

Exploring The Impact of Leadership Styles on Human Resource Practices in the Nigerian Manufacturing Industry

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<p><i>This study examined leadership styles and Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, using Indomie Manufacturing Company as a case study. The objective was to assess how different leadership styles such as transformational and autocratic impact HRM practices. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study involved a sample size of 222 staff selected through convenience sampling. Data was collected using structured questionnaires designed to capture employee perceptions and experiences related to leadership styles and HRM practices. The data was analysed using multiple regression analysis to determine the statistical significance and strength of the relationship between the variables. The findings revealed that transformational leadership had insignificant impact on HRM practices while autocratic leadership style had insignificant impact on HRM practices. The study concluded that leadership styles play a crucial role in shaping the effectiveness of HRM functions within an organisation while there is need for further improvement in the transformational and autocratic leadership. It recommended that organisations, particularly in the manufacturing sector, adopt more participative leadership approaches to enhance employee engagement, improve performance management, and support organisational growth. Managers should be trained to apply flexible leadership styles that align with situational demands and workforce diversity.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Autocratic Leadership, Organisational performance, Transformational Leadership.</p>
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1.0 Introduction

Organisational success, employee performance, and proper use of human capital all depend to great extent on Human Resource Management (HRM) policies. Performance management, employee relations, compensation and benefits, training and development, recruitment and selection of all parts of Human Resource Management (HRM) (Bao et al., 2021). The ideas aim to improve employee contentment and organisation efficiency as well as maximize workforce performance (Anwar & Mahmoud, 2021). Effective human resource management techniques help companies with better job performance, competitive edge in their industries, and increased staff retention. Advanced technology and globalisation are changing the corporate environment; therefore, businesses need strategic

human resources management policies to draw, grow, and maintain top talent (Al-Aina & Atan, 2020). The effectiveness of human resource management techniques, though, is not entirely reliant on policies and procedures; it is also affected by leadership styles in a company.

Leadership styles weigh heavily on human resource policies by defining organisational culture, decision-making processes, and staff engagement level. One's capacity to direct and inspire others to meet company objectives is called leadership (Akpapere et al., 2019). How leadership styles shape the working environment and staff interactions usually determine the success of human resource management initiatives. Leaders set the tactical

basis for personnel administration operations and decide on policy applications to promote organisational commitment and staff engagement (Rameshkumar, 2020). Every leadership style such as transformational, transactional, autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire has different effects on human resource management policies.

For example, transformational leadership stresses employee creativity, motivation, and growth. This style of leadership coincides with human resource management approaches that prioritize training, talent management, and performance improvement (Moustaghfir et al., 2020). Akdere and Egan (2020) asserted that transformational leaders motivate staff members to surpass their fundamental job responsibilities, thereby creating a culture of lifelong learning and career growth. By contrast, transactional leadership is defined by organisation, incentives, and coercion, thereby matching human resource management methods that stress performance-based rewards and top-down decision making (Keßels, 2022). Setting clear goals and compensating workers according to their performance helps transactional managers maintain efficiency and stability. Autocratic leadership, on the other hand, might impair Human Resource Management (HRM) initiatives meant to promote creativity and employee engagement (Al Balushi et al., 2024) by its centralized decision-making and strict control. Autocratic environments can make people feel constrained in their roles, which lowers job satisfaction and stifles creativity.

Important in establishing the effectiveness of a company and staff satisfaction is the link between leadership styles and Human Resource Management (HRM) techniques. Studies have found that leadership actions affect employee attitudes of fairness, motivation, and dedication (Ugaddan & Park, 2019). Organisations have more engagement and productivity if leadership styles match Human Resource Management (HRM) approaches encouraging employee well-being. Transformational and democratic leadership styles, for example, have been associated with increased job satisfaction and staff retention because of their emphasis on support and engagement (Cerutti et al., 2020). On the other side, authoritarian leadership styles as with rigid leadership could result in high turnover rates and employee discontent since there are few chances for career advancement and independence.

Understanding the interaction between leadership styles and Human Resource Management (HRM) policies is absolutely crucial in light of the increasing need for companies to adjust to changing commercial surrounds. How well companies can manage talent, raise productivity, and maintain competitive edge depends on how well leaders can properly execute Human Resource Management (HRM) policies. Organisations need to

evaluate to what degree leadership styles affect Human Resource Management (HRM) operations to guarantee that rules are carried out in a way that promotes employee engagement and corporate goals. Finally, leaders have to be instructed to use leadership styles supporting the efficiency of Human Resource Management (HRM) so as to establish a corporate culture that values performance and staff well-being. This study aims at examining how various leadership styles influence Human Resource Management (HRM) policies.

Leadership styles are central to the effective functioning of organisations, particularly in their influence on Human Resource Management (HRM) practices. Scholars such as Fidyah and Setiawati (2020) have emphasized the critical role leadership plays in shaping policies that govern employee recruitment, retention, training, performance management, and workplace motivation. However, despite the well-documented significance of leadership, the specific effects of different leadership styles on Human Resource Management practices remain underexplored within certain organisational contexts such as particularly in multinational corporations operating in complex and competitive environments such as Indomie Manufacturing Company.

Indomie Manufacturing Company is a leading entity in the Nigerian food industry, yet it operates in a high-pressure market that demands innovation, efficiency, and continuous workforce development. It is imperative to understand whether the leadership styles employed by the company are aligned with ideal Human Resource Management (HRM) practices that promote employee satisfaction, engagement, and organisational loyalty. Research indicates that transformational leadership fosters innovation, employee empowerment, and organisational commitment (Mahmood et al., 2019), while transactional leadership, with its emphasis on structure, supervision, and rewards, may limit creativity and adaptability (Xu & Wang, 2019). However, it remains unclear which leadership style is most prevalent within Indomie Manufacturing Company and how it influences Human Resource Management (HRM) outcomes.

The persistence of challenges such as high staff turnover, low employee morale, and reduced productivity in similar organisational settings further raises concerns about the possible misalignment between leadership behavior and Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies. Noor and Ampornstira (2019) suggest that such misalignments can undermine long-term business sustainability and weaken competitive advantage. Yet, there is a notable gap in empirical studies specifically investigating how leadership styles impact Human Resource Management (HRM) practices at Indomie Manufacturing Company

(Oyedele, 2019).

Given the strategic importance of effective leadership in guiding Human Resource Management (HRM) functions, the lack of data-driven evidence in this area limits managerial understanding and policy formulation. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of leadership styles (transformational and autocratic) on Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in Indomie Manufacturing Company, identify existing leadership behaviors, evaluate their alignment with Human Resource Management (HRM) objectives, and propose strategic recommendations to enhance employee performance, retention, and organisational success.

1.2 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study is to examine leadership styles and human resource management (HRM) practices in Indomie Manufacturing Company. However, the specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the effect of transformational leadership on Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in Indomie Manufacturing Company.
- ii. investigate the effect of autocratic leadership on Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in Indomie Manufacturing Company.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₀₁: Transformational leadership has no significant effect on Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in Nestle Nigeria plc.

H₀₂: Autocratic leadership has no significant effect on Human Resource Management (HRM) practices in Nestle Nigeria plc.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

Human Resource Management (HRM)

Human Resource Management (HRM) is a structured and strategic approach to managing an organisation's workforce to enhance productivity, employee satisfaction, and organisational accomplishments. It covers essential elements of employee relations, performance management, compensation and benefits, training and development, selection and recruitment, and employee relations (Bao et al., 2021). HRM is vital as it helps to align human capital with corporate goals and see to it that staff are correctly driven, motivated, and developed. In a fast-changing corporate context, modern HRM techniques stress talent management, staff engagement, and workplace diversity to

improve organisational performance (Radha & Aithal, 2024).

Recruiting and selection, whereby businesses draw in and employ the most qualified candidates according to job requirements, is one of HRM's fundamental operations. Good recruitment approaches enable companies to lower turnover, increase productivity, and create talented staff. An organized selection process guarantees the recruitment of the top talents, hence raising general business efficiency (Hongal & Kinange, 2020). Training and development also help to guarantee that staff constantly improve their knowledge and abilities to fit enterprise objectives; they are therefore vital elements of HRM. Fostering creativity, performance, and job satisfaction help businesses that support ongoing employee training to go beyond their competition (Mustafa & Lleshi, 2024).

Performance management setting performance goals, assessing employee output, and offering positive feedback also falls under HRM. Organisations can spot top-performing people and carry out plans for career advancement, promotions, and succession planning with the help of performance appraisals (Opoku et al., 2024). HRM also secures fair pay and recognition, including benefits, bonuses, perks, and salaries. According to Mabaso and Dlamini (2021), a competitive pay plan raises employee morale, raises job satisfaction, and lowers turnover rates.

Beyond these roles, HRM is very important in workplace culture and employee relations. HRM produces a friendly workplace encouraging teamwork and respect by guaranteeing adherence straight employment guidelines and legal legislation. Elufioye et al. (2024) asserted that effective HR policies support workplace diversity, employee well-being, and conflict resolution, thereby raising employee satisfaction and organisational performance. HRM is a major driver of business success, workforce building, and long-term organisational sustainability in the constantly changing corporate environment of today since it is not just about administrative functions.

2.1.2 Leadership Styles

Leadership style is the method and tactics managers employ to direct, inspire, and control their subordinates. The choice of liberality style affects company performance, staff morale, and workplace efficiency (Patmawati et al., 2024). An efficient leader realizes that varied circumstances call for different leadership approaches, so adaptability becomes a key quality. Different leadership styles have distinct qualities that affect team dynamics, communication, and decision-making.

Among these, transformational leadership is widely

regarded as one of the most effective styles. By encouraging creativity, supporting a common vision, and supporting personal development, transformational leaders motivate and encourage team members (Abdul-Azeez et al., 2024). Their emphasis on cultivating good relationships with staff strengthens their long-term growth and raises organisational goal commitment. Nonetheless, in some organized settings where discipline and efficiency are important, a stricter leadership approach may be required (Cai, 2023).

Such cases call for transactional leadership because it is grounded on distinct structures, regulations, and performance-based consequences and incentives (Agrawal & Dhamija, 2024). Transactional leadership guarantees respect and effectiveness by keeping close adherence to rules, not vision and creativity as transformational leadership stresses. Though this strategy helps to keep order, it could stifle creativity and staff engagement. On the other hand, autocratic leadership characterized by top-down decision-making exacerbates staff estrangement. Unilateral decisions by autocratic leaders sometimes result in fast task execution but at the expense of stifling staff satisfaction and input (Hadnot-Harris, 2021).

Leadership stresses ethical leadership as well as employee well-being. By giving prominence to their staff's needs, servant leaders help to create a trusting and encouraging work atmosphere (Rahal & Farmanesh, 2022). Organisations that prize employee growth, social responsibility, and long-term sustainability find this leadership style quite powerful.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a leadership approach that seeks to inspire and empower followers by aligning their individual goals with the strategic vision of the organisation. This leadership style emphasizes the importance of motivation, intellectual stimulation, and personal attention, enabling employees to exceed expectations and contribute innovatively to organisational success (Alrowwad et al., 2020). Transformational leaders do not merely manage tasks; they strive to change organisational culture by encouraging staff development, creativity, and commitment to shared values.

This leadership style consists of four essential components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Leaders with idealized influence act as ethical role models; those who provide inspirational motivation create a compelling vision; intellectual stimulation fosters problem-solving and innovation; while individualized consideration involves mentoring and addressing employee needs (Afshari & Gibson, 2020). These traits significantly shape Human

Resource Management (HRM) practices by fostering an environment of trust, collaboration, and growth.

Recent studies have confirmed the positive impact of transformational leadership on HRM outcomes such as employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention. For instance, Alrowwad et al. (2020) found that transformational leadership has a direct influence on strategic HRM practices that improve organisational performance. Similarly, research by Abdulrahman and Qureshi (2021) showed that transformational leaders significantly boost employee motivation and commitment, essential components of HRM success. In the context of companies like Nestlé Nigeria Plc, where talent management and innovation are critical, transformational leadership can enhance staff development, drive performance, and support long-term sustainability. As organisations navigate complex markets, adopting transformational leadership becomes indispensable for aligning HRM strategies with corporate goals.

Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leadership is a leadership style characterized by centralized decision-making, in which the leader holds absolute authority and control over all aspects of operations and does not typically seek input or feedback from subordinates. This leadership approach places emphasis on obedience, discipline, and order, with leaders expecting strict compliance with directives (Prasetyo et al., 2020). In autocratic settings, decisions are made quickly and unilaterally, which can be effective in crisis situations or when tasks require high precision. However, it may hinder creativity, reduce employee morale, and limit participation in the decision-making process.

In relation to Human Resource Management (HRM) practices, autocratic leadership often results in rigid structures where top-down communication dominates, and employee input is rarely considered in policy development or performance management systems (Waworuntu et al., 2022). HRM activities such as recruitment, training, and employee relations may reflect the authoritative tone set by the leadership. Employees under autocratic leaders may experience high levels of stress, reduced motivation, and a lack of ownership in their roles due to limited autonomy and feedback mechanisms. These conditions can lead to high staff turnover and decreased job satisfaction.

Recent empirical research has highlighted both the strengths and limitations of autocratic leadership in modern organisational settings. According to Dikko et al. (2021), while autocratic leadership may be suitable for highly structured environments with routine tasks, it is generally less effective in dynamic and innovative sectors like manufacturing. In the context of firms such as Nestlé

Nigeria Plc, where collaboration, innovation, and employee development are essential for competitive advantage, reliance on autocratic leadership may stifle creativity and impede HRM effectiveness. Therefore, while autocratic leadership may offer short-term gains in control and efficiency, its long-term application requires careful balance to avoid adverse effects on organisational culture and employee engagement.

2.2 Theoretical Justification

Contingency Theory

Contingency theory as one of the theories in leadership was developed by Fielder in mid-1960 but published in 1967. It examines leaders in conjunction with the situation the leader is in. It is contingent upon a match between the leader's style and the work situation. This is the theory on leadership which provides that the effectiveness of leadership is determined by the existing relationship between personal characteristics of a leader and the aspects of the situation. The assumption of the theory is that the relationship between leadership style and organisational outcomes is moderated by situational factors. These factors identified are those related to the environment. Thus, as per the views from this theory, the outcomes of an organisation cannot be determined by leadership style but rather, the existing situation (Cheng & Liu, 2021).

The theory further entails that effectiveness of leadership requires leaders to adopt certain leadership style which matches with the existing situational analysis. Situational leadership theory argues that any leader can work best in any environment by changing their style accordingly. The theory is related to the study to be undertaken as it shows how leadership style can have an influence on the performance of employees. Organisational outcomes are contributed by employees working in such organisation. This means that the extent to which leadership style influence the performance of employees depends on the existing situation. The environments in which a leader exists have influence on leadership style which has selected. This in turn leads to effects on the performance of employees who in turn affects the overall performance of an organisation.

Empirical Review

Transformational Leadership and Human Resource Management Practices

Bello and Ologbenla (2022) investigated human resource management practices and organisational citizenship behaviour in wire and cable industry in south-western Nigeria. The study relied on primary data which was generated through the administration of a structured questionnaire. The study population (1,200) comprised all

the employees of the seven wire and cable manufacturing companies in South-western Nigeria. Using Yamane's formula, a total sample size of 570 employees were purposively selected on the bases of the location of the companies. Data collected were analyzed using percentage, correlation analysis and multiple regression. The results further showed that the HRM practices had significant and positive relationship with sportsmanship ($t = 2.311$, $p < 0.05$); altruism ($t = 4.201$, $p < 0.05$); and courtesy ($r = 2.067$, $p < 0.05$); in the wire and cable industry.

Hai et al. (2020) examined the impact of transformational leadership on HRM practices, emphasizing employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction. Using structured questionnaires, data were collected from 250 employees across multiple industries in the Middle East. The findings showed that transformational leaders who demonstrate intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration improve HRM outcomes such as performance appraisals, training effectiveness, and employee development. This leadership style fostered a supportive environment, increasing employee satisfaction and commitment to organisational goals.

Obedgiu et al. (2022) investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and talent management within Chinese multinational corporations. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, they surveyed 300 employees and conducted interviews with 30 HR managers. The study revealed that transformational leaders facilitate continuous learning and career development, thereby enhancing HRM practices like employee retention and professional growth. Leaders who provided individualized support were instrumental in aligning HRM strategies with organisational objectives, strengthening workforce capability and competitiveness.

AlAbri and Alam (2021) explored how transformational leadership influences strategic HRM practices in Ghanaian public sector organisations. Employing a survey method, data were collected from 200 public employees across various government institutions. The results indicated that transformational behaviors, including vision articulation and intellectual stimulation, positively affect succession planning, performance management, and employee participation. The study highlighted that leadership development programs are essential for equipping public sector leaders with skills to strengthen HRM effectiveness.

Chung and Li (2021) assessed the role of transformational leadership in driving HRM innovation within South Korean firms. They conducted an online survey, gathering responses from 280 employees across multiple industries. The findings demonstrated that leaders who empower employees and stimulate intellectual growth enable the adoption of flexible HRM practices such as competency-

based recruitment, remote work policies, and employee empowerment. Their study emphasized that transformational leadership supports HR adaptability in dynamic business environments.

Tian et al. (2020) examined transformational leadership's effect on employee development and retention in Pakistan's healthcare sector. Using structured questionnaires, they collected data from 220 healthcare professionals across hospitals. The study found that supportive transformational leaders foster career development opportunities, consistent recognition, and supervisory support, which collectively reduce turnover and enhance HRM effectiveness. These leadership practices contributed significantly to staff well-being and stability, particularly in high-pressure healthcare environments.

Autocratic Leadership and Human Resource Management Practices

Rojak and Munir (2023) investigated the influence of autocratic leadership on HRM practices in U.S. manufacturing firms. Using structured questionnaires, data were collected from 250 employees across various manufacturing companies. The study revealed that autocratic leadership, characterized by centralized decision-making and limited employee input, negatively impacted HRM practices such as employee engagement, job satisfaction, and performance management. Employees under autocratic leaders reported feeling less motivated and more disengaged, leading to higher turnover rates and reduced organisational commitment.

Kumar and Siddiqui (2021) examined how autocratic leadership affects HRM practices in Chinese state-owned enterprises. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, they surveyed 300 employees and conducted interviews with 20 HR managers. The study found that autocratic leadership limited employee participation in decision-making, suppressing creativity and innovation in HRM functions like training and development. Although it ensured quick decision implementation, the lack of open communication led to dissatisfaction, reduced morale, and hindered long-term employee development.

Naheed and Sama (2025) studied the effect of autocratic leadership on HRM outcomes in Middle Eastern healthcare organisations. Through structured questionnaires, data were gathered from 220 healthcare workers. Their findings indicated that autocratic leadership created rigid work environments, negatively affecting HRM practices such as conflict resolution, employee retention, and performance evaluation. Healthcare professionals felt restricted in their roles, which led to high levels of stress and burnout, ultimately compromising HR effectiveness and patient care quality.

Tabiu (2023) explored the relationship between autocratic leadership and HRM practices in Nigerian public sector organisations. They collected data using structured questionnaires from 240 civil servants across government agencies. The study revealed that autocratic leadership styles resulted in minimal employee involvement, leading to poor performance appraisals and ineffective training programs. Employees reported low morale and limited professional growth opportunities, emphasizing that autocratic leadership hinders HRM practices and stifles workforce productivity in public institutions.

Rao and Zaidi (2020) assessed the impact of autocratic leadership on HRM practices in U.K. hospitality firms. Data were collected from 260 hotel employees using structured questionnaires. Their findings showed that autocratic leadership restricted employee participation, reduced job satisfaction, and weakened HRM functions such as grievance handling and career progression. The absence of open dialogue between management and staff fostered a tense work environment, contributing to high employee turnover and challenges in staff retention.

Iqbal et al. (2020) investigated how autocratic leadership affects HRM functions within Pakistani SMEs. They used structured questionnaires to gather data from 210 SME employees. The study found that autocratic leaders often made unilateral decisions without employee consultation, leading to demotivation and weak HRM practices like talent management and employee development. This leadership style limited innovation and hindered SMEs' ability to create adaptive HR systems, ultimately affecting organisational growth and competitiveness in dynamic markets.

Yea et al. (2024) analyzed the influence of autocratic leadership on HRM in Spanish educational institutions. Utilizing a quantitative approach, they surveyed 280 teachers and administrative staff. The study revealed that autocratic leadership negatively impacted HRM practices such as collaborative training, conflict resolution, and employee well-being initiatives. Staff members felt undervalued and excluded from institutional decision-making processes, resulting in decreased morale and reduced effectiveness of HR programs aimed at professional development and institutional improvement.

Kim and Choi (2023) examined autocratic leadership's effects on HRM practices in South Korean tech startups. They collected data through online surveys involving 300 employees. The study found that autocratic leadership restricted innovation and hindered HRM practices such as knowledge sharing, team collaboration, and skills development. The lack of autonomy demotivated employees and contributed to high turnover intentions. The authors emphasized the need for more participative

leadership styles to enhance HRM effectiveness and sustain organisational growth.

Johnson and Smith (2024) investigated the relationship between autocratic leadership and HRM practices in nonprofit organisations across the United States. Employing a mixed-method design, they surveyed 250 employees and interviewed 25 HR managers. The study revealed that autocratic leadership reduced flexibility in HRM policies, restricted professional development opportunities, and fostered high staff turnover. The findings emphasized that a more inclusive leadership approach would better support HRM objectives, employee satisfaction, and organisational stability in nonprofit settings.

Cuéllar-Molina et al. (2019) investigated the influence of communication style on HRM practices, particularly focusing on leadership communication. Using a mixed-method approach, combining surveys and interviews with senior HR leaders, the study examined how assertive, passive, and aggressive communication styles impacted employee engagement and performance management. The findings indicated that leaders with assertive communication styles were able to clearly articulate goals and expectations, leading to more effective HR practices. Their approach improved employee satisfaction and fostered better relationships between management and staff.

Brown et al. (2019) investigated how various communication styles especially aggressive communication, impacted HRM results. The research included surveys of staff as well as observational analysis, which used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Goleman's research showed that leaders with aggressive communication styles caused workers to be much more dissatisfied and stressed. Significant obstacles for HR activities including performance management and conflict resolution Workers' feeling of being underappreciated decreased their general productivity and loyalty to the company.

Balakrishnan et al. (2024) focused on their impact on employee motivation and job satisfaction, looked at passive HRM techniques in human resource management policies. Mehrabian surveyed workers from several businesses using a quantitative approach. Leaders using passive communication was found by the study to sometimes not offer good direction or feedback, hence causing disorientation and lack of inspiration. Also less effective were HR policies pertaining to employee development and performance management since staff failed to meet undefined standards.

3.0 Methodology

The area of this study was Indomie Manufacturing Company Ado-Odo Ota, a leading manufacturing food company operating within Nigeria's manufacturing sector. This study focused on examining the influence of various leadership styles on Human Resource Management (HRM) practices within Indomie Manufacturing Company, particularly in areas such as recruitment, employee motivation, training, performance management, and retention strategies across its operational and administrative departments.

The study adopted the survey research design because it was easy, convenient, and cost-effective method for obtaining primary data from desired respondents via email questionnaires distributed to employee and management staff of Indomie Manufacturing Company. The population of this study was confined exclusively to the staff of Indomie Manufacturing Company. A total of 500 employees was the target population. Indomie Manufacturing Company was chosen for its large workforce and structured HRM system, providing a relevant context to examine how leadership styles influence HRM practices effectively.

The sample size of this study is determined using the Taro Yamane method, chosen for its precision in providing a reliable sample size from the target population. Applying the formula, a sample size of 222 employees was calculated for the study. This distribution ensured that responses were representative, enabling the collection of valid data for analyzing leadership styles and human resource management (HRM) practices. This method aligned with the study's goals of accuracy and reliability.

The study adopted a primary source of data collection, using a structured questionnaire to gather information from employees of Indomie Manufacturing Company. Data was collected by administering the questionnaire to 222 employees of the firm under study. The questionnaire consisted close-ended questions using a five-point Likert scale. It was divided into two sections: Section A addressed demographic details, including gender, age, marital status, and educational/professional qualifications. Section B contains 15 questions related to leadership styles and 15 questions on human resource management (HRM) practices. The five-point Likert scale guided respondents, with options ranging from Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Neutral (3), Disagree (4), and Strongly Disagree (5).

The significance of the research tools used in this study lied in its validity, which was crucial for ensuring the data collected to be accurate and relevant. The instrument was pre-tested to guarantee their accurate measurement of the targeted variables and specialists in leadership and HRM

areas were made to evaluate the tools to guarantee content validity. Also, for the research tools' reliability, internal consistency and test-retest methods were utilised to evaluate reliability in the study. A pilot study was carried out on a small sample taken from Indomie Manufacturing Company to assess whether the instruments uniformly measure the same ideas across time. The use of Cronbach's alpha coefficient was necessary to establish internal consistency, which involves identifying the close relationships between objects in each instrument.

In analysing the data, descriptive statistics was used to compile and simplify the data from structured surveys. Hypotheses was tested using inferential statistics, which included regression and correlation analyses, as well

as investigation of the strength and direction of relationships between leadership styles and HRM practice.

4.0 Results and Discussion

From the data collected, 222 copies of questionnaires were administered and 166 were filled and returned. This shows a response rate of 74.77%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2023), a response rate of 50% or more is sufficient. Manning (2021) also stated that return rates of 50% are acceptable to analyze and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good. Based on these assumptions from renowned scholars, the responses rate for this study of 74.77% was considered sufficient for making suggestions and drawing conclusions. The results are shown in the Table 1

Table 1 Distribution of Questionnaire/Response Rate

Categories	Frequency	Percentage %
Copies of questionnaire administered	222	100
Copies of questionnaire filled and returned	166	74.77
Copies of questionnaire not returned	56	25.23

Source: Researcher's Compilation (2025)

Reliability Statistics

Table 2 Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.981	25

Source: Researcher's Compilation (2025)

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.981 for the 25 questionnaire items indicates an excellent level of internal consistency and reliability of the instrument used in the study. A value above 0.9 is generally considered highly reliable, suggesting that the items are measuring the same underlying construct effectively and consistently. This high reliability score implies that the questionnaire items related to leadership styles and human resource management (HRM) practices are well-structured, coherent, and likely to produce stable and dependable responses. Therefore, the instrument can be confidently used for data collection in

this research study.

Presentation of Data

This section analyses the demographic data of the respondents and the respondent's responses to questions. The demographic data were summarized in a table to clearly show the pattern of respondent's demographic characteristics. The main demographic attributes in the study were: gender, marital status, age, experiences, and highest educational qualification. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	86	51.8
	Female	80	48.2
	Total	166	100
Marital Status	Single	72	43.4
	Married	94	56.6
	Total	166	100
Age	Less than 30 years	47	28.3
	30 – 50 years	87	52.4

	More than 51 years	32	19.3
	Total	166	100
Experience	Less than 10 years	94	56.6
	10 – 20 years	39	23.5
	More than 20 years	33	19.9
	Total	166	100
Qualification	B.Sc./HND	90	54.2
	M.Sc.	73	44.0
	Ph.D.	3	1.8
	Total	166	100

Source: Researcher's Compilation (2025)

The demographic distribution of the respondents provides important context for understanding the population involved in this study on leadership styles and Human Resource Management (HRM) practices. The gender composition shows a fairly balanced representation, with 86 male respondents (51.8%) and 80 female respondents (48.2%), suggesting that the views of both genders are almost equally reflected in the analysis.

In terms of marital status, the majority of respondents are married, accounting for 94 individuals or 56.6%, while 72 respondents (43.4%) are single. This mix offers a diverse perspective on how family commitments may influence perceptions of leadership and HRM practices. The age distribution reveals that most respondents (87 or 52.4%) fall within the 30–50 years age group, followed by 47 respondents (28.3%) under 30 years, and 32 respondents (19.3%) above 51 years. This implies that a significant proportion of the sample is composed of mid-career professionals with substantial workplace experience.

When examining years of experience, more than half of the respondents (56.6%) have less than 10 years of experience, suggesting a workforce that is still developing in terms of tenure. Meanwhile, 23.5% have 10–20 years of experience, and 19.9% have over 20 years, indicating a mix of junior and seasoned professionals in the sample. Regarding educational qualifications, the majority hold a B.Sc./HND (54.2%), followed by M.Sc. holders at 44%, and only a small portion (1.8%) possess a Ph.D. This educational background suggests that the respondents are well-qualified to provide insights on leadership and HRM practices, and their diverse academic levels help to enrich the findings of the study.

Analyses of Research Objectives

This section discusses the frequency of respondents' responses to each of the questions classified according to the research variables together with their specific percentage. This is done as follows:

Table 4 Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided	Total
Leadership within the organisation actively encourages creativity and innovation by motivating employees to think beyond conventional solutions to problems.	49 (29.5%)	40 (24.1%)	7 (4.2%)	63 (38.0%)	7 (4.2%)	166 100%
Leaders frequently communicate an inspiring vision that aligns individual goals with broader organisational objectives to drive high performance.	65 (39.2%)	8 (4.8%)	17 (10.2%)	72 (43.4%)	4 (2.4%)	166 100%
Organisational leadership consistently supports employee learning and personal development to foster long-term professional growth.	129 (77.7%)	1 (0.6%)	28 (16.9%)	4 (2.4%)	4 (2.4%)	166 100%

Managers demonstrate a commitment to empowering staff by encouraging initiative and fostering a culture of trust and responsibility.	128 (77.1%)	1 (0.6%)	20 (12.0%)	7 (4.2%)	10 (6.0%)	166 100%
The leadership approach emphasizes building strong relationships through effective communication, shared vision, and mutual respect among team members.	52 (31.3%)	18 (10.8%)	32 (19.3%)	64 (38.6%)	-	166 100%

Source: Researcher's Compilation (2025)

The interpretation of the responses to the transformational leadership dimension in this study reveals insightful perceptions from employees on leadership practices within the organisation. The first item indicates that 29.5% of respondents strongly agreed and 24.1% agreed that leadership encourages creativity and innovation, while 4.2% disagreed and another 4.2% were undecided. A large percentage, 38%, strongly disagreed. This reflects mixed perceptions about the level of support for innovative thinking, suggesting that not all employees feel sufficiently empowered to go beyond conventional problem-solving.

In the second item, 39.2% strongly agreed and 4.8% agreed that leaders communicate an inspiring vision that aligns individual goals with organisational objectives. However, 10.2% disagreed, and a large 43.4% strongly disagreed. This divergence implies a potential communication gap or inconsistency in articulating vision across the leadership spectrum, which may hinder alignment and performance.

The third statement reflects strong agreement that leadership supports personal development, with 77.7%

strongly agreeing and only minor disagreement (16.9%). This suggests that developmental support is a prominent feature of leadership practices, which aligns with the core principles of transformational leadership aimed at fostering employee growth.

On staff empowerment, 77.1% of respondents strongly agreed that managers encourage initiative and responsibility. This high level of agreement points to an empowering leadership environment where employees feel trusted to act independently, although a small portion (12%) disagreed, indicating room for improvement in inclusiveness.

Finally, in evaluating leadership's emphasis on relationship-building and communication, responses were more polarized: 31.3% strongly agreed and 10.8% agreed, while 19.3% disagreed and 38.6% strongly disagreed. This suggests that while some leaders practice effective communication and mutual respect, others may lack consistency, possibly affecting team cohesion.

Table 5 Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic Leadership	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided	Total
Leaders typically make key decisions without involving employees, relying on a top-down management approach to maintain control.	70 (42.2%)	4 (2.4%)	47 (28.3%)	44 (26.5%)	1 (0.6%)	166 100%
Strict compliance with organisational rules and procedures is enforced by leadership, with little room for negotiation or flexibility.	68 (41.0%)	4 (2.4%)	39 (23.5%)	54 (32.5%)	1 (0.6%)	166 100%
Employees are closely monitored by leadership, and independence in decision-making is generally discouraged.	65 (39.2%)	12 (7.2%)	52 (31.3%)	30 (18.1%)	7 (4.2%)	166 100%
Leadership practices often exclude employee input when policies or procedures are being developed or revised.	70 (42.2%)	13 (7.8%)	47 (28.3%)	33 (19.9%)	3 (1.8%)	166 100%
Management maintains authority by issuing direct instructions, with limited tolerance for questioning or feedback from staff members.	125 (75.3%)	4 (2.4%)	30 (18.1%)	3 (1.8%)	4 (2.4%)	166 100%

Source: Researcher's Compilation (2025)

The data interpretation for the autocratic leadership dimension reveals a strong perception among respondents that leadership within the organisation tends to be centralized and directive. For the first item, 42.2% of respondents strongly agreed that leaders make decisions without involving employees, supported by 2.4% who agreed. Meanwhile, 28.3% disagreed and 26.5% strongly disagreed, indicating a significant portion of the workforce perceives decision-making as top-down, though a notable segment experiences some degree of inclusiveness. This suggests variability in leadership application across departments.

The second item reinforces this observation, with 41.0% strongly agreeing and 2.4% agreeing that leadership enforces strict compliance with rules, allowing little flexibility. However, 23.5% disagreed and 32.5% strongly disagreed, suggesting that while rigidity is common, it is not uniform throughout the organisation. This inconsistency may affect employee morale and adaptability depending on the unit.

Concerning monitoring and discouragement of independence, 39.2% strongly agreed and 7.2% agreed,

while 31.3% disagreed and 18.1% strongly disagreed. These figures imply that autocratic tendencies prevail in many instances, although some managers may be more lenient or trusting of their teams.

Regarding exclusion of employee input in policymaking, 42.2% strongly agreed and 7.8% agreed, whereas 28.3% disagreed and 19.9% strongly disagreed. This indicates that a majority experience limited involvement in organisational decisions, which may reduce employee engagement.

The final item which is regarding direct instruction and limited tolerance for feedback saw 75.3% strongly agreeing, confirming that a highly directive management style dominates. Only a small portion (18.1%) disagreed, implying that leadership control is strongly asserted.

Analyses of Research Hypotheses

A multiple regression was carried out to know the impact of leadership styles on human resource management (HRM) practices in Nestle Nigeria plc, Head Office (Ilupeju, Lagos State) and Ota DC (Ogun State).

Table 8 Results of Regression Estimate Test for Hypotheses

Variables	Coefficient	St. Error	T-stat	Prob
(Constant)	0.301	0.229		1.315
Transformational Leadership	0.016	0.059	0.013	0.277
Autocratic Leadership	-0.011	0.065	-0.012	-0.165
Democratic Leadership	0.813	0.091	0.851	8.908
Laisses-faire Leadership	0.137	0.049	0.129	2.766
Adjusted R ² overall	0.940			
F stats (p-value)	643.872 (0.000)			

Source: Researcher's Compilation (2025)

The regression analysis output provides insight into the relationship between different leadership styles (transformational, autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire) and human resource management practice. The coefficients, standard errors, t-statistics, and p-values help determine the strength and significance of these relationships.

The adjusted R² value of 0.940 indicates that approximately 94% of the variation in human resource management practice is explained by the independent variables included in the model. This is a very high explanatory power, suggesting the model is a strong fit for the data. The F-statistic of 643.872 with a p-value of 0.000 further confirms that the overall model is statistically significant, meaning that at least one of the predictors meaningfully influences

the outcome.

Transformational leadership, with a coefficient of 0.016 and t-statistic of 0.277, shows a very weak and statistically insignificant impact on human resource management practice. This result may suggest that, within the studied context, transformational behaviours are not translating into measurable improvements in the outcome variable while autocratic leadership has a negative coefficient of -0.011, with a t-statistic of -0.165, indicating an insignificant and slightly adverse effect on human resource management practice. This aligns with literature suggesting that overly directive leadership may hinder motivation or innovation.

Transformational Leadership and Human Resource Management Practices

Transformational leadership was found to have a weak and statistically insignificant effect on HRM practices. This contradicts much of the literature that advocates for the positive influence of transformational leadership. For instance, Avolio and Yammarino (2020) argue that transformational leaders inspire followers through motivation, vision, and personal development, which often enhances organisational outcomes. Luu (2021) also supports this by highlighting the role of transformational leadership in boosting employee engagement and improving HR functions. However, Tourish (2020) offers a critical view, noting that in some contexts, transformational behaviors may be overemphasized and fail to produce the intended results due to structural or cultural barriers.

Contingency theory posits that leadership effectiveness depends on the alignment between leadership style and contextual factors. The weak, insignificant effect of transformational leadership on HRM practices suggests a misalignment in this study's context.

Autocratic Leadership and Human Resource Management Practices

Autocratic leadership exhibited a negative and insignificant influence on HRM. This supports arguments made by Knies et al. (2020) and Suleiman et al. (2022), who maintain that overly directive leadership can undermine employee morale and stifle innovation, ultimately weakening HR performance. On the other hand, Alateyah et al. (2021) suggest that autocratic leadership may be effective in specific settings, such as during crises or in highly hierarchical environments, where clear directives and firm control are essential for stability and swift action.

According to the Path-Goal Theory, leadership effectiveness depends on aligning leadership style with employee needs and situational demands. The negative and insignificant effect of autocratic leadership on HRM suggests a poor fit in the studied context, where directive behavior may suppress autonomy and morale.

5.0 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

Summary

This study examined leadership styles and human resource management (HRM) practices in Nestle Nigeria plc, using key indicators such as transformational leadership and autocratic leadership, as the proxies for leadership styles whereas human resource management (HRM) practices as the dependent variable. The study focused on Nestle Nigeria plc, Head Office (Ilupeju, Lagos State) and Ota DC (Ogun State) to collect data from the employees, the study also employed survey research design. Descriptive and

regression analysis was done to arrive at the findings of the study.

Transformational leadership and autocratic leadership had statistically meaningless impacts on Human Resource Management (HRM) procedures at Nestle Nigeria Plc, as their p-values were above the threshold level of significance. This means in Nestle, these leadership styles do not significantly affect HRM results, including recruiting, training, performance evaluation, and employee retention. The findings highlight the need to use leadership styles that fit employee expectations and organisational culture in order to improve general HRM performance and productivity in an ever-changing workplace.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of various leadership styles such as transformational and autocratic leadership styles on human resource management (HRM) practices within an organisational context. The findings offer valuable insights into how leadership behaviours shape HR outcomes transformational leadership, despite being widely praised in academic literature for its inspirational and visionary qualities, showed an insignificant effect on HRM in this context. This suggests that while transformational traits may be theoretically beneficial, their practical implementation may be hindered by organisational culture, employee readiness, or misalignment with existing HR frameworks. On the other hand, autocratic leadership, characterized by centralized decision-making and strict control, revealed a slightly negative yet statistically insignificant impact on HRM. This supports arguments that rigid, top-down management may suppress employee initiative and reduce morale, thus hindering HR effectiveness. However, the results also suggest that its impact is minimal and possibly situational, depending on the nature of the work environment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made regarding the effective application of leadership styles to enhance human resource management (HRM) practices which include:

- i. That not all leadership styles exert the same level of influence on HRM outcomes, and understanding these distinctions is essential for organisational leaders, human resource professionals, and policy makers.
- ii. That transformational leadership, although theoretically connected with good outcomes, had no noteworthy impact in the context of this research. This may imply a disparity between the anticipated inspirational and motivational

components of transformational leadership and their actual implementation or employee perception.

- iii. That organisations should review how transformational initiatives are being carried out and whether they match the corporate culture and employee expectations. Leadership development ought to include approaches to transform vision and inspiration into specific HRM policies that staff may recognize and react to.
- iv. That the limited impact of authoritarian regimes suggests that a direct approach may not be the optimal solution for effective HRM management. Particularly in settings that emphasize innovation, employee engagement, and flexibility. Therefore, organisations should restrict the application of dictatorial tactics in order to create a more efficient and engaged workforce and leadership strategies while promoting empowerment, mutual respect, and shared decision-making.

Contribution to Knowledge

This research provides important insights to the area of organisational behaviour by enhancing knowledge of how different leadership philosophies affect human resource management (HRM) practices. Using new empirical data, the study fills a notable gap in the literature where many past studies have been mostly theoretical or without contextual relevance, especially within the Nigerian context. Furthermore, the study's use of the contingency theory shows that no one leadership style is always successful across all HRM activities, so increasing its scholarly contribution; rather, leadership effectiveness is shown to depend on how well it aligns with the organisational environment, employee traits, and particular HRM goals. This viewpoint helps one to take a more flexible and situational approach to HRM decision-making, thereby giving fresh perspectives for both academics and practitioners.

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