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# The influence of leadership styles and organisational politics on work engagement

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### ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to investigate the influence of leadership styles and perceived organisational politics on work engagement. The sample for the study consisted of 120 participants with a mean age of 36.59 years. Fifty-Eight (58) of the research participants were males while 62 were females. Participants were randomly selected from the population of civil servants at the Governor's office in Ado Ekiti, Nigeria; using the multi-level random sampling technique. Six hypotheses were tested. Results revealed that perceived organizational politics has no significant influence on work engagement. However, perceived organizational politics influenced the dedication and vigour dimensions of work engagement. Both autocratic and democratic styles of leadership independently and jointly influenced work engagement; and there was no significant interaction effect of leadership styles and perceived organizational politics on work engagement. There was no significant main and interaction effect of sex, rank, and age of employees on work engagement. There was a significant effect of sex of leaders on the use of autocratic style of leadership while sex of leaders did not influence democratic style and perceived organizational politics. Results of present study also revealed that there was a positive relationship between leadership styles and work engagement together with its subscales. Finally, there was a significant relationship between perceived organizational politics and autocratic leadership style but not on democratic style. Findings were discussed in line with previous research findings and it was recommended that organisations should not encourage or foster political behaviours that may hamper work engagement of employees; such as preferentially treating the employees. It was also recommended that the contingency approach to leadership should be encouraged in organizations, where the situation at hand will determine the type of leadership style to use and not just get fixed to a particular leadership style.

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### Introduction

The pervasiveness of workplace politics is capable of jeopardising the extent to which employees are engaged in their day-to-day duties. Politics in organisations is such a reality that it has become a necessity to gain control over scarce resources of organisations, promote ideas, pursue individual goals, and often make one's image better in organisations (Buchanan, 2008). Researches [e.g. Vigoda-Gadot and Drory, 2010; Yen, Chen and Yen 2009] have argued that it is very difficult to remain away from politics in organisations because of the mystery and potential benefits for the users of organisational politics. Even though an employee may be respected for standing aloof from politics in the organisation, such an employee's career growth might be slow and such an employee might be presumed to be an easy target (Buchanan, 1999, 2008; Miller, Rutherford and Kolodinsky, 2008). This inevitability of organisational politics makes it as important as performing the job itself in the organisation.

In a similar vein, the place of leadership and its styles in determining efficiency and higher productivity in the work place cannot be ignored. The types of leadership styles exhibited by managers are capable of determining the response of subordinates to organisational matters. Leader's behaviour and

politics within the organisation may, thus, serve as determinants to the levels at which employees are engaged on the job.

Work engagement has been found to bring outcomes like reduced burnout, satisfaction, commitment and higher performance (Maslach, 2003), employees feels belongingness to organisation with lower intentions to leave (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004), good health and its positive effects on the performance (Sonnentag, 2003). This means that work disengagement could result in several negative job outcomes if its antecedents are not identified. In effect, this research is geared towards investigating the influence of perceived organisational politics and leadership style on work engagement.

#### Leadership Defined:

Leadership is an essential part of management activities of people in redirecting their efforts toward the goals and objectives of an organisation. Recent researches on leadership focus on the ability to influence people to perform tasks over a period of time using motivational methods rather than power or authority (Kotter, 1996; Yammarino and Dubinsky, 1994). This definition emphasises the subordinate's choice to perform a task of his or her own free will and largely rejects the use of power, force, or coercive actions by managers, who are considered "leaders". It also makes a clear distinction between leadership and coercive rules. However, it relates leadership with the

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processes of informal influence, power and to a lesser extent, formal authority, which comprise the political environment in organisations. When people act out of obedience to authority, it is difficult to decide whether they are acting out of their own free will or out of fear of punishment by their superior. Thus, modern theories of leadership are much more interested in transformational leadership than in transactional or any other type of leadership (Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang and Chen, 2005).

A leader is anyone who is looked up to as an authority or who is responsible for giving assistance to others (Mahoney, 2001). According to Warrick (1981), leaders control both interpersonal and material rewards and punishment that often shape employees' behaviour and influence employee's motivation and attitude. Leadership, to Faugier and Woolnough (2002), is a process that involves influence, usually occurring in a group setting, involving the attainment of a goal and exists at all levels.

Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people (Lewin, Lippit and White, 1939). Different situations call for different leadership styles (Lewin, et al 1939). Lewin divided leadership style into three: Authoritarian or Autocratic leadership style, Participative or Democratic leadership style and Delegative or Free Reign leadership style. Other scholars (e.g. Kendra and Taplin, 2004) opined that leadership style refers to descriptions or classifications of the main ways in which real life leaders behave and not to models or philosophies of leadership. Thus, they divided leadership styles into transformational leadership, transactional leadership, charismatic leadership and narcissistic leadership styles. According to Blanchard (2010), leadership is not one size fits all things but rather one must adapt one's style to fit a situation or a specific group. Thus, one should gain a thorough understanding of other leadership styles. To him, the more approaches one is familiar with, the more one is able to use them to lead effectively.

Stodgdill (1974) review of literature on leadership suggested that the relationship between leadership styles and career commitment and performance of subordinates indicate that person-oriented patterns of leadership tend to enhance employees satisfaction. An investigation into the relationship between the leaders' participation, subordinate authoritarianism, task type and satisfaction by House and Mitchell (1974), found out that authoritarian methods and staff educational diversity enhance staff performance and commitment to the job. In a survey of 321 community college faculty comparing reported job performance with their perception of the leadership style of their college's president, Mckee (1991) found high correlation between job performance and high relation, low task leadership style.

#### **Organisational Politics:**

Organisational politics is the pursuit of individual agenda and self interest in an organisation without regard to their effect on the organisation's effort to achieve its goals (Gregory, 2001). Oyedele (1989) sees it as a self serving and manipulative behaviour of individuals and groups to promote their self interest at the expense of others, and sometimes even organisational goals as well. According to Davis and Blomstrom (1980), organisational politics is an inescapable and intrinsic reality that is woven with management system to the extent that it influences and affects all interpersonal relationships within the organisation.

Organisational politics in a company manifests itself through struggle for resources, personal conflicts, competition

for power and leadership and tactical influence executed by individuals and groups to attain power, building personal stature, controlling access to information, not revealing real intents, building coalition, etc (Babalola, Awoloye, Akinyemi and Kotila, 2002). All organisations are subject to conflict and competition between the desires and interests of different departments, teams and individuals.

One may be apt to reason that negative organisational politics may be very destructive for an organisation. And that negative politics includes the use of subversive methods to promote a personal agenda which may undermine organisational objectives, distract energy away from organisation while at the same time cooperating to achieve a common goal and competing for rewards, and at times their personal interests may be at odds with the organisation. Through the political system of an organisation, rival interests may revolve and this system may represent how power is applied and distributed in the organisation. Thus understanding the political system is necessary for a leader to operate effectively and reach their goals.

When a leader exercises power, he or she is able to have a strong influence on the political climate of an organisation through his/her decisions, his/her way of handling conflict and providing recognition, support and inspiration to his/her team (Babalola, Awoloye, Akinyemi and Kotila, 2002). Fesobi (2001) sees politics in workplace as a tool to attaining, retaining and displaying power. It mostly manifests itself as work lobbies or groups which surprisingly even move within or even outside organisations as a body.

Researchers have acknowledged the prominent role of politics in organisational policies and processes (e.g., Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Frost, 1978; Gandz and Murray, 1980; Gioia and Longenecker, 1994; longenecker, Sims & Gioia, 1987; Parker, Dipboye and Jackson, 1995; Pfeffer, 1981; Tziner, Latham, Price and Haccoun, 1996). Also Kacmar and Carlson (1997) linked politics to important work related attitudes and behaviours. For instance, organisational politics perceptions have been found to be related to increased job anxiety (Anderson, 1994; Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey and Toth, 1997; Ferris, Frinks, Bhawuk, Zhou and Gilmore, 1996; Ferris, Frinks, Galang, Zhou, Kacmar and Howard, 1996a; Ferris and Kacmar, 1992; Nye and Witt, 1993; Parker, Dipboye and Jackson, 1995). Drory, 1993 have linked it with reduced satisfaction with supervisor.

Ferris, Harrel-Cook, and Dulebohn (2000) suggested that individuals who perceive high levels of organisational politics also are likely to enact political behaviour themselves, thereby creating a self-perpetuating cycle. Great stress and show of nervous behaviour are usually exhibited by individuals' who face pressure by perceiving politics on the job (Vigoda, 2002). Baum, 1989 and Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey and Toth (1997) researches suggest that for many individuals, organisational politics are perceived as a threat to their well being and thus result in a variety of negative affective reactions like increased job anxiety and reduced job satisfaction etc (Kacmar and Baron, 1999). Thus organisational politics perceptions are likely to result in differing responses to organisational policies and practice depending on whether politics are viewed as an opportunity or a threat.

#### **Work Engagement:**

Work engagement can be viewed in two different ways. Engagement refers to energy, involvement, and professional efficacy, which are considered to be the direct opposites of burnout dimensions; which are defined as exhaustion, cynicism

and lack of professional efficacy (Maslach and Leiter, 1997). Workers engagement is a motivational, work-related state of fulfilment in employees (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Work engagement can be specifically defined as a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker, 2002). Vigour is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm and challenge. Absorption is characterised by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

Work engagement can be influenced by numerous factors. For instance, Mostert and Rothmann (2006) identified age, gender and race, job stress and personality traits as factors that influence work engagement. According to Fagbohunge (2009), stress related cases have recorded an upsurge within three years (2003-2006). Prominent among the cases is sudden slump at work resulting to death. Stress is linked to specific job demands, the level of support of supervisors and various organisational procedures and policies. Job demands and job resources are the two groups of organisational stressors described by Steyn and Mostert (2005). Job demands refers to those parts of the job that require physical or mental effort (deadlines, shift work, overtime, excessive paper work and handling of crisis situations), while job resources refer to those factors that may be functional in achieving work goals and the reduction of job demands [the correct equipment and effective supervision (leadership), a reasonable salary, recognition and enough personnel to do the job]. Thus, one can rightly say that job demands and job resources contribute to stress, which in turn affects work engagement.

Mostert and Rothmann (2006) identified two personality traits (Emotional stability and low conscientiousness) that can contribute to burnout (the antithesis of work engagement). They found out from their study that people that are emotionally stable are able to face stressful situations and thus score higher on well-being and engagement. Also, they reported that traits such as emotional stability, conscientiousness and extroversion promoted a tendency towards work engagement. Also according to them, background variables such as age, race and gender seem to play a role in work engagement. They found a significant difference between age groups in relation to work engagement. Gender and racial differences also impact on work engagement, with women having less access to resources to protect themselves from the effects of stress and black people reporting lower levels of well being and engagement than white people. Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006), on their part, did not find any relationship between engagement and gender but found a weak relationship between age and engagement, with engagement increasing slightly with age. They also found a weak relationship between engagement and occupational type, whereby blue-collar workers were less engaged compared to managers, educators and police officers.

Saks' (2006) study revealed that engagement mediated relationships between perceived organisational support, job characteristics, and job satisfaction, organisational commitment, intention to quit and organisational citizenship behaviour. Additionally, the study established a link between engagement, good health, and positive work affect and also organisational commitment. Hallberg and Schaufeli (2006) also established

similar findings, in relation to the positive relationship between engagement and organisational commitment and health.

Engagement tends to bring outcomes like reduced burnout, satisfaction, commitment and higher performance (Maslach, 2003); and employees feel belongingness to organisation with lower intentions to leave (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Good health and its positive effects on the performance is also studied in the past (Sonntag, 2003). Engaged employees perform better than those who are not because they are emotionally more positive (happy, joyful and enthusiastic) and enjoy better health (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008).

To confirm these findings, the present research is aimed at an empirical investigation of the influences of perceived organisational politics and leadership styles on work engagement among civil servants at the Governor's office in Ekiti State; Nigeria.

Upon this background therefore, the following hypotheses, informed by existing literature, were generated and tested:

1. There will be a significant influence of perceived organisational politics on work engagement and its dimensions.
2. There will be a significant influence of leadership styles on work engagement and its dimensions.
3. There will be a significant interaction effect of perceived organisational politics and leadership styles and work engagement.
4. There will be a significant interaction effect of sex, age, and rank on levels of work engagement.
5. There will be a significant effect of sex of leaders on leadership styles and perceived organisational politics.
6. There will be a significant relationship among perceived organisational politics, leadership styles and work engagement.

## **Methods**

### **Research Setting:**

The study was conducted among the civil servants of the Ekiti State Governor's Office, Ado-Ekiti; Nigeria.

### **Research Design:**

The study adopted three research designs: factorial design, independent groups' design, and correlational design for the study. Factorial design makes it possible to test for the interaction effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable; while the correlational design makes it possible to ascertain the relationship among the variables. Also, the independent groups' design makes it possible to compare the means of the independent variables under investigation.

### **Research Participants:**

Altogether, one hundred and twenty research participants were randomly selected from the population of civil servants in the Governor's office, Ado Ekiti; Nigeria. They were made up of fifty eight (58) males while the remaining sixty two (62) were females. Six (6) of them are SSCE holders, Ten (10) NCE holders, Fifty-One (51) are OND holders, Forty (40) have BSC/HND while the remaining Thirteen (13) have postgraduate certificates. Twenty-Five (25) participants occupy the upper level management, Forty- Nine (49) are in the middle level management level and Forty- Six (46) of them are in the lower level management.

### **Research Variables:**

The independent variables of this study are perceived organisational politics and leadership styles while the dependent variable is work engagement.

### **Research Instruments:**

Three instruments were used in this study. They are:

1. **Perception of Organisational Politics Scale (POP):** Perception of Organisational Politics was measured by adopting

and using Ferris and Kacmar's (1992) 31-item Perception of Organisational Politics Scale (POP). The POPS is designed to measure respondents' perceptions regarding the level of political behaviour in their organisations. The scale includes items such as "The rules and policies concerning promotion and pay are fair; it is how the supervisors carry out the policies that are unfair and self serving" and "I have seen people deliberately distort information requested by others for purposes of personal gain, either by withholding it or by selectively reporting it". Ferris and Kacmar, (1992) reported alpha reliability coefficient of 0.74 for the shorter version of POP scale while the researchers of this present study obtained alpha reliability coefficient of 0.78.

**2. Supervisory Description Behaviour Questionnaire (SDBQ):** This is a 48- item inventory developed by Fleishman (1953) to assess two different leadership and managerial styles in work organizations. However, the assessment is from the perspective of the workers, that is, how each worker perceives the leadership behaviour of his or her manager or supervisor or boss at work. The two leadership styles assessed are; Democratic/Consideration/Person or employee- centred and Autocratic/ Initiating structure/ Task or work- centred.

Fleishman (1953) reported the reliability coefficients for sample of 18 subordinates as Democratic (Spearman-Brown) .98 and Test- Retest (11 months) .87; and Autocratic (Spearman-Brown) .78 and Test- Retest (11 months) .75). Ejimofor (1987) correlated SDBQ with job and Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Ekpo-Ufot, 1981) to obtain the concurrent validity as follows; Democratic .142, Autocratic .336 and overall .428. The norms reported here are the mean scores obtained by workers in different organisations in Nigeria.

Scales	M (n=90)	F (n=60)	M&F (n=150)
Democratic	120.59	123.09	121.98
Autocratic	44.31	43.50	43.99
Overall SDBQ	100.30	100.65	165.97

**3. Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES):** The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) developed by Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez & Bakker (2002) was used to measure work engagement. The UWES includes three dimensions- vigour, dedication and absorption- which are conceptually regarded as the opposites of burnout and are scored on a seven point frequency-rating scale, ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (every day).

It is composed of 17 items and was found to have good psychometric properties with Cronbach's alpha generally higher than 0.80 (Duran, Extremera, and Rey, 2004; Montgomery, Peters, Schaufeli, and Den Ouden 2003; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). The researchers of this present study obtained Cronbach alpha 0.75. Moreover, confirmatory factor analysis showed that a three-factor structure of the scale (Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption) is superior in terms of fit to a one-factor structure (engagement) (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez and Bakker, 2002). However, the three dimensions of engagement are strongly intercorrelated when analysed either at the level of the latent factors (r usually higher than 0.80) (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2003). Validity studies also showed three engagement dimensions correlate negatively with the three dimensions of burnout (e.g., Demerouti, Bakker, De Jonge, Jenssen and Schaufeli, 2001; Montgomery, Peters and Schaufeli, and Den Ouden 2003) and that workers scoring high on the UWES tend to be committed to a high-quality performance, usually obtaining positive feedback from superiors (e.g., good appraisal), from the organisation (e.g., promotion), and from customers (e.g., gratitude).

## Results

The data collected were scored and analysed. The followings are the results.

**Table 1: An independent t-test summary table showing the influences of perceived organisational Politics on Work Engagement and its dimensions**

Variables	POP	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Vigour	Low	58	22.97	7.28	118	-	P<0.05
	high	62	25.32	8.01		1.68	
Absorption	Low	58	24.57	6.82	118	-	P>0.05
	High	62	26.13	8.57		1.10	
Dedication	Low	58	21.79	6.79	118	-	P<0.05
	High	62	24.03	7.30		1.74	
Work Engagement	Low	58	69.19	19.4	118	-	P>0.05
	High	62	74.89	21.74		1.51	

From the table above, it can be seen that perceived organisational politics (POP) has significant influence on levels of vigour [ $t(118) = -1.68, P < 0.05$ ] and dedication of employees [ $t(118) = -1.74, P < 0.05$ ], where those who perceived higher organizational politics had higher mean score on vigour and dedication than those with perceived lower organizational politics. However, there is no significant influence of POP on absorption [ $t(118) = -1.10, P > 0.05$ ] and global work engagement [ $t(118) = -1.51, P > 0.05$ ]. Therefore, hypothesis is partially accepted.

**Table 2: Regression analysis table showing the influences of leadership styles on Work Engagement**

Variable	$\beta$	t	p	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P
Autocratic	0.26	3.33	P<0.01	0.54	0.29	23.47	P<0.01
Democratic	0.46	5.82	P<0.01				

The table above shows that there is a significant independent and joint influence of the two domains of leadership style on work engagement of employees [ $F(2, 117) = 23.47, P < 0.01$ ]. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is accepted.

**Table 3: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) table showing the interaction effect of leadership styles and perceived organisational politics on work engagement.**

### Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

Source	Type III sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
POP	32.190	1	32.190	.100	P> 0.05
Democratic	3820.991	1	3820.991	11.852	P< 0.01
Style (Demo)	6332.077	1	6332.077	19.640	P< 0.01
Autocratic	290.281	1	290.281	.900	P> 0.05
Style (Auto)	728.426	1	728.426	2.259	P> 0.05
POP* Demo	260.646	1	260.646	.808	P> 0.05
POP* Auto	36108.774	112	322.400		
POP*					
Demo*Auto					
Error					

Table 3 above shows that democratic [ $F(1,119) = 11.85, p < 0.001$ ] and autocratic leadership styles [ $F(1,119) = 19.64, P < 0.01$ ] has significant main effect on work engagement. However, perceived organisational politics does not have a significant main effect on work engagement [ $F(1,119) = 0.1, P > 0.05$ ]. Also, there is no significant interaction effect of leadership styles and perceived organisational politics on work engagement [ $F(1,119) = 0.81, P > 0.05$ ]. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is not supported.

**Table 4: Analysis of Variance table showing the interaction effect of age, sex and rank of employees on work engagement.**

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Work Engagement

Source	Type III sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P
Age	630.029	3	210.010	.547	P>
Sex	1034.490	1	1034.490	2.696	0.05
Rank	1001.686	2	500.843	1.305	P>
Age * Sex	1423.481	3	474.494	1.237	0.05
Age * Rank	997.014	6	166.169	.433	P>
Sex * Rank	1953.150	2	976.575	2.545	0.05
Age * Sex *	2159.966	5	431.993	1.126	P>
Rank	33378.242	87	383.658		0.05
Error	614125.000	110			P>
Total	50060.191	109			0.05
Corrected Total					P>
					0.05
					P>
					0.05

Table 4 above showed that there is no significant interaction effect of age, sex and rank of employees on work engagement [ $F(5, 109) = 1.13, P > 0.05$ ]. Therefore, hypothesis 4 is not supported.

**Table 5: Independent t-test summary table showing the effect of sex of leaders on perceived leadership styles and organisational politics.**

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Democratic Style	Male	51	76.84	17.81	109	0.55	P>0.05
	Female	60	75.23	13.06			
Autocratic Style	Male	51	57.53	9.34	109	1.78	P<0.05
	Female	60	54.48	8.65			
POP	Male	51	95.61	9.80	109	0.51	P>0.05
	Female	60	96.87	15.33			

From the table above, there is no significant influence of sex of leaders on democratic style of leadership [ $t(109) = 0.55, P > 0.05$ ]. However, there is a significant influence of sex of leaders on autocratic leadership style [ $t(109) = 1.78, P < 0.05$ ], where male leaders ( $x = 57.53$ ) are more autocratic than their female counterparts ( $x = 54.48$ ). There is, also, no significant difference in sex of leaders on their perceived organizational politics [ $t(109) = 0.51, P > 0.05$ ]. Therefore hypothesis 5 is partially supported.

**Table 6: Correlation matrix table showing the relationship among leadership styles, perceived organizational politics and work engagement**

Variables	Demo	Auto	Vigour	Absorption	Dedication	Work Engagement
Demo Style	-	-	0.27**	0.23*	0.27**	0.28**
Auto Style	-	-	0.48**	0.40**	0.40**	0.47**
POP	0.007	0.37**	0.12	0.084	0.043	0.082

\*\*Significant at  $P < 0.01$ , \*significant at  $P < 0.05$  df (118)

Table 6 above showed that there is a positive relationship between democratic leadership style and work engagement together with its subscales [democratic style and vigour:  $r(118) = 0.27, P < 0.01$ ; democratic style and absorption:  $r(118) = 0.23, P < 0.05$ ; democratic style and dedication:  $r(118) = 0.27, P < 0.01$ ; democratic style and work engagement:  $r(118) = 0.28, P < 0.01$ ].

There is also a positive relationship between autocratic style and work engagement together with its subscales [autocratic style and vigour:  $r(118) = 0.48, P < 0.01$ ; autocratic style and absorption:  $r(118) = 0.40, P < 0.01$ ; autocratic style and

dedication:  $r(118) = 0.40, P < 0.01$ ; autocratic style and work engagement:  $r(118) = 0.47, P < 0.01$ ]

However, there is no relationship between perceived organizational politics and democratic style at  $r(118) = 0.007, P > 0.05$  while a relationship existed between POP and autocratic style  $r(118) = 0.37, P < 0.01$ . There is also no relationship between POP and work engagement together with its subscales [POP and vigour:  $r(118) = 0.12, P > 0.05$ ; POP and absorption:  $r(118) = 0.084, P > 0.05$ ; POP and dedication:  $r(118) = 0.043, P > 0.05$ ; POP and work engagement:  $r(118) = 0.082, P > 0.05$ ].

**Discussion**

It can be observed from the results of this study that perceived organisational politics (POP) influenced vigour and dedication, subscales of work engagement itself. It was discovered that those who perceived higher levels of organizational politics were less dedicated to their work and exert less energy at doing their works than those that perceived low organizational politics. This result is striking because perception of politics in the work place have been found to have adverse effect on dedication/commitment at performing job duties at some quarters and not in yet others.

This result is consistent with previous studies that see perceived organizational politics from the negative side. For example, POP has been seen to reduce organisational commitment (e.g., Vigoda, 2000), increase job stress and strain, job burnout (Kacmar, Bozeman, Carlson and Anthony, 1999; Valle and Perrew, 2000), and increase intent to turnover (Anderson, 1994; Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey, & Toth, 1997). Other researchers suggested that organisational politics may lead to perceived threat to employee wellbeing (Baum, 1989; Cropanzano, Howes, Grandey & Toth, 1997). It may be said that POP can result into either positive or negative reaction at work depending on whether it is perceived as opportunity or threat.

Since POP did not influence work engagement as a whole, it may be said that workers sampled are not so much concerned about political behaviours in the work place, thereby not affecting the overall level at which they are engaged in the job. Findings from present study also revealed that autocratic and democratic leadership styles independently and jointly predicted work engagement. In determining the direction of this influence, the correlation matrix table showed that both styles of leadership have significant positive correlation with work engagement and its subscales. This point to the fact that, the more employees perceive their supervisors to be autocratic, the more there is an increased level of engagement at work. It should also be noted that this pattern of relationship between autocratic style and work engagement also goes for democratic style. Another shocking evidence is that, the correlation coefficient of the relationship between autocratic style and work engagement is 0.40 while democratic style and work engagement is 0.28. This means that autocratic style may predict work engagement better than democratic style. According to conventional wisdom, autocratic style should lead to lower engagement while democratic style should result to increased job engagement because the former does not allow employees any say or participation in decision making while the latter encourages participation of employees in decisions that relate to their work. Nonetheless, conventional wisdom seems to be useless here. This finding therefore gives support to the situational or contingency approach to leadership, where the leader is expected not to be tied to a particular style of leadership. Instead, leaders are expected to use any style of leadership as it fits the situation on ground.

Sex, age and rank of employees did not seem to predict work engagement among the participants of this study. This result is consistent with the research of Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) in which they found that no relationship existing between engagement and gender. The result is not in consonance with the work of Mostert & Rothmann (2006) however, where gender was found to contribute to work engagement. Gallup's US research concluded that women tend to find more fulfilment in their jobs and are more engaged than men are.

As rank does not influence work engagement, similarly, age is not. The reason may be adduced to the fact that supervisors have imbued in their culture the attitude of engaging all employees irrespective of their ages and ranks. This result is not consistent with the findings of Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) where they found a relationship between age and engagement, though their relationship is a weak one. They established that engagement increases slightly with age. Mostert and Rothmann (2006) however, found out that younger police member experienced lower levels of engagement than older individuals. Variations in the findings here may be culture spelt. This is particularly so because Rentfrow, Gosling, and Potter (2008), for example have provided evidence suggesting that regional personality differences exist.

Results in the present study showed that male supervisors are more autocratic than their female counterparts. This result follows the traditional view that males are dominating while females are passive in social interaction. According to the study of Rosener (1990), men were typically "transactional leaders, that is, they see job performance as a series of transactions with subordinates. The transactions consist of exchanging rewards for services rendered or punishments for inadequate performance which may be said to be autocratic in nature. Women in her study were characterised as "transformational" leaders. They are skilled at getting subordinates to transform their own self interest into the interest of the larger group. The findings of this study also corroborates that of Eagly and Johnson (1990) meta-analysis, which found that women leaders are more democratic. These women actively work to make their interactions with their subordinates positive for everyone involved. More, specifically, the women encouraged participation, share power and information, enhance other people's self worth, and get others excited about their work. All these things reflect their belief that allowing employees to contribute and feel powerful and important is a win-win situation, good for the employees and the organisation. According to Moran (1992), men were supposed to be competitive, tough, decisive, and in control, while women were allowed to be cooperative, emotional, and supportive.

That men are more autocratic as leaders is understandable here because organisational politics is a behaviour strategically designed to maximize self interests (Ferris, Russ, Fandt, 1989) and therefore in conflict with the collective organisational goals or the interests of other individuals (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). The person involved in it will, inadvertently, likely adopt autocratic style of leadership as opposed to democratic style. And men, as culturally socialized, are usually involved in behaviours geared towards the subjection or relegation of others, particularly females, for the attainment of their personal interests and goals. Also, Arkin (2004) opined that females naturally dislike politics and distaste political behaviours whereas Rosener (1990) found out that men are more likely to use power that comes from their organizational positions.

## Conclusion And Recommendation

Based on the results of the present study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. That perceived organisational politics influence vigour and dedication dimensions of work engagement but not absorption dimension.
2. That both autocratic and democratic leadership styles independently and jointly influences work engagement.
3. That there is no significant interaction effect of leadership styles and perceived organizational politics on work engagement.
4. That there is no significant main and interaction effect of sex, rank of employees and age on work engagement.
5. There is a significant effect of sex of leaders on the use of particular style of leadership where male leaders tend to be more autocratic than female leaders.
6. That there is a relationship between leadership styles and work engagement together with its subscales.
7. That only autocratic leadership style is related to perceived organizational politics.
8. And that no relationship exists between perceived organizational politics and work engagement.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that organisations should adopt the contingency approach to leadership where the situation at hand will determine the type of leadership style to use and not just get fixed to a particular style. Also, it is imperative that organizations should implement the merit system in relating with employees and discourage a situation of perceived organizational politics among workers; where influential personnel will take advantage of the loop holes in the rules and regulations of the organization to achieve their self interests which may be inimical to overall organizational progress.

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