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# Transformational And Autocratic Leadership Styles And Their Influence On Job Satisfaction: A Study Of Delta State University, Abraka

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**ABSTRACT**
The role of leadership in shaping employee attitudes and performance remains a critical focus in organizational behavior research, particularly in the academic sector where effective administration influences institutional success. Despite extensive literature on leadership styles and job satisfaction, existing studies often isolate leadership styles or are limited to specific sectors, leaving a gap in understanding their combined impact within Nigerian university administration. This study, therefore, examines the relationship between transformational and autocratic leadership styles and job satisfaction among staff at Delta State University, Abraka, in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State, Nigeria. Anchored in the transformational and authoritarian leadership theories, the study employed a correlational design and a purposive-random sampling technique to select 350 respondents across the four university campuses. Two validated instruments the Leadership Style Assessment in University Administration and the Job Satisfaction Assessment were administered, both based on a modified four-point Likert scale. Reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.838. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and linear regression via SPSS Version 27. Results indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction ($r = 0.690$, $p < 0.001$), while autocratic leadership displayed a weak and non-significant negative relationship with job satisfaction ($r = -0.065$, $p = 0.233$). These findings affirm that transformational leadership characterized by inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence is seen to enhance employee satisfaction, whereas autocratic tendencies may hinder such outcomes. The study recommends institutional investment in leadership development programs, participatory governance structures, and continuous assessment of leadership effectiveness to foster a more satisfied and productive workforce within the university system.
**Keywords**: Transformational Leadership, Autocratic Leadership, Job Satisfaction

## INTRODUCTION

As organizations, including universities, shift towards strategic human resource management, retaining skilled employees has become a major concern, especially in increasingly competitive environments. Although institutions invest in employee development, many still struggle with retaining trained staff.

Among the factors affecting staff retention, job satisfaction plays a significant role and is influenced by various organizational and individual variables (Nanjundeswaraswamy, 2019).

Job satisfaction has traditionally been defined as a positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience (Locke, 1976). More recent views see it as a multidimensional evaluative state encompassing both affective and cognitive components (Mérida-López et al., 2019; Fan et al., 2019). It is also closely linked to mental well-being and turnover intentions. Organizational factors like feedback, recognition, participation, and rewards are essential for improving job satisfaction and reducing burnout and turnover (Scanlan & Still, 2019; Fu & Deshpande, 2014). Similarly, employees' perceptions that their organization values their contributions and well-being have been shown to strengthen emotional bonds and satisfaction (Kim et al., 2016). In Uganda, job satisfaction was identified as the strongest predictor of employee commitment (Sejjaaka & Kaawaase, 2014).

Leadership style remains a central factor influencing employee outcomes and satisfaction (Megheirkouni, 2017; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Effective leadership promotes organizational commitment by aligning leadership behavior with employee needs (Yulk, 2017), while leadership that fails to do so can weaken morale. Metwally et al. (2014) affirm that leadership style directly influences employees' satisfaction levels.

In African and Nigerian contexts, leadership style has a critical impact on organizational culture and employee behavior. Mukoro et al. (2018) emphasized the need for adaptable leadership approaches in South Africa and Nigeria to meet diverse staff expectations. In Nigeria, effective leadership is marked by responsiveness to both organizational goals and employee needs, which significantly enhances job satisfaction and retention (Mukoro, 2018).

**Statement of the problem**

We must make sure that effectiveness and efficiency are maintained and pursued, that the employees of these universities are at least content with their jobs, and that retention becomes a vital factor that needs to be taken into account if we be in accord that higher education institutions are central to the development of any country. An organization's effectiveness is influenced by a variety of elements. Among the many variables, the leader's style of leadership and the workers' job happiness could be cited (Josanov-Vrgovic & Pavlovic, 2014).

There are numerous leadership styles that can be used by leaders such as transactional, autocratic, democratic, laisse-fare, transformational etc. Many Universities including the ones in Delta Central Senatorial Area, faces an impending challenge concerning the interplay between leadership styles within university administration and the resultant impact on job satisfaction among its employees. This complex issue arises from the intricate nature of academic institutions, where effective leadership is not only essential for the successful navigation of institutional challenges but also for fostering an environment that nurtures the professional growth and job satisfaction of the people who work in these academic communities. Factors that may be contributing to the problem include the evolving expectations and demands placed on university administrators, the need for adaptive leadership styles in response to changing educational paradigms, and the unique context of the Delta Central Senatorial Area.

Few studies have looked at the connection between job satisfaction among employees and leadership styles. For instance, Abidakun and Ganiyu (2020) investigated the relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction from the viewpoint of workers in the Nigerian brewing sector. Particularly within the brewing sector rather than in a school. Similarly, In Osun State, Nigeria, Adetayo et al. (2023) studied job satisfaction, employee motivation, and leadership styles in private university libraries. The study was conducted in a private university in the western part of Nigeria, with a focus on library employees. In the southeast of Nigeria, Okoli (2018), another researcher, investigated the connection between work satisfaction and organizational climate.To the aforementioned studies, there is a lack of research in this field, and university management appears to lack specificity. However, it turns into a real-world problem as the researcher tries to untangle the web of difficulties, the connection between different leadership philosophies and how they impact job satisfaction in university administration. The researcher must now deal with a concrete problem that requires immediate attention, analysis, and resolution rather than just an

abstract one. For this reason, the researcher intends to look into job satisfaction and leadership in Delta Central Senatorial Area university administration.

**Objectives of the study**

The general objective of the study is to investigate leadership styles and job satisfaction in Delta state university Abraka of Delta State. The Specific objective is to investigate;

i. the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction
ii. the relationship between autocratic leadership and job satisfaction

**Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction?
2. is there a relationship between autocratic leadership style and job satisfaction?

**Research hypotheses**

**$H_0$1:** There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction
**$H_0$2:** There is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and job satisfaction

**Scope of the study**

The study covers leadership and job satisfaction in university administration with special emphasis on the university present in Delta State Senatorial Area of Delta State.

**Limitations of the study**

External factors such as economic conditions, political stability, or changes in university policies and procedures may influence job satisfaction independently of leadership styles but are not accounted for in the study.

The findings of the study may be specific to the Delta Central Senatorial Area and may not be fully generalizable to other regions or countries due to contextual differences in organizational culture.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This examined relevant works related to the study which include conceptual discourse of some terms that are central to this study, this will be done under the following sub-headings; explanation of concepts, theoretical review, empirical review, gap in reviewed, and summary of literature review.

**Job Satisfaction**

Over the past few decades, the term "satisfaction" has been extensively discussed in a variety of literary works, with the main definition being the discrepancy between the perceived and expected values (Aljarah et al., 2018; Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013). Nonetheless, it is reasonable to argue that when a company can give an employee a sense of pride or fulfillment, that individual will be satisfied. Job satisfaction, to put it simply, is the enjoyment one feels while working. An organization's productivity and effectiveness are higher when its employees are happy (Haque & Aston, 2016; Haque et al., 2018; Nanjundeswaraswamy 2019).

Job satisfaction (JS) refers to sustaining workers' dedication to their work and sense of internal accomplishment when finishing a task (Kasemsap, 2017). One of the most important responsibilities of institutional leadership is this. Job satisfaction, which is also important to increasing employee productivity, is one of the most crucial components in any institution's development to reach a strong and lucrative position (Dugguh & Dennis, 2014).

One of the elements that might increase or decrease satisfaction in public universities is the leadership style (Dirar et al., 2021). One of the key elements that enhances human resources is job satisfaction, which is a fundamental component of any organization and is bolstered by both internal and external factors (Purwanto et al., 2019). It is crucial to guaranteeing the high caliber of work produced by public university employees (Abayomi, 2020). In addition to encouraging creativity, it can improve workers' job experiences and organizational outcomes (Abidakun & Ganiyu, 2020; Fu & Deshpande, 2014Also, satisfaction can boost retention rates, promote individual effort, enhance staff abilities and communication skills, and advance the company's overall growth.

To Mérida-López et al. (2019), job satisfaction is an evaluative state that conveys happiness and positive sentiments toward the work that one does. According to Fan et al. (2019), rotation and mental health have

a substantial correlation with job satisfaction, which is the overall assessment of employees about their professions. Some scholars define employee satisfaction as the positive response to a job that arises from the discrepancy between what the person in charge wanted, expected, and earned and what actually occurred (Castaneda & Scanlan, 2014; Yee, Guo & Yeung, 2015).

**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Job Satisfaction: A Nexus**

Five levels of human wants are listed in Abraham Maslow's 1943 Maslow's Hierarchy of wants: physiological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Factors including the work environment, connections with coworkers, possibilities for advancement, pay, and alignment with personal values all have an impact on job satisfaction, which is a reflection of an individual's emotional reaction to their employment (Spector, 1997; Judge et al., 2017; Fisher, 2018).

A clear relationship exists between Maslow's theory and job satisfaction. According to the hierarchy, lower-level needs must be met before higher-level needs can influence behavior. In the workplace, employees are more likely to experience job satisfaction when their physiological and safety needs such as fair compensation and job security—are fulfilled (Maslow, 1943). Addressing these needs through safe working conditions and supportive management increases the likelihood of satisfaction (Newman et al., 2017; Van De Voorde & Beijer, 2015).

Furthermore, fulfillment of social needs and recognition (belongingness and esteem) also enhances job satisfaction. Organizations that promote positive work culture, encourage social interaction, provide development opportunities, and recognize achievements are more likely to foster satisfied employees (Judge et al., 2017; Fisher, 2018). Maslow's theory thus offers a useful framework for understanding the underlying factors that contribute to job satisfaction in the workplace.

**Leadership Style**

A key factor in the achievement or failure of an organization is leadership, which can be described as "the process that allows individuals to direct their actions and skills to fulfill organizational objectives" (Nteboheng & Samson, 2021).

It entails outlining a goal, convincing participants to embrace it, and supplying the resources required to make it a reality (Chandrasekara, 2019). According to Mwesigwa et al. (2020), leadership is also viewed as the patterns of behavior that leaders employ when collaborating with others, which mirror the characteristics and actions that leaders employ while engaging with subordinates (Samita, 2022). While Govender et al. (2013) see the leader as a change agent who motivates followers to accomplish objectives, Nam and Park (2019) define leadership style as the way leaders relate to their teams. In a similar vein, Nadeem et al. (2012) define a leader as someone who recognizes a need and works to address it.

Leadership styles remain a widely studied subject (Jeevarathnam et al., 2013; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016; Megheirkouni, 2017), yet no single definition fully captures the complexity of leadership (Bro, 2019). The challenge in defining leadership stems not from a lack of data but from its abundance, leading to contradictory interpretations (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Destructive and authoritarian leadership, as noted by Alshaar (2022), negatively affect both employees and organizations.

The leadership style adopted greatly impacts organizational outcomes. Effective leadership enhances performance and goal achievement, while ineffective styles hinder both organizational and employee performance (Akhila, 2018). Leaders must adopt styles appropriate to each situation (Armstrong, 2016).

Leadership, according to Northouse (2016), is "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." highlighting its interactive, group-based, and goal-oriented nature. Yukl and Van Fleet (2010) similarly describe it as influencing others to agree on actions and facilitating efforts toward shared objectives. These definitions, along with Bass's work on transactional and transformational leadership, collectively emphasize leadership as a dynamic, influence-driven process that balances individual and group dynamics to achieve common goals.

**Transformational leaders**

Transformational leadership is defined as inspiring change and empowering followers to improve themselves and organizational processes (Wahab et al., 2014). It emphasizes developing trust, fostering creativity, and recognizing contributions. Bass (1985) provides the most widely accepted definition, highlighting the leader's ability to influence organizational commitment by promoting shared values,

emphasizing the link between effort and goal achievement, and enhancing personal commitment among both leaders and followers (Sayadi, 2016).

Previous studies (Top et al., 2015; Metwally et al., 2014) suggest that transformational leaders empower employees, which increases their motivation and job satisfaction. Arzi and Farahbod (2014) describe transformational leadership as a process of positively influencing followers, encouraging them to surpass performance expectations by shaping their beliefs, values, and attitudes rather than enforcing compliance.

Transformational leaders are attentive to the needs of subordinates, offering support and motivation while fostering organizational commitment. These leaders mentor, build interpersonal bonds, and help employees develop leadership qualities (Chen et al., 2014; Eskandari, 2014). Their impact on employee performance and satisfaction contributes significantly to overall organizational success.

Chan and Mak (2014) note that while transformational leadership involves a variety of influence processes, more research is required to fully understand how it shapes follower attitudes and behavior. Idealized influence, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are the four essential elements of transformational leadership, according to Bass (1990).

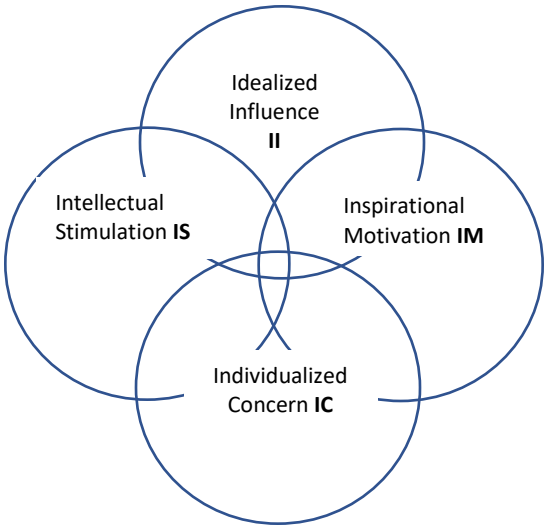


Figure 1: The four overlapping circles in the diagram stand for the essential elements of transformational leadership: Individualized Consideration, Intellectual Stimulation, Inspirational Motivation, and Idealized Influence. All four elements intersect.

**Autocratic Leadership Style**

Autocratic (or authoritarian) leadership is considered the oldest leadership style, where decision-making is centralized in the leader and subordinates are expected to implement directives without input or flexibility (Hawela, 2019). It emphasizes control, structure, and the centralization of authority, with little concern for participative processes (Bro, 2019). The autocratic leader prioritizes tasks over people, often perceiving individual needs as conflicting with organizational goals (Osama, 2014).

According to Quible (2005), this leadership style allows group members to focus on tasks without engaging in decision-making. While effective in situations where the leader holds critical knowledge (Roul, 2012), it limits subordinate autonomy and initiative. Authoritarian leadership is often associated with negative outcomes such as reduced morale and job satisfaction, particularly when power is misused (Harms et al., 2018; Thusyanthini & Thusyanthini, 2014; Jerome, 2018).

Although it may offer efficiency in high-pressure or directive contexts, the autocratic style is widely viewed as rigid and potentially detrimental to long-term employee satisfaction.see (Figure 2.2).

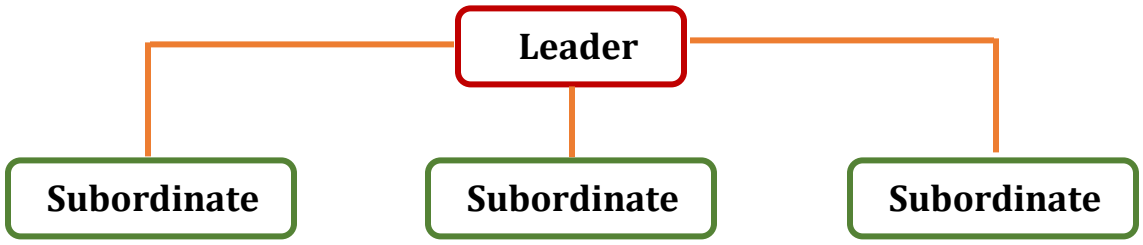


**Figure 1:** The authoritarian style of leadership. The diagram depicts the interaction between the leader and the led in a typical relation between the authoritarian leader and the followers.
**Source**: Muhammad (2012). An Introduction to Management, 2nd Edition, University Press Office, Algeria.

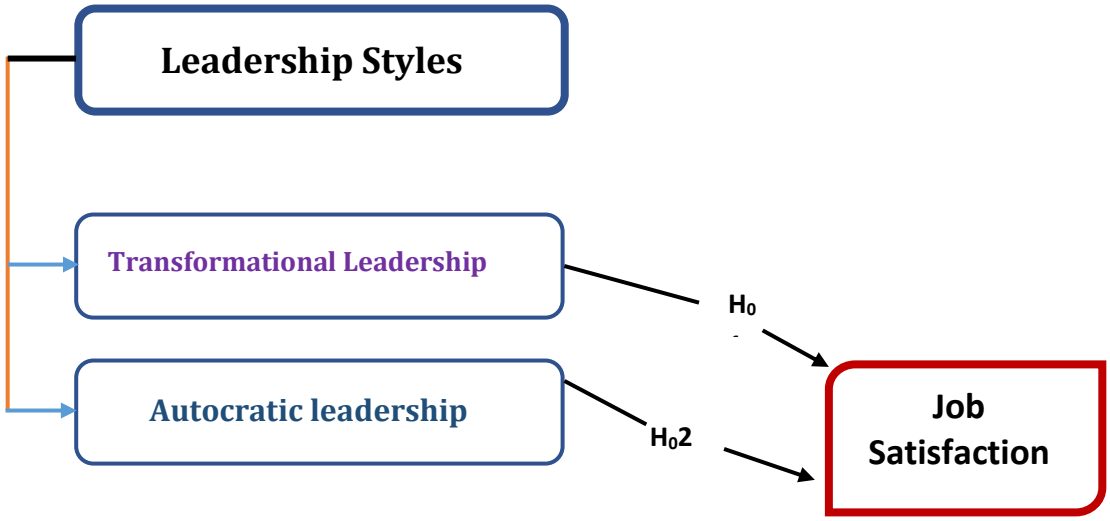


**Figure 3.** A conceptual framework diagram developed for the study

The diagram above, features arrows indicating relationships between variables: arrows from the independent variable boxes (containing various leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership) point towards the dependent variable box (job satisfaction). These arrows signify that different leadership styles influences' job satisfaction.

**Theoretical framework**

This study is anchored on Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985), which provides a comprehensive lens to examine how leadership behavior influences job satisfaction. Though several theories such as Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971), Servant Leadership (Greenleaf, 1970), and Leader-Member Exchange Theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) offer insights into leader-follower dynamics, Transformational Leadership Theory is particularly relevant due to its emphasis on motivation, individualized support, and organizational commitmentkey factors in employee satisfaction.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Developed by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985), Transformational Leadership Theory posits that effective leaders inspire followers to exceed expectations by creating a compelling vision, fostering innovation, and addressing individual needs. It is built on four key dimensions:

- Idealized Influence: Leaders serve as role models, earning trust and respect (Bass, 1985).

- Inspirational Motivation: Leaders communicate a clear and meaningful vision that energizes followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006).
- Intellectual Stimulation: Followers are encouraged to think creatively and challenge existing norms (Cheung & Wong, 2018).
- Individualized Consideration: Leaders offer support tailored to individual employee needs, promoting development and satisfaction (Farahnak et al., 2019).

Empirical studies (e.g., Akinbode & Ayodeji, 2017; Oladipo et al., 2019) affirm that transformational leadership enhances job satisfaction and performance across sectors in Nigeria. However, critiques of the theory highlight its potential for idealism, risk of leader manipulation, and the emotional toll on employees (Yukl, 1999; Breevaart et al., 2014).

Supporting Perspective: Autocratic Leadership Style

In contrast, autocratic leadership is characterized by centralized control, top-down decision-making, and limited employee input (Bro, 2019). The leader prioritizes task completion over interpersonal concerns, often making unilateral decisions with strict supervision (Osama, 2014). While effective in crisis or time-sensitive scenarios, this leadership style can suppress creativity and reduce morale. Studies (Thusyanthini & Thusyanthini, 2014; Jerome, 2018) have shown that autocratic leadership often correlates negatively with job satisfaction, particularly in academic environments where autonomy and participation are valued. Though it may achieve short-term compliance, it may hinder long-term commitment and employee engagement.

**Relevance to the Study**

This study adopts Transformational Leadership Theory to discover how leadership behaviors influence job satisfaction among university staff. It also examines the contrasting effects of autocratic leadership to provide a balanced understanding of how these two styles affect staff morale and organizational commitment at Delta State University, Abraka.

**Empirical Review**

We examined various studies and research findings related to our topic. The focus is on integrating the data from these studies to understand the current state of knowledge, identify gaps in the literature, and provide a foundation for our research.

The effect of transformational leadership on academic staff job satisfaction at Cihan University-Erbil was examined by Jameel and Ahmad (2019). Using a quantitative approach, they employed a survey strategy with structured questionnaires, collecting data from 137 participants. Four dimensions of transformational leadership Idealized Influence (II), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS), and Individualized Consideration (IC) were measured using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which was created by Bass and Avolio (2004). Each dimension had five items. The findings showed that transformational leadership significantly improved academic staff members' work satisfaction.

Similarly, at the University of Babylon in Iraq, Al-Owaidi, Saleh, and Benmechirah (2023) investigated the connection between leadership styles and job satisfaction. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire was used to acquire 50 valid replies from the 55 participants in the study. The results showed that job satisfaction and democratic leadership were significantly positively correlated, whereas authoritarian leadership and job satisfaction were negatively correlated. There was no discernible link found between job happiness and laissez-faire leadership. The study urged more research on various leadership styles in different organizations and advocated for the adoption of leadership styles that foster loyalty and job satisfaction.

Zeleke and Obang (2021) investigated the connection between job satisfaction and leadership styles at Gambella Teachers' Education and Health Science College. They polled 17 leaders and 79 members of the academic staff using a correlational study approach. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) were used to gather data. According to their research, transactional leadership was the most popular style, and the most highly regarded dimension was

Management by Exception (Active). The results indicated that transformational leadership and all nine aspects of job satisfaction were statistically significantly positively correlated, whereas laissez-faire leadership was negatively correlated with the majority of job satisfaction aspects, with the exception of working circumstances.

Specchia et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review to identify and analyze the existing literature on the correlation between leadership styles and nurses' job satisfaction. Using databases like PubMed, CINAHL, and Embase, the study included 12 studies out of an initial pool of 11,813 titles, focusing on secondary care nursing settings. In 88% of the chosen studies, the results showed a substantial relationship between nurses' job satisfaction and leadership style. Authentic, resonant, and servant leadership styles were the next most positively correlated, after transformational leadership. Conversely, laissez-faire and passive-avoidant approaches consistently shown a negative relationship with work satisfaction.The transactional style demonstrated both positive and negative correlations. The review concluded that addressing leadership knowledge gaps is crucial for improving healthcare professionals' job satisfaction and healthcare quality. Unlike Specchia et al.'s review, which synthesized existing literature, the study on "Leadership Styles and Job Satisfaction in University Administration in Delta Central Senatorial Area" used questionnaires as its primary data source.

Okereka (2015) examined the impact of leadership styles on employee performance in the Delta State House of Assembly, Nigeria. Using a historical research method, qualitative data were gathered through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to explore the relationship between leadership styles and performance outcomes. The study found that leadership style significantly influenced staff performance, with the leadership style being shaped by the authority structure and recruitment processes. Additionally, leadership recruitment through merit, clear authority structures, and continuous leader training were found to contribute to improved performance and job satisfaction. Based on these findings, the study recommended reforms in leadership recruitment and training to adopt the appropriate leadership styles, ultimately enhancing job satisfaction and employee performance.

Ali and Dahie (2015) examined how secondary school teachers in Somalia's capital of Mogadishu felt about their jobs in relation to transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership styles. 200 instructors' worth of data were examined using both analytical and descriptive designs. The study employed regression analysis to test three hypotheses. The results showed that all three leadership styles had a significant and positive impact on job satisfaction. The study emphasized the importance of leadership styles in enhancing teacher satisfaction and recommended that school leaders provide opportunities for teachers to make independent decisions to maintain and improve job satisfaction.

Opigo (2021) examined leadership styles practiced by Heads of Departments (HODs) and their effects on job satisfaction at the Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State. The study focused on transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, using a descriptive survey research design. Data were collected from 116 departmental members through questionnaires that assessed their perceptions of HODs' leadership styles and their impact on job satisfaction. The results indicated that the performance of HODs could be enhanced by adopting leadership styles that foster employee commitment, ultimately improving job satisfaction.

In the inpatient rooms of RSU Bhakti Rahayu Tabanan, Indonesia, Hakim and Wirajaya (2021) examined the effects of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles on nurses' job satisfaction. Using a cross-sectional design and quantitative approach, data were collected via questionnaires from 30 nurses. The results indicated that all three leadership styles had a significant influence on job satisfaction, with the democratic leadership style being the most dominant. Specifically, a t-test result of 4.228 showed its strongest impact.

Dzakpasu et al. (2022) explored the relationship between head teachers' leadership styles and job satisfaction among Ghanaian public basic school teachers in the Kwabre East Municipal area. The study,

using a descriptive survey design and a sample of 286 teachers, found that head teachers predominantly exhibited a transformational leadership style, which had a significant positive correlation with teachers' job satisfaction.

Duyan and Yildiz (2020) examined the effect of transformational leadership on the job satisfaction of academic staff in faculties of Sports Sciences at universities in Turkey. The study collected data from 208 academic staff members and found a significant positive effect of transformational leadership on job satisfaction. This study differs from the research on university administration in the Delta Central Senatorial Area by focusing specifically on a single leadership style (transformational) and a specific academic discipline (Sports Sciences) within universities in Turkey.

Saeed et al. (2023) investigated the impact of leadership styles (democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire) on job satisfaction at the University of Halabja in Iraq. The study, based on 252 responses, found that all leadership styles significantly impacted job satisfaction, with democratic leadership having the most positive influence.

Hakim and Wirajaya (2021) conducted a study to assess the influence of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles on nurses' job satisfaction in the inpatient rooms of RSU Bhakti Rahayu Tabanan, Indonesia. The study aimed to identify which leadership style most significantly impacts job satisfaction among nurses, who play a key role in providing quality care. The study employed a cross-sectional design with a quantitative approach, collecting data from 30 nurses using a questionnaire in April 2018. Multiple linear regression and hypothesis testing were used for data analysis. The findings showed that all three leadership styles significantly influenced job satisfaction, with democratic leadership having the most dominant positive effect, as indicated by the F test (86.99) and p-value (0.000). The study's focus on healthcare settings in Indonesia

The impact of staff motivation and leadership styles on work satisfaction among library employees at private colleges in Osun State, Nigeria, was investigated by Adetayo et al. in 2023. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of staff motivation and leadership styles on work satisfaction. The study examined information gathered from library employees at private institutions using a descriptive survey approach. The results showed that high work satisfaction was strongly correlated with both intrinsic motivation and democratic leadership.

Okoli (2018) studied organizational climate and job satisfaction among academic staff in private universities in Southeast Nigeria. The study employed a survey design, collecting data from 182 academic staff. The results indicated a positive significant relationship between leadership style, academic freedom, and job satisfaction. The study concluded that improving organizational climate, including leadership style and working conditions, would enhance academic staff satisfaction.

**Gap in the Literature**

The studied research confirms the influence of leadership styles on job satisfaction across different sectors. Higher job satisfaction is regularly associated with transformational leadership, which is typified by intellectual stimulation, personalized attention, and inspirational motivation. According to research by Specchia et al. (2021) and Jameel and Ahmad (2019), transformative leadership encourages a more engaged workforce. In contrast to transformational leadership, Zeleke and Obang (2021) found that transactional leadership has a favorable but more constrained impact on job satisfaction.

However, there is a gap in the literature, as no study has simultaneously examined the relationship between transformational, autocratic leadership styles and job satisfaction within a single study. While the literature has forayed into various sectors, there is a lack of research on the academic sector in Nigeria, particularly within university administration. This study investigates the relationship between transformational and autocratic leadership styles and job satisfaction among staff at Delta State University, Abraka, aiming to address this gap. Most existing studies focus on quantitative research

methods, pointing to the need for more mixed-methods research. This approach provided an understanding of how different leadership styles affect job satisfaction.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The study focused on Delta Central Senatorial District in Delta State, Nigeria, which spans approximately 3,700 km² and has a population of 2,032,707. The research used a correlational design to explore the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction within Delta State University, Abraka, and included a sample of 350 staff members from across its four campuses. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were employed. Two instruments, the "Leadership Style Assessment in University Administration in Delta Central Senatorial Area" (LSAUADCSA) and the "Job Satisfaction Assessment in University Administration in Delta Central Senatorial Area" (JSAUADCSA), were developed to measure leadership styles and job satisfaction, respectively, both employing a modified four-point Likert scale. The instruments were validated by experts and their reliability tested using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.838. Data were collected through questionnaire distribution across campuses with the aid of research assistants, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation. Ethical approval was obtained, and the collected data were analyzed using SPSS, employing Pearson Product-Moment Correlation for research questions and linear regression analysis for hypothesis testing at a 0.05 significance level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section contains the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected from the sample respondents through the use of questionnaire. The presentation was done in different sections.

**Research Question one:** *What is the relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction?*

**Table 1: Correlation Analysis of Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction**

| Variable | Mean ($\bar{X}$) | Standard Deviation (SD) | Transformational Leadership | Job Satisfaction | Sig. (2-tailed) | n |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Transformational Leadership | 28.6884 | 7.65831 | 1 | 0.690 | 0.000 | 337 |
| Job Satisfaction | 34.8843 | 5.95231 | 0.690 | 1 | | 337 |

As shown in table 1 above, the mean score for the Transformational Leadership style is 28.6884 with a standard deviation of 7.65831, whereas the mean score for Job Satisfaction is 34.8843 with a standard deviation of 5.95231. Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction have a moderate to high positive association, as indicated by their 0.690 Pearson correlation. This implies that there is a strong positive association between work satisfaction and perceptions of transformative leadership, with the former tending to rise as the latter does. The correlation's p-value, which is less than 0.05 and is 0.000 (1-tailed), shows that the association is statistically significant. This implies that it is unlikely that the positive relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction happened by accident and can be regarded as a noteworthy discovery.

**Research Question two:** *What is the relationship between Autocratic Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction?*

**Table 2: Correlation Analysis of Autocratic Leadership and Job Satisfaction**

| Variable | Mean ($\bar{X}$) | Standard Deviation (SD) | Autocratic Leadership | Job Satisfaction | Sig. (2-tailed) | n |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Autocratic Leadership** | 30.4688 | 5.79817 | 1 | -0.065 | 0.116 | 337 |
| **Job Satisfaction** | 34.8843 | 5.95231 | -0.065 | 1 | | 337 |

As shown in table 2 above, the Autocratic Leadership construct has a mean score of 30.4688 with a standard deviation of 5.79817, while Job Satisfaction has a mean score of 34.8843 with a standard deviation of 5.95231. The Pearson correlation between Autocratic Leadership and Job Satisfaction is -0.065, indicating a weak negative relationship. This suggests that as perceptions of Autocratic Leadership increase, job satisfaction tends to decrease slightly. However, the strength of this negative relationship is very weak. The p-value for the correlation is 0.116 (1-tailed), which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the relationship is not statistically significant.

**Hypotheses Testing**

**$H_0$1:** There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction

**Table 3: Coefficients (Regression Analysis) for Hypothesis One**

Coefficientsa

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 1 | (Constant) | 19.507 | 0.913 | | 21.366 | 0 | 17.711 | 21.303 |
| | TRFOR_LE_TOTAL | 0.536 | 0.031 | 0.69 | 17.431 | 0 | 0.476 | 0.597 |

a Dependent Variable: JOB_SAT_TOTAL

Table 3 above presents the regression analysis results for the connection between job satisfaction (JOB_SAT_TOTAL) and transformational leadership style (TRFOR_LE_TOTAL). The purpose of the analysis was to determine whether these two variables are significantly correlated. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for transformational leadership style is 0.536, meaning that job satisfaction rises by 0.536 units for every unit increase in transformational leadership style. A somewhat positive correlation between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction is indicated by the standardized coefficient (Beta), which is at 0.690. This suggests that a transformative leadership style can predict work satisfaction with a fair degree of accuracy. Given the high t-value of 17.431, it can be inferred that the coefficient is statistically significant. The link is confirmed to be statistically significant by the p-value (Sig.) of 0.000, which is significantly below the standard significance level of 0.05. With zero excluded, the confidence interval for B is between 0.476 and 0.597. This lends more credence to the idea that transformational leadership style and work satisfaction are significantly positively correlated. We reject the null hypothesis (H01) because the p-value (0.000) is less than the significance level of 0.05. Thus, we draw the conclusion that transformational leadership style and job satisfaction are significantly positively correlated.

**$H_0$2:** There is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and job satisfaction

**Table 4: Coefficients (Regression Analysis) for Hypothesis Two**

Coefficientsa

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | 95.0% Confidence Interval for B | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 1 | (Constant) | 36.923 | 1.736 | | 21.271 | 0 | 33.508 | 40.337 |
| | AUTO_LE_TOTAL | -0.067 | 0.056 | -0.065 | -1.195 | 0.233 | -0.177 | 0.043 |

a Dependent Variable: JOB_SAT_TOTAL

Table 4 above shows the regression analysis results for the relationship between autocratic leadership style and job satisfaction. The analysis aimed to examine whether a significant relationship exists between these two variables. The result showed that the Unstandardized Coefficient (B) for autocratic leadership style is -0.067, meaning that for every one-unit increase in autocratic leadership style, job satisfaction decreases by 0.067 units. The Standardized Coefficient (Beta) of -0.065 indicates a very weak negative relationship between autocratic leadership style and job satisfaction. The t-value = -1.195 suggests that the coefficient is not large enough to indicate statistical significance. The p-value (Sig.) = 0.233 is greater than the typical significance threshold of 0.05, indicating that the relationship is not statistically significant. Conclusively, since the p-value (0.233) is greater than the 0.05 significance level, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H04). Therefore, we conclude that there is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and job satisfaction.

## DISCUSSION

The study examined the causal link between Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction in Delta State University Abraka, in Delta state. There were two hypotheses formulated for the study and the two hypotheses were tested using Regression analysis at a significant level of 0.05.

According to the results of this study's first hypothesis, transformational leadership style and job satisfaction, there is a strong positive correlation between the two.Transformational leadership style, characterized by individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence, significantly enhances job satisfaction, as evidenced by the regression analysis results ($B = 0.536$, $p < 0.001$). This result aligns with the findings of Jameel and Ahmad (2019); Okereka and Denedo (2024), who found out that transformational leadership positively impacts job satisfaction and also promotes organizational success among academic staff at Cihan University-Erbil, Delta State University, Abraka and that transformational leadership fosters commitment and satisfaction by inspiring and motivating employees. Similarly, Specchia et al. (2021) concluded that transformational leadership had the highest positive correlations with job satisfaction across various studies in healthcare settings. Conversely, critics such as Yukl (1999) argue that transformational leadership can sometimes be too idealistic and challenging to implement in practice. Furthermore, overemphasis on engagement may lead to employee burnout, as noted by Breevaart et al. (2014). These critiques indicate the need for a balanced approach to transformational leadership to maximize its benefits without overburdening employees.

The results of Hypothesis two (Autocratic Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction) indicated no significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and job satisfaction ($B = -0.067$, $p = 0.233$). The weak negative coefficient suggests that autocratic leadership may slightly decrease job satisfaction but not significantly. This aligns with studies by Hakim and Wirajaya (2021) and Al-Owaidi et al. (2023), which reported inverse relationships between autocratic leadership and job satisfaction. These studies highlighted the restrictive and non-participative nature of autocratic leadership as a potential factor for lower job satisfaction. However, in specific situations requiring quick decision-making or tight control, autocratic leadership might still prove effective. This may be the case when there is a need for situational adaptability in leadership styles.

### Summary

The study investigated the relationship between transformational, autocratic leadership styles and job satisfaction in Delta state university Abraka of Delta State. The research employed a correlational design and a total of 350 both teaching and non-teaching staff from universities in the study area participated. A structured questionnaire was utilized for data collection, and data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 27. The findings revealed that transformational, styles positively influenced job satisfaction to varying extents, while autocratic leadership styles showed no significant impact.

## CONCLUSION

Leadership styles are integral to shaping job satisfaction among university administrators. Based on the study's findings, transformational leadership styles emerged as significant predictors of job satisfaction,

painting a picture that its effectiveness in fostering motivation and structured goal achievement. Conversely, autocratic leadership styles showed limited or no significant influence. These findings further encourage the need for universities to adopt leadership styles that can promote their organizational goals and employee expectations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study and to enhance job satisfaction and leadership effectiveness among university administrators, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Universities should organize training programs for leaders to inspire, motivate, and provide personalized support to their workforce.
2. Clear reward systems and goal-setting mechanisms should be implemented to sustain employee motivation, performance and job satisfaction.
3. Efforts should be made to address barriers to participative decision-making, making democratic leadership more effective within the university context.
4. Encourage collaborative decision-making and avoid overly centralized leadership practices that may hinder employee satisfaction.
5. Periodically assess leadership practices to identify areas for improvement and ensure alignment with institutional goals.

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