

## **AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP TECHNIQUE AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESILIENCE OF AGRO FIRMS IN RIVERS STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This Study investigated Autocratic Leadership Techniques and Organisational Resilience of Agro Firms in Rivers State. The researcher examined three basic techniques of leadership: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire technique. The study was anchored on episthormology as the philosophical underpinning. The research design the study adopted was co-relational survey. The population of the study was 110 with a sample size of 80 employees of selected agro firms in Rivers State. Simple random technique was used on this study. The major source of data collection was structured questionnaire with 4 Likert scale was used as main source of data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions whereas PPMCC was used to analyse the hypotheses with the help of SPSS model. Findings of the study revealed that democratic leadership and laissez –affaire techniques has a very high positive significant relationship with innovation, adaptation and capability of agro firms in Rivers State. The finding of the study indicated that autocratic technique has a high negative relationship with innovation, adaptation and capability of agro firms in Rivers State. The study pointed that organisational culture has significant influence on autocratic leadership techniques and organisational resilience of agro firms in Rivers State. The study therefore recommended that leaders and managers of firms should practice democratic and laissez –affaire techniques, and avoid autocratic technique to overcome organisational situations where necessary for the success of the firm. The organisational culture should not be too rigid rather flexible to accommodate changes arising from business environment.*

***Keywords: Autocratic Leadership Technique, Organisational Resilience, Capability, Innovation, Adaptability***

### **INTRODUCTION**

Many manufacturing firms experience great discomfort in situations involving unpredictability and change. Leading an organization involves tackling a myriad of challenges in an ever-changing and fluid business environment. Challenges include managing stakeholders and internal politics, competition for resources, fluctuations in the economy, changes in regulations, technology and data security, new rivalries in the market-place, hiring and retaining skilled and dedicated employees, among many others. Leaders and organizations often face challenges and crises that test the strength and flexibility of their systems and resources (Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta & Kramer, 2004). Will they bend with stress or will they break? Successful leadership has always been more difficult during periods of rapid change but the unique stressors facing organizations throughout the world today has caused a renewed interest in studying personal and organizational behaviours with a focus on what constitutes effective and adaptive leadership. Interestingly, some leaders and organizations not only survive, but also thrive in these situations while others falter or collapse under the stress of change. Much research and thought have gone into understanding the factors that underlie these differences. Transformational business models have recently focused on the importance of resilience in both leadership and organizational success.

Thus, the type of leadership applied in functions entailing very high degree of precision, confidence level, sensitivity, care and technical expertise may be different than in simple management-oriented portfolios, as one that does not fit all heads (Dess, & Picken, 2000). It means that situations,

contexts, culture, working environment, new laws and regulations, information overload, organizational complexities and psycho-socio developments remarkably impact the leadership concept thereby, making it commensurate to the changing organizational dynamics. The great men became irrelevant and consequently growth of the organizations. It was also determined that, "a person does not become a leader merely by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits" (Samad, 2012). On the amount of direction and guidance, the dynamic among these factors was established; socio-emotional support and task behavior, in performing a task the readiness level (commitment and competence) of the followers and relationship behavior required by the follower's functions and objective. Without involving subordinates, the autocratic leader makes decisions, laissez-faire leader lets subordinates make the decision and hence takes no real leadership role other than assuming the position and the democratic leader accesses his subordinates then takes his decision.

Moreover, the dynamic process of resilience as it applies to individuals as leaders and how leaders interact with organizations to affect stability, growth, and positive change in the face of crisis. What are the dimensions of resilience and why do some leaders adapt and sometimes grow even stronger following crisis? The answer is complex and multifaceted, involving numerous domains and mediating factors. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section briefly reviews the construct of resilience; it provides a definition of resilience and discusses several relevant psychological, biological, and social domains and mediating factors, as they relate to individual resilience. The second section of the chapter focuses on characteristics of resilient leaders and how these characteristics can foster the development and maintenance of resilient organization (Ryan & Tipu, 2013).

For instance, most organisation perform below expectation because of lack of motivation to his followers or employees to contribute their best. Some leaders have bad approach of being harsh, using force or dictating work to be done as if the employees are lazy. It is seen that leadership styles definitely have a strong relationship towards a company's success, the way the leader manages his employees will ultimately decide the performance of the organization. When a leader is engaging and puts employees' ideas and input into account when making decisions, productivity will indirectly increase especially from the employees as they feel like they are a part of an input that leads to motivation. It all comes down to human behaviour and psychological views when it comes to having the right leadership style a leader wants to adopt in an organization.

On this ground, this study is put together to encourage and educate the present and potential leaders as well as followers or employees on the significant of effective leadership practices in an organisational performance.

### **Hypotheses**

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership technique and innovation of agro firms in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership technique and adaptation of agro firms in Rivers State.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership technique and capability of agro firms in Rivers State.

### **Autocratic Leadership**

Autocratic leader is often seen as someone that is well aware of his status and has little faith or trust in the subordinates. Autocratic rulers in nature are classic and bossy. Those leaders need their subordinates to function as they dictate (AlKhajeh, 2018). In general, autocratic rulers like them reserve the right to take decisions (Longe, 2014). The autocratic ruler believes that an employee's advanced salary for work performed is a fair exchange and an employee can only be motivated by the bonus. This leadership style is characterized by personal control over all team members' decisions and little feedback. These leaders emphasize loyalty and devotion and are characterized

as those who decide by themselves and require strict compliance to regulations. The decision-making process is centralized; autocratic rulers accept full responsibility for decision-making and controlling the performance of their followers. Followers' praise and critique play an important role in autocratic governance. Usually, autocratic leaders' base decisions on their own opinions and perceptions and never consider followers' advice. Autocratic leadership requires a group's complete, authoritarian control.

However, Longe, (2015) indicated that autocratic leadership might be helpful in cases of emergency, where there is a homogeneous workforce included, in which the leader is smart, rational, and has a significant understanding of the followers. Special initiative might be required in these situations to avoid a potential incident. Among many of the weaknesses of autocratic leadership is the unwillingness of the subordinates to cultivate the satisfaction of achievement, rejection of individual development and self-actualization gratification, as well as antagonizing people and wiping the organization of lifelong allegiance and cooperation.

Nevertheless, in some cases, an autocratic approach is acceptable. It is important when the organization faces a crisis or if there is an urgent issue that requires an instant response (Bhargavi & Yaseen, 2016). In addition to bullying, there is no common goal and hardly any encouragement. Autocratic leadership usually reduces engagement, innovation and creativity (Al Khajeh, 2018). Nonetheless, most followers of autocratic leaders can be represented as bidding their time, waiting for the inevitable collapse which this leadership is creating, and removing the next leader. An example of an autocratic leader is Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple. He is the main decision-maker and acts on the basis of their opinions instead of hard evidence. While his employees find this leadership style aggressive, it may have opened doors to Steve Jobs' success. Jobs have produced one of the world's leading tech companies through his innovative ideas. Although some may have found his attitude and leadership style cocky, his devotion to technological development and design has certainly benefited not just to his business, Apple, but customers around the globe. Jobs didn't seem to understand the advantage of working with your staff as a team. On his team members he was seen as controlling as and more of a tyrant than a real leader. Although his methods were hard for all those who worked for him, they have been very efficient for Apple products' success. Steve Jobs had a mind-set of creative design. He wanted his products to be produced as he saw fit best. Once he was quoted as saying "people don't know what they want until you present it to them." This helped Steve create products that he knew the people actually wanted in this innovative and design process.

### **Organisational Resilience**

The concept of resilience, originating from the Latin *resilire* - 'to leap back' can be found in a wide variety of academic disciplines such as ecological science, psychology, systems engineering, organizational sciences, economics, disaster management, management, security, and supply chain management. In this context, organizational resilience as "the capability of an organization to anticipate key events from emerging trends, constantly adapt to change, and rapidly bounce back from disaster, when it occurs". There are three major characteristics that contribute to the resilience of the organizations: adaptability, innovation, and flexibility. This study leads us to identify innovation, agility, and adaptability as the key resilience capabilities. Adaptability is described as the capability of an organization to continuously adapt and adjust to changes in the face of change environments while innovation is the ability to offer a variety of innovative products and services rapidly; whereas agility is the ability of an organization to continually sense the business environment for threats and opportunities and respond quickly and successfully.

Most organizations whether profit or non-profit oriented, government or private, big or small agree at least in principle that performance management is important for success (Stiffler cit in Ismail & Yosuf, 2009). However, Organizational performance has been defined in different ways (Hassan and Al-Hakim, 2011). Pitt and Tucker, (2008) define it as "a vital sign of the organization, showing how well activities within a process or the outputs of a process achieve a specific goal". Also, it is defined

as "a process of assessing progress towards achieving pre-determined goals, including information on the efficiency by which resources are transformed into goods and services, the quality of these outputs and outcomes, and the effectiveness of organizational objectives" (Amaratunga & Baldry, 2003). Hassan & al-hakim, (2011) in their study maintains that organizational performance is the integration between organizational knowledge and innovation competence to achieve positive goals that have been identified previously.

Rao, (2004) opine that performance is what is expected to be delivered by an individual or a set of individuals within a time frame, and it has many dimensions. These includes: output dimensions, input dimensions, Time dimensions, focus dimensions, Quality dimensions and Cost dimensions. Due to various dimensions of performance, there is no universally accepted model or a single best measure of performance (Ismail & Yusof, 2009). Organizational performance measurement has become an important standard in evaluating the organizational success (Darroch & McNaughton 2003; Moullin, 2007). The balance score card (BSC) approach introduced by Kaplan & Norton (1992) is a non-financial technique used nowadays to measure organizational performance. Balanced scorecard method includes financial measures and operational measures such as customer satisfaction, internal processes, and the organization's innovation and improvement activities (Kaplan & Norton, 1992 cit in Lee & Choi, 2002).

### **Relationship between Autocratic Leadership Technique and Capacity**

Guo, (2011) stated that autocratic leadership usually leads to high levels of absenteeism, employee turnover and employee productivity except in cases where there is routine work or unskilled labour. The study established that autocratic leadership increased Employee turnover, 32.6% disagreed, 41.3% agreed, 13.0% strongly agreed, 6.5% strongly disagreed and 6.5% were neutral. In determining whether autocratic leadership increased employee productivity, 21.7% disagreed, 8.7% strongly disagreed, 47.8% agreed, 8.7% were neutral and 10.9% strongly agreed. These findings showed that autocratic leadership increased employee turnover and productivity. These findings agree with the studies.

### **Behavior Theory**

The style theory acknowledges the significance of certain necessary leadership skills that serve as enabler for a leader who performs an act while drawing its parallel with previous capacity of the leader, prior to that particular act while suggesting that each individual has a distinct style of leadership with which he/she feels most contented. Like one that does not fit all heads, similarly one style cannot be effective in all situations. Yukl (1989) introduced three different leadership styles. The employees serving with democratic leaders displayed high degree of satisfaction, creativity, and motivation; working with great enthusiasm and energy irrespective of the presence or absence of the leader; maintaining better connections with the leader, in terms of productivity whereas, autocratic leaders mainly focused on greater quantity of output. Laissez faire leadership was only considered relevant while leading a team of highly skilled and motivated people who excellent track-record, in the past. Feidler & House (1994) identified two additional leadership styles focusing effectiveness of the leadership. These researchers opined that consideration (concern for people and relationship behaviors) and commencing structure (concern for production and task behaviors) were very vital variables. The consideration is referred to the amount of confidence and rapport, a leader engenders in his subordinates. Whereas, initiating structure, on the other hand, reflects the extent, to which the leader structures, directs and defines his/her own and the subordinates' roles as they have the participatory role toward organizational performance, profit and accomplishment of the mission. Different researchers proposed that three types of leaders, they were; autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. Without involving subordinates, the autocratic leader makes decisions, laissez-faire leader lets subordinates make the decision and hence takes no real leadership role other than assuming the position and the democratic leader accesses his

subordinates then takes his decision. "He further assumed that all leaders could fit into one of these three categories".

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

Research design adopted is correctional research design.

### Population of the Study

The population of this study covers (110) staff; casual staff, cleaners and security ten selected agro firms in Rivers State.

### Population Distribution Table

S /N	Firms	Staff	Casual staff,	Cleaners and security	Total
1.	<u>Ojemai Farms Limited.</u> Sub-cate4gory: Farms. Address: Plot 267, Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.	5	3	3	11
2.	<u>Rivers State Vegetable Oil Company Ltd (RIVOC).</u> Sub-category: Millers. Address: Plot 80, Trans-Amadi Industrial Layout, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State.	5	3	3	11
3.	Limited. Sub-category: Services. Address: 16, Road, 4th Drive Ogbatai Road, Woji, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria	5	3	3	11
4.	<u>Winning Edge Farm.</u> Sub-category: Farms. Address: 89 Aluu Road, Rukpokwu, Port-Harcourt, Rivers.	5	3	3	11
5.	6. Ltd. Sub- category: Farms. Address: 2B, Eleme Street, Old GRA, Port Harcourt, Rivers State	5	3	3	11
6.	7. <u>Integrity Vision Limited( Aqua-Agro Farmers).</u> Sub-category: Farms. Address: 119, Redeemed Road of Apajo Sandfill, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.	5	3	3	11
7.	<u>Multibond Industries Ltd.</u> Sub-category: <u>Agric Farms.</u> Address: 50, Ikwere Road, Mile 1, Diobu, Rivers State.	5	3	3	11
8.	<u>Ojemai Farms Ltd</u> Sub-category: <u>Agric Farms</u> Address: 36, Trans-Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.	5	3	3	11
9.	Limited. Sub-category: <u>Agricultural Equipment.</u> Address: Plot 13 Trans Amadi Industrial Layout, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.	5	3	3	11
10.	<u>Ltd.</u> Sub-category: <u>Agricultural Equipment</u> Address: Suite 212/ 213, Nipost Building Territorial H/q Station, Port Harcourt, Rivers State	5	3	3	11
Total		50	30	30	110

Source; [https://www.directory.org.ng/list-agriculture and agro-allied?st=Rivers](https://www.directory.org.ng/list-agriculture-and-agro-allied?st=Rivers)

### Sample and Sampling Technique

The sampling technique that is adopted for this research is probability sampling technique. In this case, simple random sampling allows equal chance of selection of the variables study.

## Instrumentation

The Instrument that is used by the researcher is structured questionnaire to elicit responses from respondents.

## Method of Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher used primary data collection: questionnaires, interviews, personal experience as a businessman and observations. The secondary and tertiary sources of data collection that was used are; library, newspaper, awake, journals and citation from other scholars 'book etc.

The completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Quantitative data collected were analyzed by the using; Mean and Standard Deviations for the research questions at assume of 2.50.

## Results

### Hypothesis Test One:

### Pearson Correlation Relationship between Autocratic Leadership Style with innovation in Agro Firms

Variables		Innovation	Autocratic Technique
Autocratic Technique	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.849**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	80	80
Innovation	Pearson Correlation	-0.849**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	80	80

Degree of freedom =0.01: **Source: Researcher survey, (2022)**

Table above showed that R calculated is  $P = -0.849^{**}$  is less than critical value at 0.01 level of significance. Decision Rule: that says, there is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership and innovation of agro firms in Rivers State.  $P = -0.849^{**} < 0.01$ .  $H_0$  is accepted while alternative hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, 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)

Note: 0.8 -1.0 =very strong relationship, 0.6 - 0.79 = strong relationship, 0.4 - 0.59 = moderate relationship, 0.2 - 0.39 = weak relationship and 0.0 - 0.19 = very weak or no relationship

### Hypothesis Test Two

### $H_{02}$ : There is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership style and adaptation of agro firms in Rivers State

### Relationship between Autocratic Leadership Technique and Innovation

Variables	Adaptation	Autocratic Technique
Autocratic technique	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-0.886**
	N	80

<b>Adaptation</b>	Pearson		
	Correlation	-0.886**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	80	80

**Degree of freedom = 0.01**

**Source : Researcher survey, (2022)**

Table above showed that R calculated – 0.886\*\* is less than R critical value at 0.05 level of significance. Based on decision rule, null hypothesis that says that there is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership technique and adaptation is accepted whereas alternative hypothesis is rejected ( $P = -0.886^{**} < 0.01$ ). Besides, the autocratic leadership also leads to organizational conflicts which negatively affect the overall performance (Iqbal, *et al.*, 2015). Bhargavi and Yaseen, (2016) suggested that the autocratic leadership style has a positive impact on the organizational performance.

Khan, *et al.* (2015), autocratic leadership is where manager retains as much power and decision-making authorization as possible. Melling and Little, (2004) stated that autocratic leaders are high-handed leaders and are the center of every activity that go on in the establishment and all authority emanated from them and ends with them (Akor, 2014). Iqbal, *et al.* (2015), autocratic leaders are characterized by an "I tell" philosophy; autocratic leaders tell other people what to do. Nwankwo (2001) and Enoch (1999) described autocratic style as a leadership style where leaders exclusively make decisions and production is emphasized at the expense of any human consideration (cited Akor, 2014).

### **Hypothesis Test Three**

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** Autocratic leadership technique has no significant relationship with capability of agro firms in Rivers State.

**Pearson Correlation Relationship between autocratic Leadership Technique and Capability of agro firms in Rivers State.**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Capability</b>	<b>Democratic Technique</b>
<b>Democratic Tech</b>	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-.0675**
	N	80
<b>Capability</b>	Pearson Correlation	-0.675**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	80

Degree of freedom = 0.01

**Source: Researcher survey, (2022)**

Table above indicated that R calculated -0.675\*\* is less than R critical value at 0 .01 level of significance or degree of freedom. Based on decision rule, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between autocratic technique and capability of agro firms in Rivers State is accepted meanwhile alternative hypothesis is rejected ( $P = -0.675^{**} > 0.01$ )

## Discussion of the Findings

Table 1 analysed the mean and standard deviation values of autocratic and innovation 2.20 and 0.905 respectively. This showed that autocratic leadership technique has a negatively influence on innovation since the calculated mean value is less than the assume mean value. ( $2.50 > 2.20$ ). Table 4.1B showed that R calculated is  $P = -0.849^{**}$  is less than critical value at 0.01 level of significance or degree of freedom Decision Rule: that says, there is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership and innovation of agro firms in Rivers State.  $P = -0.849^{**} > 0.01$ .  $H_0$  is accepted while alternative hypothesis is rejected. Furthermore, there is no shared of 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](#)).

Furthermore, table 2 showed that R calculated  $-0.886^{**}$  is less than R critical value at 0.01 level of significance or degree of freedom. Based on decision rule, null hypothesis that says that there is no significant relationship between autocratic leadership approach and adaptation is accepted whereas alternative hypothesis is rejected ( $P = -0.886 < 0.01$ ). Besides, the autocratic leadership also leads to organizational conflicts which negatively affect the overall performance ([Iqbal, et al., 2015](#)). [Bhargavi and Yaseen \(2016\)](#) suggested that the autocratic leadership style has a positive impact on the organizational performance. [Khan, et al. \(2015\)](#), autocratic leadership is where manager retains as much power and decision-making authorization as possible. [Melling and Little, \(2004\)](#) stated that autocratic leaders are high-handed leaders and are the center of every activity that go on in the establishment and all authority emanated from them and ends with them ([Akor, 2014](#)). [Iqbal, et al. \(2015\)](#), autocratic leaders are characterized by an "I tell" philosophy; autocratic leaders tell other people what to do. [Nwankwo \(2001\)](#) and [Enoch \(1999\)](#) described autocratic style as a leadership style where leaders exclusively make decisions and production is emphasized at the expense of any human consideration (cited in [Akor, 2014](#)).

Also, table 3 indicated that R calculated  $-0.675^{**}$  is less than R critical value at 0.01 level of significance or degree of freedom. Based on decision rule, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between autocratic technique and capability of agro firms in Rivers State is accepted meanwhile alternative hypothesis is rejected ( $P = -0.675^{**} < 0.01$ ).

## CONCLUSION

Generally speaking, from the literature review: conceptual review and the theoretical review as well empirical review of study. The study concluded that leadership styles adopted by an organisation will determine the success or failure the firm. Also, an autocratic leadership leads to organizational conflicts which negatively affected the overall performance of any firm. Whereas, autocratic technique has a negative relationship on organisational resilience of agro firms in Rivers State The organisational culture has a greater influence on the leadership style and organisational resilience of agro firms. In conclusion, the study revealed that democratic leadership technique is the best technique to handle or tackled organisational resilience.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the interpretation of the analyses, summary of findings and the conclusion, the following suggestions are offered to help the leaders, manager, supervisors and the society on the relevance of this study;

1. The leaders should avoid autocratic leadership technique as the finding revealed that there is high negative significant relationship on innovation of agro firms in Rivers State.
2. The leaders should avoid autocratic leadership technique as the result indicated that there is high negative significant relationship on adaptation of agro firms in Rivers State.

3. The leaders should avoid autocratic leadership technique as the finding proved that there is moderate negative significant relationship on capability of agro firms in Rivers State.

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