

# The Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Job Performance

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## Abstract

Leadership is a complex concept that involves a process of different types of actions and developing several styles. It plays an important role in organizations. It is a type of power that has the ability to influence someone's behaviors or attitudes. In order to achieve organizational goals, leaders are expected to lead their employees toward a great performance, therefore they utilize different leadership styles depending on the situations that they face. This study focuses on three types of leadership styles: democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire and how they can impact or influence the job performance of employees. The study has the objective of examining the impact of leadership style on employee performance. It shows the objectivism perspective and the validation of the framework based on numerous observable facts and figures. The research perspective is required to focus on human behaviors that could result in a rational explanation of observable phenomena and provide recommendations on employee job performance. The evaluation of the aforementioned criteria shows a suitable mix of positivist and interpretative approaches because the philosophy of the study correlates with the philosophical belief of observable experiences when generalizations are produced while focusing, simultaneously, on subjective experiences.

## Keywords

Leadership Style, Job Performance, Democratic Style, Autocratic Style, Laissez-Faire Style, Leadership, Leader, Subordinate(s), Employee(s), Follower(s)

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## 1. Introduction

Today, many organizations face complex social environments, including miscommunication, conflicts, and hostility. One of the core criticisms of these kinds of organizations is that they tend to be either under-led or over-managed. Or-

organizations that suffer over-management are sometimes slow to make adequate changes, which leads to less efficiency and few results. On the other hand, organizations that are under-led experience low employee productivity. In such work climates, leaders act in ways employees do not quite understand. This creates an unpleasant work environment that the organization must deal with, causing employees to lose faith in their leader's leadership ability. Although the primary concern of many organizations remains attraction and retention, employees want to work most of the time for good leaders in environments where they are treated with respect and can freely express their opinions.

Since leadership profoundly affects employees, it is important to understand how it functions. To do so, we must first recognize the types of leaders that lead organizations by their strengths and weaknesses and determine the types of leaders that organizations need by their competencies. Supervisors need to be good leaders to achieve organizational success, and leadership can help to be better—but in some cases, it can also have a dramatic impact.

Over the last decades, the relationship between leadership style and job performance has been the center of attention in several organizations and the subject of many studies (Blanchard, 2010). The role of a leader has become crucial to gain the trust of subordinates and stimulate their commitment to fulfill their task successfully (Boyett, 2006). This role is regarded as a critical tool for employee productivity because the leader plays a vital role in assisting employees and formulating collective norms (Al-Malki & Wang, 2018).

Organizations seek ways to enhance their employees' performance to achieve organizational goals through their chosen leader. Therefore, a leader must provide a compelling direction that helps team members to achieve the team and organizational goals. It is believed that good leadership contributes to the success of an organization; otherwise the organization stagnates and fails, but according to Stogdill (1948), one does not become a [good] leader by possessing some traits but by bearing a relevant relationship to the activities, characteristics, and goals of subordinates. That is why good leadership creates high employee commitment and motivation (Lowe et al., 1996).

Therefore, a leader's effectiveness plays a critical role in organizational success because it can ensure that subordinates focus on the organization's vision and show their commitment (Conger, 1999). Decision-making is one of the keys that evaluate a leader's ability to lead an organization. A decision in itself does not have any power if it is not implemented correctly and implementing decision-making are issues those leaders usually face when it comes to influencing behaviors or overcoming resistance. It is why an organization must have effective leadership to implement decisions successfully to deliver good services.

Every leadership style a leader decides to use matches different work situations and can only work best when the leader has the vision to achieve and strategies to realize said vision (Reddins, 1990). We must understand that different leadership styles yield different outcomes (desirables or undesirables), and the leadership style that is considered effective is the one that can produce desirable outcomes

for employees in particular, and for the organization in general.

Hence, we recognize that more studies need to be done on the leadership style that better influences employees' performance and contributes to the success of the organizational goals.

Although several research studies have shown that leadership can boost both employees and organizational performance (Oberfield, 2014; Jacobsen, Botcher, & Andersen, 2015; Bellé, 2014), let's remind that leaders in the public sector have different roles than leaders in the private sector. Because the framework of this study is within the public sector, the analysis will extend by examining the relationship of leadership style in the public administration literature using two primary constructs: public service motivation and job performance (Perry, Hondeghem, & Wise, 2010).

The synthesis of research on public administration over the last two decades shows that most empirical studies are reporting a positive relationship between public administration and job performance (Ritz et al., 2016). Although the majority of research assumes that public service motivation is highly relevant to employee performance, some see that link as context-dependent—organization mission, public values—(Vandenabeele et al., 2018) and others believe that it is important to know more about the type of employee performance outcomes to which public service motivation relates.

Described as “a particular form of altruism or prosocial motivation that is animated by specific dispositions and values arising from public institutions and missions” (Perry, Hondeghem, & Wise, 2010: p. 682), public service motivation is a crucial mechanism that explains how employee job performance is influenced by leaders in the public sector (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010). Bandura (1977), Wright, Hassan, and Park (2016), based on the theory of social learning, argue that leaders in the public sector behave as role models for employees to reproduce attitudes and behaviors that they encourage and convey. Likewise, we believe that public leadership is positively related to public service motivation and employee job performance as leaders' different types of behaviors differ when they choose distinct leadership styles.

Some researchers have developed new leadership constructs to examine the characteristics linked to the public setting. Backing the early work of Fernandez, Cho, and Perry (2010) and Fernandez (2005) on integrative leadership, Tummers and Knies (2016) developed four perspectives related to public leadership:

- 1) Network governance leadership (connection with others);
- 2) Political loyalty leadership (advancement of the government or politicians will);
- 3) Rule-following leadership (actions in line with regulations);
- 4) Accountability (justification of actions to stakeholders).

By applying the four approaches mentioned above, leaders become examples that employees follow and emulate, which can positively impact employee motivation and, in return, is associated with employee job performance.

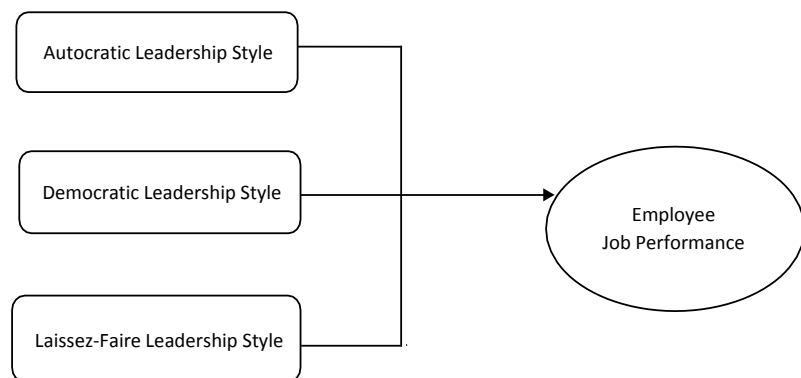
A new shift in organizations now is appropriate leadership styles that can re-

spond to the effectual change of work environments. In this regard, leaders are facing many challenges in adapting to the new leadership paradigms and models while leading employees, especially when they are from various backgrounds. Thereby, leadership becomes very important in the leadership process because leaders tend to develop leadership styles through experience, training, and education (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2001), and leadership style, in return, initiates ways to greater performance.

It has long been thought that employees with high motivation—particularly those from public service—are motivated to perform better because they can express themselves and fulfill their jobs' values. While Wright and Grant (2010: p. 694) linked public service motivation to a higher level of performance, other studies have argued that public service motivation may be the consequence of motivated performance and not the cause. Increased performance builds self-confidence, self-efficacy, and capacity to succeed, and it is said that this leads to higher public service motivation. But Wright (2008) also emphasized that other factors can moderate the consequences of public service motivation, and we believe that leadership style is one of the elements that play a key role in the performance of employees.

#### Objective of the research

This research seeks to examine how leadership style affects the job performance of employees by assessing the following objectives: 1) Identify the impact of leadership style on employee job performance; 2) Identify the impact of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on the job performance of employees (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Research model showing the influence of leadership styles on employee job performance.

#### Hypotheses

To address the above objectives, the research developed the hypotheses below:

**H1:** Autocratic leadership style has a negative impact on employee job performance.

**H2:** Democratic leadership style has a positive impact on employee job performance.

**H3:** Laissez-Faire leadership style has a positive impact on employee job per-

formance.

### **Research Question**

The leadership style of a leader can change an employee's mindset and transform him/her in being a valuable team member. Meanwhile, a leader's lack of the right skills to manage employees can hurt employee job performance.

In line with this, we will evaluate leadership style on employee job performance by answering the two following questions:

- Does leadership style have any impact on employee job performance?
- How does leadership style impact employee job performance?

### **Problem Statement**

Although several leadership researches are focusing on the perspective of an individual leader, leadership is a process that includes leaders, followers, and the environment (Weber & Khademain, 2008). Organizations try to build trust and relationships at all levels by instilling morals and responsibility into their activities for effective management that contributes to organizational development.

This study seeks to examine the effects of leadership style on employee job performance in an organization.

## **2. Literature Review**

In many organizations today, leaders face many challenges. Improving the performance of employees has become an important topic in the last few decades (Asencio, 2016), that is why leadership has started playing a tremendous role in the performance of employees because effective leadership increases the productivity of employees, their motivation, their job satisfaction, as well as their behaviors. Although it does not exist a "one" leadership style capable of fixing all leadership issues if we consider the various characteristics surrounding the leadership process, leaders, however, have the power to influence employees to achieve organizational goals.

### **2.1. The Concept of Leadership**

#### **2.1.1. Leader**

Due to the importance of individualism in Western culture, the role of the leader is sometimes exaggerated (Kort, 2008) and confused with leadership; that is why it is important first to understand the word "leader" from which leadership derives.

A leader can be defined as someone who is leading or commanding a group of people. It is a person who gets others to follow him/her (Khan, 2008), a person with a dynamic and forceful personality who leads and motivates subordinates, mediator in situations of conflicts (Sorensen & Epps, 1996). The core problem of a leader is to get subordinates to do what is needed to achieve organizational goals, and achieving these goals requires effective leadership.

In an organization, a leader will be someone who sets goals, initiates positive and productive actions, and has the authority to command employees. The work

of a leader can vary in different ways: one can be a leader because they are in charge of getting things done (execution); the other one can be a leader because they are in charge of determining policies, and still the other one can be a leader because he/she comes up with new well-expressed ideologies or new ideas that followers admire. These roles are often distinct in mature organizations. A leader is tested by the response and reaction of followers. An enlightened leader can render more flexible even a rigid bureaucracy (Kotter, 1985: p. 3). The responsibility of a leader is to ensure appropriate leadership within the organization. One of the relevant indicators to assess leadership effectiveness is the extent to which employee performance is enhanced and the achievement of goals is facilitated (Bass, 2008); another indicator is the attitudes of employees and their perception of their leader (Yukl & Gardner, 2020).

### 2.1.2. Leadership

The concept of leadership has undergone several definitions due to the different philosophical beliefs of various researchers. It is a broadly used concept that is usually defined narrowly. There are two ways in which leadership can be defined: 1) by the kind of followers that are being led; and 2) by the nature of the leader's work—Primary focus (Van Wart, 2012). Thus, leadership can either focus on the end, actual performance or the mean by which things are getting done, in other words, the motivation and development of followers. Some leaders spend a lot of their time with followers such as employees or subordinates, to whom they give orders; other leaders speak on behalf of their supporters, such as constituents; and others who simply have cognitive values over followers as role models based on the ideology or creativity of the leader.

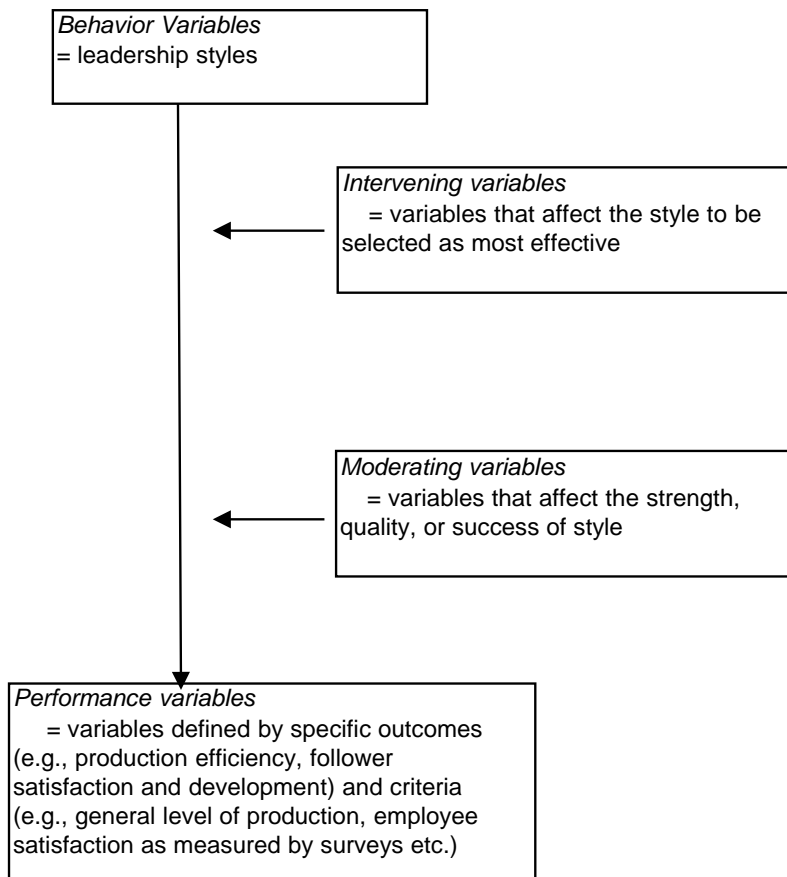
Although several leadership researches focus on the individual perspectives of the leader, leadership remains a process that includes the leader, the followers and the environment. This study focuses on the organizational leader who has projects to complete, deadlines to meet, and whose primary sole are employees, subordinates, or followers. To achieve this goal, the leader has to influence the behaviors of the people he commands by unleashing their potential and power to impact the greater good (Blanchard et al., 2013).

Leadership is an influence process that enables managers to willingly get their people to do what must be done and do well what ought to be done (Cribbin, 1981). It is an interposed influence exercised in a situation and directed through the communication process toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals (Tannenbaum & Massarik, 1957). We must understand that there is no leadership without a group or a collective action. It is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Blake & McCause, 1991).

It is noticed that the term “influence” is central to many leadership definitions and particularly to the ones mentioned above. Influence in leadership connotes the ability of a leader to influence the behaviors of his/her employees. It involves getting people to do what you want them to do thereby providing the means or

methods to achieve two ends of operating and improving the organization (Rowe, 2007). So, leadership becomes an interactive process between the leader and the followers (employees) and a situation. The results of this process determine the leader's ability to achieve excellence through styles, skills, and knowledge. Sometimes, a leader may cross his/her conceptual distinctions and changes his/her leadership role over time.

This study only focuses on the one who leads others in a leadership role. However, the style of leadership practiced may vary. A leader can go from one style to the other according to situations stringing either employee motivation or making them loose interest, which leads to low or strong performance. With regard to the institutional context of this study, public service motivation becomes a dynamic state in which leadership shapes employee motivation (Christensen et al., 2017; Piatak et al., 2021). As a result, leadership becomes capable to enhance public service motivation and affect employee and organizational outcomes. Hence, the social learning theory assumes that a range of job outcomes such as performance can influence leadership through public service motivation. As a leader models his/her manifested motivation of serving organizational goals, subordinates develop a great public service motivation, which also results in greater efforts toward organizational goals (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** A Generic, causal-chain model of leadership (Van Wart, 2016).

## 2.2. Theories of Leadership

Theories of leadership have evolved within various approaches. They come in all sizes, shapes and formats. Some have attempted to unify leadership regardless of the situation, while others have tried to give leadership a narrow aspect by explaining the causes and effects of leader attribution processes on followers, and others also have emphasized leadership on production, worker satisfaction, and the need for organizational change. We have limited our analysis to two main theories: transformational and transactional approaches. Transformational and transactional approaches are important when developing leadership styles because several researchers have assessed and validated them in numerous studies and because the two approaches span cultural and organizational boundaries.

### 2.2.1. Transactional Theory

Transactional theory arose around the first half of the twentieth century from the works of Max Weber according to which workers required a structure and directive approach to produce good results. This approach tends to include a learning-focused and a development perspective as well as more complex combined styles and more leader styles that, in return, all emphasize more worker inclusiveness (Van Wart, 2012).

Transactional leadership is characterized by two factors: one factor—that initializes and organizes work—concentrates on task accomplishment; and the second factor—that shows consideration for followers—emphasizes satisfying the self-interests of employees who do not do a good job. The transactional leader gets things done through promises, recognitions, increased pay, and promotion of subordinates who perform well and penalizes those who do not do well. This exchange or transaction, as it is called—promises and rewards for good performance or punishment for poor performance—describes effective leadership (Bass, 1990).

Transactional leadership is a managerial type of leadership where the leader focuses on results, his/her role as a supervisor, and the performance of employees (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). This type of leadership is based on transactions between the leader and employees (Bass, 1990). The transactional leader uses rewards and punishment as motivation. In transactional leadership, the primary goal of subordinates is to obey the leader's instructions. This theory emphasizes the importance of motivating workers and their needs on the decision, productivity, and retention.

However, transactional leadership was prescribed as mediocre because the leader heavily relies on passive management by exception and intervenes with the team only when standards and procedures to accomplish tasks are not met (Bass, 1990). The transactional leader may often utilize disciplinary threats to keep employees' performance up to standards—an ineffective technique and likely counterproductive in the long run. The transactional leader sets the work criteria for employees and appreciates working with those who know their job.



### 2.2.2. Transformational Theory

The notion of transformational leadership emerged in the second half of the twentieth century with the works of Downton (1973) and Burns (1978) that discussed gaining followership and encouraging followers to achieve organizational goals.

Transformational Leadership can be defined as “the process of Influencing the major changes in the attitudes and assumptions of organizational members and building commitment for the organizational mission or objectives” (Yukl, 1989). It occurs when a leader broadens and elevates the interests of his/her employees, when acceptance and awareness of the mission and purpose of the team is generated, and when the leader encourages employees to look beyond their self-interests for the good of the team, (Bass, 1990: p. 21).

The transformational leader achieves these results in the following ways: He/she may inspire his/her subordinates through his/her charisma; the leader may also meet the emotional needs of subordinates; and the leader may boost employees intellectually. Four main qualities are applicable to the transformational leader (Northouse, 2001): 1) followers’ empowerment to commit to the organization’s goals; 2) role model with high values; 3) ability to listen to different viewpoints; 4) creativity; and 5) change agent in the organization.

The transformational leader seeks to bring positive change in employees by empowering and encouraging them to do more than they are expected to do (Bass, 1990) and to achieve extraordinary outcomes (Robbins & Coulter, 2007). He/she is individually considerate, which means that he/she pays close attention to the differences among subordinates. He/she acts as a mentor to subordinates who desire to grow and develop within the organization. It is all about leadership that creates positive change in employees, cares for their interests, and acts for the team’s interests (Warrilow, 2012).

This type of leadership boosts the morale and motivation of subordinates and enhances their performance. The leader becomes the role model of subordinates. Effective transformational leadership leads to performances that exceed the expectations of organizations.

There are four components of transformational leadership identified by Bass (1999):

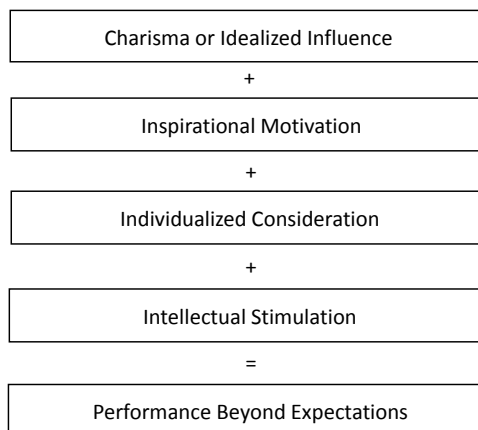
**1) Charisma or idealized influence** defines leaders who act as role models to their followers. A leader with charisma or idealized influence is usually respected by followers to make good decisions for the organization.

**2) Inspirational motivation** describes leaders who encourage followers to engage in the organization’s vision by having a team spirit to reach organizational goals.

**3) Intellectual Stimulation** portrays leaders who promote creativity and innovation through group viewpoints. They encourage critical thinking and problem-solving within the organization.

**4) Individual Consideration** characterizes leaders who play the roles of ad-

visors or coaches to their followers by inciting them to reach goals that benefit them and the organization (**Figure 3**).



**Figure 3.** Additive effect of transformational leadership to reach performances beyond expectations (Northouse, 2001).

Although the transformational theory is the approach that is mostly encouraged in organizations, it has some weaknesses, such as the difficulty in underlining its influences and processes and insufficient situational variables (Yukl, 1989). Also, transformational theory does not treat leadership as a learned behavior but rather as a personality trait. Transformational theory assumes that an effective leader influences followers to commit to the organization's goals and increases their performance.

Transaction and transformational theories are two different leadership characteristics that exhibit opposite behaviors but with the same goal of engaging their followers in their tasks while generating their performance (**Figure 4**).

<b>Transformational Leader</b>
Charisma: Provides vision and sense of mission, instills pride, and gains respect and trust.
Inspiration: Communicates high expectations, uses symbols to focus efforts, and Expresses important purposes in simple ways.
Intellectual Stimulation: Promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving.
Individualized Consideration: Gives personal attention, treats each employee individually, coaches, advice.
<b>Transactional Leader</b>
Contingent reward: Contracts exchange of rewards for effort, promise rewards for good performance recognizes accomplishments.
Management by Exception (active): Watches and searches for deviations from rules and standards take correction action.
Management by Exception (passive): Intervenes only if standards are not met.
Laissez-Faire: Abdicates responsibilities, avoids making decisions.

**Figure 4.** Characteristics of transformational and transactional leaders (Van Wart, 2016).

It is appropriate to group transactional and transformational theories together because of their strong similarities in their interests, but they are also distinctive

enough. Transactional theory tends to focus on the leader's personality, and thus shows great interest in the traits of a leader, while transformational theory tends to focus on the leader's leading change and what triggers change. The relative importance of the two approaches varies according to many factors. First, their scope of the definition is critical because democratic style is defined as transformational, then autocratic behavior significantly contributes less to perceived performance improvements (Trottier, Van Wart, & Wang, 2008). Second, the relative importance varies according to the organizational environment (Figure 5).

	Transactional	Transformational
Theoretical	Supervisors	Executives
Emphasis	Closed system Narrow range of variables	Open system Board range of variables
Leader's type of power	Legitimate, reward, punishment direct influence at close range	Expert, referent indirect influence, include influence at a distance
Follower Motivation	Self-interest such as pay; immediate need such as resources	Group interests such as organizational success; psychic satisfaction such as emulation of leader
Facilitating conditions	Stable; refinement of functioning systems	Unstable; need for change; crisis
Performance Expectations	Good performance	Exceptional performance either in terms of quantity or adaptation
Leader behaviors emphasized	Monitoring, operations planning, clarifying roles, informing, delegating, problem solving, consulting, personnel developing staff, and motivating	Environmental scanning, strategic planning, vision articulation, networking decision-making, managing organizational change, as well informing delegating planning (empowering), managing innovation, consulting, developing staff, motivating, building teams and managing personal change

**Figure 5.** Comparison of transactional theory and transformational theory (Van Wart, 2016).

In certain conditions, transactional leadership style can result in achieving organizational success although followers have fewer rights, compared to the followers of transformational leadership (Boseman, 2008).

## 2.3. Leadership Styles: Concept, Types and Dimensions

### 2.3.1. The Concept of Leadership Style

Leadership style is the method that a leader chooses to provide direction to his/her subordinates, implement plans, and motivate them (Northouse, 2007). Although leadership style is an aggregation of skills, behaviors and traits of a leader, the concept has been a popular topic in research and debates. Leadership

style is commonly used to describe what is perceived as prominent sets of a leader characteristics, examples include autocratic style, democratic style and laissez-faire style. A leader must get things done and work with people. The way he/she balances these factors is often described as his/her style. The type of situation that the leader prefers or excels in is often tied to the functional style preference, a very useful but slightly different insight: a task-force or project situation, a maintenance situation, a start-up or turning a business around (McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988).

Styles are the generalized patterns of behaviors exhibited by leaders. Leader effectiveness must be operationally defined in terms of a specific outcome: productivity, worker development, worker involvement and cohesion, effective problem solving and decision-making, successful organizational change, or a combination of these factors (Van Wart, 2012). Therefore, leadership style becomes an important function of an organization.

An organization kind of leadership style or behavior has an impact on the organization results. In other words, the way a leader manages employees ultimately impacts the organization and employee performance. It is an important factor that contributes to the success or failure of the organization. And that is why it is important that a leader chooses a style that increases job performance. Employees represent an important asset of an organization so that without them the organization cannot reach its goals and objectives. Therefore, their performance becomes the building block for the organization success. Sometimes different theories of leadership style provide different answers. Some use similar concepts and have different names, and other ones use the same names for different concepts.

There is another important set of issues regarding style: whether or to what extent style can be changed. Not many researchers have agreed that it is difficult to change the style. Friedler (1967) advises that it is better to first determine the situation and find the appropriate leader. In addition to situational demands (style needs), the preferences and ranges of style are issues of style quality. Each style requires an immense set of skills that need to be integrated into situations that evolve, but that may be beyond the abilities of an inept leader (House, 1996).

We see today in some democratic institutions how lack of good leadership style fails countries, causes tensions and affects the morale of citizens. We can define leadership style as the behavior that a leader exhibits when interacting with his/her subordinates toward successfully fulfilling their projects in the organization. The choice of a leader and his/her leadership style are important factors that determine the organization's success.

A leadership style either motivates or discourages employees and causes their performance to either decrease or increase (Belonio, 2012). We must also understand that every organization has different goals and deals with different types of individuals, and "different organizations and situations call for different leadership styles" (Stogdill, 1989). Backing that idea, Tummers and Knies (2016) argue

that leaders can move from one role to another depending on the situations that they face. That is why we believe that leaders should adopt a leadership style that helps to achieve the objectives of the team members.

### 2.3.2. Types of Leadership Styles

The concept of leadership style, as defined above, has a big impact on an organization's success or failure. Therefore, it is an important component of effective management that contributes to maximizing efficiency and helps achieve organizational goals.

The styles identified below are distinct and relatively comprehensive of all the functions of leadership (Van Wart, 2012) and provide an overview of the different leadership styles. These leadership styles were chosen among the other ones because they are the most common styles used in organizations.

#### 1) Autocratic Style

Also known as authoritarian style, strongman (Manz & Sims, 1991), autocratic decision making (Vroom & Jago, 1988), authority-compliance (Blake & Mouton, 1964), top-down leadership (Bandura & Locke, 2003), task-oriented (Friedler, Chemers, & Mahar, 1976), autocratic leadership is a style in which the leader controls all decisions, does not allow any suggestions, and gives little input to followers. He/she "commands and expects compliance, he is dogmatic and positive, and leads by the ability to withhold or give rewards and punishment" (Fubara, 1985). The autocratic leader makes decisions and choices based on his/her own ideas and judgments and imposes his/her will. This type of leadership style allows to make decisions quickly, especially in stressful situations, and provides a clear direction where there is no leadership. But it can sometimes discourage subordinates who view the leader as bossy and controlling, and this can hurt their morale and lead to the resentment.

In this kind of leadership, the leader exhibits authority by giving subordinates guidance and directions, informing them of their responsibilities, asking them to follow schedules, procedures, and rules, and coordinating the activities of the workplace.

The autocratic style emphasizes task skills such as delegation of assignments, monitoring, clarification of roles, and operations planning. This style assumes high control of the leader, above or average performance expectations, internal focus, and motivation based on reward and punishment.

The autocratic style is the most identified style. We can identify it in the classical management literature (Fayol, 1949; Gulick, 1937) and in contemporary management literature, such as reengineering with the top-down analytic approach (Hammer & Champy, 1993).

The autocratic style has various subtypes with different connotations: 1) *the instructive style* emphasizes information, telling, and clarification of direction aspects. The leader instructs subordinates on what they are not doing correctly, what they don't know how to do or what they will do differently because of changes in technology or mandate. Subordinates must know the rules, the mean-

ing of the rule infractions, exceptions that can be allowed, and how to interact with their peers. 2) *Structuring* which means that workplace activities such as schedules are coordinated in advance and contingency plans are developed. It includes task monitoring (analyzing trends, reading reports, and so on).

The autocratic style has a negative connotation because informing becomes dictating, telling becomes being bossy or commanding, planning becomes micromanagement, and clarifying becomes threatening. This style is sometimes typified as leader-centeredness, rigid, lack of inputs from others, and subordinates being treated as replaceable parts. This style is appropriate in times of crisis or imperative change.

### **2) Democratic Style**

Also known as participative style (House & Mitchell, 1974), shared leadership (Bandura & Locke, 2003), consultation (Vroom & Yetton, 1973), and super leadership (Manz & Sims, 1991), democratic style is the style of leadership in which the leader allows subordinates to participate in the decision-making process by allowing them to freely share their ideas even if the leader is the one who makes the final decision. Democratic style tends to mainly favor decision-making by group members (Robbins, 1993). It focuses on the equality of team members and sharing ideas and/or opinions.

Democratic style is highly effective because it leads to better team member contribution and higher productivity and boosts the morale of subordinates. The democratic leader consults with subordinates, considers their opinions, provides advice and suggestions, and establishes a creative and friendly work environment for employees. The behaviors of the democratic leader include staff development, personnel coordination, consultation, motivation, team building and management, and conflict management (Van Wart, 2005). The democratic style assumes moderate control and emphasizes discussions and inclusiveness in decisions and problem-solving.

Democratic style has two subtypes: 1) the inclusive kind of leadership in which the leader discusses issues with subordinates to overcome problems and gets information and inputs. The inclusive leader coordinates the group's needs and motivates them through inclusiveness. 2) The self-conscious team approach in which the leader facilitates discussions within the group by providing parameters of decisions and implementing decisions as they are recommended. The self-conscious approach focuses on interactions during meetings, management of complex group processes, and group learning.

However, democratic style can lead to communication failures when the roles of group members are unclear or lead to poor decision-making when the group is unskilled or/and has limited knowledge. The contingency approach believes that this leadership style may not always be ideal because the democratic leader may sometimes be inefficient even if he/she has good teamwork.

### **3) Laissez-Faire Style**

Also known as "Free-Rein Leader," laissez-Faire style is the style of leadership

in which the leader has little participation in the decision-making process and leaves the responsibility to their subordinates to make decisions. In this type of leadership, the leader gives subordinates the responsibility to complete tasks and identify issues. The leader neglects some areas of responsibility or exhibits indifference or passivity about subordinates and tasks.

This style is used when employees can analyze the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to do it (Blake & McCanse, 1991). Employees must be highly trained or experienced to make good decisions. However, the laissez-faire style may not be successful if employees lack the required skills to do the job. The Laissez-Faire style can be considered a conscious strategy, non-style, or hands-off style when competing demands need to overlook some areas of responsibility. It is identified as a universal hierarchical approach to leadership and the worst or bottom style, which made some theorists call it “an impoverished style” (Blake & Mouton, 1964). It is the only style that has always been identified as nearly poor.

Laissez-Faire style is characterized by follower’s lack of motivational stimulation, low leader performance expectations and goals, and low leader control. This means that the leader’s lack of focus on internal and external aspects of the organization or his/her partial focus on one aspect leads to a laissez-faire. It is not uncommon for a leader who uses this style to experience significant difficulties. Such a leader often considers that his/her only job is to fix problems and crises when subordinates are unable to carry out their duties properly. Therefore, when such negative events occur, the laissez-faire leader springs to action and takes firm and decisive steps to fix the situation. On many occasions, the leader appears to be the hero who seized the initiative, fixed the problem, and punished the innocent.

Although many structural elements can affect an organization’s productivity, a leader’s style or behavior can have a significant impact. Because performance expectations and low-level goals indicate poor leader effectiveness, this usually means a laissez-faire style because the leader does not bother to exert efforts toward high performance standards. However, styles such as autocratic and democratic indirectly permit a moderate or an average performance level. Excessive expectations can lead to disappointments. Autocratic and democratic are the two styles that generally allow a moderate level of performance and set the stage for a high level of performance (Figure 6).

### **2.3.3. Dimensions of Leadership Styles**

All styles do not seek to emphasize an identical characteristic of leadership, therefore the styles that are proposed by theorists have different dimensions. Some of the common dimensions include the degree of the leader control in providing direction and making joint or unilateral decisions, the focus of the leader’s attention and the type of motivation utilized. These dimensions show how difficult it is to capture all the nuances of leadership in few styles.

Leadership	Narrative description	Behavioral competencies
Autocratic	Letting subordinates know what they are expected to do; giving specific guidance; asking subordinates to follow rules and procedures; scheduling and coordinating	Tasks: <i>monitor, plan operations, clarify roles, delegate</i> People: <i>manage conflict, manage personnel change</i> Organizational: <i>general management functions</i>
Democratic	Consulting with subordinates and taking their opinions into account; providing advice rather than direction; establishing a friendly and creative work environment for teams	Task: <i>delegate</i> People: <i>consult (discuss), coordinate personnel, develop staff motivate, build and manage teams, manage conflict manage personnel change</i>
Laissez-Faire	Passive indifference about task and subordinates; essentially a non-style	
Notes: (1) behaviors that are in italics indicate a focus of the theory. (2) Styles identified are based on holistic assessments.		

**Figure 6.** Styles as commonly described by leadership theories.

### 1) Leader Control

The question here is to evaluate the degree of control needed by a leader and under what conditions. Control can be exhibited at various levels: monitoring, problem-solving or work decisions. Every leadership style is appropriate only to the degree of a specific situation. A high level of control is generally noticed in autocratic style. It might be more effective when there are untrained or new employees who are prone to errors or when long-term employees are in need of re-training. Democratic style often reflects a medium level of control. The leader can choose to either include others in decision-making or to utilize an interactive mechanism to determine the goals of the organization. Finally, the leader can also decide to choose a low level of control as it is seen in laissez-faire style, but it may not be appropriate for employees who have poor work standards or poor training.

### 2) Goals and performance expectations

Although many structural elements can affect productivity, it is clear that the style of a leader can have a huge impact on employee performance. Because low-level expectations and goals performance reflect the poor effectiveness of the leader, this condition shows a laissez-faire style in which the leader does not exert any effort toward high performance standards. However, there are styles that allow a moderate or average level of performance. A style like democratic style that generally accommodates a moderate performance level, sets the stage for a high-performance level.

### 3) Type of Motivation Utilized

The type of motivation that a leader uses to encourage the performance of followers varies. If the leader is indifferent to the motivational needs of em-



employees or does not motivate them, it indicates a laissez-faire style; if he/she uses his/her authority as a leader to punish for compliance or non-compliance, it reflects an autocratic style; or he/she may emphasize the participation of employees in the decision-making process, it indicates a democratic style.

**4) Focus of Leader’s Attention**

The dimensions discussed above relate to subordinates, nevertheless, leaders have responsibilities such as attention to followers or internal production that are totally different from followers. The focus of the leader’s attention can also sometimes be on the organization’s external alignment with relations and the environment with entities and outside groups (Van Wart, 2012) (Figure 7).

Dimensions	Range of Variance	Examples of styles affected by the dimension
Leader Control	- High - Medium - Low	Autocratic Democratic Laissez-Faire
Goals and performance Expectations	- Low - Average	Laissez-Faire Autocratic, Democratic
Type of Motivation Used	- None - Reward, legitimate power, coercion - Appreciation	Laissez-Faire Autocratic Democratic
Focus of Leader’s Attention	- Internal production and followers	Autocratic, Democratic

Figure 7. The three leadership style dimensions.

**2.4. Leadership Style and Job Performance**

Leadership style is a crucial element in an organizational behavior landscape. The role of leadership is a judicious instrument that motivates employees with the aim of achieving growth and development (Fry, 2003). Regarding the relationship between leadership style and job performance, prior research has shown a significant link between leadership style and the performance of employees—which is described as the capacity of an organization to reach specific goals and objectives—including profits, excellent financial outcomes (Koontz & Donnell, 1993).

Recent public administration research has studied the behaviors of leaders as a critical factor in employees’ job performance (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010). Research of Wright, Hassan, and Park (2016: p. 651) has for example shown that the ethical behaviors of leaders have positive effects on employee job performance, arguing that an ethical leader communicates, encourages, and holds employees accountable for ethical and unethical conducts. Likewise, Schwarz et al. (2016) found that servant leadership increases employees’ motivation and boosts job performance. These two examples draw on the theory of social learning

(Bandura, 1977) to define the relationship between leadership style and job performance. Social learning theory supports the idea that individuals learn appropriate and required behaviors at work while observing and imitating credible role models. Leaders are often seen as credible role models because of their positions or because they exhibit positive behaviors that subordinates think are worth reproducing.

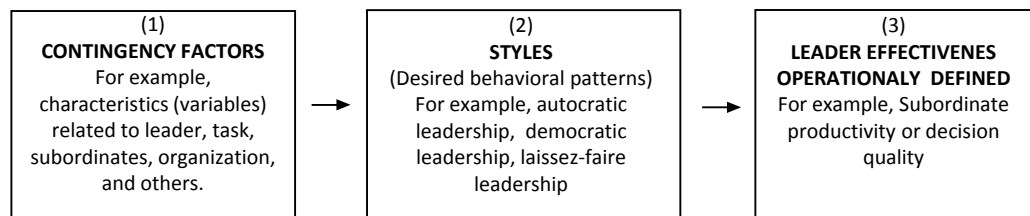
In the management field, every organization is judged by its performance. Job performance is usually defined as a behavior that contributes to organizational success (Ivancevich et al., 2007). While this definition seems explicit, job performance becomes complex when considering the environmental factor. Other theorists, such as Mullins (1999), assumed that job performance was the ability multiplied by motivation ( $JP = A \times M$ ). From the above definitions, we see that it is the responsibility of the employee in an organization to set goals either to perform a task or to fail to perform said task.

In line with the theoretical aspects of leadership style and job performance, we can briefly ask the following questions: what contingency factors affect which leadership style can increase the leader's effectiveness and employee performance? Or what are the ideal conditions for a specific leadership style to be used? Contingency factors are all the distinct types of variables that influence the style of a leader as they seek to be effective (Van Wart, 2012). The effectiveness of a leader must then be defined regarding specific outcomes: worker cohesion and involvement, productivity, successful organizational change, worker development, or a combination of these factors.

Performance was originally seen from the organizational perspective as production efficiency. Still, over the years it has shifted its focus to followers' development and satisfaction, production efficiency, and organizational change, among others. We know that the style of leadership that a leader decides to utilize can affect many kinds of behaviors in employees, including motivation, satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and/or creativity, and the different styles of leadership mentioned above can produce different performances under different situations (Azhar, 2004), and can remarkably vary in the type of motivation that the leader uses to encourage the performance of subordinates. For example, suppose a leader is indifferent to the motivational needs of subordinates. In that case, this indicates a laissez-faire approach, or when a leader primarily uses his/her legitimate authority to punish and reward for noncompliance and compliance, this indicates an autocratic style. When a leader emphasizes the interests of employees to be appreciated and involved as members of the team, this reflects a democratic style.

Human beings are highly complex and have a large array of motivational needs, several of which are likely operating at any given time. Thus, the number and complexity of recommendations for leaders can become highly complex (Van Wart, 2005). Many contradictory studies have been done on the relationship between leadership style and job performance. Belonio (2012) explained that autocratic and democratic styles significantly impact employee performance

meanwhile Dolatabadi and Safa (2010) argued that autocratic style has no significant impact on employee performance. Tandoh (2011), on the other hand, found that democratic style has no significant impact on employee performance.



**Figure 8.** Generic casual-chain model of leadership.

**Figure 8** displays how the style of a leader directly affects job performance. The leader style affects how well the organization adapts, how followers feel, how much is accomplished, and so forth (Van Wart, 2012: p. 33). But some factors influence this relationship. Some contingency factors are critical because they determine the style that can work effectively in a specific situation. For example, in some cases, an autocratic style can be more effective, while in others a democratic style is the best. Two types of variables are commonly used in this situation: 1) the intervening variable that affects the style is selected to enhance the outcome desired, just like in the case of a problem structure where a problem structure leads to one style, and a complex problem leads to another; and 2) the moderating variable that affects the quality, strength or success of a style such as the leader expertise in a particular style (Van Wart, 2012).

### 3. Findings

The goal of this study was to examine the impact of autocratic style, democratic style, and laissez-faire style on employee job performance. The research intended to identify how leadership style affects the job performance of employees. The findings reveal that the three types of leadership mentioned above can have an impact either positive or negative on employee job performance.

Democratic leadership style and laissez-faire leadership style tend to have a positive impact on employee job performance because one creates good learning opportunities for employees while the other one encourages personal growth. On the other hand, autocratic leadership style has a negative impact on employee job performance because it creates an atmosphere of frustration.

### 4. Conclusion

Every organization expects to lead employees toward great performance to meet or exceed organization goals, and the leader is supposed to use a leadership style that helps to achieve organizational goals. This study has allowed us, depending on the situation, to see the effects of the leadership style on employee job performance. It reveals that as a leader uses democratic style which includes employees in the decision-making process and shows a lot of interest in their per-

sonal lives, employees are comfortable and happier. This particular leadership style helps to boost employee morale and performance. The leader provides motivation, vision and support to employees and employees reciprocate the same behaviors with higher levels of performance (Paarlberg & Lavigna, 2010).

However, there are still limitations in regard to an effective leadership style that can boost the performance of employees. The study showed that leadership style can definitively impact the performance of employees. When a leader engages employees and values their opinions during the decision-making process, their productivity is likely to increase as they feel that their inputs are considered. Employees therefore feel appreciated. This kind of leader's behavior motivates employees and improves their performance. Meanwhile, a leader's lack of right behavior to manage employees can negatively affect their performance. Employees will be less willing to give their best, which can lead to difficult work relationships.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, it is important to note that what subordinates think of their leader affects their commitment and their productivity. Few leaders often use a single style all the time (Van Wart, 2012), instead, their styles vary as circumstances also vary although they may have a preferred style.

The existing literature defines leadership as a broad notion in which interpersonal relationships between the leader and the led are emphasized (Mintzberg, 1973: p. 60). Similarly, it agrees with this to describe how leadership can inspire, motivate, and guide others toward goal accomplishment; coach, mentor, and challenge subordinates; adapt leadership styles to a variety of situations; model high standards of integrity, trust, honest, respect and openness for the individual by applying the said values to daily behaviors (U.S. OPM, 1997: p. 3).

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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