

Analysis of Leadership Styles Practiced in Construction Projects – A Review

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Abstract:- The seminar paper provides a review of previous research findings backed by a pragmatic perspective pertaining to the topic of leadership styles practiced in construction projects. The paper provides a detailed collated review of various leadership styles based on prominent leadership theories that are practiced worldwide at present alongside a pragmatic analysis of the feasibility of the said leadership styles for construction projects. The paper has been structured in a manner that includes a brief introduction to the topic, definition of leadership, theories and styles, importance of the analysis of leadership styles followed by the discussion section that provides a comprehensive review of the characteristics, advantages, disadvantages, examples, best fit situations and the feasibility of each selected leadership style. Finally, the paper is concluded with recommendations that could be applied across the board to improve leadership within construction projects. The author anticipates that the content provided in this seminar paper shall be beneficial for effective decision making by organizational leadership to establish high performing construction project teams led by appropriate leaders that not only are focused on the achievement of scope, schedule, cost and quality requirements but also the wellbeing of team members.

Keywords:- *Leadership Styles in Construction Projects, Leadership Style and Project Performance, Leadership in Construction Projects.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Although construction firms have seen growth in their financials, and the construction industry has experienced major upgrades in terms of the technology and management practices, the project success has not enhanced as anticipated which could potentially be due to increased needs, complexities and uncertainties and non-prevalence of adequate leadership to counteract the impacts on the human resources involved within the industry (Ismail & Fathi, 2018; Zhao et al., 2021).

The absolute necessity of improvement in leadership within construction projects is manifested through the loss of nearly 4% of the global GDP (gross domestic product) on accidents and other work-related injuries (Ismail & Fathi, 2018). Since construction industry is heavily dependent on manpower, and construction teams are often large and multidisciplinary with varying levels of authority and

interests, leadership plays a pivotal role in ensuring that adequate safety procedures are being practiced within construction projects, and to ensure optimum productivity within the project (Ismail & Fathi, 2018, Liphadzi et al., 2015).

Although the construction industry is considered as the backbone of all other industries with nearly 13% contribution towards the global GDP, it too is considered as the major culprit behind global warming, accounting to nearly 19% greenhouse gas emissions, nearly 40% carbon emissions, and half of global solid waste reaffirming the conventional stance of “take-use-dispose” approach (Afzal & Tumpa, 2024). Given the environmental challenges it has imposed upon the wellbeing of the world, adoption of leadership practices backed by the objective of sustainable development has seen a surge during the recent years (Ismail & Fathi, 2018; Afzal & Tumpa, 2024). However, exponential surge of construction projects has resulted in challenges such as scarcity of resources, shorter deadlines, stringent quality and contractual requirements which has demanded a well-balanced leadership approach to ensure that these challenges are tackled adequately alongside the sustainable and environmental aspects (Afzal & Tumpa, 2024).

Construction projects, like any other project are often led by a project manager who is responsible for ensuring the project activities comply with the specifications and is delivered within the budget and the agreed schedule whilst conforming to the quality requirements (Oke, 2013). However, due to complexity of construction projects, and involvement of a significant number of stakeholders and varying influences and interests, ensuring cohesion within all interested parties and the project team is a vital task that is linked to the leadership role of the project manager (Oke, 2013). According to Buba and Tanko (2017), construction of all industries due to the involvement of diverse cohorts of individuals, relies heavily on the performance of the leader. The requirement for adequate leadership within the construction industry is so much, that certain project-based organizations are of the view that projects do not require managers, but leaders (Dubois et al., 2015).

According to Dubois et al. (2015), the degree of success of a project is commonly ascertained using the four-dimensional model which considers efficiency in terms of complying with the agreed schedule and cost, customer satisfaction, benefit realization and accomplishment of organizational goals, and futuristic preparations in terms of

acquisition of novel technology and talent thereby triggering the necessity of acquiring overall awareness by the project leaders.

Construction projects performed in eastern nations have shown inclination to adopt more people-oriented approaches than that of western nations due to cultural differences such as increased collectivism and higher power distance as shown within Chinese construction firms where project team members tend to accept changes that benefit the entire project/team regardless of alignment with their individual abilities and values contradicting the consideration of employees influenced by the western culture (Zhao et al., 2021). Hence, this manifests that the cultural background of the team members as well as the project leader could act as a mediator for success in projects since exposure to the same leadership style by team members from varying cultural backgrounds shall not be perceived in a similar fashion (Zhao et al., 2021). Further, it is often evident that construction employees from eastern countries possess attitudes that are detrimental to the success of the project which potentially could be due to non-alignment of compensation with the work demanded compared to other industries (Santoso & Chandra Tali, 2004). Hence, cultural awareness plays a pivotal role in determining the success of project leadership.

According to Ismail and Fathi (2018) the most prominent leadership styles that are being practiced in the construction industry are transformational, transactional, full range, servant, contextual and charismatic, which have been analysed in depth in this research study.

Although the leadership style adopted by the project manager is found to impact the project progress, Thoha et al. (2020) has argued otherwise. The amount of impact the project management style imposes on the project and project team is discussed in forthcoming sections of this paper.

Despite the necessity of adequate leadership within the construction industry, the amount of research that has been performed around leadership styles and its feasibility is insignificant compared to that of technical, technological and project management aspects (Buba & Tanko, 2017).

Accordingly, this study shall analyse the leadership styles that are practiced in the construction industry and its feasibility based on evidence from literature sources as well as practical experiences of the Author and other Industry Experts. This study shall also entail recommendations that shall benefit not only the current project leaders but also the higher management for the selection of appropriate individuals for leadership roles and avenues to upskill them.

➤ *Definition of Leadership, Leadership Theories and Styles*

Although project management plays a significant role in determining the success of a construction project, management is being dealt with managing compliance of the tasks with the relevant processes and specifications, whereas leadership is being dealt with providing the required guidance and direction to the team (Dubois et al., 2015). Given the number of human resources that are involved in a construction

project, the role of a project manager should not only be confined to management but mostly around leadership as well seconding the statement “A strong leader does not build an organization upon his shoulders. It is crafted in the hearts and through the hands of his dedicated team” (Dubois et al., 2015).

According to Santoso and Chandra Tali (2004), Ismail and Fathi (2018), and Thoha et al. (2020), leadership is considered an art of influencing individuals to achieve a defined goal and also the manner in which the project leadership presents themselves to derive the best possible performance from their subordinates. As per Bass's transformational leadership theory, leader establishes and maintain accountability and effective communication within the team whilst, stimulating the motivation of the subordinates towards accomplishing the relevant objectives (Oke, 2013; Ismail & Fathi, 2018). According to Dubois et al. (2015), leaders also play a pivotal role in convincing stakeholders to embrace change that could benefit in accomplishing the defined goals of the project.

Leadership is influenced by the self-cognition of the leader, his/her personality traits, vision/purpose, and self-perceived contingencies (Oke, 2013; Liphadzi et al., 2015). According to Zhao et al. (2021), the attitude, behaviour and drive of the leader possess the potential to vary according to their dominant cultural exposure. Gender equality, power distance, individualism/collectivism, short/long term orientation are some prominent dimensions that influence the effectiveness of the leader pertaining to engagement of the employees (Afzal & Tumpa, 2024). According to Liphadzi et al. (2015), vision of the leader, his/her perceived values, and the approach of execution are considered the key dimensions in which leadership differs from person to person.

According to Afzal and Tumpa (2024), the key competencies of an effect leader are, flexibility, ingenuity, cognition, influenceability, self & emotional awareness, communication, organization and planning, handling complexity and uncertainty, customer service, technological awareness, and financial management. This has also been confirmed by Bwalya (2023), further stressing the importance of sound decision-making, communication, strategic alignment and emotional skills to function as an efficient leader.

As per the management theory, Leadership is studied as a trait, behaviour as well as contingency in which the traits elucidate who leaders are, behaviours state what leaders do whereas the contingency defines how leaders deal with elements that are beyond their control, proving the importance of all 3 approaches (Santoso & Chandra Tali, 2004). Some studies have discouraged the sole reliance on personality traits when studying the conduct of leader, however, this is also found to be a strong antecedent to the behavioural/functional approach of a leader (Santoso & Chandra Tali, 2004). According to Buba and Tanko (2017), researchers often take two approaches namely, analysing leadership as a driver of the project, whereas the other analysing leadership as a clarifier of information.

It is evident that the style of leadership varies from individual to individual based on his/her inherent characteristics, inherent talent, skills acquired, and the behaviour demonstrated during interactions with subordinates (Ismail & Fathi, 2018). According to Santoso and Chandra Tali (2004) & Oke (2013), leadership styles are primarily of two types of namely employee-centered which adopts a democratic/participative approach and task-centered which adopts an autocratic/authoritative approach. However, this has evolved to a much wider range of leadership styles as explained in detail in this paper.

Given the complexity of construction projects, the leadership style adopted for each construction project and/or phase tend to vary based on a plethora of elements namely, the characteristics of the project such as the scope, schedule, cost, quality required etc., contractual requirements, life cycle of the project, resource constraints as well as environmental factors (Oke, 2013).

According to Oke (2013), the Jerrell/Slevin measuring instrument has defined four leadership styles, namely i) Shareholder – leader does not play an active role within the team and possess no authority to make decisions. ii) Autocrat – leader does not seek any information from the team and possess complete authority to make decisions on behalf of the team. iii) Consensus – leader encourages the team to actively participate in issue resolution and to provide inputs for effective decision making. iv) Consultative Autocrat – the leader relies on the input of the team; however, decision-making is still under the purview of the leader. This is somewhat like Hersey & Blanchard's situational model which consists of telling – provide information and supervision, selling – provide avenues for clarification, participating – create avenues to share thoughts and facilitate the decision-making process, and delegating (Santoso & Chandra Tali, 2004). Out of which, selling style possesses the highest levels of task and relationship behaviours.

According to Thoha et al. (2020) As per Hay-Mcber theory, leadership is of six styles namely, i) Coercive – retains sole authority of decision-making, ii) Authoritative – enforces action within the team to achieve the objectives, iii) Affiliative – creates a harmonious working relationship with subordinates, iv) Democratic – delegates authority when required, values collaboration and provides guidance, v) Pace-setting – sets high standards and leads by example, and vi) Coaching – provides assistance to achieve the required objectives.

According to Anwar et al. (2019), the 3 most prominent styles of leadership that are being practiced widely in the construction industry are transformational, transactional, laissez-fair as part of the full range leadership theory.

Based on the path-goal leadership theory, the style that is used by the leader should enable effective communication in between relevant parties/stakeholders, reward work that warrants recognition, and ensure that the rewards align with the interests of the receiving team member (Buba & Tanko, 2017).

According to the normative decision model, the amount of participation required by the project leader for project decisions rely on the criticality of the decision, the amount of information leader and team possesses, the acceptance of the decision by team members, and prevalence of rules, procedures and policies surrounding the project implementation (Buba & Tanko, 2017).

According to the leadership substitute theory, effective leaders tend to choose the best individuals for the team and establish a work system which helps each team member to accomplish their tasks with minimum interaction and supervision by the leader thereby enhancing the productivity and efficiency of project team performance (Buba & Tanko, 2017).

In the recent times, the construction industry has seen a significant shift towards a leadership approach backed by sustainable concepts focused on long-term impacts, enhancing customer value, ensuring loyalty and engagement within the team, and enhancing the level of quality of products and services offered (Afzal & Tumpa, 2024).

➤ *Importance of Analysis of Leadership Styles*

It is no doubt that construction projects are highly complex, lengthy and often come to fruition with the participation of a diverse set of stakeholders of varying authority and interest which influence the success of the project. Due to this dynamic nature, awareness of different leadership styles and choosing the most feasible leadership style are pivotal for the success of any construction project (Ismail & Fathi, 2018). The feasibility of a leadership style shall rely on a plethora of aspects namely, the organizational culture, circumstances, group dynamics, personality traits and skills of the individual (Ismail & Fathi, 2018). The importance of analysing the leadership style is vital as this influences decision making, pattern of communication, establishment of work environment, the approach for employee engagement and motivation and shall vary from person to person since individual perception and values are antecedents of the leadership style (Bwalya, 2023).

Based on the study done by Inbaekemen Go and Odiwri, it is found that leadership directly influences employee performance and often the participative leadership styles tend to enhance the performance (Ismail & Fathi, 2018). According to Ismail and Fathi (2018), the leadership approach adopted by the Project Manager towards safety often acts as a catalyst for successful behavioural changes that are conducive to an improved safety environment. Leadership plays a significant role in influencing behavioural change within employees and it is often found that organizations with lack of leadership tend to face consistent delays in terms of delivery and eventually leads to project failure (Liphadzi et al., 2015; Anwar et al., 2019).

Further, it is also found that a one-style-fits-all approach has been counterproductive in construction projects, thereby warranting the necessity of altering the leadership styles throughout the project life cycle to ensure that enhanced effectiveness and efficiency (Ismail & Fathi, 2018).

According to Zhao et al. (2021), project success has found to be influenced by the level of professionalism of the project management as well as the composition of the team thereby manifesting the necessity for project leadership to have continuous urge to upskill him/herself in terms of technical and managerial expertise as well as personal development and to ensure the possession of adequate interpersonal awareness to choose the team that could be best for the project/project situation.

Further, given the criticality of team commitment for successful design and build projects, the level of organization within a project leader influences the productivity of the team as the subordinates tend to adjust themselves to align with the behaviour of the leader (Santoso & Chandra Tali, 2004; Dubois et al., 2015; Buba & Tanko, 2017).

Based on person-organization fit theory, certain personality traits possessed by individuals could be better suited for certain projects whilst being detrimental to the rest (Dubois et al., 2015). For example, the traits of openness to experiences, and consciousness were found to be highly effective for projects that are complex and complicated such as novel technological projects (Dubois et al., 2015). However, these traits posed less significance for projects that were less complex and in fact is found that these traits could be detrimental to simple and straightforward projects, as leaders with these traits tend create changes and introduce too much complexity than what is required (Dubois et al., 2015).

Hence, as mentioned above, it is very much important to analyze leadership and leadership styles in depth to ensure that people who have a greater potential to lead are made leaders instead of using ineffective conventional approaches such as seniority and technical expertise.



Fig 1 Leadership Style Vs Frequency

II. METHODOLOGY

The study has been completed in the form of a literature review and synthesis. The literature review pertaining to the analysis has been performed using the keywords “Leadership styles in construction projects”, “Leadership Style and Project Performance” by utilizing the google scholar search engine. A total of 28 journal articles were perused out of which the journal articles that duplicated content have been disregarded. Repetition of findings towards the last set of journal articles indicated the feasibility of terminating the literature survey. The findings from the review have then been perused and classified into broader topics “Definition of Leadership, Leadership Theories, and Styles”, “Importance of Analysis of Leadership Styles”, Discussion section which emphasizes on each chosen leadership style, and finally the

Conclusion/Recommendation section that recommends the measures to be adopted by leaders to enhance the performance in construction project management teams.

To formulate a structure for this research study, and to ensure the clarity of the content and practicality for construction projects, the leadership styles associated with the literature perused have been portrayed in the figure 1, out of which ten leadership styles that have shown to appear through multiple literature sources have been considered for in depth analysis in this research paper.

The recommendations have then been verified for relevance and applicability with the assistance of 5 selected industry practitioners who possess at least 10 years of Construction Project Management experience.

III. DISCUSSION

➤ *Servant Leadership Style*

Servant leadership style is more inclined towards empowering followers and is often found to contribute to project success as is a style possessed by successful project managers (Ismail & Fathi, 2018).

Table 1 is a summary of the leadership style which entails its typical characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages.

Past literature and case studies show its suitability for environments that prioritize collaboration, empowerment and development of individuals and teams. It is very common within non-profit and social services sectors. Construction projects are often dealt with a plethora of diverse yet complex

activities that are often performed by a set of individuals with a diverse set of skillsets that is connected to the project through varying levels of influence and interest. Further, it is evident that most of the construction projects are governed by the clause “time is of the essence” thereby demanding stringent schedules and mandatory compliance. Hence, it is obvious that servant leadership style may not be feasible for the implementation phase of the project. However, due to collaborative approach offered by this leadership style, this may show a significant effectiveness during the initiation and planning phases of the project. This could also help the project leadership to forecast any potential risks in the future and innovative means to counter those based on diverse perspectives offered by subordinates who are at the coal face. This will also improve self-satisfaction among employees and increase the work output of the team since this provides some sense of belonging.

Table 1 Servant Leadership Summary

Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Service oriented	Improves engagement and satisfaction of employees through promotion of sense of purpose, belonging and fulfillment.	Necessity to incur a significant time, effort and investment to support and develop followers
Empowers and develops followers	Establishes a positive and supportive culture, built on trust, respect, and transparency.	Often found to be challenging when trying to balance the contradictory needs of individual followers and organizational objectives. Warrants alignment of values for effective execution.
Values collaboration and teamwork	Ability to develop a motivated and skillful workforce that could benefit the long-term success of the firm.	Subordinates could misuse the support and generosity of the leader, thereby leading towards deprived accountability.
High Morality		

- (Note. Parts of the above table Adapted/ Retrieved/Reprinted from "Leadership Styles" by A. Bwalya, 2023, Article in Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation, 11 (08), 2023.)

➤ *Transformational Leadership Style*

Transformational leadership style is more inclined towards influencing and motivating subordinates and is found to contribute to project success as a firelighter leadership style especially in project pertaining to process and cultural change (Ismail & Fathi, 2018).

According to Liphadzi et al. (2015) and Zhao et al. (2021) the correlation of project success is highest with transformational leadership as it is based on trust, satisfaction and leadership charm. Further the factors, influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration that comprise transformational leadership are pivotal to obtain compliance from employees with a sense of purpose (Oke, 2013; Liphadzi et al., 2015). Influence factor acts as the agent which strengthen the beliefs of the team, whilst inspirational motivation enhances the level of self-confidence and esteem within the project team alongside intellectual stimulation which clarifies the objectives of the project and what is required from the team together with individualized consideration to develop the engagement, enthusiasm and performance of each individual employee (Zhao et al., 2021). Transformational leaders are often found to action and verbalize in a manner that enables

the project team to perceive the purpose and value of their actions/work (Zhao et al., 2021). Due to their effectiveness in communicating objectives with clarity, and collaborative approach to clarify the concerns of the project team, it enhances exploratory thinking within the team thereby leading to generation of novel ideas/concepts (Zhao et al., 2021).

Given the increase of demands within the construction sector and urgency for delivery of projects, the construction industry is in need of their project teams to perform beyond standard conventional expectations which has led to higher management and subordinates to believe that transformational leadership style is the most productive approach due to its inclination towards satisfying the needs of the followers (Zhao et al., 2021).

However, according to Zhao et al. (2021), that transformational leadership has an inverted U-shaped relationship with project success thereby suggesting that transformational leadership imposes the greatest influence on project success when it is at the medium level, which warrants the necessity of avoiding any extremity and to find a perfect balance in between satisfying the needs of the project team as well as accomplishing the organizational objectives.

Table 2 is a summary of the leadership style which entails its typical characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages.

Past literature and case studies portray its suitability for organizations that perform projects that require innovation and adaptability. This leadership style is very common in change management projects pertaining to mergers, acquisitions and restructuring of firms (Buba & Tanko, 2017). Due to the highly dynamic and demanding nature of construction projects, a transformational leader can play a pivotal role in influencing and motivating the subordinates during the initiation, planning and implementation phases of the project, through inspiration of a shared vision that gives the project team a purpose and sense of belonging. Their approach of empowering individuals may also boost the self-confidence and esteem of the project team and grant some autonomy to be creative within the scope of the task. Setting an example to the project team by walking the talk, it shall influence the team members to replicate the same thereby improving accountability. Through approaches such as recognition and feedback, subordinates tend to show a higher

level of motivation to accomplish the task by considering a task as a holy grail instead of another mere activity.

According to Afzal and Tumpa (2024), transformational leadership is the go-to leadership style to foster sustainable construction due to the degree of influence it could impose on the project team. The effectiveness of the transformational leadership style could vary based on dominant culture of team/project location (Afzal & Tumpa, 2024). Since eastern countries have higher collectivism, long term focused, and greater power distance, transformational leadership plays an effective role than transactional leadership. Whereas, since western countries have higher individualism, short term focused and lesser power distance, transactional leadership shall play an effective role. However, based on the creative nature of the roles, intrinsic motivation fueled by transformational leadership plays an important role regardless of the nature of the country/dominant culture.

Table 2 Transformational Leadership Summary

Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Visionary and provides direction	Improves the level of motivation and commitment within teammates through inspiration	Over-reliance on leader’s guidance may tarnish the leadership skills and autonomy of the subordinates
Effectively communicates	Sets high expectations and encourages innovation	Increased levels of stress and burnout within leaders and subordinates as they try to accomplish higher expectations that required
Inspires and motivates followers	Establishes inclusivity, collaboration and avenues to enhance creativity	Individuals that are uncomfortable with change may resist the approach of the leader that could lead to friction and conflicts.
Encourages change	Drives change within the firms	
Empathetic towards followers		
Provides intellectual stimulation		

- (Note. Parts of the above table Adapted/ Retrieved/Reprinted from "Leadership Styles" by A. Bwalya, 2023, Article in Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation, 11 (08), 2023.)

➤ Transactional Leadership Style

Transactional Leadership style is more inclined towards maintaining promises and adopting a tit-for-tat approach that is prominently found within the construction industry. This is the conventional leadership style that is unknowingly followed by most of the leaders that have led to introduction of benefits/perks to the subordinates linked to performances as an attempt to improve performance and productivity of the team. Transactional leadership is primarily based on emphatic goal setting, contingent material and personal rewarding alongside recognition.

According to Liphadzi et al. (2015), transactional factors such as contingent reward, active and passive management by exception have been pivotal to enhance the effectiveness of any leader. Passive management by exception approach shows neglect until a serious issue surfaced where the leader gets actively involved after the occurrence of the problem but shall revert to his/her previous state of neglect (Anwar et al., 2019). This approach is related to the famous clause, "let us cross the bridge once we get there". Whereas active management by exception approach defines the

standard to be met by the subordinates for efficient outcomes alongside proper definition of the type of punishment that will be associated with non-compliance (Anwar et al., 2019). The transactional leaders who adopt this approach is often found to observe the actions of the team closely and rectify errors, if any through unrealistic evidence (Anwar et al., 2019).

According to Anwar et al. (2019), contingent reward and active management by exception has shown positive correlation with project success whereas, otherwise with passive management by exception.

A significant drawback of the transactional leadership style is its impact on employees' motivation due to friction around power, bureaucracy and politics although it could increase the performance of the team using the "get the job done" approach (Dubois et al., 2015).

Table 3 is a summary of the leadership style which entails its typical characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages.

Past literature and case studies portray its suitability for organizations that need a clear structure and perform projects that require strict compliance to defined processes. This leadership style is prominent within well-established multinational organizations with a very strong culture and

industries that require strict compliance such as healthcare. Due to its performance driven and result oriented nature, this leadership style is avidly practiced in the construction sector too.

Construction projects can be of diverse compliance requirements, and it is subject to the nature of the organization to which the construction firm is serving for. Construction projects related to petroleum, energy, mining and healthcare often tend to warrant strict compliance with the relevant industry standards with minimum room for creativity and innovation. However, this does not apply to residential high rises, hotels, etc. as it often provides avenue to be creative and innovative within the frameworks of the relevant standards.

Hence, this leadership style could be feasible during all stages of a project that possess stringent compliance requirements and shall be effective during the implementation stage of all construction projects due to its goal-oriented

nature. Sole reliance on this leadership style may not be ideal during the initiation and planning phases of creative construction projects as the compliance-oriented nature of this leadership style could degrade creativeness and innovativeness of the project team. This leadership style may not be effective to find a solution for an issue on site but shall be ideal to drive the solution that has been found. It is also found that construction project success is heavily reliant on a mixture of transactional and transformational leadership, thereby manifesting the necessity of possessing awareness of both leadership styles for effective and efficient leadership that is conducive to increased performance of the team (Liphadzi et al., 2015). As previously elaborated under the topic of transformational leadership style transactional leadership style could be of greater effectiveness in Western Countries due to the high individualism, short term focus and lesser power distance within organizations (Afzal & Tumpa, 2024).

Table 3 Transactional Leadership Summary

Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Defines expectations with clarity	Enables subordinates to comprehend what is required from them with clarity alongside the associated rewards and repercussions	Since the primary focus is on achieving goals and targets through well-defined protocols and systems, this has a potential to degrade creativity and innovation within the project team
Defines the associated contingency rewards and repercussions	Efficient and effective decision making through established protocols and systems	Although rewards and punishments could be effective over the short-term, it could degrade the motivation of employees to comply over the long term
Values relationship (linked with the task)		Leaders shall be hesitant towards change due to reliance on defined systems and protocols
Monitors performance		
Highly goal oriented		

- (Note. Parts of the above table Adapted/ Retrieved/Reprinted from "Leadership Styles" by A. Bwalya, 2023, Article in Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation, 11 (08), 2023.)

➤ Charismatic Leadership Style

Charismatic leadership style is inclined towards more of an attraction model that attracts the attention of the followers and thereby influences the actions of the team, also known as the “magnetic effect”. This leadership style has shown to significantly reduce the unsafe behaviors of miners due to its potential to influence the subordinates (Ismail & Fathi, 2018). Charismatic leadership style often is found to act as a bridge of purpose that connects the values of the project team with that of the organization and the objectives of the project (Liphadzi et al., 2015).

Due to the charismatic and influential approach of this leadership style, these types of leaders usually emerge during a crisis as they could convince followers to accept and believe a purpose behind an action (Oke, 2013; Buba & Tanko, 2017).

Table 4 is a summary of the leadership style which entails its typical characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages.

Past literature and case studies portray its suitability for environments that warrant a visionary inspiration, the ability to influence followers and drive them towards the desired outcome. This leadership style is prominent within social movements, political campaigns, startups and the network marketing/direct selling industry. Construction projects are often subject to a greater degree of risk due to its highly dynamic nature and the plethora of moving parts associated with the implementation of the project. This very reason warrants the necessity of adequate planning prior to commencement of any construction work by consulting the views of a significant number of stakeholders with varied levels of influence and interest.

Although charismatic leadership due to its exceptional story telling/ persuasive communicability, could be effective during the initiation phase to obtain the green light for the project, it may not be as effective during the planning phase as it requires to strategically and methodically consult the perspectives of a range of stakeholders. Due to its ability to influence subordinates and establish a unitary front to drive towards the desired outcome regardless of diverse/opposing opinions, suggests its feasibility to handle chaotic circumstances and drive the team through a crisis towards a successful outcome. Since construction projects often encounter eventuation of risks that could potentially act as

roadblocks for completion of project such as scope creeps, imposition of new environmental or safety regulations, etc. can be handled effectively using a charismatic leadership style during the implementation phase of the project. This leadership style can also be beneficial during the monitoring and control phases/functions of the project due to its ability to persuade followers to comply with the project requirements/objectives.

➤ *Democratic Leadership Style*

Democratic leadership style is inclined towards more of a collaborative and collective approach that not only acknowledges the ideas of the subordinates but reinforces it through provision of feedback and suggestions and thereby

fostering teamwork and collaboration to achieve the defined organizational goals (Liphadzi et al., 2015).

This style is well known for offering coaching to the project team and actively clarifies any clutter of information thereby ensuring that any potential roadblocks are removed from the project (Liphadzi et al., 2015). Based on the study conducted surrounding Indonesian power plants, it is found that democratic leaders are ideal for complicated matters as they were actively engaged in solving real-time problems whilst portraying the tendency to seek the opinion the team prior to any decision making and have also shown some inclination towards delegation of authority to team members who had the potential to lead (Thoha et al., 2020).

Table 4 Charismatic Leadership Summary

Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Possess a charismatic presence	Influence and inspire the subordinates and possess the ability to motivate them to have a vested interest towards the vision of the leader	Subordinates tend to heavily rely on the presence and action of the leader, thereby significant risk to sustain their performance in the absence of the leader
Provides visionary leadership	The ability of storytelling with clarity and persuasion enables them to convey the vision they possess, effectively.	Due to the unconditional loyalty of followers towards the leader, there is a risk of excessive manipulation of the followers by the leader which could convince them to turn a blind eye towards misappropriations of the leader. This also provides the leader with power to prioritize self-interest over the common good.
Communicates in a persuasive manner	Uplifts the energy and enthusiasm of the project team to maintain performance over the long run.	
Possess a high degree of self-confidence		
		There is a risk of creation of a leadership void in the absence of the leader

- (Note. Parts of the above table Adapted/ Retrieved/Reprinted from "Leadership Styles" by A. Bwalya, 2023, Article in Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation, 11 (08), 2023.)

According to Thoha et al. (2020), the democratic leadership style has shown positive correlation with the project team's performance due to its collaborative nature.

Table 5 is a summary of the leadership style which entails its typical characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages.

Table 5 Democratic Leadership Summary

Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Makes decisions through inclusivity	Possess the ability to improve the engagement levels of the team and ownership towards accomplishment of organizational goals through its collaborative decision-making approach	Slow/lags in decision making as the leader considers the views of a range of stakeholders which could often possess contradictory requirements. Hence, may not be ideal for situations that require immediate decision making such as a crisis
Shares the vision and goals (Collectivistic)	Improves creativity and innovativeness of the team through establishment of an inclusive and safe environment to share the concerns of subordinates.	
Effective and supportive communication	Ability to make effective decisions that could efficiently address concerns since it is made upon consideration of diverse perspectives	Demands exceptional conflict resolution and negotiation skills to handle the conflicts and frictions that could arise during consultancy of diverse opinions
Empowers individuals and provide autonomy	Increases cooperation and unity within the team as the leader creates an environment that makes individuals feel valued	
Functions on trust and respect		

- (Note. Parts of the above table Adapted/Retrieved/ Reprinted from "Leadership Styles" by A. Bwalya, 2023, Article in Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation, 11 (08), 2023.)

Past literature and case studies portray its suitability for any project that does not require critical or urgent action, especially projects with clauses such as "time is of the essence". This leadership style is prominent within the cultural and process change as well as business transformation projects that do not follow a tight schedule. The demand for rapid delivery of construction projects has surged over the recent years, that has led to put project teams under pressure with exceptionally tight schedules. Hence, this very reason manifests the necessity for the leadership to make swift yet effective decisions that may not provide avenues to consult the opinions/concerns of all the stakeholders but only the very few that could have the highest impact and power. Hence, the feasibility of this leadership style for implementation phase of the construction project may not be ideal. However, this may be effective during the initiation, planning, as well as the monitoring and controlling phase of the project.

Although nigeran construction professionals have adjudged the democratic leadership style to be the most effective, majority of previous studies have shown comparatively low correlation with project success within the construction industry compared to transformational and transactional leadership styles (Oke, 2013; Liphadzi et al., 2015).

➤ *Laissez-Faire Leadership Style*

Laissez-Faire leadership style is more inclined towards a handsoff approach that is primarily based on coaching and clarifying thereby enabling the project team to make their own decisions whilst the leader shall only clarify concerns/information, if any for the team and provide the required reinforcement to carry out the work (Oke, 2013).

Due to absence of authority to make decisions, this leadership style is often considered to pose insignificant correlation with project success (Liphadzi et al., 2015).

Table 6 is a summary of the leadership style which entails its typical characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages.

Past literature and case studies have portrayed the suitability of this leadership style for projects/ventures that thrive amidst autonomy, self-direction, and self-initiative. This style is prominent within research and development, product development projects especially within the technological sphere. Since construction projects are often required to comply with industry standards and regulations, and the participation of individuals with varying degrees of expertise and comprehension, alongside the complexity and interdependency of tasks and performance of work in parallel by several gannets, warrants the necessity for direct supervision and active management during the implementation phase of construction projects. Due to the hands-off nature of this leadership style, it is also not suitable for planning, monitoring and controlling as well as closing phases.

However, this may show significant effectiveness during the initiation phase or concept development phase of the project as it could be effective during ideation, trialing a new construction material, a new construction technique etc. Although, Anwar et al. (2019) argues its negative correlation with construction project success, this may be effective during the initiation phase especially if the project manager/leader is not directly involved in development of the concept/initiation phase but has a mandatory requirement to sign off the business case/feasibility study to start the project.

Table 6 Laissez-Faire Leadership Style

Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Frequent mistakes	Ability to establish an environment that fosters creativity and innovation due to the freedom the project team must trial novel ideas and concepts	There could be confusions within the team and misalignment within the workflow as there is no single point of guidance/direction
Leader is accountable for the performance of the team although he is not involved in direct decision making	The indirect involvement of the leader leads to enhanced engagement of the project team which could be beneficial for their own growth and their ability to make effective decisions.	The leader may use this leadership approach as an excuse to let go of being accountable to the performance of the team
Minimum intervention for project proceedings	Provision of autonomy and authority to make their own decisions could increase the sense of ownership within the project team and improve the levels of job satisfaction. This could also increase the speed of decision making as it is made by the team members themselves although the effectiveness/accuracy may be doubtful.	Individuals that often tend to thrive under direct supervision and clear directives may show lack of motivation and discipline decreasing the performance of the team
Heavily reliant on the abilities of the subordinates	Possess the potential to increase the performance of self-motivated and experience teams that thrive in an autonomous work environment	Lack of support and feedback towards the project team
Does not have direct control over the team		

- (Note. Parts of the above table Adapted/Retrieved/Reprinted from "Leadership Styles" by A. Bwalya, 2023, Article in Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation, 11 (08), 2023.)

Table 7 Autocratic/Authoritarian Leadership Summary

Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Sole decision making centralized with the leader	Swift decision making which could be beneficial for circumstances that warrant prompt action, especially during crisis situations that does not provide adequate time to build consensus.	No room for creativity and innovation as strict compliance with the instructions is required from the followers
Supervise the team directly	Clarity in terms of the roles and responsibilities and availability of a structure command chain.	Decrease in employee motivation and job satisfaction as they do not have an avenue to voice their concerns
No/less autonomy provided to subordinates		Success of the project entirely relies on the leader as he/she has the sole authority
Authoritarian Control		Followers tend to work under pressure leading to burnout and excessive employee turnover

- (Note. Parts of the above table Adapted/Retrieved/Reprinted from "Leadership Styles" by A. Bwalya, 2023, Article in Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation, 11 (08), 2023.)

➤ Autocratic/Authoritarian Leadership Style

Autocratic/Authoritarian leadership is more inclined towards a dictatorship approach where the decisions are made and tasks are assigned solely by leaders him/herself with no consultation of the team although they tend to take responsibility for team's performance (Liphadzi et al., 2015).

According to Liphadzi et al. (2015), autocratic/authoritarian leadership shows a negative correlation with project success due to its dictatorial approach.

Table 7 is a summary of the leadership style which entails its typical characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages

Past literature and case studies have portrayed its suitability for circumstances/environments that require rapid decision-making, clear direction and a hierarchical structure. Eg- Military. This leadership style is predominantly seen within builders in the construction industry as well (Oke, 2013). Due to the plethora of stakeholders with diverse perspectives a construction project is dealt with, this may not work during the initiation, planning, monitoring and controlling and closing phases of the project as it is evident that consultation of opinions of others is mandatory for effective decision making during these phases. However, unfortunately this approach is practiced famously within the construction industry across all phases, which has led to delays in project delivery due to conflicts and, has resulted in the industry to be of highest employee turnover. This approach has been contagious so much that this is not only practiced on site staff but also office staff as well which is proven by Oke (2013) through his findings that architects and quantity surveyors in the Nigerian industry too predominantly adopt this leadership style, which could be a primary reason behind project failure.

Based on industry experience, it is evident that this leadership style shall not work for the overall project leadership position as the project manager/construction manager does not know or require to know A-Z about the activities of the project and they usually expected to rely on the site workers (eg – Project Manager may not know how reinforcement bars are installed or the best technique to erect a formwork). However, this leadership style may be effective for leading hands in the respective work groups/gannts during the implementation phase as they are usually conversant with the techniques and may not require obtaining the views of the team that is led by them on site due to their previous experiences that have elevated them to the leading hand position.

➤ Pacesetting Leadership Style

Pacesetting leadership style is more inclined towards the "leading by example" approach where the leader sets high expectation/standards for the team and himself and strives to action it.

According to Thoha et al. (2020), pacesetting leaders are often governed by the idea that their followers are equally competent and skillful as them hence tend to disclose minimum information about what is required that could lead to doubt and confusion within the team. Further, their nature of higher expectations coupled up with lack of clarity in the information that is passed down, often results in posing negative effects on team's performance and tend to burn out the leader itself (Thoha et al., 2020).

Table 8 is a summary of the leadership style which entails its typical characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages.

Past literature and case studies portray the suitability of this leadership style for "time of essence" projects that require urgent implementation. This leadership style is prominent within the startup culture to get a product into the market as soon as possible with an eye to being a market leader/pioneer. Construction projects often span over months or even years depending on the scope of the project and resource constraints. Hence, although this may be feasible for tech

projects that are targeted on filling a market gap, this may not directly be feasible over the life of a construction project except the implementation phase. This is since initiation and planning phases of a construction project require consensus

building with many parties of diverse perspectives. And the long span of construction projects often warrant significant planning to mitigate the risks that could potentially eventuate during the latter phases.

Table 8 Pacesetting Leadership Summary

Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Exceptional expectations pertaining to performance	Provides consistent encouragement to subordinates to level up their performance and strive for excellence	High levels of burnout within followers and the leader him/herself
Leads by example	Instills a sense of urgency within the team and always push for quick action with less turnaround time	The focus on immediate results may hamper the growth and learning opportunities of the team thereby resulting in detrimental effects in the long run
Highly result-oriented	Could influence the team to perform better through leader's approach of "walking the talk", thereby establishing credibility	Unrealistic expectations and delivery timelines could often put the team constantly under pressure leading to decrease in job satisfaction and high employee turnover

- (Note. Parts of the above table Adapted/Retrieved/ Reprinted from "Leadership Styles" by A. Bwalya, 2023, Article in Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation, 11 (08), 2023.)

However, this might be beneficial during the ideation/design thinking phase as well to come up with a quick solution if the leader is hands-on with the ideation process and is striving to elevate his level of performance and to live up to his expectations. This leadership style has the potential to be effective during the implementation phase of a construction project as it constantly encourages the team to deliver better.

➤ *Situational Leadership Style*

The situational leadership style is more inclined towards an adaptive approach where the leader alters his/her approach based on the situation/circumstances. Hence, the approach that is chosen by the leader will be dictated by previous experiences and lessons learned thereby, the effectiveness of the approach will rely on the credibility of the exposure and competence of the leader.

If the team members possess the required skills and competencies to perform the job however, that is either not capable to make decisions of their own or struggles to find the required motivation/drive, a participative/supportive approach could be considered as most effective whereas, if the team member is somewhat skillful however, has not had adequate experience to perform the relevant task may require a coaching/guidance approach (Buba & Tanko, 2017). If the subordinate is neither capable nor adequately experienced to perform the task, the leader shall adopt dictating/directing and monitoring approach whereas, if the team member is highly competent and adequately qualified, the leader shall adopt a delegative approach (Buba & Tanko, 2017). The leaders that follow a delegative approach often consider subordinates as partners instead of followers (Buba & Tanko, 2017).

According to Dubois et al. (2015), situational leadership style comprises of 3 orientations namely, task oriented, relationship oriented, and development of subordinates. A

task oriented leader (<64 LPC) often gains self-esteem merely through accomplishments whereas, a relationship-oriented leader (>73 LPC) gains self-esteem based on the quality of relationships and specifically how others value or recognize him/her (Dubois et al., 2015). According to Dubois et al. (2015), the leaders that do not fall under the above two categories (64-73 LPM) are often considered to be most effective due to their capability of dealing with a plethora of task and relationship related situations through the adoption of novel and unique approaches.

Table 9 is a summary of the leadership style which entails its typical characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages.

Past literature and case studies portray the suitability of this leadership style for a crisis that requires rapid changes as well as for projects that warrant a great deal of training and consistent development over a long period. It is evident that construction projects are often brought to fruition through the participation of a large team that comprises of a plethora of individuals with diverse perspectives, interests, competencies, and influences. Due to this very fact, curation of a leadership style to adapt to the needs of everyone is unrealistic within a construction project, especially during the implementation phase which demands rapid execution.

Although the situational leadership style seems less effective during the implementation phase of the project, it may show greater effectiveness during the initiation, designing and planning phases of a project as its usually being performed with the participation of a selected set of individuals. Further, this may also suit certain teams that offer supportive functions such as quality and OHS during the implementation phase since those teams are often highly specialized and have less diversity compared to core construction teams. Hence, the leader who heads that unit may require less effort to curate the approach to improve the performance of each team member, thereby the entire team. According to Oke (2013) based on his research surrounding the Nigerian construction industry has argued that engineers and quantity surveyors often adopt a task-oriented situational

leadership style. According to Santoso and Chandra Tali (2004), based on their study in Surabaya, Indonesia have found that construction managers tend to adopt a task-oriented leadership style backed by a combination of selling and participative model as per Hersey-Blanchard's leadership models which is similar to that of UK. However, based on Hong Kong's Zhuhai-Macao Bridge project, which is considered as a highly successful project has shown that a

balance of task and relationship factors have been pivotal in ensuring the successful delivery of the project (Zhao et al., 2021). This has been re-affirmed by Santoso and Chandra Tali (2004), through their findings of Hong Kong being the only country out of the 3 referred countries to exhibit a balanced leadership style backed by both task and relationship considerations.

Table 9 Situational Leadership Summary

Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Consistent assessment of situations	Consistent adaptation of the leadership style to suit the readiness levels of the subordinates, provides individualized guidance to enhance individual and team performance	Demands exceptional emotional and situational awareness to curate the approach and shall consume time
Varying styles of leadership	Situational enhancements shall enable the followers to develop the areas that are truly lacking instead of blindly adopting a "one-size-fits-all" approach.	Leaders are expected to be conversant with a range of leadership styles and have greater awareness of regarding its suitability for various situations.
Flexible and adaptive	Greater effectiveness of the decisions as those have been formulated based on needs and capabilities of the team.	Diverse and evolving leadership style/approaches could mislead followers and give rise to inconsistencies in decision making
Does not follow a one-size-fits-all approach		

- (Note. Parts of the above table Adapted/Retrieved/Reprinted from "Leadership Styles" by A. Bwalya, 2023, Article in Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Innovation, 11 (08), 2023.)

➤ Other Leadership Styles

The leadership styles that are supported by limited literature sources are listed below with a brief elaboration of each and finally the verdict about their suitability for construction projects.

Share holder leadership style is much like the laissez-faire leadership style with its approach being hands-off and participatory (Oke, 2013). According to Oke (2013), based on his study in Nigeria has found that Architects and Engineers tend to portray this leadership style. This could be primarily evident within architects and engineers who act as consultants/designers of the project as they are often consulted when the construction team requires clarification pertaining to any directives/guidance. This may not be the case for construction supervision engineers and project engineers as they often exhibit a hands-on approach. Hence, as mentioned for laissez-faire leadership style, the shareholder leadership style may only be feasible for the initiation/design phase of the project.

The affiliative leadership style is much like the democratic leadership style through which the leadership strives to establish collaboration within the team and to ensure that the opinions/concerns of the team members are heard (Thoha et al., 2020). According to Thoha et al. (2020), the affiliative leaders have shown positive correlation with team's performance and are often known to pay attention to the concerns of the team members alongside the comfortability, the subordinates have shown being around the leader. Hence, as mentioned for democratic leadership style, this this

leadership style may not be ideal for implementation phase but shall show effectiveness during the initiation, planning, monitoring, controlling and closing phases of the project.

The spiritual leadership style is backed by the concept of the prevalence of a higher power and is associated with behaviors, attitudes and values to enhance the inner self of subordinates through spiritual encouragement such as committing an action for the betterment of the community and as per the wish of a calling from the higher power (Anwar et al., 2019). According to Anwar et al. (2019), spiritual leadership consists of three dimensions namely, vision, hope/faith and altruistic love. Whilst vision and hope/faith are positively correlated with project success, altruistic love has shown negative correlation with project success (Anwar et al., 2019). Further, this leadership style has positively influenced independent teams to develop cohesion within one another and to develop values that benefits the wider community (Anwar et al., 2019). This leadership style could be heavily influenced by the culture of the team where a team that hails from a collectivist culture may embrace this approach and commit to better delivery of their commitments whereas, if it is a team based upon an individualistic culture, they might not resonate well with this leadership style. Hence, this leadership style could be effective during the implementation phase of construction projects in eastern countries or teams that possess dominant presence of individuals from eastern countries.

IV. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

As elaborated through this study project leadership typically led by the Project Manager plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of a project through his/her influence on the project team especially within the construction industry given the number of human resources that are involved in bringing a project into fruition. Now that, construction projects are more inclined to consider sustainability in its

proceedings, adoption of leadership styles that are conducive to strike a balance between environmental, social, and economic goals also known as the triple bottom line, is vital (Afzal & Tumpa, 2024).

This has led to acceptance and ascertainment of contemporary diverse leadership styles whilst superseding the conventional “one-style-fits-all” approach. According to Liphadzi et al. (2015), the present-day context of construction projects warrants leaders to be aware of a range of leadership styles thereby acquiring the best fit according to the situation. This is proven through Hong Kong’s Zhuhai-Macao Bridge project where the leadership not confining only to one leadership style has been one of the pivotal standouts that has led the project to be successful (Zhao et al., 2021). Although a leader who possesses one leadership style may be effective during one stage of a project, that approach may not be effective for the rest of the project. According to Thoha et al. (2020), based on the study surrounding the suggestions of Hay-McBer argues that a project manager to be successful should be conversant with at least four leadership styles. Thoha et al. (2020) have also argued that if a company struggles to discover a candidate that possesses multiple leadership styles for the project leadership role, a candidate who adopts a democratic style shall be effective. However, according to Afzal and Tumpa (2024), a project manager who adopts a situational leadership style that could vary according to the demands of the situation is known to be an effective leader.

Project leaders’ awareness of time, location and cultural factors is vital for selection of the most appropriate leadership style for the situation (Ismail & Fathi, 2018). The leader’s perception of project success is greatly influenced by the degree of emotional intelligence possessed by him/her which manifests the necessity of providing adequate training around emotional awareness and control, consistently (Oke, 2013). Morality and honesty of the leader are two of the most sought-after values of a leader that could instil self-confidence and psychological safety within the team (Liphadzi et al., 2015; Zhao et al., 2021). The project manager’s ability to envision, manage his/her knowledge and analyze critically through scenario deductions with a much flexible and agile mindset has shown greater effectiveness for project success regardless of the dominant leadership style he/she may possess ((Dubois et al., 2015; Zhao et al., 2021; Afzal & Tumpa, 2024). As disclosed by PMI, around 80% of the success of projects have relied upon effective communication originated from project leadership (Dubois et al., 2015).

According to (Afzal & Tumpa, 2024), establishment of a culture of practicing corporate social responsibility has shown to improve cohesion within the team and thereby improve performance of the organization in its entirety.

Considering the inclination towards sustainable construction practices, it is proven that ethical leadership styles tend to directly influence the social aspect of sustainable development goals, and this directly relates to ethical standpoint of the project leader (Afzal & Tumpa, 2024; Sturesson & Casoliva, 2024). It is also evident that project

leaders within the construction industry often show reluctance to pass down information pertaining to proper practice hoping that their followers should learn it the hard way as they have been. Eg - – Project Managers/Engineering Managers instead of taking measures to skill up the new graduate engineers internally, expect them to skill up by interacting with the suppliers, more like handing off the responsibility of shaping the next line of leadership to a 3rd party vendor. This not only deteriorates the relationship between the client and the vendor but also advocates for unethical work conduct.

According to Sturesson and Casoliva (2024), appointment of ethical ambassadors from each division to lead the ethical and compliance movement within that team shall be an effective practice. However, the actions of these ambassadors should align with the code of ethics of the firm (Sturesson & Casoliva, 2024). Further, conducting a workshop surrounding ethical awareness can be a good starting point to convince the higher management to pay more attention towards ethical compliance which could in return improve employee productivity (Sturesson & Casoliva, 2024).

Selection of individuals with exceptional leadership potential, competencies and charm often leads to establishment of high performing teams that could tackle the ever-evolving demand and requirements of the present construction arena (Zhao et al., 2021).

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