

RESEARCH ARTICLE

LEADERSHIP STYLE AND PERCEIVED RISK TAKING: MODERATING ROLE OF ATTRIBUTION STYLE OF BANK MANAGEMENT STAFF

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the moderating role of attribution style on relationship between leadership style and perceived risk-taking among bank management staff. One hundred and ninety-four (194) bank management staff comprising 100 males and 94 females drawn from ten commercial banks in Asaba, Delta state of Nigeria, participated in the study. Their ages ranged between 26 and 40 years, with a mean age of 33 years. A 45-item Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was used to measure leadership style. Adapted form of Perceived Risk-taking Scale was used to measure perceived risk-taking behaviour; and Anderson's Attribution Scale was used to measure attribution style. The result of the analysis showed that autocratic leadership style was a significant predictor of perceived risk-taking behaviour ($r = -.31, t = -3.03, p < .001$). Democratic leadership style was also found to be a significant predictor of perceived risk-taking behaviour ($r = .29, t = 2.82, p < .001$). Controllability attribution style moderated the relationship between autocratic leadership and perceived risk-taking ($r = -.31, t = -2.72, p < .001$). Also, controllability attribution style moderated the relationship between democratic leadership and perceived risk-taking ($r = .27, t = 2.57, p < .005$). Globality attribution style also moderated the relationship of laissez-faire leadership and perceived risk-taking ($r = -.26, t = -2.49, p < .005$). Implications of these findings were highlighted and suggestions made for further studies.

Key Words: Attribution style, Leadership style, Management policy, Risk-taking.

INTRODUCTION

Perceived risk taking has become a special aspect of our daily living and contemporary society; which is synonymous with the popular saying that "nothing ventured, nothing gained". The diverse aspects of risk taking which include financial (for example, Stock market investments, gambling, horse-beating), physical (for example, fire-fighting, smoking, unprotected sex); psychological (for example, refers to mind-set or attitude towards risk taking 'risk propensity' or avoiding risk 'risk aversion') and social (for example, standing for election, revealing homosexuality) (Tversky, 2011). However, the possibility of physical, financial or harm/loss due to a hazard is the dominating negative perspective. Also, there is a neutral perspective (risk= uncertainty about the outcomes "good or bad" of a decision) and a positive perspective (risk can mean 'thrill' or danger-induced feelings of excitement).

O'Brien (2009) defined risk taking as a component of leadership that must be grounded with a favourable balance of benefits weighed against the potential dangers of taking the risk. For instance, part of the risk taking is not only weighing the risks against the rewards and moving into the process with a vision of the benefits overshadowing the doubts, but recognizing the vulnerabilities and having an alternative plan to cope with unexpected problems. Although perceived risk has been a focus of interest of policymakers and researchers (Sjoberg, 1999), few organizations have actual policies to encourage risk taking on the part of their managers and employees. Among the reasons, there are subtle assumptions about risk taking that give a negative connotation within an

organizational setting (James, 1994). According to March and Shapira (1987), the discussion around the value of risk in most organizations is two sided. While it is often stated that risk taking is essential to innovation and progress, it is also sharply distinguished from gambling or playing the odds, which has negative connotation. Managers emphasize that this difference between their experience teaches them that the appropriate choice are those involving undesirable outcomes that can be avoided, whereas by gambling they actually mean risk taking that turns out badly. Thus, risky choices that fail are seen as mistakes that could be avoided- a perception that discourages managers from taking those risks. This results in organizations rewarding outcomes and not decision (Kaheman and Lovallo, 1993).

Financial risk taking is related to market structure. Therefore, risk taking could change because diversification across markets competition for borrowers might intensify as banks expand their operation which decreases a bank's rents, erodes its charter value; therefore provides incentives for bank to take more risk (Keeley, 1990). In the same view, greater competition might also lead to lower loan rates, which reduces the extent of borrowers' risk shifting incentives and thus reduces a bank exposure to risk of failure (Boyd and De Nicolo, 2005). Therefore, addressing one of the basic questions in banking: are banks with lending activities in several banking market safer than banks that focus their operations on a single market? Expanding lending operations into more markets to diversify risk across regions, and if loan returns across are not perfectly correlated, geographically diversified banks are safer because they are less exposed to shocks that hit the individual areas

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(Diamond 1984; Demsetz and Strhan 1997; Morgan, *et al.*, 2004). According to Jarrett (2000), risk is not only a probability of success, but is also always a probability given a set of premises. Attention to risk tolerance leads to more efficient use of resources because the project team has a better understanding of how much of the project's risk should be remedied. African firms face a highly risky business environment (Alderman and Paxson, 1992) with particular reference to the Nigerian banking industry, where management tries to push workers beyond their comfort zones. Questions about leadership style in terms of setting challenging goals, embracing the technological advancement, pushing people to go beyond limit as well as making causal explanations over successes and failures also appears to be puzzling in the world of work. Is it important for a worker taking an action to maintain a sense of purpose and cohesion without excessive engagement in risk taking behaviour? In the era of economic downturn and greater responsibility, people especially leaders change their pattern of investment as the societal needs keep wearing new look. In change and development, staff strength and training are important to enable one become more efficient and effective towards achieving challenging goals. Risk taking in organization is a salient psychological variable that happens daily in our work environment but is less investigated by researchers. The purpose of the present research is to examine the moderating role of attribution style on relationship of leadership style and risk-taking behaviours.

Leadership refers to the processes by which an individual influences the behaviour and attitudes of others. The position in an organization or group that is expected to have special influence in the organization is called leadership role. Leadership styles can be linked with the possessions of power, influence and status. Acts of leadership style can be observed at all levels of the organizational structure. Leadership style is a means by which attempts are made to influence followers to contribute to group goals and partake in risk taking and innovation (Hartnett and Barber, 2011). Leadership style is defined as the process by which an individual influences the attitude of and behaviour of others in an organization (Chen and Lee, 2007). Hence leadership style involves people who can think and act creatively in non-routine situation and who set out to influence the risk taking behaviours, actions and feelings of others.

A number of leadership styles have been linked to various types, but this present study will examine the three major styles of leadership as: Democratic, laissez faire and autocratic leadership styles. Democratic or participative is a style in which all members of a team are involved in identifying essential goals and developing strategies to reach those goals. Laissez faire leaders abdicate responsibility and avoid making decisions altogether that involve risks (Bass, 1990). They provide little directions to followers' and refrain from behaviours typically associated with leadership, such as clarifying expectations and setting goals for followers (Brass, Avoli, Jung and Boson, 2003). In autocratic or authoritarian style, the leader does not allow the employees to make the decisions. It minimizes the rights of the subordinates. However, a good leader uses all three styles depending on what forces between the leader, the followers, and the situation. Leaders are good innovators and risk takers. All changes and innovations involve risk taking and challenges. Leaders are

pioneers- people who are willing to step out into the unknown (O'Brien, 2007). For example, leadership style and risk taking could be innovative, mentoring, facilitating, efficiency-oriented or nurturing between leaders and subordinates to ensure efficiency in achieving organizational goals. In addition, leaders must be able to achieve greatness themselves and push others to exceed their own limits. Central to this is creating a risk-free environment for experimentation that allows learning through trial and error at all levels in the organization (Dennis, Langely and Pineault, 2000). Leaders learn from failure, asking what they could have done differently to create an alternative outcome. Leaders must learn by embracing tough challenges and stretching themselves, by taking risks that have potential consequences for their well-being. Empirically, research has shown that leadership has a significant influence on risk taking behaviour (Chen and Lee, 2007; Yukl, 2010; Wehman, Goldstein and Williams, 2013). This was supported by the findings of Byrnes, Miller and Schafer (2012). While review of attribution and its relationship with risk taking behaviour has a jointly significant influence on younger female and older male employees as well as perceived fear of failure, locus and risk taking. (Balogun, Ojedokun and Macaulay 2012). Also the findings of Rajarajan (2007) indicated an association between locus and risk taking capacity. Among all the research works reviewed, few studies were conducted in African firms. No previous study was conducted examining the management staff of Nigerian banks.

Attribution style was introduced in Abramson, Saligman, and Teasdale (1978) reformulated model of learned helplessness to account for people's individual differences in helplessness upon perceiving non-contingency between behaviour and outcomes. Some fundamental attributions have been found to have significant, enduring, and widespread effects on behaviour and decision making (Abramson, *et al.*, 1978). First, success or failure can be attributed to either internal (I did it) or external (fate, luck, powerful other factors). Second, the nature of the environment in which events occur varies or is stable. What an individual does following success or failure depends in large part on the attributions concerning the stability or instability of the environment in which that success or failure occurred. Employees may explain the bad event with stable causes (e.g., the job is a dead end) rather than unstable causes (e.g., the boss happened to be in a bad mood). Third, the degree to which an individual believes that an event is global or specific. Thus, employees who feel that the causes are global (e.g., all job assignments are unfair) rather than specific (e.g., this job assignment is unfair) expect bad event to pervade across situations.

This realization has led to the development of multidimensional attribution questionnaire (Folks and Steckely, 1992; Abramson, *et al.*, 1978). Therefore, attribution has locus, stability, controllability and globality dimensions. Tabak, Erkus and Meydan (2010) found an indirect relationship between autocratic and democratic leadership styles except for laissez-faire leadership style that was reported to have a direct relationship with locus of causality and peoples' attitude towards risk taking. Some researcher (Salhi and Boujelbene, 2012; Giovanni, Luc and Gustavo, 2013) found that stability attribution style moderates bank risk taking in Tunisia and United States respectively. Tarraf and Majeske (2008) reported a positive relationship of corporate

governance, controllability attribution, risk-taking and financial performance at banking companies.

Proposing a Moderating Mechanism

It is possible that psychological constructs such as attribution style may serve as the pathway for the role of leadership styles on risk taking behaviour. Moderation in this study assumes that some levels of attribution style and leadership style, the extent or level of perceived risk taking behaviour is altered. Leaders have job titles and working conditions which symbolize the linking conditions that make people to interpret events and make causal explanation of possible outcomes. In other words, leaders' abilities to set challenging goals, stepping out in the unknown and attributing their successes/failures to locus, stability, controllability and globality, makes this study pertinent. Major decisions in any establishment are taken by leaders, and these decisions could be high or low risk decisions. Numerous studies have shown that leadership style has a corresponding effect on risk taking decision of organizational leaders (Chen and Lee, 2007; Jung and Sosik, 2003; Sivasubramaniam, Murry, Avoli, and Jung, 2002; Walumba, Wang, Lawler and Shi, 2004). The successes and failures of these decisions cannot merely be credited to the leadership skills alone but also to how the leaders perceive the risky choices, what really could be responsible for either success or failure of these choices.

Attribution styles of the leaders have been studied and seen to play a big role in their decision making (Giovanni, Luc and Gustavo, 2013). Some fundamental attributions have been found to have significant, enduring, and widespread effects on behaviour and decision making (Darley and Cooper, 1998). Causal attribution basically suggests the explanation people generally make regarding theirs and other people's behaviour which will facilitate the understanding of future behaviour. Heider (1958) believed that when individuals understand the causes behind an event or action, they are able to reduce the feeling that the world is unstable and unpredictable because they can identify who or what is responsible for the event. This is usually done by assessing the co-variation between the cause and effect variables (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1973). Used appropriately, attribution style moderating the relationship between the leadership and risk taking can be largely beneficial in improving knowledge of self and commitment, preferred communication style, management, sensitivity training, goal-setting, and teamwork.

A leader knowing how to adapt to the way he or she works with others, how to communicate, provide information and learning, how to agree and identify challenging tasks, are the main factors enabling successfully managing and motivation of others and this can also help workers in taking risks in an organization. However, both the stability and internality of buyer's attributions are considered when one is determining the causes of successful job performance (Weiner, 1985). Specifically, men tend to attribute their successful job performance to their own ability (i.e., an internal, stable attribution). On the other hand, women tend to attribute their successful job performance to things such as luck (an external stable attribution). The influence of internal, stable and controllable attribution on emotions in response to negative outcomes is argued to exacerbate by attributions of

intentionality (Gundlach, Douglas and Martinko, 2002). This suggests that attribution of intent increases one's emotional sensitivity to either take or avoid risky behaviours. This argument is consistent with Dasborough and Ashkanasy's (2002) model of emotions and attributions which predicts that subordinates that make negative attributions of intentionality (i.e., self-serving, manipulative intentions) for their leaders' behaviours are likely to experience negative affect toward the leader, and decreasing leader-member relationship quality).

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested tested:

1. There would be no significant relationship between leadership style (democratic, laissez faire and autocratic) and perceived risk taking among bank management staff.
2. Locus attribution style will not significantly moderate the relationship between leadership styles and perceived risk taking among bank management staff.
3. Stability attribution styles will not significantly moderate the relationship between leadership styles and perceived risk taking among bank management staff.
4. Controllability attribution style will significantly moderate the relationship between leadership styles and perceived risk taking among bank management staff.
5. Global attribution style will not significantly moderate the relationship between leadership style and perceived risk taking among bank management staff.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants: One hundred and ninety-four (194) bank management staff participated in the study. They were drawn from 10 randomly selected commercial banks in Asaba: UBA, Sterling Bank, First Bank, Fidelity Bank, Stanbic IBTC, First City Monument Bank, Keystone Bank, Union Bank, Access Bank and Eco Bank. Employees who have been unit heads in their respective organizations for at least two years were eligible to participate in this study. The participants were drawn from the unit heads of operations, marketing, internal control and info-tech. They comprised male and female bank managers.

Instruments: Three instruments were used for the study. They include the following: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, Adaptation of Perceived Risk Taking Scale and Attribution Style Scale

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is a 45-item instrument developed by Bass and Avoli (1999) to measure leadership styles. The scale identifies key leadership behaviours in the organisation as perceived by the subordinates. It is made up of three dimensions: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles. The instrument has a 4 point likert response format ranging from 0 = Not at all, 1 = once in a while, 2 = sometimes, 3 = fairly often, and 4 = frequently, if not always. Rating the frequency of the observed leader behaviours and bears a magnitude estimation based ratio of 4:3:2:1:0, according to a tested list of anchors provided by Bass, Caseio and O'Connor (1974). The MLQ has been subjected to considerable psychometric scrutiny (e.g., Antonakis, Avoli and Sivasubramaniam, 2003). The item total

correlation yielded a coefficient alpha of .91. The researcher obtained an internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .67, .86, and .57 for autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire respectively, while the total items yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .88. An Adapted Form of Perceived Risk Taking Scale was used to measure perceived risk-taking. This scale is a 14-item instrument adapted from the 40-item Perceived Risk-taking Scale, originally developed by Weber, Blais and Betz (2002), to measure peoples' assessment on how risky a situation is. It measures general life risk-taking behaviours. Hence, the items which were judged to be relevant to bank management staff were extracted as follows: 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 20, 22, 24, 30, and 33. The items are scored on a 5-point rating options as 1 = very unlikely, 2 = unlikely, 3 = not sure, 4 = likely, and 5 = very likely. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.88 was reported by the authors. Convergent and divergent validity has been demonstrated by administration of PRBS, and Kogan and Wallach (1964) measure of risk attitude.

Weber, *et al.* (2002) reported that the total score of the PRBS can be summed to obtain a composite score by researchers. Higher scores entail perceptions of higher levels of risk taking behaviour. A Cronbach alpha of 0.92 was obtained for the 14-item scale used in this study as a homogenous scale. Anderson's (1999) Attribution Style Scale was used to measure attribution style. The scale consists of 20 items which measures four dimensions of the attribution scale namely: locus, stability, controllability and globalism. To make the responses easier, a 5-point likert response format was used instead of the 9-point format used by the developers. The items present hypothetical situations and outcomes that might happen to anyone. For each item, the respondent is asked to imagine himself/herself in that situation, and then write down one major cause of that outcome. A Cronbach's alpha of .74 was reported by the developers. The present researcher obtained Cronbach's alphas of .53, .54, .56 and .51 for locus, stability, controllability and globality respectively. Higher scores on each indicate higher attribution on locus, stability, controllability and globality.

Validation of the Instrument

The researcher combined the three scales into one questionnaire in order to conduct a pilot study using 80 bank workers in Warri, Delta state. The researcher obtained an internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .67, .86, and .57 for autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire respectively, while the total items yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .88 for Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. A Cronbach alpha of 0.92 was obtained from the 14-item scale of adapted form of Perceived Risk Taking scale. And that of Attribution scale yielded a Cronbach's alphas of .53, .54, .56 and .51 for locus, stability, controllability and globality respectively.

Procedure: An introduction letter was obtained from the Department of Psychology that facilitated access to the banks. Five research assistants were recruited and trained for the purpose of visiting the banks for the data collection. The participants were approached in their offices for the purpose of completing the questionnaire. Two hundred and ten copies of the instruments were distributed to the bank management staff in their respective banks. Out of the two hundred and ten questionnaires, 194 copies of the questionnaires were correctly

filled, which represented 92.3% properly filled questionnaires returned by the bank management staff. Only those who were willing to participate in the study were given the questionnaires for completion. There was no reward for participation in the study.

Design/Statistics: The researcher adopted a cross-sectional design and Multiple Regression was used for the data analysis. To test hypotheses in this study, a stepwise regression analysis was conducted. The purpose of enter method regression is to select a small subset of variables that account for most of the variation in the dependent or criterion variable. The interaction terms were derived from centering the dimensions of attribution style and the dimensions of leadership style, the interaction terms were computed and this is in line with Aiken and West (1991) method for interaction analysis.

RESULTS

Correlations analysis was conducted to test relationship between perceived and leadership style and attribution style with risk-taking. Table 1 shows these relationships. It was found that attribution style (globality, stability), leadership style (autocratic, democratic and laissez faire), the interaction terms of locus and laissez faire; globality and autocratic; globality and democratic were significantly related to perceived risk-taking. Their correlation coefficient (r) values are -0.16, -0.13, 0.50, 0.48, 0.22, 0.16, 0.26 and 0.21 respectively, and they were significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

Table 1. Zero order correlation among study variables

		M	SD	I
1	Perceived risk-taking	48.31	9.94	1.00
2	Gender	1.48	.50	-.09
3	Age	2.51	1.09	-.09
4	Work experience	1.50	.50	.08
5	Locus	59.90	8.12	-.05
6	Stability	54.99	7.53	-.16*
7	Controllability	58.26	8.85	-.13*
8	Globality	58.20	9.50	.05
9	Autocratic	21.38	6.44	-.50**
10	Democratic	66.31	17.50	.48**
11	laissez faire	18.50	5.89	.22**
12	Locus x autocratic	.01	1.04	.16*
13	Locus x democratic	.04	.96	.10
14	Locus x laissez faire	.02	1.02	.05
15	Stability x autocratic	-.13	.93	-.01
16	Stability x democratic	-.08	.87	.01
17	Stability x laissez faire	-.14	.79	.003
18	Controllability x autocratic	-.17	.97	-.04
19	Controllability x democratic	-.87	.90	.00
20	Controllability x laissez faire	.01	.82	-.09
21	Globality x autocratic	-.02	.99	.26**
22	Globality x democratic	.11	.93	.21**
23	Globality x laissez faire	.01	.86	.07

*= $P < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$ (significant)

Gender= 1-male, 0-female.

Table 2 shows the regression analysis result between attribution styles, leadership style and the interaction terms of attribution styles and leadership style. It was found that attribution styles, leadership style and the interaction terms were significantly related with perceived risk-taking. Adjusted R^2 , the strength of association or the explanatory power of the model in Model 2 is 0.331 and 0.427 in Model 3. The models are significant at 0.01 levels. Table 3 above shows that only work experience among the demographic variables (age,

gender, years of work experience) was significant ($B=3.53$, $=.8$, $t=2.45$, $p=.016$).

significant predictor of perceived risk-taking behaviour, which suggests that the higher the democratic leadership style exhibited by the management staff, the higher the perceived

Table 2. Regression Model Summary of the predictor demographics, attribution styles, leadership style and moderation (interaction of attribution style and leadership style)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std Error Estimate	R ²	F	df1	df2	Sig. F.
1	.175	.031	.015	9.86013	.031	2.008	3	190	.114
2	.576	.331	.295	8.34400	.301	11.760	7	183	.000**
3	.654	.427	.354	7.98783	.096	2.390	12	171	.007**

** $p<.01$ (significant)

Table 3. Coefficient Table of Regression Analysis

Factor	B	Beta	t	Sig
gender	-.309	-.016	-.253	.800
age	-1.179	-.129	-1.718	.088
Work experience	3.534	.178	2.445	.016
locus	-.066	-.054	-.630	.530
stability	-.074	-.056	-.783	.435
controllability	-.151	-.135	-1.927	.056
globalism	.116	.110	1.264	.208
autocratic	-.472	-.306	-3.029	.003
democratic	.165	.288	2.821	.005
laissez faire	.140	.083	1.256	.211
Locus x autocratic	-.005	.000	-.004	.997
Locus x democratic	-.792	-.077	-.560	.576
Locus x laissez faire	.435	.045	.447	.655
Stability x autocratic	-.553	-.052	-.451	.652
Stability x democratic	-.890	-.078	-.653	.515
Stability x laissez faire	1.414	.112	1.523	.130
Controllability x autocratic	-3.158	-.307	-2.715	.007
Controllability x democratic	3.033	.273	2.569	.011
Controllability x laissez faire	.864	.071	1.017	.311
Globality x autocratic	2.134	.213	1.603	.111
Globality x democratic	1.040	.097	.683	.495
Globality x laissez faire	-3.027	-.262	-2.485	.014

*= $P < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (significant). Gender= 1-male, 0-female

Autocratic leadership style was a significant predictor of perceived risk-taking behaviour ($B= -.47$, $=-.31$, $t=-3.03$, $p=.003$) which suggests that the lower the autocratic leadership style the higher the perceived risk-taking behaviour. Also, the democratic leadership style was a significant predictor of perceived risk-taking behaviour ($B= .47$, $=.29$, $t=2.82$, $p=.005$) which suggests that the higher the democratic leadership style exhibited by the management, the higher the risk-taking behaviour. The moderation term of controllability and autocratic leadership style was a significant predictor of perceived risk-taking behaviour ($B=-3.16$, $=-.31$, $t=-2.72$, $p=.007$), also, the moderation term of controllability and democratic leadership style was a significant predictor of perceived risk-taking behaviour ($B=3.03$, $=.27$, $t=2.57$, $p=.011$) and globality and laissez faire leadership style was a significant predictor of perceived risk-taking behaviour ($B=-3.03$, $=-.26$, $t=-2.49$, $p=.014$) while the remaining interaction terms were not significant.

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the moderating role of attribution style on relationship of leadership style and perceived risk-taking among bank management staff. Five hypotheses were tested in the study. It was found that autocratic leadership style was a significant predictor of perceived risk-taking behaviour, which suggests that the lower the autocratic leadership style, the higher the perceived risk-taking behaviour. Also, democratic leadership style was a

risk-taking behaviour. Laissez-faire leadership style was not a significant predictor of perceived risk-taking behaviour. Thus, the first hypothesis which stated that leadership style (autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire) will not be significantly related to perceived risk-taking was only supported for autocratic and democratic leadership style. The result is consistent with previous findings (e.g., Chen and Lee, 2007; Yukl, 2010; Wehman, Goldstein and Williams, 2013) which found a positive relationship between autocratic and democratic leadership styles and perceived risk-taking behaviours. Within the framework of Authentic Leadership Theory management staff who exhibit autocratic and democratic leadership styles are more likely to get involved in risk-taking in banking industry.

The second hypothesis was that locus attribution style would not significantly moderate the relationship between leadership style and perceived risk-taking. This hypothesis was not supported for only laissez-faire leadership style. Locus of causality moderated the relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and perceived risk-taking behaviour. The result supports the finding of Tabak, *et al.* (2010). The likely explanation for these might be that bank management staff who exhibit laissez-faire leadership style, usually interpret the cause of events to be something about others. Therefore, perceiving something to be risky in banks is dependent on personal judgment. The third hypothesis stated that stability attribution style will not significantly moderate the relationship between leadership style and perceived risk-taking. This hypothesis was not supported for any of the leadership styles. This result contradicts previous findings (Salhi and Boujelbene, 2012; Giovanni, Luc and Gustavo, 2013) which found that stability attribution style moderates bank risk taking in Tunisia and United States respectively. The likely explanation for these might be differences in cultural background, political, and socio-economic stability since those foreign owned banks are relatively more stable than the Nigerian banks.

The fourth hypothesis stated that controllability attribution style will significantly moderate the relationship between leadership style and perceived risk-taking. This hypothesis was supported for autocratic and democratic leadership styles, but was not supported for laissez-faire. The result is consistent with the findings of Tarraf and Majeske (2008). Imperatively, managers adopt the autocratic and democratic leadership styles in risk-taking perception. Management staff fear that individuals will draw negative conclusions about their leadership abilities if they use an inappropriate degree of decision-making empowerment. The fifth hypothesis was that global attribution style will not significantly moderate the relationship between leadership style and perceived risk-taking. This hypothesis was only supported for laissez-faire leadership

style. Thus, the positive relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and perceived risk-taking gets weaker in the presence of high versus low globality attribution style.

Implications of the Findings

The findings of the present study have good implications for practice. Since it has been found that autocratic and democratic leadership styles predicted perceived risk-taking behaviour within the banking industry, it can further be asserted that although, the democratic leadership style is encouraged as the gold standard; the autocratic leadership style is also necessary to ensure balance of the leadership styles in the banking sector. It is imperative also to note that banking industry desire to maximize profit through diligent and consistent hard work, therefore, bank management staff should be consistently trained on how best to diversify leadership styles in decision-making. Since controllability attribution style moderated the relationship between leadership styles (autocratic and democratic) and perceived risk-taking, controllable attribution style can buffer the effects of simultaneous use of autocratic and democratic leadership styles on perceived risk-taking in the banking industry. Therefore, as the bank management staff shoulder the responsibility of decision-making, it becomes necessary to consider the most appropriate leadership style to use in a given situation. Consequently, Government in collaboration with Chief Executive Officers (C.E.O's) should provide enabling environment for sensitivity training in order to enhance managerial skills. In the same vein, since global attribution style moderated the relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and perceived risk-taking, global attribution style can buffer the effects of laissez-faire on perceived risk-taking.

Limitations of the Study/ Suggestions for Future Studies

The present study had some problems, which might limit the generalizability of the results. The study was carried out with only 194 bank management staff in Asaba, Delta State. This was as a result of few managers in the bank and non-cooperative attitude of some bank managers in accepting to fill questionnaire in some urban areas where higher institutions are closely located. Thus generalization of the findings to the entire bank management population in Nigeria may be limited. Secondly, the number of items in the questionnaire was quite large which affected the response rates to the questionnaire. Future researchers should attempt to use more than two bank management population from different states especially those banks in densely populated cities in Nigeria to enable a wider generalization to entire bank population. Also, since perceived risk-taking behaviour is not restricted to bank population, future researchers should endeavour to extend this area of research to management staff in other sectors of the Nigerian economy.

Conclusion

In this study, a significant relationship of autocratic and democratic leadership styles to perceived risk-taking among bank management staff. Also, controllability attribution style moderated the relationship between autocratic and democratic leadership styles in perceived risk-taking; while locus of causality and globality attribution styles moderated the relationship between laissez-faire and perceived risk-taking.

Since, research have shown that psychological variables are important predictors of perceived risk-taking behaviour as established by the present study, the researcher is of the opinion that the collaboration among Government, Chief Executive Officers and Industrial Psychologists would go a long way to shape managerial roles in banking sectors and the contemporary Nigerian industries.

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