

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH: A STUDY OF THE AFRICAN CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT (CENTRE LSD), NIGERIA

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Abstract: *Leadership is widely recognized as a critical driver of organizational success and sustainability. In an era marked by rapid change, complexity, and heightened competition, the ability of organizations to grow and adapt is increasingly tied to the leadership styles practiced within them. This study investigated the relationship between leadership styles and organizational growth in the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD). A cross-sectional research design was adopted, and a structured questionnaire was used to gather data from a sample of 285 staff members of Centre LSD. The study was anchored on the Full Range Leadership Theory as its theoretical framework. The theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the impact of different leadership styles on organizational outcomes such as growth, innovation, and resilience. This theory is particularly relevant for studying how these leadership styles collectively contribute to organizational growth. Correlation and multiple regression analyses were employed to test the hypothesized relationships between the identified leadership styles and organizational growth with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. Findings reveal that transformational leadership significantly contributes to organizational growth by inspiring innovation, employee engagement, and a shared vision. Transactional leadership also plays a role, particularly in ensuring task completion and maintaining operational stability. Adaptive leadership emerged as a critical factor in enhancing the organization's responsiveness to change, learning culture, and long-term resilience. The study concluded that an integrated leadership model, combining transformational,*

transactional, and adaptive elements, offers a more holistic framework for achieving sustainable organizational growth. The study recommended, among others, that the African Centre for LSD should develop and implement tailored leadership training programs that emphasize transformational and adaptive leadership qualities. These programs should focus on vision creation, emotional intelligence, strategic foresight, and change management necessary to inspire innovation and drive long-term organizational success. The study implies that adopting effective leadership styles, particularly transformational and adaptive approaches, can significantly enhance organizational growth by improving staff motivation, strategic decision-making, and overall institutional performance at Centre LSD.

Keywords: *leadership styles; organisational growth; full range leadership theory.*

Introduction

Leadership has evolved through various theories and models, from transformational and transactional to autocratic and democratic styles, each offering insights into motivating employees and driving organizational success. The effectiveness of these styles often depends on contextual factors such as organizational culture, industry, and specific challenges. Research highlights that transformational leadership, which inspires and motivates followers, positively impacts employee engagement and commitment, while transactional leadership may produce short-term gains but often limits long-term growth and innovation (Buil, Martínez-Cañas & Cárdenas-García, 2019; Weller, Süß, Evanschitzky & Wangenheim, 2019; Orhero & Okolie, 2023).

Adaptive leadership is increasingly recognized as essential for navigating dynamic environments, responding to uncertainty, and sustaining growth (Adair, 2019; Etinagbedia & Okolie, 2024). Leadership, defined as the strategies and behaviors leaders use to influence their teams, is crucial for organisational growth, impacting decision-making, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement (Hersona & Sidharta, 2017; Obiwuru, Okwu, Akpa & Nwankwere, 2018).

The African Centre for Leadership Strategy and Development (Centre LSD) focuses on enhancing leadership capacity and strategic thinking to address Africa's development challenges. Examining leadership styles in Centre LSD provides insights into how transformational,

transactional, and adaptive approaches contribute to organizational effectiveness, employee satisfaction, and sustainable growth in the African context.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to examine the relationship between leadership styles and organizational growth in the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (LSD). The specific objectives were to:

- i. Investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational growth in the African Centre for LSD.
- ii. Examine the relationship between transactional leadership and organizational growth in the African Centre for LSD.
- iii. Assess the relationship between adaptive leadership practices and organizational growth in African Centre for LSD.

Hypotheses of the Study

- i. H₁: There is no significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational growth in the African Centre for LSD.
- ii. H₂: There is no significant positive relationship between transactional leadership and organizational growth in the African Centre for LSD.
- iii. H₃: There is no significant positive relationship between adaptive leadership practices and organizational growth in the African Centre for LSD.

Literature Review

The African Centre for Leadership, Strategy, and Development (Centre LSD) is a Nigerian NGO established in 2010, focused on promoting sustainable development and good governance through strategic leadership. Operating nationwide with headquarters in Abuja and regional offices in Lagos and Delta, it runs leadership training programs, youth initiatives, and executive development courses, while supporting organizations and governments in strategic planning and policy implementation (Centre LSD, 2023). The organization's vision emphasizes strategic leadership, accountability, and sustainable development, structured around leadership, strategy, and development pillars.

Centre LSD faces challenges common to NGOs, including resource constraints, regional disparities, and a dynamic policy environment, which require adaptive and context-sensitive leadership approaches. Leadership is a key driver of organizational growth, influencing

employee motivation, decision-making, and overall performance (Northouse, 2022; Teece, 2022). Transformational leadership fosters engagement, innovation, and a culture of excellence, while transactional leadership ensures stability and efficiency, and adaptive leadership helps organizations navigate uncertainty (Kitur & Okello, 2022; Firmansyah & Purwanto, 2023).

In NGOs like Centre LSD, transformational and adaptive leadership styles are particularly effective in aligning stakeholders, motivating staff, and driving organizational growth. Leaders who communicate a shared vision, empower employees, and encourage innovative thinking help organizations respond to challenges, embrace change, and achieve sustained development impact. However, the success of these leadership styles depends on overcoming barriers such as resistance to change, misaligned organizational culture, and lack of trust, emphasizing the need for continuous leadership development and strategic capacity building.

Transactional Leadership and Organizational Growth

Transactional leadership significantly impacts employee performance by setting clear expectations and using rewards and penalties as a motivator. This approach works best in environments where routine tasks need to be completed, and measurable performance is key. Leaders in transactional systems monitor performance through regular evaluations, and they ensure that rewards are given only to those who meet the set standards. This system promotes accountability, as employees know exactly what is expected of them and the consequences for failure to meet those expectations (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Bass and Riggio (2006) argue that transactional leadership contributes to an organization's culture by fostering a clear, structured environment where goals and rewards are defined. While this can create a highly efficient and disciplined organization, it can also discourage creativity and innovation. Transactional leaders typically enforce compliance and adherence to established norms, which may inhibit risk-taking and innovation. However, such leadership can create an environment of high discipline and order, which is essential for organizations focused on operational efficiency.

According to Puni and Anlesinya (2023), transactional leadership plays an important role in organizational development, particularly in structured and stable environments. It is most effective in situations where performance needs to be strictly monitored, and there is little room for ambiguity or uncertainty. Transactional leadership is crucial in crisis situations, where quick decision-making and immediate action

are required. In such instances, transactional leaders provide clear directives, ensuring that employees know exactly what steps to take to address the crisis.

Parry (2021) affirms that transactional leadership enhances organizational efficiency by ensuring that employees meet clearly defined goals. This is particularly important in organizations focused on operations and outcomes, such as manufacturing, service industries, and large corporations. Transactional leadership provides the framework for managing day-to-day operations effectively. By ensuring that employees adhere to established processes, organizations can achieve operational efficiency and consistently meet their goals.

Givens (2020) argues that organizations employing transactional leadership styles provide real-world examples of its impact on organizational growth. These include large corporations and government institutions that emphasize efficiency and consistency. Toyota, known for its lean manufacturing system, applies transactional leadership principles in its operations. Leaders at Toyota ensure that performance metrics are clearly defined and rewards are tied to achieving production goals, which has contributed to the company's sustained growth and operational success. In many government institutions, transactional leadership is used to enforce policies and procedures. By providing clear rewards and punishments, these agencies ensure compliance and efficient execution of public services.

Despite its effectiveness in achieving short-term goals and operational success, transactional leadership has some inherent challenges, especially in environments that require flexibility, creativity, and long-term vision. Transactional leadership may limit employees' ability to think creatively, as the focus is on meeting specific goals rather than fostering innovation. Organizations that need to adapt to rapidly changing environments or drive innovation may find this style of leadership to be restrictive (Gündoğdu & Turan, 2022).

Adaptive Leadership Practices and Organizational Growth

Adaptive leadership, introduced by Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky in their 2002 book *Leadership on the Line*, is a leadership model focused on helping organizations adapt to change and navigate challenges that cannot be solved with technical solutions alone. It is based on the premise that leaders must help their followers identify and address complex problems, known as "adaptive challenges," which require learning and behavioral shifts within the organization. Adaptive leadership is crucial for fostering organizational growth in an era of rapid change and constant disruption. It empowers leaders to guide their organizations through periods of uncertainty, enabling them to

evolve, innovate, and thrive. By helping organizations become more responsive, resilient, and forward-thinking, adaptive leadership plays a key role in both the short- and long-term success of organizations (McChrystal, Collins, Silverman & Fussell, 2015).

One of the key impacts of adaptive leadership is its ability to shape a learning culture within the organization. Adaptive leaders encourage continuous learning by helping their teams develop new skills, expand their perspectives, and approach problems in new ways. This culture of learning enables organizations to remain innovative and competitive, which is vital for sustained growth. Adaptive leadership also emphasizes collaboration and shared responsibility. By empowering teams to make decisions and collaborate across organizational boundaries, leaders foster a sense of ownership and accountability. This approach not only strengthens the internal culture but also enhances the overall effectiveness and adaptability of the organization (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

McChrystal et al. (2015) argue that adaptive leadership is especially valuable during times of organizational change, where uncertainty and confusion may prevail. Adaptive leaders guide their organizations through these periods by providing direction while maintaining flexibility, ensuring that employees are not overwhelmed by change. Through clear communication and active engagement, adaptive leaders create a sense of stability amidst chaos. Several organizations have successfully implemented adaptive leadership during periods of change. For example, the transformation of the U.S. Army under General Stanley McChrystal's leadership during the Iraq War demonstrated how adaptive leadership can enhance organizational performance. By shifting the organization from a hierarchical to a more decentralized and agile structure, McChrystal empowered leaders at all levels to make decisions and respond quickly to evolving challenges.

Northouse (2018) affirms that adaptive leaders foster a sense of ownership among their employees by encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions and decisions. This empowerment leads to higher engagement, as employees feel more connected to the outcomes of their work and more invested in the success of the organization. By addressing adaptive challenges and encouraging employees to develop new skills and strategies, adaptive leaders enhance motivation and commitment. When employees feel that their contributions are meaningful and that they are part of a larger, adaptive process, they are more likely to remain engaged and committed to organizational goals.

According to Denning (2011), adaptive leadership creates an environment that encourages risk-taking and experimentation. By

fostering psychological safety and providing the necessary resources and support, adaptive leaders enable employees to explore new ideas and solutions without the fear of failure. This culture of experimentation leads to greater innovation, which is crucial for long-term organizational growth. Through adaptive leadership practices, leaders can cultivate a culture where creativity is valued, and new ideas are continuously explored. This environment of continuous innovation helps organizations maintain their competitive edge and adapt to new market demands.

While adaptive leadership has many benefits, implementing it can be challenging. Resistance to change is a common barrier, as employees may feel uncertain or threatened by new ways of working. Additionally, adaptive leadership requires a high level of emotional intelligence, which not all leaders possess. To overcome resistance, adaptive leaders must actively engage with their teams, listen to concerns, and create opportunities for dialogue. By involving employees in the adaptation process and highlighting the benefits of change, adaptive leaders can minimize resistance and encourage widespread buy-in (Grint, 2005).

Research Methods

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design. This design involves collecting data at a single point in time to analyze the relationship between leadership styles and organizational growth. A cross-sectional approach was ideal for this study as it provided a snapshot of current leadership practices and their impact on organizational growth within Centre LSD. The population of this study consisted of all staff members employed by Centre LSD (Centre for Leadership and Development) across its operational locations in Nigeria. The study focused on the total staff strength across the operational offices, as they represent the primary areas where Centre LSD conducts its activities. As of 2023, the total number of staff members working at the Centre LSD headquarters in Abuja 27 staff. The total number of staff members working at the Centre LSD regional office in Warri, Benin, Port Harcourt, Abakaliki and Jos was 2,768 staff (Centre LSD, 2023). The total population of this study was 2,795 staff, consisting of employees and management of Centre LSD. With a total population of 2,795, the sample size was determined using Yemane's formula for sample size calculation:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

N = Population

n = Sample size

e = Sample error

Given the population size with a sampling error of 5 percent, the required sample was computed as:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

$$n = 2,795 / (1 + 2,795(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 349.8 \quad \text{approximately} = 350.$$

Consequently, a sample size of three hundred and fifty (350) was used for this study. This method allows the results to be applied to the entire population while making data collection manageable, and selecting a representative sample improves the study's reliability and validity in assessing how leadership styles affect organizational growth at Centre LSD. The study adopted a non-probability sampling method, meaning that not all individuals in the research population were included in the sample. This approach was intentionally used to target participants with specific characteristics relevant to the study's objectives. By focusing on the staff of the Centre for Leadership and Development, it facilitated the collection of more detailed and relevant information. Non-probability sampling was used to target staff with specific knowledge and experience relevant to leadership and organizational processes at Centre LSD, allowing for more focused and relevant data collection. However, this approach limits generalizability, as not all staff had an equal chance of selection, so findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than universally applicable.

Data from the survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis) was used to establish the relationship between leadership styles and organizational growth. Using descriptive and inferential statistics enables this study to move from simple data summarization to meaningful insights about how leadership styles influence organizational growth. While descriptive statistics provided foundational knowledge and context, inferential statistics established relationships and predictive capabilities, making the findings both reliable and actionable for decision-making and policy recommendations. The use of descriptive and inferential statistics was crucial for analyzing the data in this study as it allowed for a systematic and meaningful interpretation of the survey results.

Results and Discussion

To achieve the objective of this study, three hundred and fifty (350) questionnaires were distributed across the selected offices. The questionnaires covered respondents' personal bio-data and the main subject of the study.

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaire and Response Rate

	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Retrieved	Percentage %
Total	350	285	81.43

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 1, presented the distribution of questionnaire and the corresponding response rate for the study. A total of 350 questionnaire were distributed to participants across the targeted offices. Out of these, 285 were successfully retrieved, resulting in a response rate of 81.43%. The response rate of 81.43% is considered high and indicated a strong level of participation from the respondents. This enhances the reliability of the data collected, as it suggests that a significant proportion of the sampled population provided their inputs. The relatively high response rate was attributed to factors such as effective questionnaire distribution strategies, respondents' interest in the research topic and follow-up efforts by the researcher.

Testing of hypothesis

A multiple regression analysis was performed to assess the impact of leadership styles on organizational growth in the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy, and Development (Centre LSD). The regression analysis aimed to evaluate how transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and adaptive leadership practices influence organizational growth in Centre LSD. Conducted at a 5% level of significance, the regression analysis was also used to further test the hypotheses developed for the study. A summary of the results from the test was presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis for the Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, and Adaptive Leadership on Organizational Growth in the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy, and Development (Centre LSD)

Variable	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Coefficient	F-stat	F-sig.	T-stat	t-sig.	D.W
Transformational Leadership	.153	.113	.682	21.150	.001 ^b	7.025	.005	1.954
Transactional Leadership	.097	.076	.419	9.649	.001 ^b	4.361	.005	1.550
Adaptive Leadership	.124	.108	.650	14.700	.001 ^b	5.940	.005	1.837

Source: SPSS Output, 2025

Table 2 summarizes the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the effects of transformational, transactional, and adaptive leadership styles on organizational growth at Centre LSD. The analysis shows that all three leadership styles contribute to explaining variations in organizational growth, with transformational leadership having the strongest impact, followed by adaptive and transactional leadership. Adjusted R-square values indicate that each leadership style provides a meaningful contribution to the model after accounting for the number of variables, reflecting the robustness of the model's predictive power. The regression coefficients suggest that increases in any of the leadership styles are associated with positive increases in organizational growth, holding other variables constant. The overall regression model is statistically significant, indicating that at least one of the leadership styles significantly predicts organizational growth. Individual significance tests confirm that all three leadership styles have a statistically significant effect on organizational growth.

The Durbin-Watson statistics indicate that the residuals are largely free from autocorrelation, suggesting that the model is well-specified, though there is mild autocorrelation in transactional leadership that does not substantially undermine the model's validity. That is, values near the midpoint indicate that the model's predictions are reliable and not biased by patterns in the data, while values that deviate from this suggest some minor inconsistencies that should be considered but do not severely affect the model's validity. Overall, the results demonstrate that transformational, transactional, and adaptive leadership styles are significant drivers of organizational growth at Centre LSD.

Discussion of Findings

Findings indicate a strong positive relationship, suggesting that practices such as inspiring vision, motivating employees, and fostering innovation significantly enhance organizational growth and effectiveness. Transformational leaders promote intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence, aligning individual goals with organizational objectives and driving strategic initiatives.

In the context of Centre LSD, transformational leadership supports employee development, collaboration, and innovation, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability. Prior research highlights that such leaders increase employee engagement and satisfaction, which are essential for organizational growth (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Northouse, 2018; Smith & Williams, 2023).

The findings have practical implications, indicating that Centre LSD should prioritize transformational leadership development programs. By equipping leaders with skills in communication, vision, and motivation, and fostering a culture of empowerment, the organization can strengthen its strategic objectives and sustain long-term growth.

Regarding objective two, the findings revealed that transactional leadership has a significant and positive but moderate impact on organizational growth, especially when compared to the stronger effect of transformational leadership. This suggests that while transactional practices contribute to organizational success, they may be less influential than transformational leadership, and organizations like Centre LSD may benefit from integrating both approaches for sustainable growth (Smith & Williams, 2023; Walker & Hernandez, 2023).

Transactional leadership relies on rewards and punishments to motivate followers, emphasizing clear structures, goals, and task completion (Puni & Anlesinya, 2023). It supports steady progress and operational efficiency (Judge & Piccolo, 2004), but its focus on maintaining the status quo may limit long-term growth, innovation, and adaptability (Northouse, 2018). In contrast, transformational leadership emphasizes vision, inspiration, and empowerment, driving organizational innovation and long-term objectives (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Omondi et al., 2023; Avolio & Bass, 2004).

The study implies that while transactional leadership ensures short-term performance and accountability, integrating transformational practices, such as employee development, motivation, and visionary leadership, can enhance long-term growth and innovation. Transactional leadership remains valuable for operational efficiency and resource control, providing a foundation upon which transformational leadership can build for broader organizational success (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Okolie, Omole & Yakubu, 2021; Okoro & Udeh, 2023).

Regarding the third objective, the study found that adaptive leadership has a strong and significant positive relationship with organizational growth at Centre LSD. Adaptive leadership, which emphasizes responding to change, creative problem-solving, and innovation, enables the organization to navigate complex and dynamic environments effectively (Turner et al., 2023; Patel & Zhang, 2024; Ndung'u et al., 2023; Omole & Ayodele, 2023; Northouse, 2018). Leaders who practice adaptive leadership foster collaboration, continuous learning, and resilience, creating conditions for sustained growth.

The study also confirmed that transformational, transactional, and adaptive leadership are all significant predictors of organizational growth, with transformational leadership having the strongest effect (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Bass & Avolio, 2004; Northouse, 2018; Yukl, 2013; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Bass, 1990). Transformational leadership inspires employees, aligns personal and organizational goals, and promotes innovation, while transactional leadership ensures operational efficiency and accountability (Burns, 1978; Podsakoff et al., 1996). Adaptive leadership supports resilience and effective problem-solving in complex and uncertain contexts (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018).

Overall, transformational leadership was the most influential, followed by adaptive and transactional leadership. The findings suggest that Centre LSD should prioritize developing transformational and adaptive leadership skills while maintaining transactional practices to balance efficiency, innovation, and long-term growth (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2018). Leadership development programs should focus on vision, adaptability, employee engagement, and fostering a learning-oriented culture to sustain organizational success.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between leadership styles and organizational growth in African Centre for Leadership, Strategy, and Development (Centre LSD). The findings across all three objectives offer strong evidence that leadership style plays a critical role in shaping organizational outcomes, particularly in dynamic and knowledge-driven environments such as Centre LSD. The first objective focused on transformational leadership, revealing a strong and statistically significant positive relationship with organizational growth. Leaders who practice transformational leadership demonstrate visionary qualities, intellectual stimulation, individualized support, and the ability to motivate followers beyond transactional exchanges. This leadership style was found to be the most influential in driving growth at Centre LSD. The ability of transformational leaders to inspire innovation, promote shared values, and align individual objectives with the organizational mission was clearly reflected in the growth trajectory of Centre LSD.

The second objective addressed transactional leadership. The study revealed a moderate but statistically significant relationship between transactional leadership and organizational growth. Transactional leadership emphasizes structured roles, reward-based motivation, and goal attainment. While effective for ensuring short-term efficiency and stability, this style was shown to have limited influence on long-term

growth compared to transformational leadership. The findings underscore that although transactional leadership is vital for maintaining operational order, it may need to be complemented by more visionary and adaptive approaches to fully harness organizational potential.

The third objective examined adaptive leadership, and the results demonstrated a strong positive relationship with organizational growth. Adaptive leadership enables leaders to respond effectively to dynamic environments, address complex challenges, and foster continuous learning within the organization. In the case of Centre LSD, adaptive leadership has proven to be a critical mechanism for navigating socio-political challenges and driving strategic transformation.

Cumulatively, the study found that all three leadership styles, transformational, transactional, and adaptive are statistically significant predictors of organizational growth, with transformational leadership having the most pronounced impact. This hierarchy of influence suggests that Centre LSD's leadership development initiatives should prioritize strategies that foster transformational and adaptive capabilities while leveraging transactional mechanisms to support structure and accountability.

The implications of these findings are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, they contribute to the existing body of leadership research by validating the distinct yet complementary roles of the three leadership styles in fostering organizational development. Practically, the study offers actionable insights for Centre LSD and similar organizations in leadership development and policy advocacy sectors. Encouraging transformational and adaptive leadership behaviors among current and emerging leaders could lead to improved employee engagement, innovation, and long-term sustainability.

Ultimately, effective leadership is not the adoption of a single model but the integration of multiple approaches suited to the organizational context. As demonstrated, the interplay between vision, structure, and adaptability is essential for organizations like Centre LSD that operate in environments requiring constant evolution and strategic foresight. To enhance leadership effectiveness and drive sustainable organizational growth in African Centre for Leadership, Strategy, and Development (Centre LSD), the following recommendations are proposed:

1. African Centre for LSD should first implement tailored training programs emphasizing transformational and adaptive leadership. These programs should focus on vision creation, emotional intelligence, strategic foresight, and change

management to inspire innovation and drive long-term organizational success.

2. Centre LSD should establish regular feedback systems, encourage experimentation, and support learning from failure. This will enhance adaptability in a dynamic organizational environment and strengthen the organization's capacity for sustained growth.
3. Centre LSD should use transactional leadership to maintain operational stability and ensure accountability in performance management, supporting overall organizational growth.

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