

## **LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT STYLE AND ACADEMIC STAFF PERFORMANCE OF RIVERS STATE TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: IMPLICATION FOR POST COVID-19**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The aim of this research was to empirically investigate the relationship between leadership management style and academic staff performance of Nigeria tertiary institutions with emphasis on post Covid-19 effect. The study applied cross sectional survey design in structured questionnaire to collect data from 400 lecturers of public universities in Rivers State. Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient tool was used with the help of SPSS Version 21.0, to statistically analyzing data obtained from the field. Results revealed that leadership management style has a positive and significant relationship with academic staff performance, however, Covid-19 moderates the extent of relationship between both variables by reducing the impact of the former on the latter. Consequently, the research concluded that analytical leadership is a veritable management tool that when deployed, will improve staff productivity. Therefore, staff performance in universities can be enhanced and measured with high level of productivity through the instrumentality of analytical leadership orientation. Based on the above, the research recommends that government at all levels should apply the analytical leadership orientation, as this research has proven the possibility of enhancing staff productivity and academic performance through this approach.

**Keywords:** Leadership Management Style, Analytical Leadership, Covid-19, Academic Staff, Productivity.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Until January 2020, the world was relatively peaceful in contrast with unprecedented health crises that engulfed many nations across all spheres of human existence. More evidently, and say rarely, world leaders had to come together to form strategic alliance in order to combat a common enemy called 'Coronavirus, also known as Covid-19. In Nigeria, COVID-19 pandemic has varying effects on many sectors including education. Consequently, in order to curtail the spread of the virus, the Federal ministry of education temporarily suspended school activities effective March 23<sup>rd</sup> (World Health Organization, WHO, 2020) According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO, 2020), almost 40 million learners have been affected by the nationwide school closures in the country. For a dilapidated education system, the Covid-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges on the government, students, and other key stakeholders, including university staff. As key stakeholders, a fundamental question of how is or whether the Nigerian education system is designed to adapt rapidly to the changing world? Given this scenario, the possibility to achieve improvement in learning and academic staff performance will depend largely on the leadership style of not only the government, but also, and more importantly, that of university authorities (Orji, Malachy, Boman & Akhimien, 2017).

It is common knowledge or believed that leadership management style is geared toward achieving some predetermined goals and objectives. According to Kanyabi and Devi

(2011), the concept of leadership management style is multifaceted and an extremely vital criterion that determines organizational success or failure. One of the main aims of leadership management style is to improve employee performance (Prasetya & Kato, 2011). According to Okon and Isong, (2016) managers strive to achieve organization objectives through the use of various management styles. Some of these management styles include participative, autocratic, laissez-faire, paternalistic, persuasive, democratic management style among others.

The last 3 decades have ushered in the perception that the world is flat and changing at a faster pace; arguably due to the invention of the “World Wide Web” (Sazali & Raduan, 2011). Therefore, leaders of organizations who do not equip themselves with analytical tools may not be able to lead their organizations to enviable heights and survive in the long-run. Analytical leaders are those who forecast and predict the future in precision; develop strategic plans; inspire subordinates or followers; with the aim of adapting to changes in the future and achieve sustainable survival. More so, persuasive leadership is a common management style in Nigeria learning institution. A persuasive management style is that of a manager who uses their ability to interpret a situation, people’s actions and dialogue, and then strongly urges or convinces them to do a task or achieve objectives the manager’s way (Okon & Isong, 2016). However, enhancement of staff performance has been debated to have relationship with factors that motivate the employees, including management leadership style. It is rational to believe that when an employee is motivated, it is expected that such an employee’s performance will be improved. That is to say employee’s motivation and performance are closely knit together in many cases.

Studies have been previously undertaken in the area of leadership management style in the small scale business enterprises sub-sector (Okon, & Isong, 2016), where the authors used transformational and autocratic leadership style in evaluating employees’ performance. In addition, Paul, M. (2016) examined visionary leadership for management of innovative higher education institutions. Shahab, Sobari, & Udim (2018) investigated empowering leadership and organization citizenship behaviour, using psychological empowerment and emotional intelligence as mediating roles in the medical service industry. More so, Sougui, Bon, Mahamat and Hassan, (2017) evaluated the impact of leadership on employee motivation in Malaysian telecommunication sector.

In view of the above studies, and other related ones, however, this study recognizes the effect of Covid-19 on public institutions of learning; with emphasis on the leadership styles of those in position of authority. Specifically, this research was undertaken to examine the effects of analytical and persuasive management leadership on employee productivity as it relates to academic staff of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

**Operationalization of Variables and Conceptual Framework:**

This research is on leadership management style and academic staff performance. The independent variable which is leadership management style has analytical and persuasive leadership dimensions. On the other hand, the dependent variable which is academic staff performance was measured with productivity. Below is the model specification:

- ASP = f (LMS) (HF) -----Model 1
- LMS = (AL, PL) -----Model 2
- ASP = P ----- Model 3
- C = Health Factor -----Model 4
- P =f (AL, PL) (C) ----- Model 5

ASP	= Academic Staff Performance
LMS	= Leadership Management Style
HF	= Health Factor
AL	= Analytical Leadership
PL	= Persuasive Leadership
P	= Productivity

Below is the conceptual framework for this study

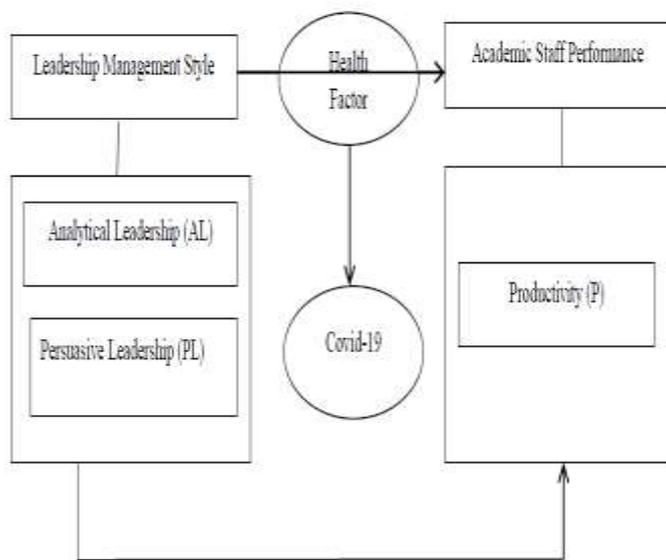


Fig. 1.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

**Source:** adapted from Sougui, Bon, Mahamat and Hassan (2017): The impact of leadership on employee motivation in Malaysian telecommunication sector. Galore International Journal of Applied Sciences and Humanities, 1(1), 59-68.

## LITERATURE REVIEW:

### Theoretical Foundation:

#### Leader-Member Exchange Theory:

The idea of the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) defines the relationship between a leader and his or her subordinates. According to Graen, Novak & Sommerkamp (1982), the central feature of the LMX theory is its focus on the working

relationship between a leader and the various members of a work unit, team, department or organization. More specifically, the quality of the exchange relationship between a leader and a particular member (dyad) is the basic unit of analysis. The theory tries to explain and predicts the type of relationship a particular leader keeps with followers. Furthermore, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) argued that the LMX theory narrates the process through which leader determines roles and expectations relating to his subordinates. Sometimes, the leader of a group keeps different kinds of relationship with followers; therefore, LMX theory has the characteristics to explain this differentiated and personalized relationship between the leader and members of the group (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975).

Dirks and Ferrin (2002) argued that the LMX theory identifies two types of relationships in the leader-follower relationship. They are low-quality and high-quality. In the former, leader usually maintain only a contractual relationship with members of the group, while in the latter, the leader establishes a relationship that goes beyond the contractual relationship, and develops in to a psychological contractual relationship (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). In essence, the LMX theory examines the quality of exchange relationships, or dyads between formally assigned leaders/supervisors and their subordinates, and the consequences of different types of exchange relationships in terms of the attitudes and behavioural processes of subordinates. Hence, the main contribution of the LMX theory to the understanding of organizational behaviour, which attempt to identification a number of antecedents of so called high-quality and low-quality exchange relationships and in the observed connection between leader-member exchange quality and various organizational outcomes.

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### **Conceptualizing Leadership Management Styles:**

The concept of leadership is originally developed in folk psychology to explain the factor of leadership style impact on employee (Jaskaran & Sri-Guru, 2014). The other popular definitions of leadership stated that it is more about an individual who influences a group of people to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2017). According to Iqbal, Anwar & Haider (2015), leadership is about inspiring others to trail the vision until it becomes a shared effort to achieve the vision. Sougui, Bon, Mahamat & Hassan (2017) opined that leadership is conceived as a process where one or more people influence a group of individuals to move in a certain direction. Lian & Tui (2012) defined leadership in the context of personal power to influence workers in getting work done. Similarly, the term management style can be defined as the method a manager uses in administering an organization (Yulk, 2003) it includes controlling, directing, and indeed all methods used by the manager to motivate subordinates to follow their instructions.

According to Watson (2003), management styles are the different styles used by the manager to influence the employees so that they will strive willingly toward the achievement of organizational goals. Kanyabi and Devi (2011) view management style as a multidimensional construct and an extremely vital criterion that determines organizational success or failure. More so, leadership Management styles can also be described as the particular practice used by the manager to direct the affairs of an organization (Okon & Isong, 2016). A management style is a way of life operating throughout the enterprise and permits an executive to rely on the initiative of the personnel of an entity. Management style is not a procedure on how to do but it is the management framework for doing.

### **Analytical Leadership Style:**

According to Ali, Ullah and Javed (2017), analytical leadership could be defined as the use of digital means in championing the course of the organizations. The author further opined that analytical leader are renowned for their natural ability to analyze information using their critical thinking skills. They thrive in careers that others may find challenging, as they operate and even absorb information differently than most people. Also, Wright and Snell (1998) stated that having more responsibility and moving up in leadership roles requires developing new skills to lead effectively and to work through others. Traits that have in past roles been strengths can turn into weaknesses when they're not balanced in a leadership position. Being aware of these potential blind spots is key when developing optimal performance (Yulk, 2006).

According to Yoeli and Berkovich (2010), the analytical leader is fundamentally interested in finding out solutions to problems but solutions which are based upon the available evidence. The author went on to mention that an analytical leader has what it takes to analyst data into facts; give that data meaning and purpose and turn it into information; then, using a mix of experience, values and grounded insight, turn that information into knowledge that provides a framework for evaluating and making judgments. These processes make analytical leadership unique among other leadership styles (Wayne, Shore, Boomer & Tetrick, 2002).

### **Persuasive Leadership Style:**

A persuasive management style is that of a manager who uses their ability to interpret a situation, people's actions and dialogue, and then strongly urges or convinces them to do a task or achieve objectives the manager's way (Okon & Isong, 2016). This style has many characteristics in common with the autocratic

style. The main difference between the styles, however, is that once a persuasive manager makes a decision, they then try to convince a subordinate that what was decided by the manager is in the subordinate's best interests. This type of manager will try to bring people around to their own view, but will also stick to their decision with or without agreement (Okon & Isong, 2016).

### **Academic Staff Performance:**

The concept of academic staff performance has long been explored by many scholars, even as no consensus has been realized in terms of its definition. However, a few scholars have attempted to describe the concept in various ways. Ziegler (2005) relates academic performance with particularly effective action by a teaching staff which is consistently observed as a superior achievement in an education setting. More so, Ofoegbu and Alonge (2016) explained the concept from a tertiary institution's perspective. The authors' defined academic performance as effective teaching and learning that is anchored on developmental resources with a high impact community service, creativity, and innovativeness. The authors further opined that academic staff performance could be measured by the acquisition of self-independent economic skills by graduates of universities. It was further argued that the concept relates to both practical and theoretical knowledge acquired in key professions and/or industries, including high moral discipline by both staff and students of tertiary institutions (Ofoegbu & Alonge, 2016).

In addition, Simon (2002) conceptualized academic performance from a societal stand point. The author proved this point through his work by examining strong link between academic staff performance and the quality of society. In this regard, Simon (2002) expressed that academic staff performance is a

function of excellence leadership on the part of the university management. Achieving both individual and organization excellence is a pathway through which the society and members therein accomplish their goals. Ericsson (2002) advocated for the inclusion of certain standards, and that academic performance should be positioned as a social movement through which societal values are upheld and communicated. It is crucial to see academic performance as a tool to helping the society in offering solution to problem with a view to enhancing societal well-being. In this research, academic staff performance is measured with productivity.

### **Leadership Management Style and Academic Staff Performance:**

Muhammad and Kuchinkeba (2016) examine the impact of managers' leadership styles on subordinates' performance in the Pakistani banking sector. The sample of the study consisted of 224 full-time employees in the banking sector of Pakistan. Findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance outcomes. However, laissez-faire leadership style showed negative relationship with employee performance outcomes in terms of effectiveness, and employee satisfaction.

Voon, Lo, Ngui and Ayob (2011) examined the influence of leadership styles on employees' job satisfaction in public sector organizations in Malaysia. The study employed survey research design. Two hundred Malaysian executives working in public sectors voluntarily participated in the study. Two types of leadership styles, namely, transactional and transformational were found to have direct relationships with employees' job satisfaction. The results showed that transformational leadership style has a stronger relationship with job satisfaction. This implies that

transformational leadership is deemed suitable for managing government organizations. However, the study did not cover telecommunication industry in Nigeria. Thus, the findings of the study cannot explain the impact of leadership management style in telecommunication industry in Nigeria.

Ali and Meshal (2016) examine the relationship between the adopted leadership style and employees' motivation in a private petrochemical company that is located in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia. A survey was developed and distributed to 30 employees in two departments. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with a focus group of 10 employees to validate the results of the survey. The study found that there is a strong relationship between leadership style and employee motivation where the correlation was positive with transformational style and negative with transactional style. The study areas did not cover Nigeria thus; its findings may not be applicable in the Nigerian context.

Chua, Basit, and Hassan, (2018) examine the impact of leadership style on employee's performance from services sector at different location in Klang Valley. The study employed causal research design. More so, a Likert scale from 1-5 was used to collect data, where the questionnaire was tested for its face, content and construct validity along with reliability of the construct. The study found that laissez-fair leadership style has no significant influence on employee performance. The study was conducted outside the Nigeria geographical location thus, there is need to carry out research within the context of Nigeria. In addition, while the study applied only questionnaire this present study intends to use mixed method of data collection.

Batholomew and Ogunbiyi, (2018) examine the relationship between exemplary leadership and employee commitment in private health sector in Port Harcourt, Rivers

State; Nigeria. The study adopted exploratory research design with statistical technique of Kendall's tau-b correlation coefficient to determine the association between the dependent and independent variables as well as the significance of the relationship existing among them. The study findings revealed that the dimensions of exemplary leadership inspire a shared vision, and significant relationships with employee commitment in private health sector. However, the study focused on private health sector in Port Harcourt and not included impact of leadership management style on telecommunication industry.

Sougui, Bon, Mahamat and Hassan, (2017) review the literatures on the significant of the leadership on the employees' motivation in Malaysian telecommunication sector. The study employed content analysis. Findings of the literatures reviewed showed that leadership style has a significant positive impact on the employee's motivation, there is also compelling evidence that indicate a negative link between the leadership style and employees' motivation. However, the study did not mention kind of the leadership management style that is the best particularly, in the context of Nigerian telecommunication sector. Meanwhile, the methodology employed in the study using content analysis seems not too strong enough to explain the situation in Nigeria. This is because of country differences. There is need to collect cross sectional data so as to empirically investigate the impact of leadership management style on employee's motivation within the context of Nigerian telecommunication industry.

It was against the backdrop of these findings we proposed the following hypotheses:  
**H<sub>01</sub>:** Analytical leadership style does not have a significant relationship with productivity of academic staff of tertiary.

**Ho2:** Analytical leadership style does not have a significant relationship with productivity of academic staff of tertiary.

**Ho3:** Covid-19 does not significantly moderate the relationship between leadership management style and academic staff performance of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

**RESEARCH MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

This study adopted cross-sectional survey type of quasi-experimental design. This involves the use of questionnaire in eliciting information from respondents. The population of this research comprise of academic staff of public universities in Rivers State.

Table 1.1 Academic Staff Strength of Universities in Rivers State

S/N	Number of Institutions	Number of Academic Staff
1	University of Port Harcourt	1395
2	Rivers State University	406
3	Ignatius Ajuru University	440
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,241</b>

**Source:** Personnel Department of the Institutions involved, 2021.

Based on the population, Taro Yamen formula was used to determine a sample size of 400. It is however important to note that the research adopted simple random sampling technique in administering the research instrument on selected sample elements. Basically, two main sources of data were used: primary and secondary sources. While the former was obtained from questionnaire administration, the latter was obtained from journal articles, credible internet publication, textbooks, etc. More so, the research instrument was evaluated through expert checking for content therefore, a pilot study was conducted to pretest the questionnaire. The rationale for the pilot testing is to detect reliability in the

design of the instrument and address any form of ambiguity as to restructure the instrument in line with observations. To determine the reliability of the study instrument, Cronbach's Alpha tests were carried out. Lastly, the research adopted a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical tools in analyzing data. In terms of descriptive statistics, the research used charts, tables, averages (means and standard deviation), percentages, etc; on the other hand, inferential statistics such as Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient was used in testing hypotheses. However, all analyses were done with SPSS application (version 21.0).

**Data Analysis and Discussions:**

The researcher relied on data from questionnaire distributed to respondents. This section was devoted for data presentation and testing of hypotheses.

Table 1.2 Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percent (%)
Distributed	400	100
Retrieved	372	93
Not Retrieved	28	7
Retrieved Usable	364	91

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021.

Table 4.1 above shows that a total 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed; however, 372 representing 93% were retrieved. More so, 28 copies were not retrieved, but 364 representing 91% were both retrieved and usable.

Table 1.3 Result of Test of Reliability

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Analytical Leadership	0.842
Persuasive Leadership	0.801
Productivity	0.874
Covid-19	0.899

Source: SPSS Output, 2021.

The table above shows the results of the reliability test. As can be noticed that since the various test results are more than 0.700 (70%) which happens to be the criterion for acceptance of the instrument. Hence, the research instrument is reliable.

**4.3 Testing of Hypotheses:**

**Hypothesis One:**

**Ho1:** Analytical leadership style does not have a significant relationship with productivity of academic staff of tertiary.

Table 1.4: Correlation Analysis between Analytical Leadership and productivity

			Analytical Leadership	Productivity
Spearman's rho	Analytical Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.811**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	364	364
	Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	.811**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	364	364

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021, SPSS Output.

**Decision:**

The above table shows a Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient of 0.811 and probability value of 0.001. Since the PV which is 0.001 < 0.01, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. This result indicates that there is positive and significant relationship between analytical leadership and productivity of lecturers in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

**Test of Hypothesis Two:**

**Ho2:** Persuasive leadership style does not have a significant relationship with productivity of academic staff of tertiary.

Table 1.5 Correlation Analysis between Persuasive Leadership and Productivity

			Persuasive Leadership	Productivity
Spearman's rho	Persuasive Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.449**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.050
		N	364	364
	Productivity	Correlation Coefficient	.449**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	.
		N	364	364

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source: Field Survey Data, 2021, SPSS**

**Output:**

**Decision:**

The above table shows a Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient of 0.449 and probability value of 0.050 > 0.01 we accept the null hypothesis. This result indicates that there is positive and weak relationship between persuasive leadership and productivity of academic staff in Nigeria tertiary institutions.

**Test of Hypothesis Three:**

**Ho3:** Covid-19 does not significantly moderate the relationship between leadership management style and academic staff performance of tertiary institutions in Rivers State.

Table 1.6: Correlation Analysis of the Moderating Influence of Covid-19

			Leadership Management Style	Staff Performance
Spearman's rho Covid-19	Leadership Management Style	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.819**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	364	364
	Staff Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.819**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	364	364

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Field Survey Data, 2021, SPSS Output.

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**Decision:**

The above table shows a Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient of 0.819 and probability value of 0.001. Since the PV which is 0.001 < 0.01 we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. This result indicates that covid-19 moderates the relationship between leadership management style and academic performance of tertiary institution lecturers in Rivers State.

**DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS:**

Hypothesis one (**H<sub>01</sub>**) aimed to examine the relationship between analytical leadership and staff productivity of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The hypothesis was tested using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient and result showed a correlation value of 0.811. This revealed a positive and significant relationship between analytical leadership and productivity. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. Also, hypothesis two (**H<sub>02</sub>**) aimed to examine the significant relationship between persuasive leadership and productivity of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The hypothesis was tested using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient and result showed a correlation value of 0.449. Our analysis revealed a positive and weak relationship between persuasive leadership and productivity of tertiary institutions in Rivers State. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. The findings however corroborate with the findings of Muhammad and Kuchinkeba (2016) when they examine the impact of managers' leadership styles on subordinates' performance in the Pakistani banking sector. Findings of the study revealed that there is a weak relationship between persuasive leadership and employee performance outcomes. However, persuasive leadership style showed negative relationship with employee performance outcomes in terms of effectiveness, and employee satisfaction.

Hypothesis three (**H<sub>03</sub>**) aimed to examine the moderating influence of post Covid-19 on the relationship between knowledge analytical leadership and academic staff performance of lecturers in Nigeria tertiary institutions. The hypothesis was tested using Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient and result showed a significant value of 0.819. Our analysis revealed that post Covid-19 has a strong moderating influence on the relationship between knowledge investment and academic staff performance of lecturers in Nigeria tertiary institutions. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. In line with the above finding; Adeoye, Adanikin and Adanikin, (2020), argued that the Covid-19 pandemic has not only slow down the reopening of universities but also has affected various sources of funds for investing knowledge-based infrastructures that is crucial to improving staff productivity. They also opined that lack of these amenities brought about by the pandemic has affected the possibility of competing favorably.

**Conclusion and Managerial Implications:**

The outbreak of Covid-19 resulted to serious setback and negatively affected the Nigeria educational sector confirmed by notable authorities. Due to the health crises, government authorities at all levels were forced to start re-thinking decisions and programmes towards the educational sector in ways that minimizes the negative effect of the pandemic. It is interesting to state that the pandemic offers a unique turning point; an opportunity for leaders to learn, reshape, and build resilience into the educational system in general, and tertiary institutions in particular. As confirmed by this research, analytical leadership is more suitable in driving the desired change brought by the crises and help organizations to succeed. Covid-19 has highlighted a critical gap in management, which analytical leaders can fill due to their analytical approach in carrying out activities. In

addition, analytical leadership has been tested to be a veritable management tool that when deployed, will improve staff productivity. Therefore, staff performance in universities can be enhanced and measured with high level of productivity through the instrumentality of analytical leadership orientation.

Based on the above, government at all levels should apply the analytical leadership orientation, as this research has proven the possibility of enhancing staff productivity and academic performance through this approach. Having address, the problem identified earlier, this study has successfully solved pressing contemporary issues occasioned by the pandemic. This research has therefore contributed to existing thoughts in the area of leadership management style and academic staff performance in tertiary institutions with emphasis on post Covid-19 effects.

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