women are more relationship oriented, cooperative, nurturing and emotional in their leadership roles. They further asserted that these qualities make

women particularly well suited for leadership roles at a time when organizations are adopting a stronger emphasis on teams and employee involvement), ages, and cultures. Leaders must respond to this diversity with a vision for their staff and by developing a multicultural approach to their work.

Mitchell, Smyser and Weed (1975) studied a sample of leaders drawn from all functions and from all levels of two companies in the United kingdom and were asked to express preference for factors influencing their choice of their leadership style(s). The result indicated that forces in the situation – type of organization in which the leader work, size of the working groups and their geographical distribution, to a large extent determines their choice of leadership style. This was seconded by forces in the manager. That is manager's values, such as the relative importance to the manager of

organizational efficiency and company profit.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to ascertain the perceived factors influencing the choice of leadership style of heads of libraries and equally find out if there is gender difference in the choice of leadership style.

Research Questio

1. What are the perceived factors influencing the choice of leadership styles of heads of academic libraries in Delta State?
2. What is the difference in mean scores of male and female librarians on perceived factors influencing the choice of heads of libraries' leadership styles?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was stated and tested:

There is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female librarians on perceived factors influencing heads of libraries'choice of leadership styles.

Research Method

The study is on the perceived factors influencing heads of libraries' choice of leadership styles in some selected academic libraries in Delta State, Nigeria. It is a descriptive survey design. Two university, two Polytechnics and two Colleges of Education libraries were used for the study. The institutions used in this study were purposively selected. The population of the study consisted of 75 librarians. No sample was used because the population was small. The questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. A ten item questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was structured on a four- point Likert scale of strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The mean cutoff point for the study was 2.50. The questionnaires were administered to the 75 librarians in their respective institutions, but 68 of them were retrieved and found usable.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Institutional population and sample Size

	Librarians	
Institutions	**No. Administered**	**No. Retrieved**
Delta State University, Abraka.	20	18
Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun.	9	9
College of Education, Agbor.	10	9

College of Education, Warri.	14	11
Delta state Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku.	15	15
Delta state Polytechnic, Ozoro.	8	6
Total	**75**	**68**

Table 1 reveals that out of the 75 questionnaire administered (the whole population was used) 68 of them representing 90.67% were retrieved and found usable.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Male	23
Female	45
Total	**68**

Table 2 reveals that out of the population of 68 librarians who took part in the study, 23 of them were male while 45 were female. This represents 33.82% and 66.18 respectively.

Table 3: Perceived Factors Influencing Heads of Libraries' Choice of Leadership Styles

S/NO	*ITEMS*	**Mean response**	**Interpretation**
1.	The group task situation - it is the degree to which the group members trust and like the leader, and are willing to follow his guidance.	*3.23*	***Strongly Agree***

2.	Job environment situation – it is the degree to which the task is spelt out.	*3.40*	*Strongly Agree*
3.	The position power – a leader with a relatively strong and stable position.	*3.88*	*Strongly Agree*
4.	The head of library values and feeling of job security.	*2.34*	*Disagree*
5.	Confidence in staff.	*3.56*	*Strongly Agree*
6.	The knowledge of the leader.	*3.01*	*Strongly Agree*
7.	The type of job and how it should be done.	*3.00*	*Strongly Agree*
8.	Leadership inclinations of the head librarian.	*3.82*	*Strongly Agree*
9.	Type of library in which the leader works.	*2.48*	*Agree*
10.	Size of the working groups.	*1.75*	*Strongly Disagree*

Table 3 shows that with a mean cutoff point of 2.50, eight items (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 10) were accepted. The highest mean score recorded is 3.88 representing the position power a leader has (a leader with a relatively strong and stable position). Generally, as shown in the table above all the items was accepted.

Table 4: Gender Difference in Mean scores.

S/NO	ITEMS	Male Mean Response	Standard Deviation	Female Mean Response	Standard Deviation
1.	The group task	❖ *3.50*	0.51	❖ *3.86*	0.54

	situation - it is the degree to which the group members trust and like the leader, and are willing to follow his guidance.				
2.	Job environment situation – it is the degree to which the task is spelt out.	*2.03*	*0.98*	*1.99*	*1.12*
3.	The position power – a leader with a relatively strong and stable position.	❖ *2.64*	*0.91*	❖ *2.93*	*0.62*
4.	The librarians' values and feeling of job security.	*2.00*	*0.57*	*1.97*	*0.63*
5.	Confidence in staff.	*2.31*	*1.05*	*2.25*	*0.97*
6.	The knowledge of the leader.	*2.03*	*0.51*	*1.96*	*0.59*
7.	The type of job and how it should be	*1.88*	*0.46*	❖ *2.50*	*1.24*

	done.				
8.	Leadership inclinations of the head librarian	❖ *2.64*	*0.91*	❖ *2.93*	*0.62*
9.	Type of library in which the leader works.	*2.36*	*1.60*	❖ *2.88*	*1.07*
10.	Size of the working groups.	*1.89*	*0.52*	*1.94*	*0.89*

❖ **= Agree**

In Table 4, it was observed that male respondents agrees with three items, 1, 3, 8 as perceived factors influencing their choice of leadership styles, while females agrees with five, 1, 3, 7, 8, 9. It was concluded that female respondents were more favourably disposed towards the perceived factors.

Table 5: T-test Summary of Male and Female Librarians on Perceived Factors Influencing Chief Librarian's Choice of Leadership Styles

Sources of Variation	N	X	SD	DF	Cal.t	Crit.t	Decision
Male	23	2.33	0.80		3.8	1.67	Rejects Null hypo.
				66			
Female	45	2.52	0.83				

The summary table of t-test analysis above shows that at 66 degree of freedom and .05

level of significance, the null hypothesis of no significant difference between male and female librarians on factors influencing their choice of leadership styles was rejected. This is because the calculated t (3.8) was greater than the critical t (1.67). Therefore, it was concluded that there is a significant difference between male and female librarians on perceived factors influencing chief librarians' choice of leadership styles.

Generally, all the items outlined as perceived factors were accepted, but the highest mean score recorded is 3.88 representing the position power of a leader. This findings corroborate Ovwigho (2004, p. 184) argument that the leadership styles of individuals (university librarians inclusive) are often influenced by situations such as the group –task situation. This is the degree to which the group members trust and like the leader, and are willing to follow his guidance; Job - Environment situation: which is the degree to which the job is spelt out, the knowledge of the leader and the group of job and how it should be done, and the extent to which the members can perform the job; The position power: a leader with a relatively strong and stable position power may have better influence

and control over his followers than the one whose appointment could be terminated at the pleasure of the group. It is a relatively strong and stable position that should be encouraged.

The hypothesis of no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female librarians on perceived factors influencing their heads of libraries' choice of leadership styles was rejected. This reason could be that female respondents were more favourably disposed towards the perceived factors influencing the head librarian's choice of leadership styles as reflected in Table 4. Also, Appelbaum and Shapiro (1993) and Mano – Negrin (2003) asserted that women are more relationship oriented, cooperative, nurturing and emotional in their leadership roles. They further asserted that these qualities make women particularly well suited for leadership roles at a time when organizations are adopting a stronger emphasis on teams and employee involvement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the study reveals that the highest mean score recorded is 3.88, representing the position power a leader has

(a leader with a relatively strong and stable position). Female respondents were more favourably disposed towards the perceived factors influencing the chief librarian's choice of leadership styles. There is a significant difference between male and female librarians on choice of perceived factors influencing chief librarians' leadership styles. It is therefore recommended that heads of libraries, particularly, academic libraries should be mindful of the way they go about exerting their influence on employees, in order to get the right attitude from staff.

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