# LEADERSHIP STYLES OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

**Ngozi Blessing Ossai-Ugbah, PhD, CLN**
*Library & Information Science,*
*Department of Educational Management,*
*Faculty of Education,*
*University of Benin,*
*Benin City,*
*Edo State, Nigeria*
*Email: ngozi.ossai-ugbah@uniben.edu*

**Abstract**

*This study investigated leadership styles employed by university librarians in public university libraries in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was made up of 67 librarians in three public university libraries in Rivers State, Nigeria. Data was gathered using a questionnaire and analyzed using simple frequency and percentage techniques with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 22). Findings reveal democratic leadership (38.8%) and transformational leadership (31.3%) are the most common leadership styles. Also, majority of library staff (73.1%) accept that leadership styles influence the positive organizational culture for an overall constructive and supportive work environment. This study concluded that the leadership style of librarians in public university libraries in Rivers State is participative and transformational.*

***Keywords: Leadership, Librarians, Public University, Libraries, Rivers State, Nigeria.***

## Introduction

University libraries in Nigeria are essential academic units that provide access to information resources necessary for the advancement of knowledge. These libraries are often the heartbeat of academic institutions, playing a critical role in supporting students, faculty, and researchers. However, the effectiveness of these libraries largely depends on the leadership style of the university librarian, who serves as the chief executive of the library. According to Maxwell (2007, P.1), "Everything rises and falls on leadership".

So, leadership is a crucial determinant of the effectiveness and efficiency of any organization, including academic libraries. In university libraries, leadership influences not only the delivery of quality services but also the overall performance and development of library staff. University librarians play a pivotal role as leaders, shaping the vision, policies, and operations of their institutions. In public university libraries, particularly in Rivers State, Nigeria, the leadership style of university librarians directly impacts the extent to which these libraries fulfill their roles in supporting teaching, learning, and research.

Rivers State, one of Nigeria's educational hubs, houses three public universities which are University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State University of Science and Technology and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education with libraries that cater for diverse academic communities. Public university libraries in the state face challenges such as inadequate funding, technological advancements, and the need to balance traditional and digital library services. The ability of university librarians to navigate these challenges depends significantly on their leadership style, which influences decision-making, staff development, and service delivery. While some studies have explored leadership styles in academic institutions,

there is limited research focusing specifically on university librarians in Rivers State. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the leadership styles adopted by these professionals and their effects on library operations.

**Review of Related Literature**

Leadership is the ability of an individual or group of people to inspire and influence others toward achieving mutual goals. McKinsey and Company (2024) describe it as "a set of mindsets and behaviors that aligns people in a collective direction, enables them to work together and accomplish shared goals, and helps them adjust to changing environments."

Leadership styles are broadly categorized into autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformational, and transactional styles. Each style has unique characteristics and implications for organizational performance. These include: autocratic leaders exercise centralized control and make decisions independently, which may result in high efficiency in the short term but can demotivate staff (Fischer & Sitkin, 2023).

Democratic leaders encourage participation and collaboration, fostering a sense of ownership among team members (Nanz & Leggewie, 2019). Laissez-faire leaders provide minimal supervision, granting staff autonomy to make decisions, which may lead to innovation but also potential disorganization if staff lack direction. (Fischer, Tian, Lee & Hughes,2021).

Transformational leadership focuses on inspiring and motivating staff to exceed expectations, often leading to higher job satisfaction and improved performance. In contrast, transactional leadership relies on structured tasks, rewards, and punishments to achieve goals, which may not foster long-term growth (Battilana, & Casciaro, 2021).Transformational Leadership has been identified as a prevalent style among university librarians. This approach emphasizes vision, inspiration, and fostering an environment conducive to innovation.

Recent studies have explored various leadership approaches and their impacts on library operations, staff motivation, and service delivery. A study by Ukangwa, Onuoha, and Otuza (2020) found that transformational leadership positively correlates with job satisfaction among librarians in private universities in Nigeria. They suggested that this leadership style enhances collaboration and creativity, leading to improved job performance. A study by Aghahowa (2021) emphasized the necessity of competent leadership styles in organizations, highlighting transformational leadership as a catalyst for organizational growth and sustainability.

The catalyst mentioned earlier as demonstrated in dynamics of leadership underscores the importance of transformational leadership in fostering innovation and promoting academic excellence Nigerian tertiary institutions. Leaders who articulate a compelling vision and empower others contribute significantly to institutional development and the cultivation of a culture of accountability and continuous improvement (Kannike, 2024).

Adanri (2016) examined Nigerian public administrators' leadership styles and their perceived effectiveness. The findings suggested that transformational leadership is associated with higher perceived effectiveness, indicating its relevance across different organizational contexts, including university libraries.

Democratic leadership is another style observed in academic libraries. This participative approach involves staff in decision-making processes, promoting a sense of ownership and accountability. Urhefe-Okotie and Odiachi (2020) examined the relationship between democratic leadership and job performance among librarians in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria. Their findings

indicate a positive correlation, suggesting that inclusive leadership practices can enhance staff performance and satisfaction.

Conversely, autocratic leadership, characterized by centralized decision-making and limited staff input, has been associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and higher turnover intentions. Aiyebelehin, Odiachi, and Omoregie (2020) explored the impact of autocratic leadership on turnover intentions among librarians in Nigerian university libraries. The findings revealed that autocratic leadership styles contribute to increased turnover intentions, emphasizing the need for more participative leadership approaches.

The path-goal theory of leadership, which posits that leaders can enhance employee performance by clarifying goals and providing support, has also been applied in the context of university libraries. Usman, Abdulraheem, and Eromosele (2018) investigated how leadership styles, as outlined in the path-goal theory, affect job performance of library personnel in public university libraries in North-Central Nigeria. The study showed that supportive and participative leadership behaviors positively influence job performance, aligning with the principles of the path-goal theory.

The relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance has been extensively studied. Aghahowa's (2021) study leadership and its impact on organizational performance. The study revealed that leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, autocratic, and democratic have varying impacts on organizational performance. The study concluded that transformational leadership positively influences performance by enhancing employee motivation and communication. A study published in *Sustainability* (2024) examined the effect of strategic planning on transformational leadership in Nigerian higher education institutions. The research highlighted that strategic planning enhances transformational leadership practices, which in turn positively affect organizational performance. A systematic review by Harms et al. (2022) indicated that authoritarian leadership is often linked to negative performance and complex leader–follower relationships. These findings suggest that such leadership styles may not be conducive to the collaborative and innovative environment required in university libraries.

In summary, review literature underscores the significant impact of leadership styles on the performance and satisfaction of librarians in Nigerian university libraries. Studies in the field of library and information science have shown that the leadership style of university librarians affects staff morale, productivity, and the quality of library services. For example, transformational leadership has been linked to higher levels of staff satisfaction and innovation in academic libraries, while autocratic leadership often results in lower levels of engagement. In Nigeria, Urhefe-Okotie and Odiachi (2020) have highlighted the unique challenges faced by university librarians, including limited resources, bureaucratic hurdles, and rapidly changing technological landscapes, all of which require adaptive and effective leadership styles.

However, there remains a paucity of empirical studies specifically addressing the leadership styles of university librarians in public universities in Rivers State. This gap in the literature underscores the need for this study, which seeks to provide insights into how leadership styles influence the operational success of public university libraries in Rivers State.

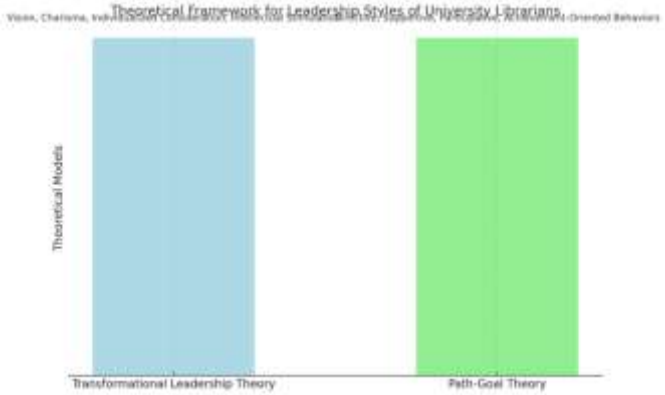
**Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on two theoretical models: the transformational leadership theory and the path-goal Theory of leadership. Transformational leadership theory was developed by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and expanded by Bernard Bass (1985). This theory emphasizes the ability of leaders to inspire and motivate followers to achieve beyond ordinary expectations. Transformational leaders are characterized by their vision, charisma, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. This

theory is particularly relevant to university librarians who are required to lead innovative practices and motivate staff in the face of limited resources.

Path-goal theory of leadership was proposed by Robert House in 1971. This theory focuses on how leaders can enhance the performance and satisfaction of their followers by clarifying goals, removing obstacles, and providing support. The theory identifies four leadership behaviors: directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. In the context of university libraries, this theory helps explain how librarians can adopt various leadership behaviors to address the dynamic needs of library staff and users.

By integrating these theories, this study seeks to provide a wide-range understanding of the leadership styles of university librarians in public university libraries in Rivers State by exploring how these styles influence the motivation and productivity of library staff, as well as the overall performance of the library.




## Objectives

The objective of this study is to investigate the leadership styles of librarians in public university libraries in rivers state, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. To determine the most common leadership styles employed by university librarians in public University libraries in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. To examine the satisfaction and engagement levels of library staff regarding the leadership styles of their librarians.
3. To assess how the leadership styles of librarians influence staff creativity and innovation within the university libraries.
4. To evaluate how the leadership styles of librarians impact staff collaboration and teamwork within the university libraries.
5. To determine if cultural and organizational factors within the university libraries impact the leadership styles of librarians
6. To identify the key factorsaffecting university librarians in implementing effective leadership styles.

## Research Method

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a descriptive survey design. The aim was to conduct an expository investigation, in other to investigate the leadership styles of university librarians in public university libraries in Rivers State. The descriptive survey design was deemed

appropriate for this study as it allows for the systematic collection, organization, and analysis of data to provide insights into the research questions.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select three University Libraries in Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, and Rivers State University of Technology. The population of the study was sixty-seven (67) librarians, and due to the manageable small size total enumeration was used. Questionnaire was the primary instrument used for the data collection. It comprised both closed-ended and open-ended questions to facilitate the collection of both quantitative and qualitative insights. The respondents were briefed on the study's objectives and assured of the confidentiality of their responses to ensure the integrity of the data collected.

The questionnaires were administered to the respondents over a period of two weeks. Data was gathered using a questionnaire and analyzed using simple frequency and percentage techniques with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 22).

**Results**

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Demographic Profile**

| **Table 1: Socio-Demographic characteristics of respondents(N=67)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **Response** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| | Male | 27 | 40.3 |
| | Female | 40 | 59.7 |
| **Age** | Under 25 years | 16 | 23.9 |
| | 25-34 years | 24 | 35.8 |
| | 35-44 years | 11 | 16.4 |
| | 44-54 years | 11 | 16.4 |
| | 55 years + | 5 | 07.5 |
| **Educational qualification** | Bachelor's degree | 31 | 46.3 |
| | Masters | 26 | 38.8 |
| | PhD | 3 | 04.5 |
| | Others | 7 | 10.4 |
| **Position in the library** | Librarian | 6 | 08.9 |
| | Assistant Librarian | 27 | 40.3 |
| | Library Assistant | 14 | 20.9 |
| | Others | 20 | 29.9 |
| **Years of experience** | Less than 1 year | 11 | 16.4 |
| | 1-3 years | 25 | 37.4 |
| | 4-6 years | 14 | 20.9 |
| | 7-9 years | 6 | 08.9 |
| | 10 years and more | 11 | 16.4 |

**Fieldwork, 2024**

The majority of respondents were female (59.7%) and the male make up 40.3% of the entire respondents. On the age distribution, majority fall into the 25-34 years category (35.8%), followed by under 25 years and below (23.9%). A moderate proportion belong to the 35-44 years and 44-54 years groups, each accounting for 16.4%, while the smallest group consists of those aged 55 years and above (7.5%). On the educational qualification, nearly half of the respondents hold a Bachelor's degree (46.3%), which is the most common qualification. Master's degree holders represent 38.8%, indicating

a highly educated workforce, and small percentage has obtained a PhD (4.5%). While others, potentially including diplomas or certifications, account for 10.4%.

On the position in the library, the largest group is Assistant Librarians (40.3%), followed by library assistants (20.9%). Librarians constitute a smaller proportion (8.9%), while the category of "Others" represents 29.9%, possibly indicating auxiliary or specialized roles. Next is the year of experience, the result shows that a significant portion has 1-3 years of experience (37.4%), indicating many are relatively new to the profession; while those with less than 1 year and 4-6 years each constitute around 16.4% and 20.9% respectively. A smaller group has 7-9 years (8.9%), and another 16.4% have 10 years or more of experience.

**Objective 1: To determine the most common leadership styles employed by university librarians in public University libraries in Rivers State, Nigeria.**

**Table 2: Leadership Style (N=67)**

| | Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Leadership style of current university librarian** | Autocratic | 14 | 20.9 |
| | Democratic | 26 | 38.8 |
| | Transformational | 21 | 31.3 |
| | Transactional | 01 | 01.5 |
| | Laissez-faire | 03 | 04.5 |
| | Others (situational, unconventional) | 02 | 03.0 |
| **Frequency of the librarian seeking input before making decision** | Always | 09 | 13.5 |
| | Often | 25 | 37.3 |
| | Sometimes | 25 | 37.3 |
| | Rarely | 08 | 11.9 |
| **Frequency of the librarian providing feedback on performance** | Always | 14 | 20.9 |
| | Often | 21 | 31.3 |
| | Sometimes | 27 | 40.3 |
| | Rarely | 04 | 06.0 |
| | Never | 01 | 01.5 |
| **Extent to which librarian encourage innovation and creativity** | To a great extent | 33 | 49.2 |
| | To a moderate extent | 28 | 41.8 |
| | To a small extent | 06 | 09.0 |

**Fieldwork, 2024**

The Table 2 above shows the result on leadership style. From the Table it is revealed that democratic leadership was the most frequently observed style (38.8%). This suggests that many librarians emphasize participation and collaboration in decision-making processes. While transformational leadership was ranked second (31.3%), indicating a focus on inspiring and motivating staff while promoting innovation and organizational goals. Autocratic leadership is reported by 20.9%, reflecting a segment of librarians who rely on top-down control and directive management styles and transactional leadership is rare (1.5%), suggesting minimal emphasis on performance-based rewards or penalties. Other styles, including Laissez-faire (4.5%), and Others (3.0%), account for a small proportion, which may represent highly situational or unconventional approaches.

On the frequency of the librarian seeking input before decision-making, the result shows that a significant proportion of respondents reported that librarians often (37.3%), or sometimes (37.3%) seek input before making decisions. While the respondents who affirmed "Always seeking input" is less common (13.5%), indicating that truly inclusive decision-making may not be consistently practiced. However, a small group (11.9%) indicates that input is rarely sought, highlighting a potential area for improvement in participative leadership. Still on frequency of librarian providing feedback on performance, majority of respondents indicate feedback is provided sometimes (40.3%), or often (31.3%).

While respondents that said librarian always providing feedback is reported by 20.9%, indicating that a smaller portion of librarian's exhibit consistently high engagement in performance discussions. Only a few respondents reported feedback is given rarely (6.0%) or never (1.5%). This suggests a general recognition of feedback's importance, albeit with uneven application. Democratic and transformational leadership styles are both people-centric. This may account for the high frequency of the respondents who report that librarians often (37.3%) or sometimes (37.3%) seek input before making decisions.
Next is on the extent to which librarian encourages innovation and creativity, the result shows that almost half of the respondents (49.2%) feel librarians encourage innovation and creativity to a great extent, reflecting a strong commitment to fostering an innovative environment. Another substantial group (41.8%) perceives encouragement to a moderate extent, suggesting that while there is support for innovation, its impact or emphasis could be enhanced. A small fraction (9.0%) report encouragement to a small extent, highlighting areas where creative engagement may be lacking.

**Objective 2: To examine the satisfaction levels of library staff regarding the leadership styles of their librarians**

**Table 3: Job Satisfaction and Performance(N=67)**

| | Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Satisfaction with current job** | Very satisfied | 14 | 20.9 |
| | Satisfied | 40 | 59.7 |
| | Neutral | 13 | 19.4 |
| **Librarian leadership style positively impact on my job** | Strongly agree | 18 | 26.9 |
| | Agree | 36 | 53.7 |
| | Neutral | 09 | 13.4 |
| | Disagree | 03 | 04.5 |
| | Strongly disagree | 01 | 01.5 |
| **Feeling motivated to perform my duties** | Always | 25 | 37.3 |
| | Often | 19 | 28.4 |
| | Sometimes | 20 | 29.8 |
| | Rarely | 03 | 04.5 |

**Fieldwork, 2024**

On current job satisfaction, the result shows that "satisfied" respondents form the majority (59.7%), showing that most individuals are content with their roles. While, the "very satisfied" respondents make up 20.9%, reflecting a smaller proportion with high levels of job satisfaction and the least among the respondents are those Neutral respondents accounting for 19.4%, indicating some ambivalence about job satisfaction. The high level of satisfaction could be a product of leadership. House (1971) pointed out that leaders have the capacity to enhance the performance and satisfaction of their followers by clarifying goals, removing obstacles, and providing support. The results indicate that the majority of respondents (53.7%) believe that the librarian's leadership style significantly impacts their

job. However, smaller group remain neutral (13.4%), suggesting mixed feelings or uncertainty regarding the influence of leadership. While only a few respondents disagree (4.5%) or strongly disagree (1.5%), indicating limited dissatisfaction with leadership's effect.

Next is on the feeling of being motivated to perform their duties, the result shows that a significant proportion of respondent's report feeling motivated always (37.3%) or often (28.4%), demonstrating a high degree of workplace motivation. Nearly a third of the respondents and only a small group feels motivated rarely (4.5%), suggesting that low motivation is not widespread.

**Objective 3: To assess how the leadership styles of librarians influence staff creativity and innovation within the university libraries.**

**Table 4: Creativity and Innovation (N=67)**

| | Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Level of creativity** | Very high | 19 | 28.4 |
| | High | 33 | 49.2 |
| | Moderate | 13 | 19.4 |
| | Low | 02 | 03.0 |
| **Leadership style influences creativity** | Strongly agree | 20 | 29.9 |
| | Agree | 38 | 56.7 |
| | Neutral | 9 | 13.4 |
| **Frequency of innovative idea implementation** | Always | 15 | 22.4 |
| | Often | 20 | 29.9 |
| | Sometimes | 28 | 41.7 |
| | Rarely | 03 | 04.5 |
| | Never | 01 | 01.5 |

**Fieldwork, 2024**

Table 4 shows the distribution of creativity levels among the respondents. According to the results, "high" creativity is the most frequent category (49.2%), 28.4% reported "very high" creativity, and (19.4%) moderate.

On the leadership style influencing creativity, 29.9% of the entire respondents "strongly agreed" and 56.7% of the respondents "agreed" to the assertion, while 13.4% of the respondents were neutral with their response. On the frequency of innovative idea implementation, 22.4% affirmed "always", 29.9% said "often" and 41.7% agreed that it is "sometimes". Others include "rarely" with 3 participants (4.5%) and 1.5% of the respondents saying "never".

**Objective 4: To evaluate how the leadership styles of librarians impact staff collaboration and teamwork within the university libraries.**

**Table 5: Collaboration and teamwork (N=67)**

| | Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Level of collaboration** | Very high | 16 | 23.9 |
| | High | 27 | 40.3 |
| | Moderate | 22 | 32.8 |
| | Low | 02 | 03.0 |
| **Leadership style encourage teamwork** | Strongly agree | 20 | 29.9 |
| | Agree | 27 | 40.3 |
| | Neutral | 18 | 26.9 |
| | Disagree | 02 | 03.0 |
| **Frequency of teamwork participation** | Always | 20 | 29.9 |
| | Often | 26 | 38.8 |
| | Sometimes | 12 | 17.9 |
| | Rarely | 09 | 13.4 |

**Fieldwork, 2024**

Table 5 provides insights into the levels of collaboration, perceptions of leadership's impact on teamwork, and frequency of teamwork participation among a sample of 67 individuals. On the level of collaboration, with 27 respondents (40.3%) revealed a high level. This was followed by moderate collaboration reported by 22 participants (32.8%), "very high" collaboration is reported by 16 respondents, accounting for 23.9% of the sample and high collaboration is the most common response, with the least among the respondents are the Low collaboration is observed in only 2 participants (3.0%).

On the leadership style and its influence on teamwork, the result revealed that a combined 70.2% of the respondents either "Strongly agree" or "Agree" that leadership styles promote teamwork. However, the relatively high proportion of "Neutral" responses (26.9%) indicates some ambiguity or uncertainty about this influence. Only a small minority (3.0%) explicitly disagrees.

On the frequency of teamwork participation, the result reveals that a majority of the respondents (68.7%, combining "Always" and "Often") report frequent teamwork participation. However, a notable minority (31.3%, combining "Sometimes" and "Rarely") participates less regularly, suggesting potential gaps in inclusion or opportunities for collaboration.

**Objective 5: To determine if cultural and organizational factors within the university libraries impact the leadership styles of librarians**

**Table 6: Organization Culture and Climate (N=67)**

| | Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall organizational culture in the library** | Very positive | 11 | 16.4 |
| | Positive | 38 | 56.7 |
| | Neutral | 18 | 26.9 |
| **Leadership style influence organizational culture** | Strongly agree | 19 | 28.4 |
| | Agree | 35 | 52.2 |
| | Neutral | 12 | 17.9 |
| | Strongly disagree | 01 | 01.5 |
| **Frequency of individual support on organizational culture** | Always | 08 | 11.9 |
| | Often | 32 | 47.8 |
| | Sometimes | 24 | 35.8 |
| | Rarely | 03 | 04.5 |

**Fieldwork, 2024**

Table 6 shows the results of the perceptions of organizational culture and climate, the influence of leadership, and the frequency of individual support for organizational culture in the libraries. The result shows that a combined 73.1% (combining "Very positive" and "Positive") of respondents perceive the organizational culture as favourable, suggesting an overall constructive and supportive work environment. However, the 26.9% who perceive the culture as "Neutral" indicate that more could be done to actively engage these individuals and enhance their experiences. The results shows that 80.6% (combining "Strongly agree" and "Agree") believe that leadership positively influences organizational culture. This underscores the critical role of leadership in shaping workplace climate.

The results show that the majority of respondents (59.7%, combining "Always" and "Often") reported receiving frequent individual support for organizational culture.

However, a substantial proportion (40.3%, combining "Sometimes" and "Rarely") indicates inconsistency in fostering or participating in the culture.

**Objective 6: To identify the key factors affecting university librarians in implementing effective leadership styles.**

| Table 7: Factors Influencing Leadership Effectiveness (N=67) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Extent to which Organizational structure affect effective leadership** | **Response** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| | To a great extent | 34 | 50.7 |
| | Moderate extent | 31 | 46.3 |
| | Little extent | 2 | 03.0 |
| **Institutional support on implementing effective leadership** | A great deal | 17 | 25.4 |
| | A lot | 26 | 38.8 |
| | A moderate amount | 15 | 22.4 |
| | A little | 03 | 04.5 |
| | None | 06 | 09.0 |
| **Frequency of individual support on organizational culture** | Significantly | 18 | 26.9 |
| | Moderately | 29 | 43.3 |
| | Slightly | 09 | 13.4 |
| | Not at all | 11 | 16.4 |

**Fieldwork, 2024**

Table 7 explores the perceived extent of various factors affecting leadership effectiveness. The above table indicates that organizational structure is a significant factor influencing effective leadership, with a combined 97.0% (combining “To a great extent” and “Moderate extent") recognizing its impact. The predominant "Great extent" response indicates the importance of structural elements, such as hierarchy, communication channels, and roles, in enabling or hindering leadership effectiveness.

The results reveals that 64.2% (combining "A great deal" and "A lot") perceive substantial institutional support for implementing effective leadership, indicating a generally supportive environment. However, the combined 35.8% (comprising "Moderate amount," "A little," and "None") indicates variability in how institutional support is experienced.

On the frequency of individual support on organizational culture, from the result shows that 70.2% (combining "Significantly" and "Moderately") of respondents believe individuals provide support for leadership to a meaningful degree. However, the remaining 29.8% (comprising "Slightly" and "Not at all") reflects a notable proportion of individuals who offer limited or no support. This discrepancy indicates that while many individuals actively contribute to leadership effectiveness, there are gaps in engagement or alignment.

**Discussion of Findings**

This section presents and analyzes the key findings from the study, highlighting the dominant leadership styles among librarians and their influence on organizational outcomes. The discussion integrates empirical evidence and theoretical perspectives to contextualize the implications of these leadership practices within academic library settings.

From the objective 1,the results of this study reveal that the most preferred leadership style among librarians is *the* democratic leadership style, endorsed by 38.8% of respondents, followed closely by the transformational leadership style at 31.3%. Although this contrasts slightly with the findings of Ukangwa, Onuoha, and Otuza (2020), who reported that transformational leadership is more prevalent

among librarians in private universities in Nigeria, the difference in rankings is not significantly divergent. Both leadership styles are people-centered, emphasizing inclusivity, communication, and shared decision-making, which may account for their prominence in the current study.

Furthermore, one important implication of this result is the alignment between preferred leadership styles and participatory decision-making practices. A substantial number of respondents reported that librarians often or sometimes seek input before making decisions. This aligns with the findings of Urhefe-Okotie and Odiachi (2020), who noted that participatory leadership enhances staff involvement in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability. Such inclusive leadership styles contribute to a culture where feedback is valued and considered integral to organizational growth and staff development. This is consistent with the assertion of Kannike (2024) which highlighted the role of idea-sharing in improving staff competence and organizational productivity.

In terms of motivation, while a third of respondents reported feeling frequently motivated, only 4.5% claimed to feel rarely motivated. This suggests that low motivation is not a widespread issue within the context of the study. The theoretical underpinning by Burns (1978) and later expanded by Bass (1985) supports this finding, noting that transformational leaders have the capacity to inspire followers to exceed ordinary expectations through motivation and vision.

Again, the study established that a majority of respondents (53.7%) believe that the leadership style of their librarian significantly influences their job performance and creativity. This finding resonates with the work of Usman, Abdulraheem, and Eromosele (2018), who found a positive correlation between supportive, participative leadership and enhanced job performance. The data also reinforces the idea that leadership style directly affects creativity, innovation, and team dynamics. The assertion by Aghahowa (2021) that transformational and democratic leadership styles positively impact organizational performance is validated in this context. In contrast, Harms et al. (2022) emphasized the detrimental effects of authoritarian leadership on employee performance, underscoring the necessity for adaptive and empowering leadership approaches.

On the issue of teamwork, 70.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that leadership styles promote teamwork within the library setting. Nonetheless, the relatively high proportion of neutral responses (26.9%) indicates some level of ambiguity or perhaps inconsistency in how leadership practices are perceived in relation to teamwork. Still, the overwhelming agreement confirms the positive influence of leadership in fostering collaboration, which echoes the findings of Ukangwa, Onuoha, and Otuza (2020) on the role of transformational leadership in promoting workplace creativity and collaboration.

On the cultural and organizational factors within the university libraries that impact the leadership styles of librarians the study also found to significantly influence organizational culture and climate, particularly in how individual employees support and align with institutional values and practices. This is consistent with Adanri's (2016) findings that public administrators' leadership styles in Nigeria significantly influence organizational dynamics, including the effectiveness and morale of staff in university libraries. Finally, the study identified organizational structure as a crucial determinant of leadership effectiveness, with 97.0% of respondents affirming its significance.

There are key factors affecting university librarians in implementing effective leadership styles. These include: Structural factors - such as communication channels, hierarchical levels, and defined responsibilities - either facilitate or hinder effective leadership. This aligns with the findings of Aiyebelehin, Odiachi, and Omoregie (2020), who noted that autocratic leadership styles not only negatively affect staff retention but also disrupt organizational structures. Therefore, to foster effective

leadership, institutional support must prioritize structural reforms and create enabling environments for participatory and developmental leadership practices within public libraries.

## Conclusion

This study on the leadership of librarians in public university libraries in Rivers State, Nigeria, revealed that the leadership style of librarians has a substantial impact on staff performance, job satisfaction, and organizational culture of the libraries. The findings further showed that democratic and transformational leadership styles were the most commonly identified among the librarians. These styles of leadership being people-focused improves job satisfaction and performance

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. Librarians and public administrators should learn to deploy democratic and transformational leaderships in university libraries.
2. Librarians should create room for participative decision-making to increase the levels of creativity and innovation of their staff.
3. Administrative training courses focused on democratic and transformational leadership styles should be made mandatory for university librarians to improve their leadership styles and influence.
4. University librarians should explore and deploy more of participative leadership as it contributes to significant collaboration and teamwork.
5. Institutional support for university librarians through effective and efficient organizational structure to strengthen library leadership.

**References**

Adanri, A. A. (2016). Nigerian public administrators' leadership styles and their perceived effectiveness. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 6*(9), 85–92.

Aghahowa, O. M. (2021). *Leadership style and its impact on organizational performance: Guinness Nigeria Plc, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria* [Master's thesis, Centria University of Applied Sciences].

Aiyebelehin, A. J., Odiachi, R., & Omoregie, B. (2020). Leadership styles, promotion opportunities, and salary as correlates of turnover intentions among librarians in Nigerian university libraries. *IAFOR Journal of Literature & Librarianship, 9*(2). https://doi.org/10.22492/ijl.9.2.03

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.

Battilana, J., & Casciaro, T. (2021). Power, for all: how it works and why it's everyone's business. Simon & Schuster.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.

Fischer, T., & Sitkin, S. B. (2023). Leadership styles: a comprehensive assessment and way forward. ***Academy of Management Annals, 17***(1), 331-372.

Fischer, T., Tian, A. W., Lee, A., & Hughes, D. J. (2021). Abusive supervision: a systematic review and fundamental rethink. ***The Leadership Quarterly, 32***(6).

Harms, P. D., Wood, D., Landay, K., Lester, P. B., &Vogelgesang Lester, G. (2022). Authoritarian leadership styles and performance: A systematic review. *Journal of Business Ethics, 176*, 1–24.

House, R. J. (1971). A path-goal theory of leader effectiveness. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 16*(3), 321-339. https://doi.org/10.2307/2391905

House, R. J., & Mitchell, T. R. (1974). Path-goal theory of leadership. *Journal of Contemporary Business, 3*(4), 81-97.

Kannike, A. A. (2024) Dynamics of leadership in tertiary institution administration in Nigeria. *The Nigeria Lawyer*, 2024.

Maxwell, J. (2007). The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership, Thomas Nelson.

Nanz, P., &Leggewie, C. (2019). No representation without consultation: a citizen's guide to participatory democracy. between The Lines.

Strategic Planning (2024). Transformational leadership and organization performance in nigerian higher education institutions." *Sustainability*, vol. 16, no. 11, p. 4348

Ukangwa, C. C., Onuoha, U. D., &Otuza, E. C. (2020). Leadership style and job satisfaction of librarians in private universities in South-East and South-West, Nigeria. *Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology, 13*(2), 358–359.

Urhefe-Okotie, E. A., & Odiachi, R. A. (2020). Democratic leadership style and job performance of librarians in federal university libraries in South-South Nigeria: A correlational study. *Jewel Journal of Librarianship, 13*(2), 37–38.

Usman, S. A., Abdulraheem, W. J., &Eromosele, G. O. (2018). Leadership styles and motivation on job performance of library personnel in public university libraries in North-Central Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice*.