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Impact of Hospital Administrators' Leadership Style on Staff Productivity and Patient Satisfaction in Tertiary Hospitals in Delta State, Nigeria

Esther Otekpen Anyanwu Ph.D

Department of Healthcare Administration and Hospital Management, Dennis Osadebey University, Asaba, Delta State, Nigeria

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***Corresponding author:** Esther Otekpen Anyanwu Ph.D

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Abstract **Original Research Article**

This study examined the influence of hospital administrators' leadership styles on staff productivity and patient satisfaction in selected tertiary hospitals in Delta State. Specifically, the study identified the dominant leadership styles used by hospital administrators, examined how leadership styles influence staff productivity and assessed their influence on patient satisfaction. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of 180 respondents, comprising 60 healthcare workers and 120 patients from Asaba Specialist Hospital and Federal Medical Centre, Asaba. The entire population was used as the sample size through the census sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Hospital Administrators' Leadership Style, Staff Productivity and Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire (HALSSPPSQ). The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the three research questions, with a criterion mean of 2.50. The findings revealed that transformational and democratic leadership styles were commonly practised by hospital administrators, although some autocratic tendencies were also observed. The overall mean score for leadership styles was 3.02, while the highest mean score of 3.45 showed that administrators motivated staff to achieve organisational goals. The findings also revealed that staff motivation, participation in decision-making, supervision and recognition were important leadership practices that contributed to staff productivity. Furthermore, effective coordination and supervision were found to be important in improving patients' experiences and satisfaction. The study concluded that effective leadership is essential for improving staff performance and patient satisfaction in tertiary hospitals. It recommended that hospital administrators should encourage teamwork, motivate healthcare workers, involve staff in decision-making and strengthen supervision to improve healthcare delivery and patient satisfaction.

Keywords: Leadership styles, hospital administrators, staff productivity, patient satisfaction, tertiary hospitals.

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Introduction

Leadership is an important part of managing any organisation, particularly hospitals where the lives and well-being of patients depend on the quality of services provided. Hospitals require effective leadership to ensure that employees perform their duties properly, resources are managed effectively and patients receive the care they need (Ward et al., 2025). Hospital administrators are responsible

for planning, organising, directing and supervising the activities of healthcare workers. Their leadership and management responsibilities include coordinating staff, making decisions, managing resources and ensuring accountability in the delivery of healthcare services (Kadandale et al., 2024). Effective leadership is therefore important in creating a working environment where healthcare workers can perform their duties efficiently and patients receive quality care (Mubiri et al., 2024).

They also make decisions, resolve conflicts, encourage teamwork and ensure that hospital policies are properly implemented. The way administrators carry out these responsibilities can influence employees' attitudes towards work, their level of productivity and the quality of services provided to patients. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2025) recognises effective leadership and governance as important requirements for strengthening health systems and improving healthcare service delivery.

Leadership style refers to the manner in which a leader directs, motivates, supervises and relates with employees in an organisation. In hospital administration, the leadership style adopted by an administrator may depend on personal characteristics, professional experience, organisational demands and the nature of the healthcare environment. Some hospital administrators encourage staff participation in decision-making, while others prefer to make decisions independently. Common leadership styles discussed in healthcare management include transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership (Wu et al., 2024; O'Donovan et al., 2021).

Transformational leadership involves inspiring and motivating employees through a shared vision, encouragement and support for professional development. Transactional leadership, on the other hand, focuses on setting clear performance expectations, monitoring employees' activities and using rewards or corrective measures to encourage compliance with organisational goals (Wu et al., 2024; O'Donovan et al., 2021). Democratic leadership encourages employees to participate in decisions affecting their work, whereas autocratic leadership involves decision-making that is largely controlled by the leader. Laissez-faire leadership gives employees considerable freedom to carry out their responsibilities, with limited direct supervision. However, the effectiveness of each style may depend on the situation and the experience and needs of the healthcare workers involved.

The importance of effective leadership in hospitals can also be seen in its relationship with staff productivity. Staff productivity refers to the ability of employees to perform their assigned responsibilities effectively and efficiently within the available time and resources. In tertiary hospitals, staff productivity can be measured through punctuality, regular attendance, commitment to work, teamwork, prompt attention to patients and the ability to complete assigned tasks. Healthcare workers are expected to work together to ensure that patients receive appropriate treatment and attention. However, their ability to perform these duties may be affected by poor supervision, inadequate motivation, excessive workload and poor communication. Administrators who provide adequate support, recognise employees' efforts and encourage cooperation may create a working environment that promotes better performance. On the other hand, poor leadership may result in low morale, lack of commitment and reduced productivity. Adeyemi et al. (2024) reported that transformational and transactional leadership styles positively influenced job performance among health information management practitioners, showing the importance of leadership in achieving better employee performance in tertiary hospitals.

The healthcare sector is faced with several challenges, including inadequate funding, shortages of healthcare personnel, poor infrastructure and increasing demand for medical services. Tertiary hospitals are expected to provide specialised medical treatment, conduct research and train healthcare professionals. These responsibilities require proper administration and effective coordination among

different categories of healthcare workers. Hospital administrators must ensure that employees understand their responsibilities, available resources are properly managed and patients receive appropriate attention. The World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa (2025), in its Nigeria Health Systems and Services Profile, identified weaknesses in healthcare financing, workforce availability, infrastructure and service delivery as important challenges affecting the country's health system. These challenges make effective leadership necessary for improving staff performance and the general organisation of healthcare services in Nigerian hospitals.

The relationship between leadership style and staff productivity has also received attention in Nigerian healthcare research. Adeyemi et al. (2024) examined the influence of leadership styles and change management on the job performance of health information management practitioners in selected tertiary hospitals in South-East Nigeria. The study involved 117 health information management officers and technicians. The findings revealed that transformational and transactional leadership styles had significant positive effects on job performance, while laissez-faire leadership did not show a significant positive influence. This suggests that the way hospital administrators direct, motivate and supervise employees can affect how effectively they perform their responsibilities. Although the study focused on health information management practitioners, it provides useful evidence of the relationship between leadership practices and employee performance in Nigerian tertiary hospitals.

Apart from staff productivity, patient satisfaction is another important measure of the performance of healthcare institutions. Patient satisfaction refers to the extent to which patients are pleased with the healthcare services they receive and the degree to which those services meet their expectations. It is influenced by factors such as the attitude of healthcare workers, waiting time, communication, respect for patients, availability of medical services and the quality of treatment provided. Patients expect to be attended to promptly, treated with respect and given clear information about their health conditions. When healthcare workers are caring, respectful and responsive, patients are more likely to have a positive experience. Hospital administrators therefore have an important responsibility to establish policies and working conditions that encourage employees to provide patient-centred services.

Leadership style may affect patient satisfaction through its influence on the behaviour and performance of healthcare workers. Administrators who encourage teamwork, effective communication and staff motivation may improve the way healthcare services are delivered. Similarly, administrators who provide adequate supervision and pay attention to employees' welfare may encourage healthcare workers to respond better to patients' needs. Awa, Bademosi and Peterside (2025), in their study on leadership styles and perceptions of patient-centred care, examined healthcare managers and leaders in two tertiary hospitals in Rivers State, Nigeria. Their findings indicated positive relationships between transformational leadership practices and aspects of patient-centred care, including physical comfort and emotional support. This shows that the leadership approach adopted by hospital administrators may influence the attention and support patients receive during their stay in healthcare institutions.

Patient satisfaction remains an important concern in Nigeria because patients expect healthcare institutions to provide services that are accessible, timely and responsive to their needs. However, patients may experience long waiting times, poor communication, inadequate attention and difficulties accessing certain medical services. These problems may affect their confidence in healthcare institutions and their willingness to use available services. The World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa (2025) identified challenges relating to healthcare access, infrastructure, workforce availability and service delivery in Nigeria. Hospital administrators therefore need to provide effective leadership that encourages employees to treat patients with respect, communicate properly and respond promptly to their needs.

Although leadership alone cannot solve all the challenges affecting patient satisfaction, it can contribute to better staff coordination, supervision and organisation of hospital services.

In Delta State, tertiary hospitals play an important role in providing specialised healthcare services to residents of the state and neighbouring communities. These hospitals attend to patients with different health conditions and depend on the combined efforts of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, medical laboratory scientists, health information management personnel and other supporting staff. Managing these different categories of employees requires effective leadership and proper coordination. Hospital administrators are expected to ensure that employees understand their responsibilities, work together and make proper use of available resources. The leadership styles they adopt may influence employees' relationships with management, their willingness to perform their duties and the general quality of services provided to patients. Effective leadership is therefore necessary for maintaining discipline, improving teamwork and promoting efficient healthcare delivery in tertiary hospitals in the state.

Furthermore, patient satisfaction in tertiary hospitals in Delta State deserves attention because the experiences of patients are influenced not only by the treatment they receive but also by the way healthcare services are organised and delivered. Patients expect to receive attention within a reasonable period, obtain clear information about their health conditions, receive respectful treatment and have access to the services they require. Hospital administrators have a responsibility to create an environment that supports these expectations. Their leadership styles may influence how employees communicate with patients, respond to complaints, manage waiting time and carry out their professional responsibilities. Therefore, understanding the relationship between leadership style and patient satisfaction is important in identifying ways of improving the quality of healthcare services.

Despite the importance of leadership in hospital administration, there is a need to understand the leadership styles commonly adopted by hospital administrators and how they affect staff productivity and patient satisfaction in tertiary hospitals in Delta State. Previous studies have examined leadership effectiveness and employees' job satisfaction in selected hospitals in Delta State, while other studies have investigated leadership styles and job performance in tertiary hospitals in other parts of Nigeria. However, there is still a need for research that considers the dominant leadership styles adopted by hospital administrators and examines their effects on both staff productivity and patient satisfaction within tertiary hospitals in Delta State. Findings from other locations may provide useful information, but differences in working conditions, administrative practices and organisational structures make it necessary to examine the situation within the Delta State healthcare environment.

It is against this background that this study examines the impact of hospital administrators' leadership styles on staff productivity and patient satisfaction in tertiary hospitals in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the dominant leadership styles adopted by hospital administrators, examine how leadership styles affect staff productivity and determine how they influence patient satisfaction. The study is expected to provide useful information to hospital administrators, healthcare workers and relevant stakeholders on the importance of effective leadership in improving employee performance and promoting better patient experiences.

Studies on impact of hospital administrators' leadership style on staff productivity and patient satisfaction in tertiary hospitals has been investigated by scholars recently. Awa, Bademosi and Peterside (2025) conducted a study titled Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Perceptions of Patient-Centred Care in two tertiary hospitals in Rivers State, Nigeria: the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital and Rivers State University Teaching Hospital. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The target population comprised medical doctors, nurses, pharmacists

and laboratory professionals with management responsibilities. A sample of 310 healthcare managers and leaders was used. The researchers identified eligible participants through the hospitals' human resources departments, although a specific sampling technique was not stated. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, including an adapted Patient Judgments of Hospital Quality questionnaire and a leadership questionnaire. Exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling were used to analyse the data. The findings showed that transformational, emotionally intelligent and individualised consideration leadership styles had significant positive relationships with the perceived delivery of physical comfort to patients.

Boshra et al. (2025) carried out a study titled Impact of Leadership Styles on Patient Satisfaction with Nursing Care Quality in Public Hospitals: A Cross-Sectional Study in four public hospitals in Saudi Arabia. The researchers adopted a cross-sectional survey design and used non-random convenience sampling. The study involved 150 nurses who provided care to 180 patients. The researchers used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire to assess leadership styles and the Patient Satisfaction with Nursing Care Quality Questionnaire to measure patient satisfaction. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences in patient satisfaction across leadership styles. The findings showed that passive-avoidant leadership was the most common style and was associated with lower patient satisfaction. Transactional leadership recorded higher patient satisfaction scores than passive-avoidant and transformational leadership in the reported comparisons.

Lui, Andres and Johnston (2024) conducted a study titled How Do Organisational Culture and Leadership Style Affect Nurse Presenteeism and Productivity? A Cross-Sectional Study of Hong Kong Acute Public Hospitals. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design and was carried out in three major public hospitals in Hong Kong. The target population consisted of 4,657 full-time nurses, all of whom were invited to participate. A total of 2,339 nurses responded to the survey. The study therefore used an all-eligible-nurses invitation approach rather than selecting a smaller sample through a stated random sampling technique. Data were collected through a questionnaire assessing organisational culture, leadership style, presenteeism and productivity. The data were analysed using multilevel hierarchical linear modelling. The findings showed that leadership style at the unit level was not directly associated with nurse presenteeism or productivity.

Adunola (2023) carried out a study titled Leadership Styles and Their Outcomes: A Study of a Nigerian Hospital Middle Management Nurses in a large tertiary hospital in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study examined the leadership styles of nurse managers and their influence on staff nurses' perceptions of leadership effectiveness, satisfaction and willingness to put in extra effort. The study used a one-time survey approach. The target group comprised nurse managers in the hospital's wards and units. A convenience sampling technique was adopted, and 350 questionnaires were distributed. Out of these, 240 were returned, while five were rejected because they were not properly completed, leaving 235 valid questionnaires for analysis. Data were collected using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X). Multiple regression analysis was carried out using SPSS version 25. The findings showed that transformational leadership, particularly idealised influence, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration, significantly predicted positive leadership outcomes.

Effective leadership is important in hospital management because it influences staff performance and the quality of care patients receive. Hospital administrators are responsible for guiding healthcare workers, coordinating activities and ensuring that resources are properly used. Ward et al. (2025) noted that hospital management practices are linked to the quality of healthcare services and patients' experiences. In tertiary hospitals, poor leadership may affect staff motivation, teamwork and

productivity, which may also influence patient care. Niinihuhta and Häggman-Laitila (2023) linked nursing leadership with staff and patient outcomes, while Adeyemi et al. (2024) found that transformational and transactional leadership positively influenced job performance in selected Nigerian tertiary hospitals. In Delta State, Okolie and Oyovwevotu (2023) reported a positive relationship between leadership effectiveness and employees' job satisfaction in selected hospitals. However, their study did not specifically examine how administrators' leadership styles affect staff productivity and patient satisfaction in tertiary hospitals. This leaves a gap that requires further investigation. Therefore, this study examines the leadership styles adopted by hospital administrators in tertiary hospitals in Delta State and how they influence staff productivity and patient satisfaction.

Research Questions

The following were the research questions raised to guide the study:

1. What are the dominant leadership styles used by hospital administrators in tertiary hospital in Delta State?
2. How does leadership style affect staff productivity in tertiary hospital in Delta State
3. How does leadership style affect patient satisfaction in tertiary hospital in Delta State?

Methods

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain information from respondents about their opinions and experiences without manipulating the variables under investigation. Questionnaires were used to collect data from healthcare workers and patients to examine the impact of hospital administrators' leadership styles on staff productivity and patient satisfaction in the selected hospitals. The population of the study comprised 180 respondents drawn from Asaba Specialist Hospital and Federal Medical Centre, Asaba. This consisted of 60 healthcare workers and 120 patients from the two hospitals. The healthcare workers provided information on leadership styles and staff productivity, while the patients provided information on their satisfaction with the healthcare services received. The study adopted the entire population of 180 respondents as its sample size using the census sampling technique. This comprised 60 healthcare workers and 120 patients from the two selected hospitals. The technique was considered appropriate because the population was manageable, allowing every member of the study population to participate in the research.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled Hospital Administrators' Leadership Style, Staff Productivity and Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire (HALSSPPSQ). The questionnaire was divided into three sections: A, B and C. Section A obtained demographic information from respondents, such as age, sex and relevant professional or patient details. Section B focused on the leadership styles adopted by hospital administrators and their relationship with staff productivity. It contained questions on transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles, as well as staff motivation, teamwork, job performance and work efficiency. Section C focused on patient satisfaction with healthcare services. It contained questions on staff attitude, communication, responsiveness, waiting time and the general quality of care received. The questionnaire items were rated on a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. A criterion mean of 2.50 was used to interpret the responses. This was obtained by adding the four response values (4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10) and dividing the total by four, giving 2.50. Therefore, items with a mean score of 2.50 and above were accepted, while items with a mean score below 2.50. The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot test involving respondents from a hospital outside the two selected study hospitals. The

responses obtained were analysed using Cronbach's alpha to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above was considered acceptable for the study. The researcher obtained permission from the management of the selected hospitals before administering the questionnaires.

The data collected for this study were analysed using mean and standard deviation. These statistical methods were used to answer the three research questions. The mean was used to determine the respondents' opinions on the leadership styles adopted by hospital administrators, staff productivity and patient satisfaction, while standard deviation was used to determine the extent to which respondents' opinions differed. A criterion mean of 2.50 was adopted for interpreting responses. Items with a mean score of 2.50 and above were accepted, while those with a mean score below 2.50 were rejected

Results

The results of the research questions and hypotheses are presented below:

Research Question 1: What are the dominant leadership styles adopted by hospital administrators in tertiary hospitals in Delta State?

Table 1: Mean Scores on the Dominant Leadership Styles Adopted by Hospital Administrators (N = 60)

Items	Mean	S.D	Remark
Hospital administrators encourage staff to participate in decision-making.	3.32	0.71	Agreed
Hospital administrators motivate staff to achieve organisational goals.	3.45	0.62	Agreed
Hospital administrators reward staff for good performance.	3.18	0.78	Agreed
Hospital administrators make decisions without consulting staff.	2.76	0.91	Agreed
Hospital administrators allow staff to perform their duties with little supervision.	2.41	0.96	Disagreed
Overall mean	**3.02**		

Table 1 shows that the respondents agreed with most of the statements on leadership styles, with an overall mean of 3.02. The highest mean score of 3.45 indicates that administrators motivate staff to achieve organisational goals. The result indicates that transformational and democratic leadership behaviours are commonly practised, although some autocratic tendencies are also evident.

Research Question 2: How does leadership style affect staff productivity in tertiary hospitals in Delta State?

Table 2: Mean Scores on the Effect of Leadership Style on Staff Productivity (N = 60)

Items	Mean	S.D	Remark
Effective leadership motivates healthcare workers to perform their duties.	3.48	0.63	Agreed
Good communication between administrators and staff improves work performance.	3.55	0.59	Agreed
Staff participation in decision-making improves productivity.	3.38	0.72	Agreed
Regular supervision encourages staff to carry out their duties effectively.	3.27	0.76	Agreed
Recognition and rewards encourage staff to work harder.	3.42	0.68	Agreed
Overall mean	**3.42**		

Table 2 reveals an overall mean of 3.42, indicating that respondents agreed that leadership style influences staff productivity. Good communication recorded the highest mean of 3.55, suggesting that communication between administrators and healthcare workers is particularly important in improving work performance. The findings also indicate that motivation, staff participation, supervision and recognition contribute to staff productivity.

Research Question 3: How does leadership style affect patient satisfaction in tertiary hospitals in Delta State?

Table 3: Mean Scores on the Effect of Leadership Style on Patient Satisfaction (N = 120)

Items	Mean	S.D	Remark
Effective hospital leadership promotes quality healthcare services.	3.41	0.69	Agreed
Proper supervision of healthcare workers improves patient care.	3.52	0.61	Agreed
Good communication among healthcare workers improves patients' experiences.	3.46	0.66	Agreed
Effective management reduces delays in attending to patients.	3.29	0.78	Agreed
Well-coordinated hospital services improve patient satisfaction.	3.57	0.58	Agreed
Overall mean	**3.45**		

Table 3 shows an overall mean of 3.45, indicating that patients agreed that effective hospital leadership contributes to their satisfaction. Well-coordinated hospital services recorded the highest mean of 3.57, followed by proper supervision of healthcare workers with a mean of 3.52. This revealed that coordination and supervision are important in improving patients' experiences and satisfaction.

Discussion

The result shows that transformational and democratic leadership styles are commonly practised by hospital administrators in tertiary hospitals in Delta State, although some autocratic leadership tendencies are also evident. The result agrees with Awa, Bademosi and Peterside (2025), who found that transformational, emotionally intelligent and individualised consideration leadership styles had significant positive relationships with the perceived delivery of physical comfort to patients in two tertiary hospitals in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The result shows that leadership practices such as staff motivation, participation in decision-making, supervision and recognition contribute to staff productivity in tertiary hospitals in Delta State. The result agrees with Adunola (2023), who found that transformational leadership, particularly idealised influence, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration, significantly predicted positive leadership outcomes among nurses in a tertiary hospital in Ibadan, Nigeria. However, the result differs from Lui, Andres and Johnston (2024), who found that leadership style at the unit level was not directly associated with nurses' presenteeism or productivity in acute public hospitals in Hong Kong. This difference may be attributed to variations in organisational structures, working conditions, availability of resources and other factors that influence staff productivity.

The result shows that effective leadership practices, particularly supervision, coordination, staff motivation and recognition, are important in improving patients' experiences and satisfaction in tertiary hospitals in Delta State. The result agrees with Awa, Bademosi and Peterside (2025), who found that transformational, emotionally intelligent and individualised consideration leadership styles had significant positive relationships with the perceived delivery of physical comfort to patients. Similarly, Boshra et al. (2025) found that leadership styles were associated with differences in patient satisfaction with nursing care quality in public hospitals in Saudi Arabia.

Conclusion

The study concludes that leadership styles play an important role in the effective management of tertiary hospitals in Delta State. The findings revealed that transformational and democratic leadership styles are commonly practised by hospital administrators, although some autocratic leadership tendencies are also present. The study further established that staff motivation, participation in decision-making, effective supervision and recognition are important leadership practices that contribute to staff productivity. In addition, proper coordination and supervision help to improve the quality of healthcare services and patients' experiences and satisfaction

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Hospital administrators should adopt transformational and democratic leadership styles that encourage teamwork, staff participation and

effective communication in order to promote good working relationships and improve hospital administration.

2. Hospital management should regularly motivate and recognise healthcare workers through incentives, awards, promotion opportunities and other forms of appreciation to encourage staff commitment and improve productivity.
3. Hospital administrators should involve healthcare workers in decision-making, particularly on issues affecting their duties and working conditions, to promote a sense of belonging, responsibility and cooperation among staff.
4. Hospital management should strengthen supervision and monitoring of staff activities to ensure that healthcare workers perform their duties effectively and maintain the required standards of healthcare delivery.
5. Hospital administrators should improve coordination among departments and healthcare professionals to ensure timely delivery of services, effective communication and better patient care.

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