

## **Perceived Effects Of Leadership Styles On Workers' Performance In Package Water Producing Industry In Adamawa State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*This empirical paper examines the impact of transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez faire leadership and servant leadership styles on performance among employees of Package Water producing Industry in Adamawa State, Nigeria. SPSS v.20 Correlation and regression techniques were used to test the study hypotheses. The result provided support for three hypothesized relationships for the study. Specifically, transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style and servant leadership style have positive, strong and significant relationship with performance among the study sample. However, laissez faire leadership style was not found to be significantly related to performance among the employees. Therefore, it is recommended that, package Water enterprises managers/ owners should practice transformational leadership, servant leadership styles and transactional leadership for improved performance in the industry in Adamawa State, Nigeria.*

**Keyword:** *Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Laissez faire Leadership, Servant Leadership, Employees' Performance*

### **Introduction**

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of people to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2004) or the key of trust that comes from the respect of others (Mintzberg, 2010). It is usually associated with the use of a leading strategy to offer inspiring motives and to enhance the staff potentials for growth and development (Fry, 2003). Effective leadership is seen as a potent source of management development and sustained competitive advantage for organizational performance improvement (Rowe, 2001). Leadership is the very heart and soul of organisational management. The need for a manager to find his leadership style is emphasized by (Glantz, 2002). Leadership style in an organization is one of the factors that play significant role in enhancing or retarding the interest and commitment of the individuals in the organization (Timothy *et al.*, 2011). According to Belonio (2010), leadership styles can either motivate or discourage employees, which in return can cause employee's increase or decrease in their level of performance. Efficiency in resources mobilization, allocation, utilization and enhancement of organizational performance depends, to a large extent, on leadership style, among other factors (Timothy *et al.*, 2011). Lack of appropriate leadership style and motivation are some of the factors that exert negative effect on organizational performance in Nigeria (Akpala, 1998).

The dissatisfactions of employees in leadership styles in an organization are more often than not; reflected in high labor turnover, frequent complaints, strikes and deterioration in job performance (Khan *et al.* 2010). Some of the effects of poor leadership in Nigeria organizations may not be far from the position of (Okoh 1998; & Okafor, 2005) who identified inefficiency, poor achievement of results, shoddy handling of activities and programs, poor rendering of services, abuse of office, lack of initiative and maintenance culture, delays, corruption, unsatisfactoriness, irregularities, poor quality of work output, poor commitment, low morale

truancy, lateness to duty, idleness, laxity, indiscipline, sleeping on duty, dishonesty, falsification of official records and poor productivity as the main features of Nigeria workers especially in the public sector and due largely to the effect of poor leadership.

A large number of studies on leadership styles were undertaken to explain the principles and effects of leadership styles (Jin, 2010; Aldoory & Toth, 2004; Islam, Aamir, Ahmed & Muhammad 2012; Abdullah, 2013; Padmakumar & Gantasala 2010; Chaudhry & Javed, 2012; Lisbijanto, & Budiyanto 2014). However, a few studies (Paracha *et al.*, 2012; Timothy *et al* 2011; Bass *et al.*, 2003, Desmond & Seligman, 1977) have related transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership to employee's performance, and have found positive relationship. Inconsistently, other studies (Timothy *et al.*, 2011; Herningsih *et al.*, 2013; Padmakumar *et al.*, 2010; Kieu, 2007) have related the transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership styles and have found negative relationship, thus suggesting more studies. Looking at the results of the previous studies (Paracha *et al.*, 2012; Chaudhry *et al.*, 2012; Judge *et al.*, 2004) which suggest inconclusiveness and mostly covers only two types of leadership styles, there is need for more research. Additionally, study by Rejas, Ponce, Almonte, & Ponce, (2006) indicated that there is a dominance of the transactional leadership style over transformational and laissez faire styles. Further investigation of the impact of transformational, transactional, laissez faire and servant leadership styles on performance among employees will help to provide deeper understanding and increase the validity of the results.

In line with these observed literature gaps, suggesting the inconclusive nature of past studies, some authors (Paracha *et al.*, 2012; Belonio; 2010) have recommended for additional laissez faire and servant leadership styles on employee's performance for better understanding of the dynamics and strength of their relationships. Against this background, this study is a unique attempt to replicate transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez faire leadership, servant leadership and employees' performance study within the Nigerian context more precisely within Adamawa State. Unlike the previous studies, this study is a direct relational study that will test for significance of the relationship between the leadership styles mentioned and employees' performance. Therefore, this study is unique in the following respects: Firstly, it tries to test the direct relationship between the four leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez faire and servant leadership) and employees' performance. Secondly, this study employs a new research context. That is, this study was conducted on package Water producing industry in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Most of the previous leadership styles studies (Wen, 2006; Cavazotte et al 2013; Abdul Aziz, 2013; Islam *et al.*, 2012; Bass *et al.* 2003; Ronald, 2011) were conducted in the western and Asian countries, thus providing only limited knowledge about the significant effects of leadership styles on employee performance across other global cultures. This study will contribute to leadership styles and employee's performance literature by providing perceptions of the effects of transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez faire leadership and servant leadership on employees' performance from a different cultural perspective.

## **Literature Review**

Available literature on leadership studies is abundant, but reading a variety of sources leads one to conclude that there is no agreement on one universal definition for the concept of leadership, but one can find in the literature working definitions that have been proposed and used by different authors. In this sense, this paper aligned with the definition of leadership by Mintzberg (2010) who according to him leadership is the key of trust that comes from the respect of others. It also aligned with the Islamic definition of leadership that said "Leadership in Islam is a trust (amanah)" (Beekun & Badawi 1999; Gurkan & Yusuf 2006; Haddara & Enanny, 2009). Employee performance is the accomplishment of agreed work at the right time in an effective and efficient way for anticipation of rewards from the employer.

Attempts have been made over the years to examine the impact and relationship of transformational leadership style on employee's performance in public and private organizations. Several studies (Paracha *et al.*, 2012;

Abdul Aziz, *et al.*, 2013; Cavazotte *et al.*, 2013, Biswass, 2009) have reported different findings from different countries and organization around the world. Some (Paracha *et al.*, 2012, Biswass, 2009, Cavazotte, *et al.*, 2013) found that transformational leadership style have positive impact on performance others (Herningsih & Mardiyono 2013, Timothy *et al.* 2011) reported contrary.

Transformational leadership is concerned with engaging the hearts and minds of others. Transformational leadership style helps followers to coordinate with each other and effectively increases followers' satisfaction level (Shibru, 2011). Transformational leadership has positive impact on employees' behaviors Al- Swidi, Nawawi & Al-Hosam (2012), and it is behaviors that lead to performance (Ripley, 1999). Many studies (Paracha *et al.*, 2012; Cavazotte, *et al.*, 2013; Abdul Aziz, & Abdullah, 2013) have found out that transformational leadership style has positive effects on performance. Transformational leaders motivate subordinates and appeal to their ideals and moral values by creating and representing an inspiring vision of the future (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Transactional leadership is based on the assumption that employees are motivated by the best system of rewards and punishments. It motivates subordinates by appealing to their personal desires, based on instrumental economic transactions. Transactional leadership helps organizations achieve their current objectives more efficiently by linking job performance to valued rewards and by ensuring that employees have the resources needed to get the job done (Zhu, Chew & Spengler, 2005). Iqbal *et al.*, (2012) opined that transactional leaders set high objective with very low or no participation from employees and set some punishment if they perform poorly, all this indicate total control by the leaders on the followers. Looking at transactional leadership and employee performance, research conducted by Bass *et al.*, (2003), reveals that positive relationship existed between transactional leadership and employee performance. Elenkov (2002) observed that in Russia, managers who adopt transactional leadership behavior positively correlates with organizational performance and innovation. Burke *et al.*, (2006) investigation on leadership behaviors and team performance outcomes a Meta-analysis revealed that transactional leadership behavior is significantly related to team performance. Lo *et al.*, (2009) also examined leadership styles and employees' organizational commitment and found that several dimensions of transactional and transformational leadership have positive relationship with organizational commitment but the impacts are stronger for transactional leadership style. In contrast, the findings of Padmakumar & Gantasala (2010) revealed that transactional leadership style was negatively related to job involvement and job satisfaction, which are major determinants of workers' performance. It was also found that employees support and prefer transformational leadership to transactional leadership.

Robbins (2007) explained the laissez-fair style as "Abdicates responsibilities avoid making decisions". Leaders who score high on laissez-faire leadership avoid making decisions, hesitate taking action, and are absent when needed (Judge *et al.*, 2004). The Laissez-faire leadership style is characterized by a total or general failure to take responsibilities for managing (Bass, 1999). Laissez-faire leadership can be effective in situations where group members are highly skilled, motivated and capable of working on their own (Cherry, 2012). On the contrary, is not ideal in situations where group members lack the knowledge or experience they need to complete tasks and make decisions (Judge *et al.*, 2004), Laissez-Faire leadership style and employees performance in organization have been investigated in the literature. Research by Chaudhry & Javed (2012), reveals that laissez faire leadership style is not an important style that boosts the motivation level of workers as compare to other leadership styles. If workers are not motivationally boosted they cannot perform better. Research by Frischer (2006) reveals that the inactivity of the laissez-faire leader has been consistently negatively related to productivity, satisfaction, cohesiveness and maximum goal achievement. Kieu (2007) research also reveals that, laissez-faire leadership had a direct and negative relationship with organizational performance. Laissez-faire leadership style was disliked because it was accompanied by less sense of accomplishment, less clarity about what to do, and less sense of group unity (Frischer, 2006).

Servant leadership is an approach to leadership with strong altruistic and ethical overtones that asks and requires leaders to be attentive to the needs of their followers and empathize with them. The fundamental aspect of

servant leadership is the leader’s notion that he/she is a servant first before any other consideration. True leadership emerges out of a deep-seated desire to first help others (Smith, 2005). The general understanding of servant leadership seems to stop at the point of focusing on meeting needs of the individuals (Townsend, 2011). Research by Hussain *et al* (2012) reveals that absence of servant leadership adversely affects an overall job performance. Townsend (2011) in his study reveals that the impact of servant leadership on organizations may increase employee’s satisfaction and retention, increases in productivity and sales, and more stability for the organization. Lisbijanto & Budiyanto (2014) reported that servant leadership has a positive significant impact on job satisfaction, but has not influenced organization performance significantly. Chinomona, Mashiloane & Poe (2013) found that servant leadership positively influences employee trust in the leader and employee commitment to the organization in a significant way.

## Theoretical Framework

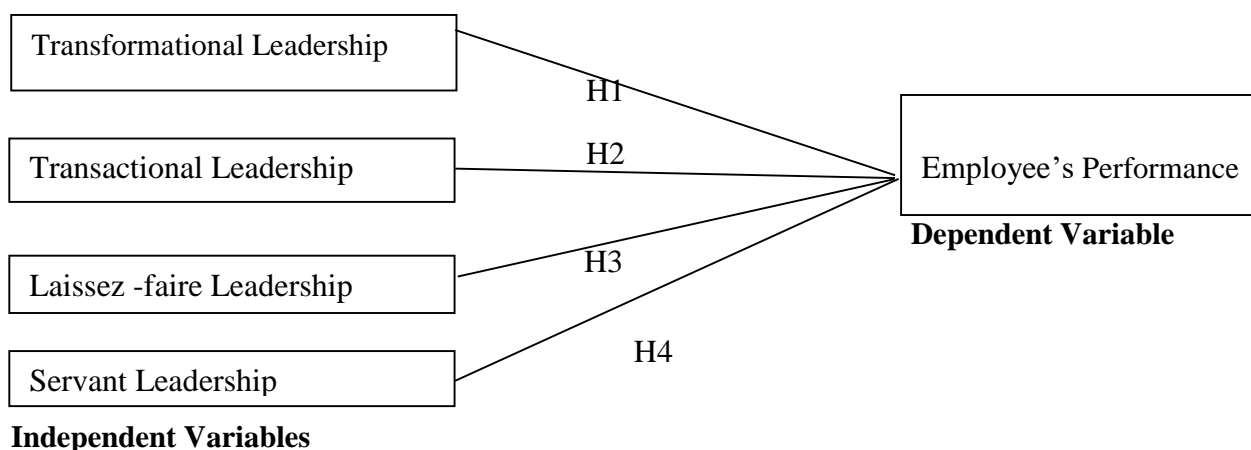
The dependent variable for this study is employees’ performance which is the variable of primary interest, in which the variance is attempted to be explained by the four independent variables of (1) Transformational Leadership, (2) Transactional Leadership, (3) Laissez faire Leadership, and (4) Servant Leadership.

Several studies (Abdul Aziz, *et al.*, 2013; Cavazotte *et al*, 2013 & Metwally, A.H & El-bishbishy, N 2014) have found that Transformational leadership theory relates to employee performance in an organization and has gained great popularity as it aimed at empowering and elevating followers. Transformational leadership achieved superior performance through acceptance of goals and mission of the organization.

Looking at transactional leadership and employee performance, research conducted by (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003, Elenkov, 2002; Burke *et al.*, 2006) reveals that positive relationship existed between transactional leadership theory and employee performance though others studies results prove contrary. Chaudhry & Javed (2012) research reveals that laissez faire leadership theory is not an important style that boosts the motivation level of workers as compare to other leadership styles. If workers are not motivationally boosted they cannot perform better.

Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997; Melchar *et al.*, 2010 explain that, employees who use servant leadership theory and model in organizations may be more committed to organizational values and maintain high-performance levels. In view of the above Hussain *et al* (2012) opined that absence of servant leadership adversely affects an overall job performance.

This study relationship is envision because Leadership styles can either motivate or discourage employees, which in return can cause employee’s increase or decrease in their level of performance (Belonio, 2010). The theoretical basis for this study is constructed by modifying the Belonio (2010) model by incorporating servant leadership style and removing employee’s satisfaction. The study relationship is diagrammatically represented below and serves as a basis for testing the research hypothesis.



**Source: Researcher's Compilation****Hypotheses of the Study**

The following hypotheses are formulated to establish the causal relationship and effects between the dependent and independent variables respectively.

H1: There is a significant relationship between transformational Leadership style and performance among employees of package Water producing enterprises in Adamawa State

H2: There is a significant relationship between transactional Leadership style and performance among employees of package Water producing enterprises in Adamawa State

H3: There is a significant relationship between laissez faire Leadership style and performance among employees of package Water producing enterprises in Adamawa State

H4: There is a significant relationship between servant Leadership style and performance among employees of package Water producing enterprises in Adamawa State

**Methodology****Population and Sample of the Study:**

Population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate (Sekaran, 2003). The total population of this study is 361 employees that is drawn from the selected package Water producing enterprises in Adamawa State. The Package Water Industry was chosen because of the rigor employees are made to go through in the course of meeting the production targets of the management. This has affected the economic, social and private lives of the employees. The managers of these enterprises may not have the same leadership styles in relating with their employees and to understand which style is better proper investigation like this research is required. Adamawa State is selected for this study because, the 2008 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) report indicated that only 23.2% of the Adamawa households have access to improved source of drinking water.

A sample is a subset of the population (Sekaran, 2003). The need for choosing the right sample for a research investigation cannot be overemphasized. The sample size for this study is 186 based on Krerjcie and Morgan's scientific guideline for determining sample size for research activities. Stratified sampling method was adopted. Stratified random sampling can either be proportionate or disproportionate to the number of elements in the stratum (Sekaran, 2003). This study further adopted the disproportionate stratified random sampling because some strata are too small while others are large.

**Methods of Data Collection**

An explanatory survey design was adopted for this study. This is because the study sought to explain the relationships between transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez faire leadership, Servant leadership and employees' performance within the selected package Water companies. A structured questionnaire consisting of 94 closed ended multiple choice questions was used. The questionnaire is divided in to three segments. A five point likert scale ranging from one (1) representing strongly disagree to five (5) representing strongly agree was employed. The questionnaire was administered across the eight companies by the researcher himself. The questionnaire was design using English language because is the official language in Nigeria.

**Measurement and Instrumentation**



To measure transformational leadership, transactional leadership and laissez faire leadership styles, Multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X) by Avolio *et al.*, (1995) was used. Antonakis *et al.*, (2003) results indicate that the current version of the (MLQ Form 5X) is a valid and reliable instrument for measuring the leadership styles.

However, to measure servant leadership, thought there are many measurement instruments developed by researchers (e.g. Russell & Stone 2002; Denis, 2004; Spears, 2004; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Liden *et al.*, 2008), this study adopted Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) instrument developed by Laub (1999) for the measurement of servant leadership variable. This particular instrument is adopted because is best to be utilized for research purposes as a single scale measure of servant leadership at the organizational level (Irving, 2005). Finally, to measure employee performance Role Based Performance Scale (RBPS) developed by Welbourne *et al.*, (1997) was adopted in this study using a five point likert scale ranging from (1) representing strongly disagree to (5) representing strongly agree.

## Results and Discussion

This study result demonstrated that three (3) out of four (4) of the leadership styles (transformational, transactional and servant) were significantly related with performance among employees. However, only laissez faire leadership that failed to show significantly relationship with performance. Additionally, among all the leadership styles transformational leadership ( $\beta = .447$ ,  $t = 6.112$ ,  $p < .000$ ) had the highest, strong and positive standardized beta value coefficient. This indicates that transformational leadership style was the most important variable in predicting high performance among employees. The other predictors that are important in predicting high performance are the servant leadership style ( $\beta = .220$ ,  $t = 2.956$ ,  $p < .004$ ) and transactional leadership style ( $\beta = .174$ ,  $t = 2.176$ ,  $p < .031$ ). Among the tested predictors it was only laissez faire leadership style that demonstrated negative and non significant effect relationship with performance among employees. Therefore, three of the leadership styles (transformational, transactional and servant) impacted on the performance among employees as hypothesized. Whilst hypotheses 1, 2 and 4 are accepted, hypothesis 3 was rejected.

In sum, this study have found that transformational leadership style is significantly positively related with employee performance and these findings provided empirical support for the hypothesis and are thus, consistent with the previous studies (Paracha *et al.*, 2012, Biswass 2009, Abdul Aziz, *et al.*, .2013, Cavazotte, *et al.*, 2013). The result also reveals that significant relationship exists between transactional leadership style and performance among employees and that the relationship has positive effect. However, results demonstrated that the relationship between laissez faire leadership and performance among employees is not significant. Hence, H3 was not supported. This findings may not be too surprising considering that laissez faire leadership managers avoid getting involved when important issues arise, are absent when needed and delay responding to urgent problems. Thus, laissez-faire leadership style is not an important style that boosts the performance of workers in an organization as compared to other leadership styles and should be avoided among small and medium enterprises. Another thrust of this study was to examine the relationship between servant leadership style and performance among employees of small and medium enterprises in Adamawa state. Expectedly, the results have provided empirical support for hypothesis H4. This finding demonstrated strong positive and significant support for the hypothesized relationship indicating that when managers put the needs of the workers ahead of their own, provide the support and resources needed to help workers meet their goals, creates an environment that encourages learning, take appropriate action when it is needed, works alongside the workers instead of separate from them etc, the followers reciprocate by putting more efforts (performance) in to the organization. This study is consistent with the past studies of (Harwiki 2012, Chinomona *et al.*, 2013).

**Table 1.1: Correlation Matrix of Leadership Styles and Employees Performance**

	TFL	TSL	LFL	SL	EP
TFL	1				
TSL	.518**	1			
LFL	.195*	.479**	1		
SL	.567**	.487**	0.023	1	
EP	.637**	.451**	0.046	.555**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Table 1.2: Results of Regression Analysis**

Independent Variables	Beta ( $\beta$ ) values	t- values	P values
Transformational leadership	0.447	6.112	.000
Transactional leadership	0.174	2.176	0.031
Laissez faire Leadership	-0.129	-1.922	0.056
Servant leadership	0.22	2.956	0.004
F value			<b>37.273</b>
R			<b>0.692</b>
R Square			<b>0.479</b>
Adjusted R Square			<b>0.466</b>
Durbin-Watson			<b>1.613</b>

## Conclusion

This study provides an understanding to the management of package Water producing industry on how to foster new leadership practices, in order to enhance employees’ performance. Moreover, the study reported which style of leadership is comparatively more significant than the others in improving job performance among workers of package Water producing industry in Adamawa state. Managers should select the styles keeping in view the findings of this study if they really want to adopt new leadership practices and get rid of status quo. The findings of the study can also be well applied and generalized in other job providing sectors of Adamawa state and Nigeria at large. Keeping in view the natural similarities, the results of this study can also be applied in many other developing countries like Niger, Ghana, and Cameroun etc.

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