# EFFECT OF GENDER ON LEADERSHIP STYLE OF SELECTED MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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*Abstract:* **The study examined the impact of gender on leadership style of selected manufacturing firms in Anambra state. The objectives inter alia sought to examine the nature and extent of relationship existing between male and autocratic leadership style; ascertain the nature and extent of relationship existing between female and transformational leadership style; and to verify the nature and extent of relationship existing between ascribed gender and laissez faire leadership style. Survey research method was adopted and primary and secondary data were used for the study. The population of the study consists of employees of manufacturing firms under review. The questionnaire was analyzed in with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences. Findings revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between male and autocratic leadership style. It was also discovered that there is a significant positive relationship between female and transformational leadership. The study also shows that there is a significant positive relationship between ascribed gender and laissez faire leadership style. The study concluded that gender affects the leadership style in the selected firms. The study recommends that male managers should be positioned to organizational areas where subordinates are likely to be unproductive and lackadaisical in order to promote increased productivity and ensure positive behaviour and attitudes necessary for realization of organizational desired goals, that organizations should invest in the right type of female workers to and as well put them in managerial positions where diagnosis, problem solving and interpersonal skills are needed.**

*Keywords:* **Gender, Leadership Styles, Transformational Leaders, Lassie faire Managers.**

## 1.   INTRODUCTION

Over the centuries, femininity has been stereotyped as dependent, submissive and conforming, and hence women have been seen as lacking in leadership qualities. The male bias is reflected in the false conception of leadership as mere command or control. For the past two decades, gender differences in leadership styles have been one of the most intensely studied topics in the field of leadership. Are there inherent differences in the way men and women function as leaders and if so, are these differences gender linked? This question has commanded attention because researchers have been trying to provide an explanation about why there have been so few women leaders. Even though women have become an increasingly large proportion of the work force, they still do not hold a proportionate share of the administrative position. Most of the gender difference research has focused upon whether women's comparative lack of success in attaining high positions could somehow be related to differences in their leadership style. It has examined the personality characteristics and behavior patterns of women as possible explanations for their lower status.

Gender plays a vital role in human society. The popular belief is that males and females have different roles in society. However, gender roles in society are changing as the world changes. How these changes affect the socio economic activities of the world is very complex. Modern day society is far more complex compared to old, traditional society. One of the main relationships which drive any society is the relationship between leaders and followers. Leaders can be found in many forms. They can be managers, entrepreneurs, spiritual guides or they just can be a simple employee of an organization. At the same time as there is no consensus on the definition of a leader across the world, a leader may be distinguished from a follower by his or her qualities.

Different kinds of leaders are needed for different scenarios, so there is no such a thing as a universal leader. However some leaders can adapt to various situations and act accordingly. The role of a leader is basically to guide followers to achieve goals effectively and efficiently. If the leader is not competent enough to do the task efficiently and effectively, the whole team will collapse. Therefore the leaders of modern society are considered the top level and are the driving power of the society. Since the leaders are considered as valuable assets to society, demand for superior leaders are at an all time high in any organization. Therefore people try to cultivate leadership qualities and skills inside them and be leaders in organizations.

Although more women are assuming leadership roles today than before, the notion of a woman as a leader is still foreign to many individuals, male and female alike. Changes in perception are difficult to achieve because the traditional norms of leadership are firmly entrenched. In our society, as in most others, leaders have customarily been males. In the past, leadership opportunities for women tended to be limited to all female organizations such as sororities, convents, and female institutions of education- but even there, the presidents of women's colleges were almost always men (Bass, 1981). From this phenomenon the generalization was made that leadership implies maleness and that, since women were not men, they lacked the qualities that are necessary to be leaders. The assumption that leadership equates with maleness is deeply embedded in both our thinking and language. Leaders are often described with adjectives such as "competitive," "aggressive," or "dominant," which are typically associated with masculinity. A female leader is frequently regarded as an aberration and women who become leaders are often offered the presumed accolade of being described as being "like men" (Hearn & Parkin, 1986). For instance, Margaret Thatcher was often described as the "best man" in Great Britain.

According to Howell (1997) leaders do not necessarily need to be involved in providing all of the skills needed for leadership, the importance of the leaders in any organization is still considered as one of the most important aspects in the success of any given organization and cannot be overemphasized. What an organizations needs to be successful are the people who can drive them effectively and efficiently among others factors.

The existence of leaders is mainly dependent on the followers. To be a leader, one should have at least one follower. This relationship should be based on mutual understanding and respect on the part of both the leader and the follower. Some organizations attempt to force this relationship by giving the hierarchical power of authority to the leaders but this type of leader-follower relationship is not stable in the long run. To have a healthy relationship, the trust and respect of the followers need to be earned by the leader and vice versa.

There are plenty of social barriers to becoming a leader of certain group of individuals which depends on the situations, beliefs, cultures and opinions. Therefore, some individuals in society have to put an extra effort compared to others to be a leader in a society or an organization. Most of the time, the reasons behind those hurdles are baseless. Leaders in most of organizations in the world are mainly male, even though some of the middle level management positions and supervisory positions in the organizations are dominated by females. Female leaders have to face and break the glass ceiling when they are trying to advance their position towards top level positions in an organization. The cause for this barrier can vary from the organization to organization and also from culture to culture (Palacio, 2010).

Eagly & Karau (2002) propose that two types of prejudice toward female leaders can be identified. Generally, prejudice arises from misconceptions formed by the way people view and define gender roles and characteristics in society. This gender stereotyping causes prejudice towards females and also creates barriers in the career advancement of female managers worldwide. The other reason for prejudice toward female managers is the general belief that female managers do not possess the required leadership skills and qualities compared to male managers. Because of these prejudice towards females, female managers have to exert extra effort when climbing towards the top level positions in an organization.

Johnson (2008) claimed that current male and female leader prototypes are associated with gender in evaluating leaders. He also pointed out that male individuals expect that leaders are more masculine, strong, and oppressive than feminine individuals and also sensitivity was more toughly associated with feminine leadership. According to the researchers, female leaders needed to prove both sensitivity and strength to be considered as effective, on the other hand male leaders only needed to demonstrate strength. This bias creates extra barriers to female leader to become top level managers.

Even when female managers become top level managers in an organization, some of the male subordinates do not like to follow the directions given by the female managers due to various reasons (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Male subordinates do not like to work under the direction of females since most cultures in the world are patriarchal and male dominant, hence the female leader has to put an extra effort to maintain her followers compared to the male leader with same leadership

ability. Because of that, the shareholders and the stakeholders of an organization positioned in this type of cultural background do not like to advance female leaders to the top level positions; this creates a huge gender imbalance in top level positions all around the world. This problem is especially present in African countries since almost all the African cultures are patriarchal and male dominant.

The lack of women in management roles in organizations is also influenced by culture and religion. Most of the studies conducted on the effects of gender on management are done in western cultures (Wen-Chi et al., 2008). Since culture plays a vital role in management styles and human relationship between leaders and followers, it is essential to study gender related management issues in African countries. The popular belief is that the abilities and skills of male and female leaders are different, it is therefore important to understand whether there is a difference between the leadership styles of male and female managers and also to understand whether gender has an effect on the effectiveness of leadership. The findings in this field will be important since the gender balance of managers is changing around the world. This phenomenon can affect the management of organizations, since men's and women's behaviour is different.

On one hand, male managers already in the top level positions in organizations discourage potential female candidates from applying to top level positions. On the other hand, female managers in some organizations face problems in building trust and confidence among male subordinates due to the belief that males possess more leadership qualities compared to women even though the female leader may have more experience, education, exposure and other qualifications. One research found that the leadership styles differed among the sexes for specific tasks and situations. It states that women and men do not differ in their ability to perform operational tasks but rather bring a different perspective to strategic decision making through their increased sensitivity to others (Nielsen & Huse 2010)

Although more women are assuming leadership roles today than before, the notion of a woman as a leader is still foreign to many individuals, male and female alike. Changes in perception are difficult to achieve because the traditional norms of leadership are firmly entrenched. In our society, as in most others, leaders have customarily been males. Globally, women experience specific challenges when aiming for leadership positions and undertaking leadership roles. According to Palacio (2010), the number of women in the top management positions in Nigeria and the world is low. Women in management positions still face a lot of entrance barriers and prejudice according to the literature. Also some researchers claim that current male and female leader prototypes are associated with gender in evaluating leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

The accommodation of different leadership styles is an increasingly important issue for today's organizations. As women become a proportionately larger part of the work force, one of the greatest challenges for organizations will be to assimilate a more diverse labor force into higher level management roles (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). The presence of a so-called "glass ceiling" is said to have inhibited women from advancing to the highest level of management in most organizations. The glass ceiling also affects minorities in organizations. This glass ceiling is an almost invisible barrier that prevents ambitious women from moving up in the organizational hierarchy. Although in the past two decades women have made significant progress into lower and middle management positions, there is still a dearth of women in the most senior management positions. A recent Department of Labor study (Rivers, 1991) reports that the glass ceiling effect is a real one and not just a figment of feminist imagination. It is clear that women have found it more difficult to move up the organizational ladder. But is it a difference in leadership styles that has impeded women's progress?

Equal treatment and opportunity for women is guaranteed by the constitution in many countries. They have equal opportunities and access to free education as male children do; however when it comes to leading positions in the private sector and government sector, only a few female managers can be found. There is the general prejudice according to Eagly & Karau (2002) that women are subservient to men. This stereotyping cause prejudice towards female and also creates barriers in career advancement of female managers worldwide. Another reason for prejudice toward female managers is the belief that female managers do not possess the required leadership skills.

Women are improving their professional opportunities, yet are still responsible for the majority of the chores and care giving duties, also known as the double burden syndrome. This syndrome is particularly experienced in the African and Asian regions, which reflects the responsibility for both work and household. European women are responsible for twice as many household tasks than the men (McKinsey 2007). A major problem relates to women's confidence, in both the beliefs in their own abilities, as well as in the capability of communicating confidence.

Despite the societal mandates used to increase the number of women in leadership positions e.g., various legal measures such as affirmative action, the traditional stereotypes remain. These stereotypes still exert a powerful influence and are at least partially to blame both for women's difficulty in attaining leadership positions and for society's struggle to accept

them. Because women do not fit the stereotypical leader mold, those who want to be leaders usually need to be extremely well qualified, have proven records of accomplishments, and be over prepared for their positions. Once these positions are attained, women are often expected to "behave just like their male counterparts rather than enhancing their roles with the new and varied talents and fresh perspectives they might bring" (Shavlik & Touchton, 1988).

The statistical analyses of western countries reveal that while the numbers of women entering management positions continues to increase, women still remain under-represented in senior executive positions (Davidson and Bruke, 2000). This may be because of the stereotypical masculine behaviours which are still considered important for leadership in an organization. Unfortunately, women do experience a strong gender bias when being evaluated for promotions on both their level of performance as well as their potential impact. Researches within professional groups show that women have to significantly work harder than their male counterpart to be perceived as equally competent as men (Lyness & Heilman, 2006). Moreover, unfortunate assumptions are sometimes made about women's ambitions and abilities.

Catalyst, (2004) shows that there is hardly a difference between senior men and women when aspiring for the highest roles in the company. Furthermore, women struggle with so-called second generation gender biases, which are powerful yet often invisible barriers to women's advancement that arise from cultural beliefs about gender, as well as workplace structures, practices, and patterns of interactions. Women face quite some key challenges, they are not advancing enough to leadership roles and contributing to influential decision-making roles as well as not receiving an equal amount of education, and not employed at equal rates as their male counterparts. As businesswomen, they sometimes face legislative challenges, and often with limited access to capital through laws denying their rights for collateral. They may also be charged higher interest rates because of limited credit histories and are often more challenged to find guarantors/sponsors or have the assets they own recognized as collateral.

The aim of this study is to unravel the effect of gender on leadership style of selected manufacturing firms in Anambra and state, however the specific objectives are:

  i.   To examine the nature and the extent of relationship existing between male and autocratic leadership style.

  ii.  To ascertain the nature and the extent of relationship existing between female and transformational leadership style.

  iii. To verify the nature and the extent of relationship existing between ascribed status and laissez faire leadership style.

The research questions formulated for this study which is structured in line with the objectives are as stated below:

  i.   What is the nature and extent of relationship existing between male and autocratic leadership style?

  ii.  What is the nature and extent of relationship existing between female and transformational leadership style?

  iii. What are the nature and the extent of relationship existing between ascribed gender and laissez faire leadership style?

The hypotheses formulated for the study as aligned to the research questions as follows:

  i.   There is a positive and significant relationship existing between male and autocratic leadership style.

  ii.  There is a positive and significant relationship existing between Female and transformational leadership style.

  iii. There is a positive and significant relationship existing between ascribed gender and laissez faire leadership style.

## 2.   REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

**2.1 Conceptual Framework:**

**2.1.1 Nature and Styles of Leadership:**

Leadership can be defined as the process through which an individual guides and motivates a group towards the achievement of common goals. Research has examined whether or not there are gender difference in leadership, and these differences can be seen from a relationship based or task based perspective. Until recently, leadership positions have predominantly been held by men and they were therefore stereotyped to be more effective leaders. Women were rarely seen in senior leadership positions leading to a lack of data on how they behave in such positions. However, current research has found a change in this trend and women have become more prevalent in the workforce over the past two decades, especially in management and leadership positions. The gender gap is gradually decreasing and these stereotypes are changing as more women enter leadership roles.

A study by Johnson, Murphy, and Zewdie, 2008, showed that feminine individuals expect leaders to be more sensitive than masculine individuals, who expect leaders to be more masculine, strong, and tyrannical than feminine individuals. Also, sensitivity was more strongly associated with female leadership, whereas masculinity, strength, and tyranny were more strongly associated with male leadership. However, for female leaders to be perceived as effective, they needed to demonstrate both sensitivity and strength while male leaders only needed to demonstrate strength.

The concept of leadership, the perception of what a leader is and leadership styles appeared before the industrial revolution. Leading and this perception of leadership was inherited of a traditional male vision because the main leaders of our occidental civilization have always been men. Therefore, the concept of leadership has always been associated with masculine values and to male domination. But this traditional perception has evolved. The paternalistic image of the leader, who controls, transmits knowledge, gives advice, orders tasks to accomplish, rewards and punishes, has gradually eroded. Indeed, nowadays organizations are less compartmentalized, hierarchy has less importance and leaders get closer to their teams. Followers are more autonomous and enlightened thus leaders do not need to have a direct control on individuals anymore. Notion of hierarchy is now obsolete; the male power of the leader "loses his magic". Moreover, new technologies allow the leaders to execute several tasks at the same time, to gain time and to open their job to more cooperative and collaborative projects. Due to this evolution, the way to lead has also changed. Many theories appeared about leadership models. Researchers emphasize different leadership styles corresponding to different manners to lead group according to the circumstances. Nowadays, leaders face more different and difficult situations. One precise leadership style cannot suit all contexts.

The studies also showed men as more goal- and task-oriented and less relationship- and process-focused than women. Nonetheless, studies demonstrating distinct leadership styles between men and women do not represent the final word. Other researchers found limited evidence for significant differences between the behaviors of male and female leaders. In 2011, Anderson and Hanson found differences in decision-making styles, but none linked directly to differences in leadership effectiveness. They found no distinction in types or degree of motivation or in leadership styles overall. Other studies show similar results, challenging the notion that leaders' sex shapes their performance as a leader.

A different view, popularized by James MacGregor Burns, broadly contrasts two styles of leadership: Transactional and Transformational.

**Transactional Leadership**, as its name implies, this leadership style views leadership as based on transactions between leader and followers. The leader sees human relations as a series of transactions. Thus rewards, punishments, reciprocity, exchanges (economic, emotional, physical) and other such "transactions" are the basis of leadership. In simplest terms, I lead this organization by paying you and telling you what you need to do; you respond by doing what you need to do efficiently and well, and the organization will prosper. Transactional leadership pays attention to managing the day- to-day operations of the organization and the exchange of rewards for performance (Durskat, 1992). Roles of employees and task requirements are clarified; followers are rewarded positively and negatively depending on their performance (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2008). Good work will be rewarded and poor performance punished when things go bad (Bass,1990). By using extrinsic motivation this leadership style attempts to increase the productivity of employees (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2008).

**Transformational Leadership** looks at leadership differently. It sees a true leader as one who can instill the values, hopes and needs of followers into a vision, and then encourage and empower followers to pursue that vision. Transformational leaders try to motivate their employees and stimulate them to achieve the goal of the organization (Druskat, 1992). They attempt to make sure that their employees do not look to their self-interests, but give priority to the concern of the whole (Bass, 1990). They engender trust, serve as moral agents, and focus themselves and followers on objectives that transcend the more immediate needs of the group (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2008). Higher levels of intrinsic motivation, trust, commitment, and loyalty from followers are needed when using this leadership style (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2008). The leader has charisma and is aware of the emotions and needs of his employees (Bass, 1990). Therefore the leader must have strong empathic skills (Druskat, 1992). The transformational leader conceives leadership as helping people to create a common vision and then to pursue that vision until it is realized. She elicits that vision from the needs and aspirations of others, gives it form, and sets it up as a goal to strive for. The vision is not hers': it is a shared vision that each person sees as his own.

The concept behind transformational leadership is therefore providing and working towards a vision, but it also has elements of empowerment, of taking care of people, and even of task orientation. The job of the transformational leader is not simply to provide inspiration and then disappear. It is to be there, day after day, convincing people that the vision is reachable, renewing their commitment, priming their enthusiasm. Transformational leaders work harder than anyone else, and, in the words of a philosopher, "keep their eyes on the prize".

**Laissez-Faire Leadership** comes with a leader who has a lack of response to subordinate performance (Hinkin & Schriesheim 2008). In reality it is non-leadership, the leader avoids decisions, hesitates to take action and generally ignores subordinates needs. Hinkin & Schriesheim (2008) state that this way of leading comes with a leader who does not use his or her authority. Laissez-Faire Leadership is often used in flat organizations (Manners, 2008). Bass (1999) concluded that Laissez-Faire Leadership has positive effect on the empowerment of employees. The leader gives followers autonomy with reason and interest in what was delegated (Bass, 1999). Employees get to decide on matters that they know best, this way of leading has positive effect on their empowerment (Bass, 1999). Bass (1999) states that Laissez-Faire Leadership stimulates employees to monitor each others' mistakes. Hinkin & Schriesheim (2008) suggest that Laissez -Faire Leadership may have important independent effects on subordinate outcome variables. The research of Hinkin & Schriesheim (2008) indicates that Laissez -Faire Leadership was related to role -clarity and subordinate - perceived supervisor effectiveness. As mentioned before, Laissez -Faire Leadership is used in flat organizations. Lots of organizations are decreasing the number of management layers to empower those at lower lever in the organization and place decision making where it can be most effective (Manner, 2008). By not having a clear hierarchy, this way of leading stimulates the self-confidence of the employees and the commitment to perform responsibilities of the organization.

### 2.1.2 The Characteristics of Female and Male Leaders and the Glass Ceiling of Gender

The characteristics of the female leaders are as follows:

**Task-focused** – Female leaders tend to be extremely focused on completing a task assigned. Completing day-to-day tasks are necessary to ensure a company is running smoothly from an operational perspective. While a task-focused leadership style helps an organization run properly, employees working for a leader employing this type of leadership style may not understand the context of why the task is important to the organization from a strategic perspective.

**Transformational** – A number of studies have noted that women have a transformational style of leadership. "Transformational leaders establish themselves as role models by gaining followers' trust and confidence, such leaders mentor and empower followers, encourage them to develop their full potential and contribute more effectively to their organizations"(Eagly & Carli, 2007). Transformational leadership is a powerful characteristic to possess because it allows a leader to make necessary changes to a current business model. Without transformational leaders, organizations would not have the capability of re-inventing themselves at necessary junctures.

**Prefer Flat Organizational Structures** – Women tend to prefer leading and creating flat organizational structures that allow for a more collegial atmosphere. This type of leadership style is necessary for creating a new product or service that requires tight integration amongst team members. At the same time, a flat organizational structure does not take into consideration the experience and knowledge associated with a more seasoned manager. There is a chance a key component is overlooked because a lower level employee does not have the experience or knowledge necessary to identify a key step in the process.

**Promote Cooperation and Collaboration** – Female leaders typically promote cooperation and collaboration amongst team members. Cooperation and collaboration is important for managing a large or a geographically dispersed team. On the other hand, if members of the team are unclear of roles and responsibilities, there is a chance for redundant work.

**Indirect Communication –** Oftentimes women indirectly communicate their expectations of a given task and allow more latitude in accomplishing a goal. On the one hand, this can allow a team member to use his/her knowledge and experience to complete a given task. Conversely, this can be a drawback if a team or department requires a leader who needs to have frank conversations with team members.

**Mentoring and Training Others** – Everyone could use a good mentor and training to upgrade their current knowledge, skills, and abilities. Beyond upgrading a skill set, mentoring and training is important for ensuring coverage amongst team members, especially if an associate is out sick or is busy with another assignment. One drawback to this style is a lack of

urgency surrounding the training. Instead of seeing your leader as an authority figure, it is possible leaders may not be able to separate business decisions from personal relationships.

Men, on the other hand, tend to have the following, generalized, characteristics associated with their leadership styles.

**Transactional**– Studies have shown that men exhibit a transactional leadership style in comparison to women. A transactional leadership style is one which sees "job performance as a series of transactions to be rewarded or disciplined. A leader establishes give-and-take relationships that appeal to subordinates' self-interests. Such leaders manage in the conventional manner of clarifying subordinates' responsibilities, rewarding them for meeting objectives, and correcting them for failing to meet objectives" (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

**Prefer Hierarchical Structure** – Men tend to prefer a hierarchical leadership structure because it allows for easier role clarity of roles and delegation of authority. A disadvantage of a hierarchical structure is employees not taking enough initiative to solve a problem, instead, the employee defers to a higher level of senior management to make a decision. This delay in making a decision can prove costly to an organization needing to make rapid decisions and cut costs.

**Focus on Performance** – Focusing on doing one's best is what all organizations strive for. This constant drive to outperform other team members could have a negative impact on firms because resources and knowledge are not being shared across the organization. Instead, fiefdoms become established and entrenched, which could be to the detriment of the firm.

**Direct Communication –** As was mentioned in a transactional leadership definition, a direct communication style is where a leader clarifies subordinate responsibilities and provides precise instruction for what they are looking for, this can also mean having frank discussions about performance – whether it has been good or needs improvement. One downside of a direct communication style can be a team member's unwillingness to listen to the frank assessment of their performance.

**Like to create competition** – A little competition amongst team members or departments is a good thing for an organization. Various well-known leaders, like Steve Jobs have been known to set up competitions amongst divisions or departments with good results ensuing. One drawback is creating an overly competitive company culture where sources or ideas are not shared across your organization. An organization faces enough pressure from outside competitors; it makes little sense to create another strain on staff by creating an overly competitive company culture.

This concept illustrates how gender leadership issues manifest themselves within organizations. Indeed, the glass ceiling shows the under-representation of women at top executive positions. This metaphor of the glass ceiling is a reference frame to put stress on barriers that prevent women from ascending to leading positions. Nowadays, even if women occupy more and more top-executive positions, they still remain under-represented. Authors such as Meyerson, Fletcher, Morrisson and White strive to explain the phenomenon and its reasons. The literature devoted to this concept always introduces statistics to show the under representation of women at top-executive positions. To describe the phenomenon, Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) qualified the under-representation of "*gender inequity*" within the corporate sphere of organizations. They talk about a systematic "*disadvantage which blocks women from career advancement*", even if women have the same abilities as men.

Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) laid the blame on a dominant male executive culture "*made by and for men*". According to them, organizational practices reflect male norms. They are also more adapted to the male gender role which allows a flexible availability and a complete devotion to the job. Morrison and White (2002) went through three levels of pressures to explain how women's career advancement is restrained: the job, their pioneer role in the job and their family sphere. First, regarding pressures applied by the job, men face the same kind of stress and tensions which are for instance objectives to reach or tasks to accomplish. The second pressure lies in being a female Chief Executive Officer. Indeed, referring to the study of Kanter (2007) on "*tokenism*", Morrisson and White put stress on the fact that women are a minority within the executive sphere. Finally, they show that a third pressure is linked to the family and the private spheres. "Women are still expected to take major responsibility for maintaining a household, raising children, even nurturing an intimate relationship." Through the concept of male organizational model, we can partly understand why women still face difficulties to evolve within organizations. The concept of leadership appeared with the first organizations which were led by male exclusively. Thus, the concepts of leader and top-executive positions are based on male values.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.2.1: The Great Man Theory:

The Great Man theory evolved around the mid 19th century. Even though no one was able to identify with any scientific certainty, which human characteristic or combination of, were responsible for identifying great leaders. Everyone recognized that just as the name suggests; only a man could have the characteristic(s) of a great leader. The Great Man theory assumes that the traits of leadership are intrinsic. This simply means that great leaders are born not made.  This theory sees great leaders as those who are destined by birth to become a leader. Furthermore, the belief was that great leaders will rise when confronted with the appropriate situation. The theory was popularized by Thomas Carlyle, a writer and teacher. Just like him, the Great Man theory was inspired by the study of influential heroes. In his book "On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History", he compared a wide array of heroes. For example, a scholarly follower of the Great Man theory would be likely to study the Second World War by focusing on the big personalities of the conflict – Sir Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, Charles de Gaulle, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, etc and view all of the historical events as being tied directly to their own individual decisions and orders.

### 2.2.2 Trait Theory

This theory postulates that people are either born or not born with the qualities that predispose them to success in leadership roles.  That is, that certain inherited qualities, such as personality and cognitive ability, are what underlie effective leadership.  There have been hundreds of studies to determine the most important leadership traits, and while there is always going to be some disagreement, Intelligence, sociability, and drive (a.k.a determination) are consistently cited as key qualities. Trait theories often identify particular personality or behavioural characteristics that are shared by leaders. Many have begun to ask of this theory, however, if particular traits are key features of leaders and leadership, how do we explain people who possess those qualities but are not leaders? Inconsistencies in the relationship between leadership traits and leadership effectiveness eventually led scholars to shift paradigms in search of new explanations for effective leadership. Trait theory suggests that the characteristics or the personality of a person may make them an effective leader. Several academics believe that potential leaders can be spotted by studying the personality traits of the individual and matching them to the characteristics of actual leaders. Trait theory was almost abandoned by leadership practitioners as leadership research evolved, but in the past few years, there has been a renewed interest and more research related to the Trait Theory.

### 2.2.3 Behavioural Theory:

In contrast to the trait leadership theory, the behavioural theory is offering a new perspective, one that focuses on the behaviours of the leaders as opposed to their mental, physical or social characteristics. Thus, with the evolutions in psychometrics, notably the factor analysis, researchers were able to measure the cause and effects relationship of specific human behaviours from leaders. From this point forward anyone with the right conditioning could have access to the once before elite club of naturally gifted leaders. In other words, leaders are made not born. Behavior theory focuses on what an effective leader does. Leadership is not something you are born with, nor do you need a set of commonly accepted traits. However, effective leadership is dependent on the right behavior. Researchers proposed that for a leader to be effective, their behavior must vary with the situation. In other words, you can learn how to act like a leader. Behavior theory is based on categories of behavior and leadership types. The myth in this thinking is that outward behavior is enough to establish leadership. In the 1970s, research found most of the Behavior theory research to be invalid (Howell and Costley, 2001; Yaverbaum and Sherman, 2008); however, leadership behavior is still frequently discussed.

### 2.3.4 Contingency Theory:

Contingency theory of leadership focuses on particular variables related to the environment that might determine which style of leadership is best suited for a particular work situation. According to this theory, no single leadership style is appropriate in all situations. Success depends upon a number of variables, including leadership style, qualities of followers and situational features (Charry, 2012). A contingency factor is thus any condition in any relevant environment to be considered when designing an organization or one of its elements (Naylor, 2009). Contingency theory states that effective leadership depends on the degree of fit between a leader's qualities and leadership style and that demanded by a specific situation (Lamb, 2013). It is generally accepted within the contingency theory that leaders are more likely to express their leadership when they feel that their followers will be responsive.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

The empirical survey method was adopted for this study. Primary and secondary sources of data relevant for this study were utilized. The population of the study consists of employees of the selected manufacturing firms in Anambra state under study. Random sampling method was adopted for the study. Also data were sourced, sorted and analyzed to suit the objectives of the study from several published journals, reviews, serials, published and unpublished articles, theses, questionnaires and from the internet.

Questionnaire in particular was analyzed in SPSS 20.0 using frequencies and descriptive statistics. 95% confidence level was adopted and tested at 5% significance level with their respective degrees of freedom which enabled the researcher to compare the calculated value with the table value, where the critical or table value served as our bench mark for accepting or rejecting the null hypotheses.

## 4. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES

This segment presents and analyzes selected descriptive, correlation and regression statistics in respect of the variables in the study. Thus both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analyses were employed in analyzing the data gathered through questionnaire using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 20.0). The parametric test instruments were bivariate (correlation) to test the hypotheses advanced in the study.

In presenting and analyzing the data, the scale and decision rule stated below applied: Scale: Strongly Agree (SA) 5, Agree (A) 4, Undecided (U) 3, Strongly Disagree (SD) 2, and Disagree (D) 1. A total number of one hundred and seventy (170) copies of questionnaire were administered by the researcher with the assistance of two trained research assistants. Out of the one hundred and seventy questionnaires sent out, one hundred and fifty five (155) were duly completed and returned giving a response rate of 91% and fifteen (15) were not returned, giving a non response rate of 9%.

### 4.1 Objective

To examine the nature and extent of relationship existing between male and autocratic leadership style. In the objective one, three item questions were designed to examine that particular objective.

**Table 4.1: Gender is closely linked to leadership styles**

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Agree    | 15        | 10.0    | 10.0          | 10.0               |
|       | Agree             | 19        | 11.9    | 11.9          | 21.9               |
|       | Undecided         | 32        | 20.3    | 20.3          | 42.2               |
|       | Disagree          | 70        | 45.5    | 45.5          | 87.7               |
|       | Strongly Disagree | 19        | 12.3    | 12.3          | 100.0              |
|       | Total             | 155       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

*SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2017*

The above table reveals that 10% of the respondents strongly agreed that gender is closely linked to leadership styles, 12% respondents agreed with the notion, 20% were undecided, 45% disagreed while 12% strongly disagreed.

**Table 4.2: Males are more competitive in leadership styles than females**

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Strongly Agree    | 44        | 28.4    | 28.4          | 28.4               |
|       | Agree             | 20        | 13.2    | 13.2          | 41.6               |
|       | Undecided         | 6         | 3.5     | 3.5           | 45.1               |
|       | Disagree          | 40        | 25.5    | 25.5          | 70.6               |
|       | Strongly Disagree | 45        | 29.4    | 29.4          | 100.0              |
|       | Total             | 155       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

*SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2017*

The above table reveals that 28% of the respondents strongly agreed that males are more competitive in leadership styles than females, 13% respondents agreed with the position, 4% were undecided and 25% disagreed while 30% strongly disagreed.

**4.3: Gender creates a significant difference in the type of Manager's leadership style**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 54 | 34.5 | 34.5 | 34.5 |
| | Agree | 14 | 9.4 | 9.4 | 43.9 |
| | Undecided | 3 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 45.8 |
| | Disagree | 31 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 65.5 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 53 | 34.5 | 34.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 155 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2017*

The table above shows that 34% of the respondents strongly agreed that gender creates a significant difference in the type of manager's leadership style, 9% respondents agreed, 2% were undecided and 20% disagreed while 35% strongly disagreed.

**Table 4.4: Females are democratic in leadership style**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 47 | 30.6 | 30.6 | 30.6 |
| | Agree | 33 | 21.3 | 21.3 | 51.9 |
| | Undecided | 10 | 6.1 | 6.1 | 58.0 |
| | Disagree | 20 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 71.2 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 45 | 28.8 | 28.8 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 155 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2017*

The table above reveals that 30% of the respondents strongly agreed that females are democratic in leadership style, 21% respondents agreed with the position, 6% were undecided and 13% disagreed while 29% strongly disagreed.

**Table 4.5: Female leaders exhibit cooperativeness and concern for people in their leaderships style**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 70 | 44.8 | 44.8 | 44.8 |
| | Agree | 16 | 10.6 | 10.6 | 55.4 |
| | Undecided | 4 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 58.0 |
| | Disagree | 31 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 77.7 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 34 | 22.3 | 22.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 155 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2017*

The table above reveals that 45% of the respondents strongly agreed that female leaders exhibit cooperativeness and concern for people in their leadership style, 10% respondents agreed with the position, 3% were undecided, 20% disagreed while 22% strongly disagreed.

**Table 4.6: Female leaders motivate and inspire employees in the workplace**

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 61 | 39.4 | 39.4 | 39.4 |
|  | Agree | 35 | 22.9 | 22.9 | 62.3 |
|  | Undecided | 2 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 63.3 |
|  | Disagree | 30 | 19.6 | 19.6 | 82.9 |
|  | Strongly Disagree | 27 | 17.1 | 17.1 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 155 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

*SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2017*

The above table reveals that 39% of the respondents strongly agreed that female leaders motivate and inspires employees in the workplace; 23% respondents agreed with that position, 1% was undecided 20% disagreed while 17% strongly disagreed.

**Table 4.7: Ascribed role/leadership leads to low productivity**

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 20 | 12.6 | 12.6 | 12.6 |
|  | Agree | 35 | 21.9 | 21.9 | 34.5 |
|  | Undecided | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 34.5 |
|  | Disagree | 52 | 33.9 | 33.9 | 68.4 |
|  | Strongly Disagree | 48 | 31.6 | 31.6 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 155 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

*SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2017*

The table above reveals that 13% of the respondents strongly agreed that Ascribed role/leadership leads to low productivity; 21% respondents agreed, none was undecided 34% disagreed and 32% strongly disagreed.

**Table 4.8: Ascribed role/leadership allows workers make independent decision**

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 56 | 35.9 | 35.9 | 35.9 |
|  | Agree | 39 | 24.8 | 24.8 | 60.7 |
|  | Undecided | 5 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 63.9 |
|  | Disagree | 35 | 22.9 | 22.9 | 86.8 |
|  | Strongly Disagree | 20 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 155 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

*SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2017*

The above table reveals that 36% of the respondents strongly agreed that ascribed role/leadership allows workers make independent decision, 25% respondents agreed with them. 3% were undecided, 22% disagreed while 13% strongly disagreed.

**Table 4.9: Ascribed role/leadership thrives where group members are highly skilled and motivated**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Strongly Agree | 61 | 39.4 | 39.4 | 39.4 |
| | Agree | 35 | 22.9 | 22.9 | 62.3 |
| | Undecided | 2 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 63.3 |
| | Disagree | 30 | 19.6 | 19.6 | 82.9 |
| | Strongly Disagree | 27 | 17.1 | 17.1 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 155 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

*SOURCE: FIELD SURVEY, 2017*

The above table shows that 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that ascribed role/leadership thrives where group members are highly skilled and motivated, 23% respondents agreed with the position, 1% was undecided,19% disagreed with the notion while 17% strongly disagreed.

### 4.2 TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Three hypotheses were formulated and tested as follows:

**Hypothesis One**

$H_0$: There is a negative relationship existing between male and autocratic leadership style

$H_a$: There is a positive and significant relationship existing between male and autocratic leadership style.

**Table 4.10: Correlations**

| | | Male Gender | Autocratic Leadership Style |
|---|---|---|---|
| Male Gender | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .918** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .077 |
| | N | 155 | 155 |
| Autocratic Leadership Style | Pearson Correlation | .918** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .077 | |
| | N | 155 | 155 |

**.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Hypothesis Two**

$H_0$: There is a negative relationship existing between Female and transformational leadership style

$H_a$: There is a positive and significant relationship existing between Female and transformational leadership style.

**Table 4.11: Correlations**

| | | Female Gender | Transformational Leadership Style |
|---|---|---|---|
| Female Gender | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .868** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .061 |
| | N | 155 | 155 |
| Transformational Leadership Style | Pearson Correlation | .868** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .061 | |
| | N | 155 | 155 |

**.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Hypothesis Three**

$H_o$: There is a negative relationship existing between ascribed gender and laissez faire leadership style

$H_a$: There is a positive and significant relationship existing between ascribed gender and laissez faire leadership style.

**Table 4.12: Correlations**

|  |  | Ascribed Gender | Laissez Faire Leadership Style |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ascribed Gender | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .721** |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .081 |
|  | N | 155 | 155 |
| Laissez Faire Leadership Style | Pearson Correlation | .721** | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | .081 |  |
|  | N | 155 | 155 |

\*\*.Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**4.3 Results**

1. Having analyzed the data from the questionnaire using correlation analysis to examine if there is a positive and significant relationship existing between male and autocratic leadership style. The **Tables 4.1.10** revealed that the correlation result shows the existence of significant result on the variables (r\*\*calc = .0918> at p< 0.05). The significant level was found to be 0.077, and due to this we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate one which states that *there is a positive and significant relationship existing between male and autocratic leadership style*.

2. Data for the test of this hypothesis two were obtained from responses from the questionnaire. Correlation analysis was used to test the significant relationship between Female and transformational leadership. **Table 4.1.11** reveals that while the r calculated result shows the existence of significant result on the variables (r = 0.868 at p< 0.05). The significant level is 0.061, and due to this we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate one which states that there is a *significant positive relationship between Female and transformational leadership*

3. Data for the test of this hypothesis two were obtained from responses from the questionnaire. Correlation analysis was used to test the significant relationship between ascribed gender and laissez faire leadership style. **Table 4.1.12** reveals that while the r calculated result shows the existence of significant result on the variables (r = 0.721 at p< 0.05). The significant level is 0.081, and due to this we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate one which states that there is a *significant positive relationship between ascribed gender and laissez faire leadership style*

**4.4. Discussion**

As recent as 2011, Andersen and Hansson conducted a study to determine if there were significant differences in leadership behaviors as claimed by previous studies and authors. They studied public managers on leadership styles, decision-making styles, and motivation profiles and found that the only differences were in decision-making styles, but none were great enough to be considered significant.

Additionally, in a 2010 study, men and women leaders in a large German sample were found to be the same with respect to transformational leadership behavior. Cliff (2005) studied male and female business owners, who are free to manage as they see fit, as opposed to middle managers who are more constrained, and found that no significant differences exist in men and women's leadership behavior. According to the researchers, the findings "challenge the gender-stereotypic argument that a leader's sex plays an important role when it comes to organizational design and management."

Another similar study Dobbins and Platz (1996) found that even men and women show equal amounts of relationship orientation and task orientation and have equally satisfied subordinates. Even though male leaders are rated as more effective than female leaders, these findings are based on laboratory research and may not hold in organizational settings. These studies correlate with other research cited by Vecchio (2002), Dobbins and Platt (1986), Gibson (1995), and Van Engen et al. (2001), who all argue that no significant gender differences in leadership exist.

## 5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the summary of the major findings:

i. There is a positive and significant relationship existing between male and autocratic leadership style ($r^{**}$calc = .0918> at $p < 0.05$).

ii. There is a significant positive relationship between Female and transformational leadership ($r = 0.868 >$ r-tab, 0.061 at $p < 0.05$).

iii. There is a significant positive relationship between ascribed gender and laissez faire leadership style ($r = 0.8721 >$ r-tab, 0.081 at $p < 0.05$).

Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that gender affect positively on leadership style in selected manufacturing and this is shown in the level of transformational and autocratic styles used by selected organizations.

Both men and women should feel free to adopt leadership strategies that will help them succeed. The recognition of a diversity of leadership styles will allow potential leaders to lead in ways that will draw upon their individual strengths. The restructured workplace will provide a setting for a variety of leadership styles to flourish, and, as a result, it will gain in strength and flexibility. Clearly we are in a period of transition in regard to our thinking about gender differences in leadership styles. The cultural factors supporting differences in leader behavior are in a period of flux. It seems likely that as more women assume leadership roles and as sex role stereotypes fade away, the very notion of gender differences in leadership style will also disappear. We will recognize that different leaders have different styles, but we will not automatically associate one style with women and another with men. Males and females alike will be challenged to develop the type of leadership skills that will be needed to lead the organizations of tomorrow.

Based on the findings and conclusion, these recommendations are made;

• Male gender has been found to be very useful in ensuring autocratic leadership. Hence, male should be positioned to organizational areas where subordinates are likely to be unproductive and lackadaisical so as to promote increased productivity and to ensure positive behaviour and attitudes necessary for realization of organizational desired goals/objectives.

• Since Female gender managers is seen as a useful means of fostering transformational style of leadership, organizations should invest in the right type of female workers to engage as well put them in managerial position where diagnosis and problem solving and interpersonal skills are needed as this enhances employee output as well as competencies and skills that helps to promote creativity and productivity.

• Organizations should as much as possible focus on their employees as part of their operations and programmes, as such approach positively affects the service quality perceptions, employee satisfaction and loyalty as well as ensures organizational sustainability, longevity, continuity, viability and overall development.

• It is also recommended that studies on this burning issue be carried out on a wider scale too ensure increased reliability of results obtained and thus benefit more organizations.

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