

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND PERCEPTION OF WORKER PRODUCTIVITY IN SELECTED HOTELS IN BENIN CITY

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of the hospitality industry in Nigeria has led to the growing competition among hotels in Benin city, raising concerns about the effectiveness of prevailing leadership styles. Consequently, there is a pressing need to investigate how different leadership approaches influence workers' perceptions of their own productivity. This research investigated the relationship between leadership styles and the perception of employee productivity in selected hotels located in Benin City, Nigeria. To achieve its aim, data was collected from 134 randomly sampled staff across the different units of 6 Hotels using questionnaires. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics (frequency, mean, mean index, ANOVA and regression). Results revealed that while autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire and transformational types of leadership had a significantly positive relationship with worker productivity, autocratic leadership style had a contrary relationship. The study recommends that hotel leadership be adequately informed and trained to understand the various types of leadership, and to identify which styles are most suitable for adoption. Efforts should be directed toward implementing one of the following leadership styles: democratic, laissez-faire, or transformational. In addition, hotels should establish feedback mechanisms, such as suggestion, review, assessment, or appraisal boxes, that allow employees to anonymously evaluate the leadership approaches of their supervisors.

Keywords: *Leadership, Productivity, Hotel workers, leadership styles, Benin City.*

Introduction

The hotel industry in Nigeria is characterized by intense competition, driven by the rapid growth of tourism and hospitality services. The industry's expansion has led to a significant rise in the number of hotel establishments, which in turn has heightened the competition amongst these businesses (Alabi and Akindele, 2022). This competitive environment has compelled hotel managers to adopt various strategic measures to enhance operational efficiency and gain a competitive edge. Among these strategies, the implementation of effective management styles has emerged as a critical factor in improving worker productivity (Olawale & Akinola, 2023). Despite the importance of management styles in organisational performance, there remains a paucity of research specifically investigating their impact on productivity within the hotel sector in Nigeria.

Previous studies have predominantly focused on the relationship between management or leadership styles and job satisfaction, as well as employee retention. For instance, Akinbode and

Adetunji (2021) explored the influence of leadership styles on job satisfaction, concluding that democratic and transformational leadership positively affect employee contentment. Similarly, research by Eze and Okeke (2020) demonstrated that inclusive leadership styles significantly enhance job satisfaction among employees. Additionally, studies such as those by Oluwaseun and Obafemi (2021) and Adeyemi and Oladipo (2022) have established a positive correlation between management styles and employee retention. These studies have reinforced the beneficial impact of effective management on job satisfaction and retention across various sectors. However, they have not adequately addressed the unique dynamics of the hotel industry. Most research has centred on other sectors such as manufacturing and banking (Ojo & Adebayo, 2023; Emeka & Amaka, 2023), leaving a significant gap in understanding how different management styles affect worker productivity specifically in the hotel industry. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the impact of autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, and transformational leadership styles on worker productivity in hotels in Benin City, Edo State.

Literature Review.

Worker Productivity

Worker productivity has been extensively studied and defined by various scholars. It is often conceptualized as the efficiency with which workers achieve specific tasks or outputs within a given timeframe. Gebauer (2020) defined worker productivity as the capacity of employees to achieve desired outputs with minimal resource input while adhering to quality standards. Hitt and Collins (2021) emphasized that worker productivity encompasses the ability to perform tasks effectively, integrating effort, time, and skill utilization to meet organisational goals. Chen and Wang (2022) described it as the measurable contribution of employees toward achieving organisational objectives, factoring in the quality and quantity of work produced. These definitions collectively underscore the multidimensional nature of worker productivity, which involves efficiency, effectiveness, and consistency in task execution. A critical evaluation of these perspectives reveals a common emphasis on measurable output and quality, while also acknowledging the role of individual and organisational factors in enhancing or inhibiting productivity.

Worker productivity has been correlated to several factors such as human capital (Delery & Roumpi, 2022), workplace environment (Boxall & Macky (2023), motivation (Salas & Weaver, 2023), technological tools and innovations (Zhang & Li (2023) and Leadership (Armstrong & Taylor, 2022).

Leadership Styles

The concept of management styles has been defined by various scholars, with some providing nuanced perspectives based on leadership behaviours and decision-making approaches. For instance, Goleman conceptualized management styles as a range of techniques and behaviours utilized by managers to influence and guide their teams, emphasizing the adaptability of these styles to situational factors (Goleman, 2020). Additionally, Armstrong described management styles as the specific patterns of managerial behaviour that reflect how leaders interact with their employees, focusing on communication, decision-making, and delegation processes (Armstrong, 2018). On the other hand, Blake and Mouton argued that management styles are the manifestation of a leader's concern for both task accomplishment and interpersonal relationships, categorizing them into a managerial grid to delineate different approaches to leadership (Blake & Mouton, 2019). These definitions align in their recognition of management styles as multidimensional constructs that combine individual traits, organisational goals, and

external circumstances. A critical evaluation of these definitions suggests that while Goleman emphasizes situational adaptability, Armstrong highlights operational components, and Blake and Mouton offer a systematic framework. This indicates a consensus among scholars that management styles are not fixed but are shaped by the interaction of managerial behaviours and organisational contexts.

Leadership styles determine how managers plan, organize, lead, and control resources to achieve organisational goals effectively. Several prominent management styles are often discussed in contemporary literature. However, this study focuses on autocratic, democratic laissez-faire, and transformational leadership styles.

Autocratic Leadership Style: The autocratic management style is characterized by a high degree of centralization, where decision-making power is concentrated in the hands of the leader. Managers employing this style exercise tight control over subordinates, with minimal input from employees in decision-making processes. According to Bhatti et al. (2015), the autocratic approach can be highly effective in crisis situations or industries requiring strict compliance with safety and procedural standards, such as manufacturing or military organisations. The ability to make quick decisions and maintain a clear chain of command ensures operational efficiency in high-pressure contexts. However, this style often stifles creativity and employee morale, as highlighted by Iqbal, Anwar, and Haider (2015), who note that a lack of autonomy can result in employee dissatisfaction and high turnover rates. Furthermore, employees may feel undervalued, which can hinder long-term organisational growth. On the other hand, Khan et al. (2020) argue that in environments requiring precise execution of tasks, such as healthcare or aviation, autocratic leadership ensures adherence to protocols, minimizing errors. Nevertheless, the rigidity of this style makes it unsuitable for dynamic industries where innovation and adaptability are key. Thus, while the autocratic style provides structure and discipline, its limitations in fostering employee engagement and adaptability reduce its effectiveness in modern, innovation-driven industries.

Democratic Leadership Style: The democratic or participative management style emphasizes collaboration, where employees are actively involved in decision-making processes. This style fosters a sense of ownership among employees, enhancing engagement and motivation. Research by Bass and Bass (2019) highlights that democratic leadership creates a positive organisational climate, improving job satisfaction and team cohesion. This is particularly beneficial in creative industries or teams requiring diverse input to develop innovative solutions. However, the democratic style also has limitations. As noted by Koyuncu, Burke, and Fiksenbaum (2017), the participatory approach can lead to slower decision-making, as consensus-building takes time. In fast-paced environments, this delay could impede organisational agility. Furthermore, not all employees are equipped or willing to participate in decision-making processes, potentially leading to frustration or inefficiency. Nonetheless, Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy (2015) assert that the inclusiveness of this style enhances employee retention and reduces conflicts, as employees feel their voices are heard. While the democratic style fosters innovation and a sense of belonging, its effectiveness is contingent on the organisational context and the willingness of employees to actively contribute to decision-making processes.

Laissez-Faire Leadership Style: Laissez-faire management, often referred to as a hands-off approach, provides employees with autonomy to make decisions and execute tasks with minimal managerial intervention. This style works best in organisations with highly skilled, self-motivated employees who require little supervision. As noted by Yang (2015), this management

style encourages creativity and innovation by giving employees the freedom to explore new ideas without fear of micromanagement. It is particularly suited to research and development environments, where experimentation and risk-taking are necessary for progress. However, laissez-faire leadership can lead to a lack of direction and accountability, especially in teams that lack self-discipline or clear objectives. Skogstad et al. (2014) warn that this style may result in role ambiguity, reduced productivity, and increased workplace conflict if employees are not adequately supported. Moreover, Khan et al. (2015) argue that excessive autonomy may foster a lack of cohesion within teams, as employees operate in silos. Despite these drawbacks, laissez-faire leadership can be effective in organisations with a strong culture of self-leadership and trust, provided there are mechanisms in place to address potential challenges.

Transformational Leadership Style: Transformational leadership focuses on inspiring and motivating employees to exceed expectations by aligning individual goals with organisational objectives. This style emphasizes vision, innovation, and personal development. Studies by Bass and Riggio (2018) suggest that transformational leaders foster high levels of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. By creating a shared vision and empowering employees, transformational leadership drives innovation and adaptability. However, as noted by Northouse (2018), this style requires leaders with strong interpersonal skills and the ability to articulate a compelling vision, which may not always be feasible. Additionally, overemphasis on vision and inspiration may overshadow practical aspects of management, such as process optimization and resource allocation. Nonetheless, transformational leadership remains one of the most effective styles for fostering innovation and driving organisational change in rapidly evolving industries

Theoretical framework

The Path-Goal Theory of Leadership, initially developed by Robert J. House in 1971 and refined in subsequent years, provides a robust framework for understanding the interaction between leadership behaviour, follower characteristics, and situational factors in achieving organisational goals (House, 1971). House's model postulates that the effectiveness of leadership behaviours, categorized as directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented depends on their alignment with the employees' needs and the environmental context (House & Mitchell, 1974). The central premise of the Path-Goal Theory, that leadership styles should be adapted to fit the needs of employees and the demands of the work environment, has received considerable scholarly attention. However, critics argue that the theory oversimplifies the dynamic interplay between leadership behaviours and organisational outcomes, as it does not adequately address the complexities of organisational culture, power dynamics, and external influences (Evans, 2017). Further empirical investigations have shown that while the theory provides a useful heuristic for understanding leadership styles, its predictive power diminishes in contexts characterized by rapid change and uncertainty (Wofford & Liska, 2016). Despite these limitations, the theory remains widely applied in leadership training and organisational development, underscoring its enduring relevance in management studies.

In relation to the effect of management style on worker productivity, the Path-Goal Theory provides valuable insights into how leaders can influence employee performance by adapting their behaviour to align with individual and situational factors (Muriithi et al. 2018; Ogbonnaya & Nielsen, 2016; Kumar et al., 2019). However, its application requires careful consideration of cultural and organisational contexts, as leadership effectiveness is often mediated by factors such as organisational climate, employee autonomy, and technological advancements (Sethibe & Steyn, 2017).

Material

Methods of Data Collection

Data for the study was collected from 134 randomly sampled employees of six hotels across Benin City, Edo State. The hotels, which were Protea Hotel, Precious Palm Royal Hotel, Uyi Grand Hotel, Western Villa Hotel, Limoh Suites and El-Hassani Hotel. and had a total population of 202 in total. The Yamane (1967) sample formulae was used to calculate the sample the sample size. Data were collected using structured questionnaire. The questionnaire, carefully designed by the researcher was assessed by other experts in the department of Human resource Management at the University of Benin. 10 percent of the sample size was pre tested and subjected to analysis resulting to an acceptable Cronbach of 6.91. The questionnaire was divided into section A and B. Section A had questions meant to obtain data on respondent's socio-demographics while Section B comprised of questions focused on worker productivity and leadership styles. All questions were on five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agreed as 1 to strongly disagree as 5. In line with (Okhakhu & Adekunle, 2021), the questionnaire was distributed and withdrawn within 30 days. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and mean) and multiple regression analysis.

Results and Discussion

The result (Table 1) of worker productivity indicates that most respondents perceive their productivity positively. The highest-rated statement, "I consistently meet or exceed the performance standards set by my supervisor" (Mean = 4.1), shows that employees generally believe they meet expectations. Furthermore, a significant proportion agree or strongly agree that they handle daily responsibilities effectively (69.7%) and complete assigned tasks on time (62.9%), with mean values of 3.7 and 3.6, respectively. However, the lowest-rated item, "My contributions to the team help in achieving the overall goals of the hotel" (Mean = 3.4), suggests some reservations about employees' perceived impact on organisational objectives. Overall, the average mean score of 3.7 indicates a generally positive but slightly varied perception of productivity among hospitality workers.

Table 1: Worker Productivity

S/N	ITEM	SA (5) f/(%)	A (4) f/(%)	U (3) f/(%)	D (2) f/(%)	SD (1) f/(%)	Mean ($\bar{x}$)
1	I complete my assigned tasks within the expected time frame.	22 (16.7%)	61 (46.2%)	29 (22.0%)	14 (10.6%)	6 (4.5%)	3.6
2	I consistently meet or exceed the performance standards set by my supervisor.	40 (30.3%)	72 (54.5%)	13 (9.8%)	5 (3.8%)	2 (1.5%)	4.1
3	I am able to handle my daily responsibilities effectively, even during busy periods at the hotel.	21 (15.9%)	71 (53.8%)	26 (19.7%)	10 (7.6%)	4 (3.0%)	3.7
4	I strive to deliver high-quality service to hotel guests on a consistent basis.	21 (15.9%)	63 (47.7%)	31 (23.5%)	13 (9.8%)	4 (3.0%)	3.6
5	My contributions to the team help in achieving the overall goals of the hotel.	17 (12.9%)	62 (47.0%)	22 (16.7%)	21 (15.9%)	10 (7.6%)	3.4
Average		24 (18.3%)	66 (49.8%)	24 (18.3%)	13 (9.5%)	5 (4.0%)	3.7

The result (Table 2) of autocratic management style suggests that many employees perceive their work environment as highly structured and directive. The highest-rated item, "My manager rarely involves employees in discussions or decision-making processes" (Mean = 4.1), indicates that decision-making authority primarily rests with management. Similarly, employees overwhelmingly agree that they are expected to follow instructions without questioning (83.3%, Mean = 4.0) and that their responsibilities are tightly controlled (Mean = 4.0). The lowest-rated statement, "Decisions in my hotel are often made by management without consulting employees" (Mean = 3.3), suggests that while top-down decision-making is common, some level of employee input may occasionally be considered. Overall, the average mean score of 3.8 reflects a predominantly autocratic management style, where employee participation in decision-making is minimal.

Table 2: Autocratic Management Style

S/N	ITEM	SA (5) f/(%)	A (4) f/(%)	U (3) f/(%)	D (2) f/(%)	SD (1) f/(%)	Mean ($\bar{x}$)
6	Decisions in my hotel are often made by management without consulting employees.	16 (12.1%)	47 (35.6%)	31 (23.5%)	32 (24.2%)	6 (4.5%)	3.3
7	I am expected to strictly follow instructions from my supervisors without questioning them.	28 (21.2%)	82 (62.1%)	16 (12.1%)	6 (4.5%)	0 (0.0%)	4.0
8	My manager rarely involves employees in discussions or decision-making processes.	48 (36.4%)	62 (47.0%)	14 (10.6%)	8 (6.1%)	0 (0.0%)	4.1
9	Feedback from employees is rarely sought or considered by management when implementing policies.	25 (18.9%)	65 (49.2%)	24 (18.2%)	14 (10.6%)	4 (3.0%)	3.7
10	My work responsibilities are tightly controlled by management with little room for flexibility.	33 (25.0%)	77 (58.3%)	9 (6.8%)	12 (9.1%)	1 (0.8%)	4.0
Average		30 (22.7%)	67 (50.4%)	19 (14.2%)	14 (10.9%)	2 (1.7%)	3.8

The result (Table 3) of democratic management style suggests that employees perceive a moderate level of participation in decision-making. The highest-rated statement, "Management involves employees in setting goals and objectives for the team" (Mean = 3.9), indicates that a majority of employees (76.5%) feel engaged in organisational goal-setting. Similarly, many respondents agree that collaboration between employees and supervisors is a key aspect of work processes (69.7%, Mean = 3.7) and that their suggestions are valued (69.0%, Mean = 3.7). However, a notable portion of employees (25.8%) disagree or strongly disagree that their manager encourages them to share opinions in decision-making, which is reflected in the lower mean score of 3.5 for that item. Overall, the average mean score of 3.7 suggests that while democratic management practices exist in hospitality firms, there is room for improvement in fostering open communication and participatory decision-making.

Table 3: Democratic Management Style

S/N	ITEM	SA (5) f/(%)	A (4) f/(%)	U (3) f/(%)	D (2) f/(%)	SD (1) f/(%)	Mean ($\bar{x}$)
11	My manager encourages employees to share their opinions when decisions are being made.	25 (18.9%)	57 (43.2%)	16 (12.1%)	29 (22.0%)	5 (3.8%)	3.5
12	I feel that my suggestions are valued and considered by management in my workplace.	29 (22.0%)	62 (47.0%)	14 (10.6%)	22 (16.7%)	5 (3.8%)	3.7
13	Collaboration between employees and supervisors is a key aspect of how tasks are carried out in my hotel.	28 (21.2%)	64 (48.5%)	20 (15.2%)	17 (12.9%)	3 (2.3%)	3.7
14	Management involves employees in setting goals and objectives for the team.	31 (23.5%)	70 (53.0%)	16 (12.1%)	13 (9.8%)	2 (1.5%)	3.9
15	I feel comfortable approaching my manager with ideas or concerns regarding my work.	25 (18.9%)	59 (44.7%)	28 (21.2%)	18 (13.6%)	2 (1.5%)	3.7
Average		28 (20.9%)	62 (47.3%)	19 (14.2%)	20 (14.0%)	3 (2.6%)	3.7

The result (Table 4) of laissez-faire management style suggests that many employees experience a high degree of autonomy in their tasks. The highest-rated statement, “I have the freedom to plan and execute my work with minimal input from management” (Mean = 3.8), indicates that most employees (78.8%) feel trusted to manage their responsibilities. Similarly, a majority (72.7%) agree that supervisors rarely provide direct guidance (Mean = 3.7) and that they are allowed to make decisions without close supervision (72.7%, Mean = 3.7). However, a lower agreement level is observed in “I am expected to solve work-related problems independently without seeking frequent input from my manager” (Mean = 3.3), where a notable percentage of respondents (22.0%) remained undecided. Overall, the average mean score of 3.6 suggests that while laissez-faire management is present in hospitality firms, some employees may still require occasional managerial guidance and support.

Table 4: Laissez-Faire Management Style

S/N	ITEM	SA (5) f/(%)	A (4) f/(%)	U (3) f/(%)	D (2) f/(%)	SD (1) f/(%)	Mean ($\bar{x}$)
16	My manager allows employees to make decisions about their tasks without close supervision.	21 (15.9%)	75 (56.8%)	19 (14.4%)	16 (12.1%)	1 (0.8%)	3.7
17	I have the freedom to plan and execute my work with minimal input from management.	18 (13.6%)	86 (65.2%)	19 (14.4%)	8 (6.1%)	1 (0.8%)	3.8
18	Supervisors in my hotel rarely provide direct guidance or closely monitor employee activities.	18 (13.6%)	78 (59.1%)	24 (18.2%)	10 (7.6%)	2 (1.5%)	3.7
19	I am expected to solve work-related problems independently without seeking frequent input from my manager.	7 (5.3%)	65 (49.2%)	29 (22.0%)	26 (19.7%)	5 (3.8%)	3.3
20	My manager trusts employees to complete their duties without constant oversight.	9 (6.8%)	78 (59.1%)	20 (15.2%)	20 (15.2%)	5 (3.8%)	3.5
Average		15 (11.0%)	76 (58.0%)	22 (16.8%)	16 (12.1%)	3 (2.1%)	3.6

The result (Table 5) of transformational management style suggests a strong presence of inspirational and developmental leadership within the hospitality firms. The highest-rated item, "I feel motivated by my supervisor's ability to communicate a clear vision for the hotel's success" (Mean = 4.0), shows that most employees (87.9%) are motivated by a clear and inspiring leadership direction. Similarly, a high percentage of respondents agree that their managers recognize achievements (86.3%, Mean = 3.9) and encourage creative thinking (84.8%, Mean = 3.9). The lowest agreement level is seen in "I feel that my manager genuinely cares about my professional growth and development" (Mean = 4.0), though it still reflects strong positive sentiment (81.8%). Overall, the average mean score of 3.9 indicates that transformational leadership is actively practiced, fostering motivation, innovation, and employee recognition.

Table 5: Transformational Management Style

S/N	ITEM	SA (5) f/(%)	A (4) f/(%)	U (3) f/(%)	D (2) f/(%)	SD (1) f/(%)	Mean ($\bar{x}$)
21	My manager inspires me to perform beyond my usual expectations.	21 (15.9%)	91 (68.9%)	14 (10.6%)	4 (3.0%)	2 (1.5%)	3.9
22	I feel motivated by my supervisor's ability to communicate a clear vision for the hotel's success.	21 (15.9%)	95 (72.0%)	11 (8.3%)	5 (3.8%)	0 (0.0%)	4.0
23	My supervisor encourages me to think creatively and propose innovative ideas.	16 (12.1%)	96 (72.7%)	15 (11.4%)	4 (3.0%)	1 (0.8%)	3.9
24	My manager recognizes and celebrates the achievements of employees, motivating us to perform better.	18 (13.6%)	96 (72.7%)	14 (10.6%)	3 (2.3%)	1 (0.8%)	3.9
25	I feel that my manager genuinely cares about my professional growth and development.	32 (24.2%)	76 (57.6%)	16 (12.1%)	6 (4.5%)	2 (1.5%)	4.0
Average		22 (16.3%)	91 (68.8%)	14 (10.6%)	4 (3.3%)	1 (0.9%)	3.9

Test of Hypotheses

The research hypotheses were tested using regression analysis in order to achieve the current study's objectives.

Table 6a Model Summary of Management Style and Worker Productivity
 Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R of the		Change Statistics			Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
			Square	Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1 df2		
1	.406 ^a	.165	.139	.69036	.165	6.285	4 127	.000	1.814

a. Predictors: (Constant), TMS, DMS, LMS, AMS

b. Dependent Variable: WPRO

The model summary (Table 6a) shows that management styles (AMS, DMS, LMS, and TMS) collectively explain 16.5% ($R^2 = 0.165$) of the variation in worker productivity (WPRO), indicating a modest predictive power. The low percentage of 16.5% could be as a result of several factors such as Multifactorial Nature of Productivity, Measurement Limitations resulting from the usage

of self-reporting questionnaire, Sample Size and Diversity, Overlap or Redundancy Among Leadership Styles or Contextual Issues. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.139 suggests a slight reduction after adjusting for the number of predictors. The F-statistic ($F = 6.285$, $p = .000$) confirms that the model is statistically significant. The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.814) falls within the acceptable range (1.5–2.5), indicating no serious autocorrelation issues in the residuals, ensuring the validity of the regression model.

Table 6b Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Management Style and Worker Productivity
 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.981	4	2.995	6.285	.000 ^b
	Residual	60.528	127	.477		
	Total	72.509	131			

a. Dependent Variable: WPRO

b. Predictors: (Constant), TMS, DMS, LMS, AMS

The ANOVA results (Table 6b) indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 6.285$, $p = .000$), meaning that management styles (AMS, DMS, LMS, and TMS) collectively have a significant impact on worker productivity (WPRO). The regression sum of squares (11.981) compared to the total sum of squares (72.509) shows that management styles explain a portion of the variance in productivity, while the residual variance (60.528) suggests other factors also influence productivity. The model's significance confirms its validity in assessing the relationship between management style and worker performance in hospitality firms

Table 6c Regression Output of Management Style and Worker Productivity

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.659	.652		1.011	.314
	AMS	.118	.127	.083	.929	.355
	DMS	.190	.080	.206	2.377	.019
	LMS	.196	.107	.158	1.822	.071
	TMS	.295	.139	.191	2.122	.036

a. Dependent Variable: WPRO

Hypothesis One

H_{01} : Autocratic management style does not significantly influence worker productivity in the hotel industry.

The regression output (Table 6b) shows that autocratic management style (AMS) has a p-value of 0.355, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the effect is not statistically significant. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_{01}) and conclude that autocratic management does not significantly affect worker productivity in the hotel industry.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Democratic management style has no significant impact on worker productivity in the hotel industry.

The results (Table 6b) indicate that democratic management style (DMS) has a p-value of 0.019, which is less than 0.05, meaning the relationship is statistically significant. Consequently, we reject the null hypothesis (H₀₂) and accept the alternative hypothesis, concluding that democratic management has a significant positive impact on worker productivity in the hotel industry.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: Laissez-faire management style does not significantly influence worker productivity in the hotel industry.

The regression output (Table 6b) shows that laissez-faire management style (LMS) has a p-value of 0.071, which is greater than 0.05, suggesting a statistically insignificant effect. As a result, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H₀₃) and conclude that laissez-faire management does not significantly influence worker productivity in the hotel industry.

Hypothesis Four

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between transformational management style and worker productivity in the hotel industry.

The regression output (Table 6b) shows that Transformational management style (TMS) has a p-value of 0.036, which is less than 0.05, indicating a significant effect. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis (H₀₄) and conclude that transformational leadership significantly enhances worker productivity in the hotel industry.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that autocratic management style (AMS) does not significantly impact worker productivity in the hotel industry ($p = 0.355$). This aligns with existing literature highlighting the limitations of autocratic leadership in modern workplaces. Iqbal, Anwar, and Haider (2015) argue that autocratic leadership can suppress employee motivation and creativity, leading to dissatisfaction and increased turnover. Similarly, Eze, Ugochukwu, and Ikechukwu (2023) found that autocratic management negatively affects productivity in hospitality firms, reinforcing the idea that excessive control and lack of employee input hinder performance. However, Bhatti et al. (2015) suggest that in high-risk industries such as aviation or healthcare, autocratic leadership can enhance efficiency by ensuring strict adherence to procedures. This contrast suggests that while autocratic management may be effective in structured, rule-driven environments, its rigidity makes it less suitable for dynamic industries like hospitality, where employee engagement and customer service quality are critical.

Also, the study revealed that democratic management style (DMS) has a significant positive impact on worker productivity ($p = 0.019$), indicating that participatory decision-making enhances employee engagement and performance. This aligns with Bass and Bass (2019), who found that democratic leadership fosters a positive organisational climate and job satisfaction. Akinyele and Fasogbon (2021) similarly discovered that democratic leadership had the most positive influence on productivity in Nigerian manufacturing firms. However, Koyuncu, Burke, and Fiksenbaum (2017) caution that democratic management can lead to slower decision-making, which could be a drawback in fast-paced industries. Despite this limitation, the findings

of Gomes, Fernandes, and Martins (2021) in the restaurant sector reinforce that participatory management improves both job satisfaction and productivity. The alignment of these studies suggests that democratic leadership is particularly effective in service-based industries, where collaboration and employee motivation are essential for customer satisfaction and operational efficiency.

Going further in the study, Laissez-faire management style (LMS) was found to have an insignificant effect on worker productivity ($p = 0.071$), suggesting that while autonomy can be beneficial, excessive managerial detachment may not lead to higher productivity. Yang (2015) supports this by noting that laissez-faire leadership can foster creativity in highly skilled teams but may lead to role ambiguity and inefficiency in less structured environments. Similarly, Skogstad et al. (2014) warn that laissez-faire management can result in workplace conflicts and reduced accountability if employees lack guidance. In contrast, Eze, Ugochukwu, and Ikechukwu (2023) found that laissez-faire leadership negatively affected hospitality workers, as the absence of managerial oversight led to decreased performance. The findings of Khan et al. (2015) further highlight that excessive autonomy can weaken team cohesion, supporting the study's results that laissez-faire management is not a strong predictor of productivity in the hospitality industry. These findings suggest that while some level of autonomy is beneficial, hospitality firms require a balanced approach that provides freedom while ensuring clear expectations and accountability.

Finally, the study confirmed that transformational management style (TMS) significantly enhances worker productivity ($p = 0.036$), supporting extensive research on the positive effects of transformational leadership. Bass and Riggio (2018) argue that transformational leaders drive innovation and employee commitment by aligning personal and organisational goals. Similarly, Chen and Tsai (2022) found that transformational leadership positively influences intrinsic motivation and productivity in Taiwan's tourism sector. Ademola and Adediran (2020) also reported that transformational leadership significantly improved productivity in Nigerian telecommunications firms, highlighting its effectiveness across industries. However, Northouse (2018) notes that transformational leadership requires strong interpersonal skills and vision, which may not always be present in managerial settings. Despite this, the study's findings align with prior research emphasizing that transformational leadership fosters employee engagement and adaptability, making it particularly effective in the hospitality sector, where customer service and innovation are critical.

Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the significant influence that leadership styles exert on workers' perceptions of productivity within the hotel industry in Benin City. Through the analysis of data collected from a diverse sample of hotel staff, it became evident that democratic, laissez-faire, and transformational leadership styles are positively associated with enhanced employee productivity, while autocratic leadership showed no meaningful contribution. These results reflect the nuanced ways in which leadership behavior shapes employee attitudes, motivation, and performance outcomes in a competitive hospitality environment. By examining the statistical relationships between leadership dimensions and productivity perceptions, the study contributes valuable insights into organisational dynamics and human resource management in Nigerian hotels. Ultimately, the research highlights the importance of leadership as a strategic factor in fostering a productive workforce and sustaining operational excellence in the hospitality sector.

Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Hospitality firms should minimize reliance on autocratic management practices, as the study found no significant impact on worker productivity. Instead of centralized decision-making and rigid control, hotel managers should adopt a more inclusive leadership approach that fosters open communication and employee engagement. While autocratic management may be useful in enforcing policies and ensuring compliance with operational standards, excessive rigidity can hinder creativity and job satisfaction. Therefore, managers should balance structure with flexibility, allowing employees to contribute ideas and take initiative where appropriate.
- ii. Given the significant positive effect of democratic management style on productivity, hospitality firms should encourage participatory decision-making and team collaboration. Managers should create platforms such as regular meetings or feedback sessions where employees can contribute to strategic and operational decisions. This inclusive approach enhances motivation, increases job satisfaction, and fosters a sense of ownership among employees. However, to mitigate the risk of slow decision-making associated with democratic leadership, management should establish clear timelines and delegation mechanisms to ensure efficiency while maintaining employee involvement.
- iii. Since laissez-faire management was found to have an insignificant effect on productivity, hospitality managers should avoid excessive managerial detachment. While autonomy can be beneficial for skilled employees, lack of guidance and supervision can lead to inefficiencies, role ambiguity, and reduced accountability. Managers should ensure that employees receive adequate support, performance monitoring, and constructive feedback to maintain operational efficiency. A structured approach that provides autonomy within a framework of clear expectations and regular performance reviews will help strike a balance between independence and accountability.
- iv. As transformational leadership was shown to significantly enhance productivity, hospitality firms should invest in leadership development programs that train managers to inspire and motivate employees. Managers should focus on setting a clear vision, recognizing employee achievements, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation. Providing mentorship opportunities, career growth pathways, and performance incentives can further enhance employee engagement and commitment. By integrating transformational leadership principles into their management strategies, hospitality firms can improve both employee morale and overall organisational performance.

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