



## **Leadership Style, Organizational Culture and Performance: A Critical Literature Review**

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# Leadership Style, Organizational Culture and Performance: A Critical Literature Review

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## Abstract

In recent times, organizations are going through dramatic changes, including flatter and looser structures, downsizing, and horizontal approaches to information flow. On the one hand, these changes are due to rapid technological developments, global competition and the changing nature of the workforce. These organizational transformations and innovations are triggered by interventions such as total quality leadership and leadership. In modern society, the prosperity and progress of an organization depends largely on the quality of leadership. Leadership is very essential in organizations since achievements and results occur consequence to the traits being projected by the leader. Leadership has always been a crucial issue since organizations and companies are permanently in a constant struggle to be increasingly competitive. Leadership, as an important function of management, helps to maximize efficiency and so achieve organizational goals. The paper avers that past studies conceptualized how leadership style actions significantly influenced organizational performance. Despite its importance, studies have demonstrated that the

influence of leadership style on organizational performance is contingent upon situational constraints or random effects. To date, very little empirical research has analyzed the direct and indirect relationships between leadership style, organizational culture and organizational performance. This paper sought to unearth this research gap by critically reviewing relevant conceptual and empirical literature to bring out the possibility that organizational culture can influence the relationship between leadership style and organizational performance. The paper advances the emerging postulations which anchor a conclusion that the direct effect of leadership style on performance is contested, and hence inconclusive due to the possible mediating influence of organizational culture. It is hoped that the paper's postulations will guide empirical research in various contexts to hasten addressing the extant knowledge gaps.

**Keywords:** *Leadership Style, Organizational Culture, Organizational performance*

## Introduction

The concept of leadership is originally developed in folk psychology to explain the factor of leadership style impact on employee (Jaskaran & Sri-Guru, 2014). The historical perspective of indicated that leadership is used as an effective management approach to manage large sized organizations (Iqbal, Anwar & Haidar, 2015). The gradual replacement of personnel administration with human resource management, results integration of leadership styles into effective employee management or performance (Iqbal *et al.*, 2015). This demands leaders to adapt themselves to various situations when demand arises to ensure there is effective leadership (Heresy & Blanchard, 1988). Different leadership styles were applied based on the amount of direction, decision making and empowerment (Iqbal *et al.*, 2015). When it comes to administration, the leadership, situation and performance of employees are loosely connected and left to hang on their own (Iqbal *et al.*, 2015). This has caused poor employee performance due to the lack of both direction and strategic leadership, in managing routine work.

The essence of leadership is to convince and lead everyone to work toward a goal, the goal being success of the organization. Leadership therefore, is an important factor in conflict resolution especially when success appears to be threatened (Ho *et al.*, 2015). A leader must be able to want to make workers to volunteer and corporate with others (Han, Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 2010). Furthermore, the type of leadership can impact the effectiveness of the organization (Yukl, 2011). Many researches, in the past examined the performance and factors affecting employee performance. One of the dominant key factors that have been discussed in past researches are leadership such as participative, autocratic, and democratic (Iqbal *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, many researches were conducted to examine performance and how it was affected by various leadership styles. However, most of the studies were highly lacking the data collected on Malaysian context, especially on employee's performance and leadership style in commercial service such as ear hearing service providers.

Researchers have pointed out that leadership, and the study of this phenomenon, originated at the beginning of civilization (Stone & Patterson, 2005). Workplaces, business settings, worker motivations, leaders, managers, leadership styles, and a myriad of other work-related variables have been researched for almost two centuries. During this period, researchers also started to study the relationship between leader behavior and outcomes such as follower satisfaction level, organizational productivity, and profitability. Different definitions of leadership exist, however, one aspect that has usually been found in all definitions of leadership, is that it has to do with the

capability of an individual to influence the actions of other individuals, who can be portrayed as followers (Khan, Asghar, & Zaheer, 2014; Wang, Tsui, & Xin, 2011). Another set of definitions by Bass (1990) conceptualized leadership from a personality aspect, which implies that leadership is a blend of unique traits or characteristics that an individual possesses. These traits enable that individual to influence others to accomplish tasks.

Wang *et al.* (2011) commented that a direct relationship exists between the performance of employees and leadership styles, while the latter depends on the level of satisfaction, employees believed in their jobs. Over the years, leadership has presented a major challenge to practitioners and researchers alike (Northhouse, 2013). The term leadership is a highly valued phenomenon that is very complex and is a process that is similar to management in many ways as it involves influence and requires working with people, which management requires as well (Northhouse, 2013). Ologbo and Saudah (2011) asserts that a manager's leadership style and support considerably add to employee engagement. Leadership is not "one size fits all" thing; often, a manager must adapt their style to fit in a situation or a specific group and this is why it is useful to gain a thorough understanding of various leadership styles; after all, the more approaches the manager is familiar with, the more tools they will be able to use to lead effectively (Murray, 2013).

### **Leadership Style**

Gopal and Chowdhury (2014) defines leadership as a dynamic process whereby one man influences others to contribute voluntarily to the realization and attainment of the objectives towards the common goal. Koech and Namusonge (2012) argue that owing to the definition of leadership, a leader is one who inspires others towards achieving a common goal, which is organizational performance. In agreement with the above argument, Mostashari (2009) notes that taking into account the dynamic environment within which an organization operates, the critical role of the leadership in providing direction on how to re-configure, modify or adapt the resources to remain competitive and achieve organizational success is vital. Aziz, Abdullah, Tajudin and Mahmood (2013) observe that the role leaders' play in providing direction and articulating the vision, mission and goals to workers, influences the performance of the firm. The different leadership styles have been noted to have different effects on organizational performance. The efficient achievement of organizational objectives is by linking job performance to valued rewards and, by ensuring that employees have the resources they need, to get the job done (Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa, & Nwankwere, 2011).

For some decades now, how leadership impacts on organizational performance has gained prominence among academics and practitioners working in the area of leadership (Al Khajeh, 2018; Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016; Igbaekemen & Odivwri, 2015). This is premised on the notion that the style of leadership of an organization has a correlation with organizational performance (Rowe, Cannella Jr, Rankin & Gorman, 2005). The adopted style of leadership is considered by some researchers to be particularly important in achieving organizational goals, and, in evoking performance among subordinates (Arif & Akram, 2018; Klein *et al.*, 2013). Organizations undergo rapid changes daily as a result of diverse factors. Some of these factors are external such as competition, global market trends and technological changes. Some of the changes over time also occur within the organizations themselves. Examples are employee motivation, innovation, organizational culture and human resource strength (Haque, Faizan & Cockrill 2015; Igbaekemen & Odivwri, 2015). All these tend to affect the performance of these organizations. One key factor that also has the potential to largely affect an organization's



performance is its leadership (Ng'ethe, Namusonge & Iravo, 2012; Mitonga-Monga, Coetzee & Cilliers, 2012).

The role of leaders in ensuring excellent organizational performance cannot be over emphasized. Adequate motivation, suitable work environment, compensation, efficient communication between managers and subordinates, play an important role in promoting this goal. Planning and organization of work is also very crucial. It has been argued by some researchers that the most common problems affecting organizational performance in business and other institutions are poor attitude to work among the workforce, inefficiency as well as ineffectiveness of leaders in most places, though others share a contrary view (Haque, Faizan, & Cockrill, 2017). Leadership style practiced by an organization has an impact on the success or otherwise of its operations. Leadership style in an organization is one of the factors that play a significant role in enhancing or retarding the interest and commitment of the individuals in the organization (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016; Obiwuru *et al.*, 2011).

Organizational theorists contend that effective leadership is one of the most important contributors to overall organizational success (Weber, 2009; Daft, 2000; Pettinger, 2000; Barney, 1991; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Wade & Ricardo, 2001). Many leadership theories have been proposed in the last fifty years, which are claimed to have influenced the overall effectiveness of organizations where some of these theories have been employed. In the competitive world with technological changes within the business environment, it is vital that organizations employ leadership styles that enable them to survive in a dynamic environment (Maritz, 1995; Bass, 1997). Without leadership, the probability of mistakes occurring increases, and the opportunities for success become more and more reduced. The role of a leader is vital for the survival and progress of an organization. Al Khajeh (2018) and Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016) in their study on leadership and organizational performance suggest that the role of leadership is critically important for an organization to achieve a high level of performance.

It is contended that organizations do not only exist for survival, but also to sustain their existence by improving performance. In order to meet the needs of the highly competitive markets, organizations must continually increase performance by adopting the appropriate leadership style. Leadership style is a key determinant of the success or failure of any organization. Leaders influence, direct, and motivate others to perform specific tasks and also inspire subordinates. Literature suggests that the role of leadership is critically important for achieving the performance of organizations. To this end, some studies argue that the effective leadership role in increasing organizational performance are mixed (Uchenwamgbe, 2013). This paper identified several leadership styles, which leaders purposely or involuntarily portray in an organization. An autocratic leader is seen as the one who is very conscious of his position and has little trust or faith in the subordinates (Luftman, Bullen, Liao, Nash & Neumann, 2004). Autocratic leaders are classic and bossy in nature. Such leaders desire that their subordinates work according to what they dictate (Al Khajeh, 2018). Basically, autocratic leaders retain the decision-making rights with them (Obiwuru *et al.*, 2011). An autocratic leader feels that remuneration advanced to employees for work done is a just reward and it is only the reward that can motivate an employee. This style of leadership is characterized by individual control over all decisions and little input from group members. A study conducted indicates that an autocratic/authoritarian leader is characterized as being arbitrary, controlling, power-oriented, coercive, legitimate, punitive and with a closed mind (Al Khajeh, 2018; Iqbal *et al.*, 2015). Such leaders stress loyalty and obedience and are defined as those who make decisions alone and demand strict adherence to rules.

Armstrong (2012) suggests that autocratic leadership may be useful in situations of emergency, in cases where homogenous work force is involved and where the leader is wise, just and has considerable understanding of the followers. In such circumstances, special action may be needed to avert a potential mishap. Among some shortcomings of autocratic leadership is the inability of the subordinates to develop pride of accomplishment, denial of personal development or satisfaction from self-actualization, and it also antagonizes human beings and wipes the organization of lasting loyalty and co-operation. Indeed, the autocratic style is characterized by an “I tell” philosophy. That is, an autocratic leader tells staff members what to do. Even though this approach can give a business a clear direction, however, it may also lead managers to undervalue or ignore input from team members (Obiwuru *et al.*, 2011). Nonetheless, an autocratic approach is appropriate in some situations. It is valuable when the business faces a crisis or when an urgent problem arises that requires an immediate response (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016). There is no shared vision and little motivation beyond coercion. Commitment, creativity and innovation are typically eliminated by autocratic leadership (Al Khajeh, 2018). In fact, most followers of autocratic leaders can be described as bidding their time, waiting for the inevitable failure this leadership produces and the removal of the leader that follows (Iqbal *et al.*, 2015; Michael, 2010).

Democratic leadership, also referred to as participative leadership, is a type of leadership style in which members of the group take a more participative role in the decision-making process. This style of leadership dwells on performance and people (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016; Puni, Ofei & Okoe, 2014). Democratic leadership style encourages employees to participate in the decision-making process of the organization (Nwokocha & Iheriohanma, 2015). According to Puni *et al.* (2014), decision making in a democratic system is not centralized and high performance is recognized and rewarded. Nwokocha and Iheriohanma (2015) on the other hand suggest that there is potential for poor decisions to be made by the subordinates as a result of the leader depending on the contributions made by the employees or subordinates. This can be said to have a negative impact on the organization and can also instigate turnover intention in employees. It is therefore expected that brainstorming of ideas and collective decisions are arrived at by all concerned. The democratic leadership sounds good in theory but it is often bogged down in its slow decision-making process and the results which could seem workable would always require a lot of time and effort (Nwokocha & Iheriohanma, 2015). The democratic leader allows for decision making to be shared by the leader and the group. The leader discusses with subordinates before he issues general or broad orders from which subordinates feel free to act on (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016). The superior allows the subordinates opportunity to use their initiative and make contributions. The leaders also offer support to the subordinates in accomplishing task.

Burns (1978) defines transformational leadership as leadership focused on change. The term transformational leadership was first used by James V Downton in 1973 and was popularized by James Macgregor Burns in 1978 (CMI, 2015). Pham (2016) defines it as a leadership style that is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards and long-term goals; its focus is on changing human values with an aim of changing the organizational practices. Odumeru and Ogbonna (2013) argue that a transformational leader is a person who stimulates and inspires followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes. Leaders using this style pay attention to the concern and developmental needs of individual followers; they change the followers’ awareness of issues by allowing them to look at old problems in a new way; and they are able to arouse, excite and inspire followers to put out extra effort to achieve group goals. Magoha (2017) posits that transformational leadership style is a management style where the leader is charged with identifying needed change and creating a

clear vision to guide the change not only through inspiration, but also execution of the change in tandem with organizational needs. Transformational leadership is observed when leaders encourage followers to boost the level of their morale, motivation, beliefs, perceptions, and coalition with the objectives of the organization (Rich, 2013).

In the views of Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse and Sassenberg (2011), transformational leadership may be seen as encouraging followers to carry out their work in a promotion- based manner, and accordingly elicit fit for those who prefer to use promotional means of self-regulation. Transformational leadership style has been proven to be the most effective style of leadership (Obasan & Hassan, 2014). Transformational leadership serves to change the status quo by articulating to the followers the problems in the current system, and a compelling vision of what a new organization could achieved. There are five components of transformational leadership that are prescribed by scholars. These are: charismatic, inspirational, motivational, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Obiwuru *et al.*, 2011).

Hill, Seo, Kang and Taylor (2012) discussed the effects of transformational leadership on the normative commitment of employees towards their organization. According to the survey, it was shown that different hierarchical levels in an organization bring a little difficulty when a change needs to be implemented within the firm. Whereas, if the manager follows the transformational approach and encourages the employees towards the change in a more positive way, then there are more chances of less change, resistance and high adaptability. Joo, Yoon and Jeung (2012) presented in their study that employees are more satisfied and committed to their organizations when there is a friendly environment, their leader has the courage to share his vision and articulate the mission in a friendly and good atmosphere. Most of the employees expect their leader to allow them to participate and share thoughts when making decision.

Laissez faire is a French phrase which means “let it be” and it is also known as the “hands off style” (Nwokocha & Iheriohanma, 2015: p. 194). According to Gill (2014), it means leaving subordinates to complete tasks and jobs in the way they choose without adherence to any strict policies or procedures. Bass (1985) describes the laissez faire leadership style as one in which the leader has no belief in his own ability to supervise. He further states that the leader has no clear set goals towards how they may work, does not help the group in making decisions and so leaves too much responsibility with subordinates. According to Puni *et al.* (2014), the laissez-faire leader avoids controlling his employees and so only relies on the few available employees who are loyal to get a task done. It is argued that laissez faire leaders do not believe in employee development as they believe that employees can take care of themselves (Puni *et al.*, 2014). Laissez-faire leaders do not use their authority and avoid taking actions. It is considered a passive and ineffective form of leadership. A laissez-faire leader may either not intervene in the work affairs of subordinates or may completely avoid responsibilities as a superior and is unlikely to put in effort to build a relationship with them. Laissez-faire style is associated with dissatisfaction, unproductiveness and ineffectiveness.

## **Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture includes the norms that the members of an organization experience and describe as their work settings (Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey, 2013). Such norms shape how members behave and adapt to get results in the organization. Organizational culture is how the members of an organization interact with each other and other stakeholders (Simoneaux & Stroud, 2014). Organizational culture is a set of values, beliefs, and behavior patterns that differentiate one

organization from other organizations (Ortega-Parra & Sastre-Castillo, 2013). King (2012) defined organizational cultures as a system of values that subconsciously and silently drives people to make each choice and decision in the organization. Organizational culture refers to shared values, principles, traditions, and ways of doing things that influence the way organizational members act (Robbins & Coulter, 2002). Schein (2010) defined organizational culture as the shared philosophies, ideologies, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, attitudes, norms and values in organizations. Business managers use organizational culture and workplace culture interchangeably because both terms refer to the same underlying phenomenon (Childress, 2013). The difficulty about leadership is the handling of human resources in the organizational culture (Peters & Waterman, 1982). Yirdaw (2014) noted that organizational culture is the glue that combines the hardware (non-human resources) to the software (human resources) in the organization to establish teamwork and excellent performance. Organizational culture positively relates to corporate leadership and governance (O'Connor & Byrne, 2015).

Fusch and Gillespie (2012) indicated that developing a positive workplace culture leads to performance improvement in the organization. Organizational culture is an important determinant factor for organizational performance (O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman & Doerr, 2014). Uddin, Luva and Hossian (2013) confirmed the existence of a strong relationship between organizational culture and organization performance. Childress (2013) also noted that an organizational culture does affect organizational performance positively or negatively. Unger, Rank and Gemunden (2014) found the existence of a positive relationship between corporate culture and financial performance. In another empirical research, Flamholtz and Randle (2012) confirmed that the organizational culture has an impact on organizational processes, employee performance, and overall organization productivity. However, Berg and Wilderom (2012) argued that the organizational culture might affect performance, where the change is a longer time interval showing the effects of culture on financial performance. Organizational culture is classified as strong and weak. In a strong organizational culture, the members of the organization share the values and goals of the organization, and new employees quickly adopt these values (Kotter & Heskett, 2011).

Strong organizational culture includes an important role in aligning the organization's current and future direction (Raza, Anjum, Shamsi & Zia, 2014). In contrast, management with weak or ineffective organizational culture has the potential to affect profitability and productivity (Shahzad, Luqman, Khan & Shabbir, 2012). In a weak organizational culture, employees have a problem to define the organization's values and to determine the right process of conducting business in the organization (Childress, 2013). Schein (2010) noted that management with weak organizational culture lacks transparent and consistent communication in the organization. In a weak organizational culture, employees behave in a manner inconsistent with the organization's priorities because of insufficient communication and lack of uniform direction from the leadership (Flamholtz & Randle, 2011). When the organizational culture is weak, the organization existence is at risk because organization members have different values and beliefs, where they may work against the management's priority (Eaton & Kilby, 2015).

In a strong organizational culture, business managers may develop and maintain a strong cultural foundation in the organization (Simoneaux & Stroud, 2014). The foundation work includes establishing the organization members' working culture and developing a set of rules and trends of doing business in the organization (Flamholtz & Randle, 2011). Customers and other stakeholders use the organization members' culture and their work trends to identify their organization from other organizations' culture (Cian & Cervai, 2014). Customers and other



stakeholders may perceive and use the organizational culture as a distinguishing factor in identifying a good organization from a bad organization (Childress, 2013).

In a strong organizational culture, employees and business managers have an excellent professional quality that contributes to performance improvement in the organization (Pinho, Rodrigues, & Dibb, 2014). Professional quality contains (a) respect and dignity between employees and managers, (b) high commitment to customer services, and (c) motivation and moral engagement to achieve organizational priorities (Busse, 2014). When employees and business managers develop respect and dignity between them, they may integrate their knowledge and experience to improve performance in the organization (Miguel, 2015). A strong organizational culture is important to motivate employees in the organization. Motivated employees are primary drivers to improve performance in organizations (Simoneaux & Stroud, 2014). Schein (2010) indicated that highly motivated employees might perform in the organization better than unmotivated employees. Flamholtz and Randle (2011) also noted that motivated employees use their time efficiently in performing their daily tasks. Fiordelisi and Ricci (2014) found motivated employees to be an important factor in improving performance by achieving organizational goals.

The literature on organizational culture contains information on how business managers use effective organizational culture to improve performance and productivity (Flamholtz & Randle, 2012; O'Reilly *et al.*, 2014). Business managers believe that effective organizational culture is an asset, and ineffective culture is a liability for organizational success (Flamholtz & Randle, 2011). Eaton and Kilby (2015) indicated that business managers use organizational culture to control and moderate the working environment throughout the organization. An effective organizational culture is a combination of strong and positive culture. In a strong culture, the organization members behave in a way consistent with organizational values (Flamholtz & Randle, 2011). In a positive organizational culture, employees share the goals and values of the organization (Flamholtz & Randle, 2012). Business managers may establish an effective organizational culture to improve performance and productivity in the organization (Inabinett & Ballaro, 2014). Givens (2012) noted that managers with effective organizational culture promote excellent customer service and an innovative business environment. In an effective organizational culture, business managers show employee-focused leadership, sound interpersonal relationship, and ethical decision-making processes (Engelen *et al.*, 2014).

### **Organizational Performance**

Organizational performance is a term used to refer to how an enterprise is performing in terms of level of profit, market share and product quality in relation to other enterprises in the same industry (Saasongu, 2015). Consequently, organizational performance is a reflection of productivity of members of an enterprise measured in terms of revenue, profit, growth, development and expansion of an organization (Saasongu, 2015). Performance continues to be a key issue among organizational researchers and employees are bound to perform well where they are treated well (Haque *et al.*, 2017). Javier (2002) has asserted that performance is equivalent to the famous 3 Es (economy, efficiency, and effectiveness) of a certain program or activity. However, according to Daft (2000), organizational performance is the organization's ability to attain its goals by using resources in an efficient and effective manner. Quite similar to Daft (2000), Ricardo and Wade (2001) who define organizational performance as the ability of the organization to achieve its goals and objectives.

Organizational performance refers to the level of success of a firm (Sulaiman, Yusoff & Chelliah, 2010). This is a classic method of determining the generalized indicator of the economic efficiency of managerial work. The effect can be positive if the result is close to the ideal state, satisfies the objective function and corresponds to the constraint system. But it can turn out to be negative, if it is not possible to reach the goal. As stated, performance is a multidimensional concept (Simpson, Padmore & Newman, 2012). It can be referred to a level which the operation fulfils the performance objectives (primary measures) and satisfies the customer's expectations (secondary measures), (Slack, Chambers, & Johnston, 2010). Each organization starts its activity to establish certain economic indicators as targets. The efforts of management are aimed at ensuring the achievement of certain economic results. Accordingly, the scale of objectives distinguishes between general, intra-company and group efficiency. Some researchers argue that performance measurement is a complex issue (Hakimpoor, Tat & Arshad, 2011). The performance of organizations can be measured in terms of innovation (Winne & Sels, 2010). In any case, the main task of the management system is to ensure an active impact on the managed object in order to improve its performance. The various properties and parameters of the subject's and the management's activity often do not agree with each other, they are in dialectical contradiction, in connection with it there is the problem of defining a generalizing indicator that would be a measure of organizational performance.

Organizational performance is considered as one of the basic notions in management and most of the management's tasks are formed according to the mentioned notion. Of course, organizations' success can be reflected in their performance. Ahmed and Shafiq (2014) define performance as performing, applying, and doing each regular and committed work. This definition is related to inputs and outputs and also indicates that performance has close relationship with work and its outcomes (Chamanifard, Nikpour, & Chamanifard, 2014). Organizational performance is considered to be the sum of accomplishments achieved by all businesses/departments. These accomplishments are involved with an organizational goal within a given period of time. The goal is either meant for a specific stage or on the overall extent (Lee & Huang, 2012). The idea of organizational performance is affiliated to the survival and success of an organization (Ahmed & Shafiq, 2014). Organizational performance includes effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, quality, and innovation (O'Reilly *et al.*, 2014).

### **Leadership style and Organizational Culture**

The perception of organizational culture is influenced by leadership behavior in terms of its support or conflict with perceived organizational values (Lord & Brown, 2001). Organizational culture is tied to the display of its values (Schein, 2010) which is reflected through the perception of its leaders (Eisenberger *et al.*, 2010). Further work on the influence of leadership on organizational culture has been called for (Bass & Avolio, 1994) specifically with the goal of understanding the internalization of a company's values and beliefs by followers. Stites-Doe, Pillai, and Meindl (1994) investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational culture and found a positive relationship between the dimension individual consideration and acculturation activities. Further study of this interaction remains underdeveloped, likely from a lack of standard definition and modeling for organizational culture.

A number of research and scholars submit that organizational culture possesses the ability to enhance organization performance, create competitive advantage and define the boundaries of the organization in terms of scope of information processing (Lunenburg, 2011). This is achieved as a result of unique quality of culture put forward by resources-based view theory (Barney, Wright,

& Ketchen, 2001) and its ability to help the organization to anticipate or adapt to environmental changes as proposed by dynamic capability and contingency theories (Übüs & Alas, 2009). Ahmadi, Salamzadeh, Daraei and Akbari (2012) posit that organizational culture can be categorized as either strong or weak. Strong cultures are the ones associated with superior performance owing to strongly shared values among employees. However, where the organizational culture is not able to achieve congruence with the environment, then it will not be in position to help the firm realize competitive advantage (Ahmadi *et al.*, 2012). Also, a weak culture can act as a de-motivator even to an outstanding employee, leading to underperformance and overall poor organizational performance (Ahmadi *et al.*, 2012).

Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. The relationships between the leader and employee, as well as the quality of employees' performance, are significantly influenced by the leadership style adopted by the leader (Ojokuku, Odetayo, & Sajuyigbe, 2012). Effective leadership in an organization, therefore, creates a vision of the future that considers the legitimate long term interest of the parties involved in the organization, develops a strategy for moving forward towards that vision, enlists the support of employees to implement the strategy (Dele, Nanle, & Abimbola, 2015; Tandoh, 2011).

Aspiration and values of the group that is representing the essence of leadership, is to help a group or an organization to attain sustainable development and growth (Malik, Saleem, M., & Naeem, 2016). Leadership brings in the required change to influence learning and development of required skills, performance and creates a platform for individual growth in an organization. Leadership is all about taking ownership and accountability aimed at achieving the end objective by applying the available resources and ensuring a cohesive organization where an individual influences a group to achieve the common objective (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015). It appears that leadership interventions do have an impact on a variety of outcomes. Yet, leadership interventions appear to differ in terms of their impact based on the theoretical focus of the leadership models. Leadership style is a key determinant towards the success or failure of the organization and is the behavioral approach of the leader to provide motivation and direction to his people (Ojokuku, *et al.*, 2012).

Creating results in today's ever changing and increasingly competitive world requires a very different kind of leadership from what was studied in the past (Haque *et al.*, 2015). While leaders in the past managed perhaps complex organizations, this was in a world of relative stability and predictability. In today's globalized world, with organizations coping with rapidly changing environments, leaders face a new reality (Haque *et al.*, 2015). Working in flexible contexts and connected by real-time electronic communication, increasingly mobile employees have themselves become the critical resource of their organizations (Wang *et al.*, 2010). What is now needed are leaders who simultaneously can be agents of change and centers of gravity, keep internal focus and enable people and organization to adapt and be successful (Jyoti & Bhau, 2015; Sofi & Devanadhen, 2015).

### **Leadership Style, Organizational Culture and Performance**

Any organization which employs appropriate leadership style(s) coupled with other factors in its operation has a higher probability of achieving its organizational goals. An organizational leadership style(s) go(es) a long way to influence the culture of the organization. This in turn directly or otherwise influences the performance of the organization (Haque *et al.*, 2015; Klein, Wallis & Cooke, 2013). Leadership is the life blood of any organization and its importance cannot

be underestimated. According to Armstrong (2012), a leadership style is the approach used by managers to exercise their leadership function. This is seen to be a particular behavior a leader in an organization employs to motivate employees towards the achievement of a defined objective of the organization (Haque *et al.*, 2015; Igbaekemen & Odivwri, 2015; Ng'ethe *et al.*, 2012). Leadership style plays an important role in the organizations of today. Leadership style is the way and manner in which a manager or supervisor chooses to act towards his employees or subordinates and the way the leadership function is being carried out by them (Xenikou, 2017).

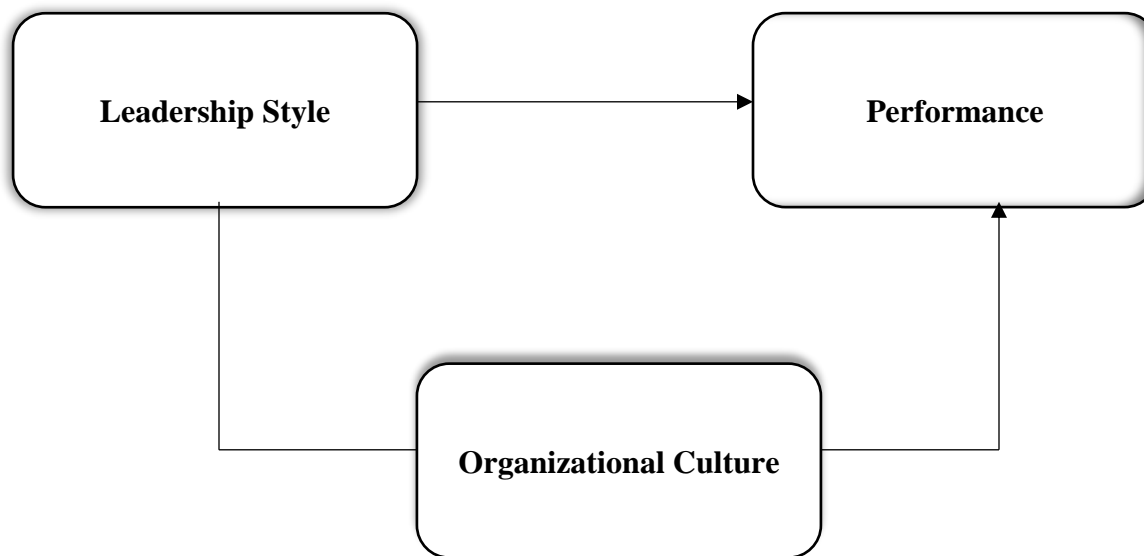
Researchers in the area of leadership suggest that no one leadership style is better than the other but that styles are dependent on some factors (Armstrong, 2012). They indicate such factors to include the type of organization, nature of the task, characteristics of the individuals in the leader's team, the group the leader leads as a whole and more importantly, the personality of the leader. To them therefore, there is not one leadership style that is considered best at all times as a particular situation would demand one or a combination of different leadership styles. Leaders should be able to know how their leadership skills influence their followers as it has an impact on the followers being supportive of them or not (Saleem, 2015; Sethuraman & Suresh, 2014). This can have an impact on employee behavior to support their leaders; followers or employees who do not have support for their leaders can be prone to dissatisfaction which could arouse an intention of an employee to leave.

Some authors have argued that leadership styles can affect an employee's job satisfaction level and job satisfaction is an outcome of leadership style. This can negatively be associated with the intention of the employee to leave the organization (Khan *et al.*, 2014; Peachey, Burton, & Wells, 2014). This suggests that leadership style or behaviour has an impact on job satisfaction and an employee's desire and intention to leave an organization or otherwise. As indicated by Vandenberghe and Bentein (2009), before an employee considers leaving an organization, such an employee will first assess (Tummers & Knies, 2016) the position of his/her relationship with the organization, among other factors. It is noteworthy to stress that appropriate leadership style, employed in a given time, regardless of low remuneration, could still motivate an employee to put up his/her best in the organization. This assessment according to Peachey *et al.* (2014) could include the level of attachment of the employee to the organization and the leader. In the case where this relationship is lessened or negatively affected, the employee has the tendency to leave such an organization.

### **Conceptual Framework for the Study**

Literature review reveals gaps in the findings and opinions of past studies. Whereas some views agree that Leadership style has a direct influence on organizational performance, others argue that this relationship is not conclusive and is subject to other factors. This study investigated the mediating role of organizational culture in this relationship as presented in a diagrammatical form in Figure 2.1.





**Figure1: Conceptual Framework**

## Methodology

This paper adopted a qualitative research design which entailed a critical review of literature on the effect of leadership style on organizational performance and the role organizational culture plays in this relationship. The rationale for this design was to interrogate views, methods, and findings of authors on the relationships among study variables. Therefore, the study used secondary data obtained from journal articles, books, publications, and conference papers drawn globally. The review mainly used content analysis which were mentioned, and discussions specific to the study variables were identified, analyzed, and critiqued.

## Conclusion

Relationship between leadership style and organizational performance has been topical in recent times. In organizations, leadership styles can affect employees positively (reward) or negatively (punishment) and also has its own consequences on the employee behavior with respect to attitude, motivation, which in turn impacts the organizational performance. Autocratic leaders make a decision without involving their followers and laissez-faire leaders allow followers to make a decision by not being part of the process and democratic leaders involve their followers before making his decision (Ryan & Tipu, 2013; Khan *et al.*, 2016). It is also one of the factors that intensify the commitment of the individuals towards the organization (Obiwuru *et al.*, 2011; Ojokuku *et al.*, 2012). This study examined the link between leadership styles, organizational culture and performance. This study also establishes that the effect of leadership style on organizational performance is inconclusive and is still a subject of academic debate.

Contrary to the general belief that leadership style always has a positive impact on performance, this study established that the effect of leadership style on a firm's performance is actually mixed. Whereas several studies find a positive relationship (Dutton & Heapy, 2013; Pradeep & Prabhu, 2011; Kariuki, 2015; Kissi, Dainty & Tuuli, 2013). Research shows that leadership style has a

significant relationship with organizational performance, and different leadership styles may have a positive correlation or negative correlation with the organizational performance, depending on the variables used by researchers (Wang *et al.*, 2010). Other studies find a negative relationship (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2014; Keegan & Den Hartog, 2014); Some studies find no significant relationship (Keegan & Den Hartog, 2014; Quick & Marcik-Frey, 2013). Therefore, the relationship between leadership style and performance is inconclusive.

Jyoti and Bhau, (2015) found that transformational leadership and organizational performance are positively associated. Hurduzeu (2015) suggests that transformational leadership practices have a positive influence on organizational performance. Bhargavi and Yaseen (2016) found out that the democratic leadership and performance are positively linked. Longe (2014) revealed that transactional leadership style has a positive impact on the organizational performance. Al Khajeh (2018) found that transformational, autocratic, and democratic leadership styles had a positive relationship with the organizational performance. Ojukuku *et al.* (2012) also stated that bureaucratic leadership has a negative impact on the organizational performance. Iqbal *et al.* (2015) found that autocratic leadership negatively affected the overall performance. McGrath and MacMillan (2000) contend that there is significant relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance. Effective leadership style is seen as a potent source of managing development and sustained competitive advantage (Al Khajeh, 2018). Leadership style helps the organization to achieve its current objectives more efficiently by linking job performance to valued rewards and by ensuring that employees have the resources needed to get the job done.

No evidence is found in literature for the mediating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between Leadership style and performance. The study, however, finds that organizational culture plays a mediating role on the leadership style-performance link. A quantitative study results indicate a positive relationship between organizational culture and business performance (Han, 2012; Hartnell, Ou, & Kinicki, 2011; Jofreh & Masoumi, 2013). A case study research results also show a strong culture as a driving factor for organizational performance (Pinho *et al.*, 2014; Simoneaux & Stroud, 2014). New and historical literature showed the existence of a positive relationship between organizational culture and performance. Flamholtz and Randle (2012) confirmed that the organizational culture has an impact on organizations' processes, employee performance, and overall organization productivity. Sharma and Good (2013) suggested that strong organizational culture is an important factor to improve and increase the organization's profitability and financial performance. Nwibere (2013) also indicated that a healthy and strong organizational culture are positive factors to increase organizational performance. Therefore, this conclusion finds support in literature (Marigat, 2016; Wambugu, 2014) which report that organizational culture mediates the organizational performance. This paper recommends that future studies can use a contingency framework to focus on how other factors are likely to affect this relationship.

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