



An Investigation of the Impact of Paternalistic Leadership on Workers Performance

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of paternalistic leadership on workers performance: A study of Life Flour Mill Limited, Sapele, Delta State, Nigeria. The study explores paternalistic leadership (PTL) proxied with Authoritarian leadership (AL), Benevolence leadership (BL), Morality leadership (ML) and visible leadership (VL) in relation to Workers Performance (WP). Survey research design was adopted in this study. The technique for data analysis used in this study was correlation and multiple regression analysis. The hypothesis were tested using the multiple regressions with the aid of SPSS version 23, to find the effects of paternalistic leadership on workers performance.. The results of the study showed that measures of paternalistic leadership, specifically; Authoritarian leadership (AL), Benevolence leadership (BL), Morality leadership (ML) and visible leadership (VL) have significant and positive effect on WPF. Hence, the study concluded that paternalistic leadership have a significant effect on workers performance. The study recommended that management, should focus on the four dimensions of paternalistic leadership, namely, authoritarian, benevolence, morality, and visible. Also, management should create a safe space where staff members can voice issues, challenges, and organizational mistakes and have them acknowledged by management, by doing so, management will be able to establish a cooperative environment that fosters constructive problem-solving and timely achievement of their objectives.

Key Words: *Paternalistic Leadership, (Authoritarian, Benevolence, Morality, visible leadership), Workers Performance*

Introduction

Paternalistic leadership (PL) is a leadership style that emphasizes the paternalistic role of the leader towards their subordinates. This leadership style is characterized by a combination of authoritative and fatherly or motherly behaviors, where leaders act as caretakers, make decisions for their subordinates, and take responsibility for their well-being. In the context of Nigeria firms, it is important to understand the impact of paternalistic leadership on workers' performance. Nigeria is a diverse country with various cultural beliefs and values, which influence leadership practices in organizations (Lu, Zhou, Wang & Zhu, 2022). Traditionally, Nigerian society has had a patriarchal structure, where elders are revered and respected, and their decisions are rarely questioned. These cultural norms have shaped the adoption of paternalistic leadership styles within Nigerian firms. Research on the impact of paternalistic leadership on workers' performance in Nigeria firms is crucial as it provides insights into the effectiveness of this leadership style in a specific cultural context. Understanding how paternalistic leaders interact with their subordinates and their influence on employee performance is essential for organizational success (Salih & Salih, 2021).

Several factors can be attributed to the relevance of studying the impact of paternalistic leadership in Nigeria firms. Firstly, Nigeria has a large workforce, and given the prevalent leadership style, it is important to understand how employees respond to this form of leadership and its impact on their performance. Secondly, exploring the outcomes of paternalistic leadership, such as employee satisfaction, commitment, and motivation, can help organizations devise and implement effective leadership strategies (Bedi, 2019). Moreover, due to the dynamic nature of the business environment, it is critical to examine whether paternalistic leadership is still relevant and effective in modern Nigerian firms. Factors such as globalization, changing demographics, and increased focus on employee empowerment and participation may challenge the traditional approach to leadership (Banks, McCauley, Gardner & Guler, 2016).

A comprehensive study on the impact of paternalistic leadership on workers' performance in Nigeria firms can contribute to both academic and practical knowledge. It can provide empirical evidence on the relationship between paternalistic leadership and employee performance, shedding light on the complex dynamics in Nigerian organizations. This research can guide policymakers and managers in designing leadership training programs and interventions that align with the cultural context, leading to improved performance and organizational outcomes (Ceri-Booms, Curşeu & Oerlemans, 2017). Despite the prevalence of paternalistic leadership in Nigerian organizations, there is a lack of empirical research on its impact on workers' performance. This gap in knowledge creates uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of paternalistic leadership in the Nigerian context and its implications for employee performance. Hence, studying the impact of paternalistic leadership in Nigeria firms is crucial to understanding the dynamics between leaders and subordinates in a cultural context shaped by traditional values. It helps organizations gauge the effectiveness of this leadership style, adapt to changing environments, and develop strategies that enhance employee performance and overall organizational success.

Statement of the Problem

Paternalistic leadership encompasses several leader behaviours and activities. However, its definition and proportions in Nigeria are disputed. This ambiguity makes measuring and analyzing its impact on worker performance difficult. We lack significant research on paternalistic leadership and worker performance in Nigerian enterprises. Existing research have focused on various leadership styles or cultural contexts, limiting their applicability to Nigerian organizations. Nigerian organizations prioritize seniority and authority. Hierarchical conventions and traditional beliefs impact leader-subordinate relationships. The extent to which cultural influences affect paternalistic leadership's impact on worker performance is uncertain. Paternalistic leadership in Nigerian enterprises must be assessed in light of cultural differences. A changing corporate environment: Nigerian enterprises face fast technological change and changing labour demographics in a globalized economic environment. The effectiveness and relevance of paternalistic leadership, with its authoritative and fatherly approach, must be assessed in this changing setting. Given these changing circumstances, paternalistic leadership's impact on worker performance must be analyzed. Nigerian organizations need evidence-based leadership strategies and practices. Without a thorough knowledge of how paternalistic leadership affects workers' performance, organizations may struggle to optimize their leadership strategy and foster employee growth and productivity. Thus, it is crucial to determine if paternalistic leadership improves or degrades worker performance. In conclusion, the absence of more empirical study, difficulty in defining paternalistic leadership, cultural implications, and changing corporate environment make it difficult to comprehend how it affects Nigerian workers' performance. Addressing these gaps would help us understand this leadership style and how it improves Nigerian organizations, specifically Life Flour Mill Limited, Sapele, Delta State, Nigeria. Based on this premise, the main objective of the study is to examine the effects of paternalistic leadership on workers performance: A study of Life Flour Mill Limited, Sapele, Delta State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Paternalistic Leadership (PL)

A domineering authority figure who assumes the role of a matriarch or patriarch and treats partners and employees like they are part of a big, extended family is known as a paternalistic leader. In return, the leader anticipates obedience, trust, and loyalty from the workforce. According to Gelfand, Erez, and Aycan (2007), paternalistic leadership is a system of hierarchy in which a leader expects loyalty and reference in exchange for guiding subordinates' personal and professional lives in a way akin to that of a parent. According to Bing (2004), a leader who exhibits paternalist leadership is kind and fatherly in both work and non-work related situations. A manager that practices paternalistic leadership views their subordinates as members of a big, extended family. When it comes to overseeing employees, a paternalistic leadership style channels a patriarchal or matriarchal attitude (Aruoren, 2020). Workers are obligated to trust that management understands what is best for the company and that their leader will always act in the best interests of the employees when they work for an organization where paternalistic leadership is practiced. Although workers are heard, the boss always has the last say.

Researchers have identified several dimensions of paternalistic leadership such as grace-bestowing, virtue-establishment prestige-imposing, (Cheng, Chou, and Farh, 2000), benevolence, morality and authoritarianism (Farh and Cheng, 2000), authoritarian, benevolent, visible moral-incorruptness, moral-impartialness, moral-magnanimity and moral-courage leadership (Irawanto, 2011). However, for the purpose of this study, only four dimensions of PL will be used. This includes authoritarianism, benevolence, morality and visible leadership. Authoritarian: This dimension reflects the authoritative nature of paternalistic leaders, who exercise control and make decisions on behalf of their subordinates, frequently without seeking their input or offering explanations (Chan, 2017). A benevolent leader thinks about the long-term effects of his own actions, is conscious of how his morals affect others, prioritizes doing what is right over what is popular, and observes not only himself but also others in terms of ethical behavior and decision-making. Morality: This dimension emphasizes the leader's role as a role model and upholder of moral values (Duangekanong, Duangekanong, John, Wichayachakorn & Vikitset, 2017; Wu, 2018). Paternalistic leaders adhere to a set of ethical and moral principles that guide their decision-making. They prioritize fairness, justice, and integrity, and aim to create an ethical work environment. Visible leadership refers to a leader who is at the leading edge of the workforce and accessible to their subordinates when needed is referred to as having visible leadership. (Aruoren, 2020). By considering and studying these dimensions, researchers and practitioners can gain a more nuanced understanding of how paternalistic leadership influences workers' performance in Nigeria firms. This knowledge can guide the development of effective leadership strategies and interventions that optimize employee outcomes and contribute to organizational success.

Workers performance (WP)

It is imperative for an organization to prioritize worker performance in order to prevent or mitigate subpar performance. When workers are comfortable and happy, they perform better, and management finds it easier to motivate top performers to reach company objectives (Kinicki and Kreither, 2007). High performers are essential to an organization's ability to supply goods and services, accomplish goals, and gain a competitive edge. Employee performance is crucial since completing work and doing their best work can make them feel satisfied (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). As cited by Ugurluoglu, O, Ece Ugurluoglu Aldogan, E.U, Turgut, M. and Ozatkan, Y., (2018), work performance is the efficacy with which employees carry out tasks that directly support the organization's technological core by performing a portion of its technological process or indirectly by supplying it with necessary material or services. Contextual activities are also significant because they influence the organizational, interpersonal, and emotional context that drives task activities and procedures, hence improving organizational effectiveness.

Paternalistic leadership (PL) and workers performance (WP)

Paternalistic leadership is a complex leadership style that encompasses various dimensions and behaviors. Examining these dimensions provides a deeper understanding of how paternalistic leadership affects workers' performance in firms (Ceri-Booms & Wendt, 2018). Leaders who adopt a paternalistic style demonstrate compassion and encouragement for their subordinates. Employee performance thus improves. The welfare and well-being of their workers are given first priority by paternalistic leaders, both personally and professionally. Leaders who exhibit parenting-like characteristics are characterized as paternalistic. Employee performance and career development can be positively impacted by their provision of guidance, support, and counsel to their subordinates, who are treated with care and concern (Guo, Decoster, Babalola, De Schutter, Garba & Riisla, 2018; Duangekanong, et al, 2017). Salih and Salih (2021) determined the influence relationship between patriarchal leadership and its three components (authoritarian leadership, benevolence leadership, and moral leadership) on the Employees' Voice Behaviour of a selected sample of Anbar University employees. The study relied on the descriptive and analytical approach, using the questionnaire form as a main tool used in collecting data from the study participants. A sample of employees from ten colleges within the university where the research was performed was given 320 questionnaire out of which 303 questionnaire were retrieved, and 292 forms were valid for analysis. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The result unveiled that there is a correlation between the dimensions of patriarchal leadership (benevolence leadership, moral leadership) and employees' vocal behaviour.

Ugurluoglu, Aldogan, Turgut, and Ozatkan (2018) looked at how paternalistic leadership dimensions affected employees' performance on the work and their intention to quit. 267 medical and administrative staff members from a university hospital in Ankara, Turkey, made up the study sample. To assess the associations between the study's variables, simple correlation and multiple regression analyses were run on the information gathered from respondents via questionnaires. It was discovered that the dimensions of paternalistic leadership—benevolent, moral, behaviorally authoritarian, and managerially authoritarian leadership—have a direct bearing on employees' job performance and intention to quit. Aruoren, (2020) studied the link between job satisfaction and paternalistic leadership behaviour of Civil Servants working at Delta state civil service Secretariat, Nigeria. Utilizing a descriptive survey study approach, 170 valuable questionnaires were collected from the participants. Multiple regression analysis and correlation analysis were used in the investigation. The results demonstrated a strong and positive correlation between job satisfaction and paternalistic leadership behaviors. Specifically, there was a substantial positive correlation between job satisfaction and benevolent, visible and moral-courage leadership. However, there was a substantial negative correlation between authoritarian leadership and work satisfaction. From the above discussion, we therefore, hypothesize that

H₁: Authoritarian leadership is related to workers Performance.

H₂: Benevolent leadership is related to workers Performance.

H₃: Morality leadership is related to workers Performance

H₄: Visible leadership is related to workers Performance

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on the Leader Member Exchange (LMX) Theory. According to Liden and Graen's (1980) proposal, the quality of a leader-follower connection is referred to as the "LMX theory." Positive work results, such as high levels of trust, respect, and commitment, is experienced by followers who have a high-quality exchange connection with their boss. On the other hand, followers who have a poor quality exchange connection with their leader exhibit low levels of commitment, support, and trust. The parallels and discrepancies between LMX and paternalistic leadership have been studied by earlier researchers. For example, there are various reasons that set paternalistic leadership apart from LMX. First and foremost, paternal leaders prioritise improving both the work and personal outcomes of their followers (Hou, Hong, Zhu & Zhou, 2019). In contrast, LMX is just concerned with improving the productivity of the staff member. Second, the foundation of high-LMX relationships is consistent economic exchanges in which the leader provides positive economic results, such as raises in salary or performance ratings, to followers in exchange for their hard work. Contrarily, paternalistic partnerships entail social exchanges with the goal of strengthening commitment and human ties rather than only making financial gains (Duangekanong, et al, 2017).

In summary, LMX employs a participative management style, while paternalistic leaders use a directive approach to decision-making. I propose that leaders who are moral and virtuous have excellent leader-follower (LMX) interactions. Acting in their followers' best interests, benevolent leaders sincerely care about their well-being. Moral leaders exhibit great personal values and provide a good example for others. High-quality relationships with followers are likely to result from the protection and care given by kind leaders and the moral leaders' integrity. Conversely, subordinates under an authoritarian leader will not have a good relationship with them. Relationships between leaders and followers are predicated on the followers' task completion and compliance, while low-quality relationships are characterized by hierarchical, role-defined interactions. Because they exhibit such domineering and hierarchical behaviours, authoritarian leaders are more likely to have strained relationships with their followers.

Research Methodology

Survey research design was adopted in this study. This is found suitable for this kind of research work, where respondents' opinion are sought and evaluated for possible inferences. To achieve a research – oriented work the researcher delimited the work to the employees of Life Flour Mill Limited, Sapele, Delta State, Nigeria. The total population of the study is 302 employees. A convenient sample of (75) was used in the study. The method of data analysis utilized in this study was correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis. Microsoft excel software was also used to create tables and perform data entry.

Model specification

$$WP = f(PL)$$

$$WP = f(AL, BL, ML, VL)$$

$$WPF = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AL + \beta_2 BL + \beta_3 ML + \beta_4 VL + \varepsilon$$

Where;

WP = Workers Performance

PL Paternalistic Leadership

AL = Authoritarian leadership

BL = Benevolence leadership

ML = Morality leadership

VL = Visible leadership

Data Presentation and Results Discussion

In Table 4.1, AL, BL, ML and VL has a coefficients of ($r = 0.198, 0.221, 0.093$ and $0.155 < 0.05$) respectively, which reveals that AL, BL, ML and VL has strong positive correlation with WP, this implies that a good AL, BL, ML and VL would have positive effects on WP.

Table 4.1: The Correlation Output for the Variables under Study

Correlations		WP	AL	BL	ML	VL
Pearson Correlation	WP	1.000				
	AL	.198	1.000			
	BL	.221	.623	1.000		
	ML	.093	.298	.456	1.000	
	VL	.155	.325	.518	.947	1.000

Source: SPSS Version 23 Output, 2023.

In Table 4.2a, the coefficient of AL is 0.102 with a t-value of 2.550 and associated p-value (sig. value) is 0.040. This suggests that AL has positive effect on WPF. This implies that, the effect is significant given the fact that the p-value of 0.040 is lesser than that 0.05 (5%) level significance. The coefficient of AL is 0.102 which implies that AL has a positive trend with WP. One percent (1%) movement in AL would lead to 10.2% increases in WP. This implies that AL has a significant influence on WP. According to Schaubroeck et al. (2017), AL usually strengthens subordinates' sense of identification as members of the group, which further inspires workers to deliver outstanding performance. Authoritarian leaders are more likely to give their subordinates a straight, unequivocal, and clear example, according to Rast et al. (2013).

The coefficient of BL is 0.112 with a t-value of 2.074 and associated p-value (sig. value) is 0.029. This suggests that BL has positive effect on WP. This implies that, the effect is significant given the fact that the p-value of 0.029 is lesser than that 0.05 (5%) level significance. The coefficient of BL is 0.112 which implies that BL has a positive trend with WP. One percent (1%) movement in BEN would lead to 11.2% increase in WP. BL has a significant influence on WP. This suggests that when managers care about employees' personal or family well-being, provide care, support, and encouragement when they face challenges, as well as by highlighting group identification to boost employees' self-esteem, workers' performance is improved. The results of (Aruoren, 2020; Ugurluoglu, et al. 2018) are supported by this finding.

The coefficient of ML is 0.486 with a t-value of 2.893 and associated p-value (sig. value) is 0.019. This suggests that ML has negative effect on WP. This implies that, the effect is significant given the fact that the p-value of 0.019 is lesser than that 0.05 (5%) level significance. The coefficient of ML is 0.478 which implies that ML has a positive trend with WPF. One percent (1%) movement in MOR would lead to 48.6% increase in WP. ML has a significant influence on WP. This result confirms the result of Ugurluoglu et al. (2018). Employee performance is improved when management places a high priority on justice, fairness, and integrity and seeks to provide an ethical work environment.

The coefficient of VL is 0.527 with a t-value of 3.082 and associated p-value (sig. value) is 0.001. This suggests that VL has positive effect on WP. This implies that, the effect is significant given the fact that the p-value of 0.001 is lesser than that 0.05 (5%) level significance. The coefficient of VL is 0.527 which implies that VL has a positive and significant influence on WP. One percent (1%) movement in PATM would lead to 52.7% increase in WP. VL has a significant influence on WP. This result agrees the findings of Aruoren, (2020). This indicates that when leaders leading the group are accessible by their subordinates when needed, employee performance is improved.

Table 4.2a: Multiple regression analysis

Coefficients ^a		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	12.088	2.422		4.991	.000
	AL	.102	.040	.107	2.550	.040
	BL	.112	.054	.103	2.074	.029
	ML	.486	.168	.478	2.893	.019
	VL	.527	.171	.520	3.082	.001

a. Dependent Variable: WP

Also, Table 4.2b which is model summary table show the correlation co-efficient (R) of the regression is 0.983(98%) which indicates a very strong positive relationship between the dependent variable [WP] and the independent variables [AL, BL, ML and VL]. The co-efficient of determination (R²) is 97% (0.966) showing that 97% of the variation in dependent variable (WP) has been explained by the independent variables [AL, BL, ML and VL]. While 3% remain unexplained in the model. With an R² value of 97% showed that the strong positive relationship is further confirmed. The adjusted R² measures the goodness or fit of the model. This shows the goodness of fit of the model and also explains the dependent variable in relation to the independent variables in 95 ways. The 3% left is known as the error term and other variables outside the model. From the above, there is conclusive evidence of serial or autocorrelation since the Durbin Watson calculated value of 1.474 is less than "2". Lastly, the Anova shows the overall significance of the significance of the model, has F (1.523) with p-value is estimated at 0.005. This indicates that all the independent variables [AL, BL, ML and VL] jointly influence the dependent variable (WP).

Table 4.2b:

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.983 ^a	.966	.947	2.01901	1.474

a. Predictors: (Constant), AL, BL, ML, VL

b. Dependent Variable: WP

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	24.839	4	6.210	1.523	.005 ^b
	Residual	285.348	70	4.076		
	Total	310.187	74			

a. Dependent Variable: WPF

b. Predictors: (Constant), AL, BL, ML, VL

Source: SPSS Version 23 Output, 2023.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study examined the effects of paternalistic leadership on workers performance: A study of Life Flour Mill Limited, Sapele, Delta State, Nigeria.. The results of the study showed that measures of paternalistic leadership, specifically; Authoritarian leadership, Benevolence leadership, Morality leadership and visible leadership have significant and positive effect on Workers performance. Hence, the study concluded that paternalistic leadership has a significant effect workers performance in Life Flour Mill Limited, Sapele, Delta State, Nigeria. The study recommended that management of the Life Flour Mill Limited, Sapele, Delta State, Nigeria, where the research was conducted, should focus on the four dimensions of paternalistic leadership, namely, authoritarian, benevolence, morality, and visible. Also, management should create a safe space where staff members can voice issues, challenges, and organizational mistakes and have them acknowledged by management, by doing so, management will be able to establish a cooperative environment that fosters constructive problem-solving and timely achievement of their objectives.

Suggestion for further studied

This study was conducted to examine the impact of paternalistic leadership on workers performance. However, the study sample was relatively small. Therefore, further research should be conducted on the two construct under study on a larger sample size and population.

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