

**MODERN LEADERSHIP STYLES AS CORRELATE OF BUSINESS
EDUCATION LECTURERS' PERFORMANCE IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS
IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study determined modern leadership styles as correlate of business education lecturers' performance in South East, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted correlation research design, and 257 business education lecturers in public tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria that offer business education programme were studied without sampling. Two instruments namely, Modern Leadership Styles Survey (LSS) and Business Education Lecturers' Performance Questionnaire (BELPQ) with 20 items, and 15 items were used for data collection. Face and construct validity of the instrument were established by three experts in the field of education while the reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach Alpha and Coefficient values of 0.89 and 0.83 obtained for clusters B₁ to B₂ with an overall reliability value of .86, while Coefficient value of 0.78 was obtained for BELPQ. Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression analysis were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that transformational leadership, and servant leadership styles had

strong positive relationship with business education lecturers' performance. Educational qualification and gender moderated significant relationships between transformational leadership style, servant leadership styles and business education lecturers' performance in tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that adoption of transformational and servant leadership styles can increase business education lecturers' performance. It was recommended among others that; Heads of Department (HODs) of business education programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria should adopt transformational and servant leadership styles identified by this study to have a strong positive relationship with business education lecturers' performance

Key Words: Transformational Leadership; Servant Leadership, Business Education Lecturers, Performance

Introduction

Business education is a skill-oriented programme that inculcates in youths skills for gainful employment or self-employment. It is an aspect of vocational education programme that equips students with skills to function efficiently in the workplace (Olumese & Edigbonya, 2016). It offers courses in Entrepreneurship, Commerce and Cooperative Economics, Accounting, and Office Technology and Management (OTM) (Salawu, 2016). The primary goal of business education as stipulated by Iwu (2018) is to produce skilled and dynamic graduates who will be effective in the workplace. These objectives can be achieved with qualified and competent business education lecturers. Well-trained professionals capable of teaching all business education courses in universities and colleges of education are referred to as business education lecturers. They are individuals who possess extensive knowledge and qualifications in their disciplines, and are often up-to-date with latest developments in business education programme (Jim et al., 2017).

In order to provide the general public with superior educational services, tertiary institutions need qualified and skilled lecturers. Anozie (2021) posited that a key factor in effectively implementing business education curriculum is the lecturers and their ability to deliver top-notch performance. As a result, lecturers' performance becomes an area of continued interest for researchers. Employee performance evaluates how effectively an employee performs work using available resources. It involves how well a lecturer carries out assigned tasks, which can be measured, tracked, and evaluated as accomplishments at the individual level (Donohoe, 2019). Since the performance of lecturers is essential to the achievement of educational goals, tertiary institutions need to support factors that enhance lecturers' performance. One of the significant factors that could determine lecturers' performance could be their leadership style.

The leadership style adopted by the Heads of Department of Business Education could affect the amount of efforts put in by lecturers. In tertiary institutions in Nigeria, the contributions of a leader could be essential to enhancing employee productivity. Idowu (2020) stated that the leadership style employed by school leaders determines whether the school succeeds or fails. In view of this, leaders can employ a variety of styles to influence

the behaviour of their followers. Leadership is the capacity to persuade others to work toward a common objective. It is the act of influencing individual or group behaviours in order to realize organizational objective (Ajimuse, 2020). Leadership has become the attention of many researchers due to its crucial role in determining educational success. Idowu (2020) stated that a leader's leadership style is reflected in how they set goals, carry them out, and motivate others.

Leadership styles are the diverse behavioural patterns that leaders employ while guiding subordinates toward accomplishing organizational goals. Abdulkarim (2022) averred that business education administrators' ability to foster an environment that ensures employees' performance depends on their leadership style. Leadership styles could include autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformative, and transactional leadership styles. Mohammed et al. (2020) enumerated toxic; humble; servant, transformational, transactional, charismatic, situational, and participative as modern leadership styles. This study focused on modern leadership styles such as transformational leadership and servant leadership style. Modern leadership styles often overlap and can be combined based on the specific needs of the organization, the team dynamics, and the context of the situation. Effective leaders often integrate aspects of modern multiple styles to suit different challenges and scenarios.

The positive expectations for followers are a hallmark of transformational leaders, which raises levels of drive and morality (Johnson, 2015). The transformational leader collaborates with the team to identify necessary change, develop a vision to guide the change, and carry out the change. The basic goal of this leader is to influence followers' demands and shift their perspectives (Schultz and Schultz, 2016). Similarly, transformational leaders are passionate about inspiring their colleagues to take act, and can inspire team members to change objectives and sources of motivation while still working toward established targets. Ali further argued that a transformational leadership style boost employees' commitment, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. On the other hand, servant leadership is the ability to build relationships via persuasion, develop others, and put others' needs ahead of one's own need. It is the decision to serve others rather than hold a position of authority (Mohammed et al., 2020). This type of leadership prioritizes the needs, interests, and aspirations of employees been led. As pointed out by Alafeshat and Tanova (2019), serving others has five dimensions; love, empowerment, trust, humility and vision.

In Nigeria, Federal and State tertiary institutions employ both male and female business education lecturers. These lecturers range in professional experience; some may have extensive teaching credentials, while others may not. These demographic factors may moderate their work performance. Stakeholders in education are concerned about the poor performance of business education lecturers at tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Oyewobi et al. (2021) asserted that lecturers in business education are not performing up to par. Similarly, Abdulkarim (2022) reported complaints about business education lecturers' poor attitude and lack of motivation toward carrying out their instructional duties. In agreement, Ile and Mekuri-Ndimele (2021) observed that in Nigerian tertiary institutions, a lot of lecturers (business education lecturers inclusive) have developed the habit of improperly supervising students' work and displaying a lackadaisical attitude toward their academic work. The low performances are attributed by Abdulkarim to ineffective leadership styles

of administrators of business education. Ajimuse (2020) likewise observed that labour union strikes, and disputes between management and unions such as NASU, SSANU, and ASUU in tertiary institutions in Nigeria are as a result of management leadership styles. Ajimuse claimed that this has impacted lecturers' performances negatively. Based on this backdrop, the study determined modern leadership styles as correlates of business education lecturers' performance in tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In order to better prepare students for independent life or profitable employment, business education lecturers are required to equip students with relevant employability skills. However, years after graduating, the majority of business education graduates still struggle to find job, which has left them frustrated, and questioning the quality of education received while in school. In a similar line, employers of labour and parents are concerned about business education lecturers' incapacity to provide their students with employable skills that will enable them to thrive in the digital workplace. This suggests that some of these lecturers are still not performing up to standard. In an effort to address this ugly situation, educational stakeholders and researchers have identified a number of determinants of lecturers' job performance, including job satisfaction, motivation, compensation, leaders' conflict management techniques, relational capital, and structural capital. The researcher proposed that the performance of business education lecturers may be correlated with modern leadership styles of the leaders at tertiary institutions.

One of the major problems in Nigerian tertiary institutions is the inflexibility of most leaders' leadership styles. Most leaders fail to adjust their style of leadership to the changing situation and current matters arising because they do not understand that no one particular style of leadership can fit into all conditions. This could lead to disagreements between tertiary institution administrators and lecturers probably affecting lecturers' performance. The majority of research in the field focuses on employees in corporate organizations like banks, manufacturing enterprises, and engineering firms. As a result, there is little to no research in the educational field, particularly in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria. To fill this knowledge gap, the researchers specifically ascertained; (1) the relationship between transformational leadership style and business education lecturers' performance in Tertiary Institutions in South East, Nigeria, (2) the relationship between servant leadership style and business education lecturers' performance in Tertiary Institutions in South East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study;

1. What is the relationship between transformational leadership style and business education lecturers' performance in Tertiary Institutions in South East, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between servant leadership style and business education lecturers' performance in Tertiary Institutions in South East, Nigeria?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership style and business education lecturers' performance in Tertiary Institutions in South East, Nigeria based on educational qualification.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant relationship between servant leadership style and business education lecturers' performance in Tertiary Institutions in South East, Nigeria based on gender.

Methods

The correlation research design was adopted in carrying out this study. It was conducted in South-East Nigeria. The population of 257 business education lecturers in both Federal and State tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria that offer business education programme was studied without sampling. In all, there are four Federal Universities with 57 business education lectures, four State universities with 85 business education lecturers, three Federal Collages of Education with 113 business education lecturers while four State Colleges of Education has 58 business education lectures. (Source: Academic Planning Unit of these institutions as at 28th November, 2023). Two instruments namely, Modern Leadership Styles Survey (MLSS) and Business Education Lecturers' Performance Questionnaire (BELPQ) were used for data collection. The MLSS was in section A and B. Section A contained information on personal data of the respondents such as gender, and educational qualification. Section B was divided into two clusters B1 to B2 with 10 items each covering transformational leadership, and servant leadership styles. The BELPQ contained 15 items in section C. The MLSS and BELPQ were structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, Disagree (D) = 2, Agree (A) = 3 and Strongly Agree (SA) = 4.

The face and construct validity of the instrument were established using opinions of three experts in the field of Business Education and Educational Foundations Departments, all from Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University, Anambra State. The internal consistency of the instruments were established through pilot-testing and data collected analyzed using Cronbach Alpha method and Coefficient values of 0.89 and 0.83 obtained for clusters B₁ to B₂ with an overall reliability value of .86, while Coefficient value of 0.78 was obtained for BELPQ. The researcher and six research assistants administered 257 copies of the questionnaires to the respondents. Out of the 257 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 241 were correctly filled and returned giving a 94% return rate, which were used for data analysis. Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to carry out the analysis. For the relationship scale interpretation, the scales by Bryman and Bell (2011) were used: The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using multiple regression by computed correlation index for appropriate decision. In testing the null hypotheses, when p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ($P < .05$), the null hypothesis was rejected otherwise, the null hypothesis was accepted. The analysis was carried out using Special package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 23.0.

Results

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Test for Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Business Education Lecturers’ Performance

Variables			Transformational Leadership Style	Employee Performance	r.	Remarks
Transformational Leadership Style (X)	Pearson (r)	N	46.63	5.16	.70	Strong Positive Relationship
			241	241		
Employee Performance (Y)	Pearson (r)	N	51.35	4.90		
			241	241		

Table 1 shows a correlation value (r) of .70, indicating a strong positive relationship existing between transformational leadership style and business education lecturers’ performance. This is to say that transformational leadership style in tertiary institutions South East, Nigeria is a strong determinant of business education lecturers’ performance.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Test for Relationship between Servant Leadership Style and Business Education Lecturers’ Performance

Variables			Servant Leadership Style	Employee Performance	r.	Remarks
Servant Leadership Style (X)	Pearson (r)	N	47.62	4.76	.71	Strong Positive Relationship
			241	241		
Employee Performance (Y)	Pearson (r)	N	51.35	4.90		
			241	241		

Table 2 shows a correlation value (r) of .71, indicating a strong positive relationship existing between servant leadership style and business education lecturers’ performance. This is to say that servant leadership style in tertiary institutions South East, Nigeria is a strong determinant of business education lecturers’ performance.

Table 3: Regression Analysis on the Relationship between Transformational Leadership Style and Business Education Lecturers’ Performance Based on Educational Qualification

N	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	%	Cal. F	df	P-value	Remarks
241	.108	.012	.002	.2	1.16	238	.02	Significant

Table 3 shows that with R Square Adjusted of .002, the transformational leadership style and educational qualification jointly contribute .2 percent to business education lecturers’ performance. Also, at 0.05 level of significance, 2 df numerator and

238 df denominator, the calculated F is 1.16 with p-value of .02. Since the p-value is less than the alpha level (P-value = .02 < .05), the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and business education lecturers’ performance in tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria based on educational qualification.

Table 4: Regression Analysis on the Relationship between Servant Leadership Style and Business Education Lecturers’ Performance Based on Gender

N	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	%	Cal. F	df	P-value	Remarks
241	.137	.019	.009	.9	1.88	238	.01	Significant

Data in Table 4 shows that with R Square Adjusted of .009, the servant leadership style and gender jointly contribute .9 percent to business education lecturers’ performance. Similarly, at 0.05 level of significance, 2 df numerator and 238 df denominator, the calculated F is 1.88 with p-value of .01. Since the p-value is less than the alpha level (P-value = .01 < .05), the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between servant leadership style and business education lecturers’ performance in Tertiary Institutions in South East, Nigeria based on gender.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study disclosed that there was a strong positive relationship existing between transformational leadership style and business education lecturers’ performance in tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria. Findings of the study is in line with the findings of Abdulkarim (2022) which found that transformational leadership style of business education administrators had a strong positive relationship with business educators job performance. Akinnuoye (2021) reported that leadership styles had a positive and significant relationship with academic staff performance. Similarly, Idowu (2019) noted that the study on transformational leadership style of education leaders had a significant relationship with job performance of academic staff. Mohammed and Wang (2018) earlier reported that leaders who employ transformational style of leadership take a balanced approach by assisting their staff in resolving some workplace problems while also imparting knowledge on how to manage problems of a similar nature. Findings of the study also revealed that there was a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and business education lecturers’ performance in tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria based on educational qualification. The findings of this study agree with the findings of Alenazi et al. (2017) which revealed that educational attainment was a mediator variable for transformational leadership style.

Findings of the study revealed that there was a strong positive relationship existing between servant leadership style and business education lecturers’ performance in tertiary institutions in South East, Nigeria. The findings is in agreement with the findings of Wang et al. (2017) which showed that servant leadership promoted employees’ performance through its effect on low-level supervisors’ servant leadership. Akinnuoye (2021) found that servant leadership styles had a positive and significant relationship with academic staff performance. Additionally, Aida (2022) reported that servant leadership style positively influenced employees’ performance. This is because according to Aida, the servant-leader delegates power, responsibility, and authority to employees, prioritizes the

needs of employees, and assists employees in performing better in their jobs. Findings of the study further revealed that there was a significant relationship between servant leadership style and business education lecturers' performance in Tertiary Institutions in South East, Nigeria based on gender. In agreement, Snaebjornsson and Edvardsson (2013) earlier reported that gender had an effect on the relationship between leadership styles and employees' performance.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that transformational leadership, and servant leadership styles had strong positive relationships with business education lecturers' performance. Based on the findings, the researchers concluded that the adoption of transformational and servant leadership style can increase business education lecturers' performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Heads of Department (HODs) of business education programmes in tertiary institutions in Nigeria should adopt transformational and servant leadership styles identified by this study to have a strong positive relationship with business education lecturers' performance.
2. Administrators of tertiary institutions in Nigeria should organize regular leadership training and development programmes for the HODs of business education to enable them continuously up-date their leadership skills. This will help the HODs to select appropriate leadership styles needed to improve the performance of business education lecturers.
3. Business education lecturers in South East, Nigeria, should actively embrace and promote transformational and servant leadership practices by fostering a supportive classroom environment: They should create an atmosphere of support and encouragement, where students feel valued, understood, and are empowered.

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