

LEADERSHIP CHANGE AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF TRANSFORMATIONAL AND TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE IN A UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Lack of employee commitment may be a critical threat to organizational survival and growth. Private Christian mission owned universities seem to be grappling with survival and growth threats associated with a lack of employee commitment, which is likely to be causing inefficient daily operations, delay tasks completion, fostering customer dissatisfaction, and sabotaging revenue generation initiatives. The study examined the extent to which transformational and transactional leadership styles influence employee commitment in a Nigerian private Christian mission university. Survey research design was used for the study. The target population was 774 full-time employees of the University. The sample size of 89 respondents consisted of faculty and non-teaching staff and was determined using the Taro Yamane formula. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) were employed as data collection instruments. The study employed proportional and simple random sampling methods to allocate and distribute the questionnaires to respondents. Correlation coefficient and simple regression analysis were used to analyse data. The findings suggested that transformational and transactional leadership styles significantly affected employee commitment. The findings implied that the social and economic exchange relationship fostered by transformational and transactional leadership behaviours in organizations promote employee emotional attachment and inspires them to be dedicated to its goals. The study recommended that organizations' leaders should consciously create work environments that promote employee trust, responsible, and productivity behaviours.

Keywords: Transactional leadership; Transformational leadership; Employee commitment; Affective commitment; Inspirational motivation.

1. Introduction

Lack of employee commitment may be a critical threat to an organization's survival and growth. It is likely to hinder efficient daily operations, task completion, foster customer dissatisfaction, and rupture the organizational bottom line. Perhaps, the 21st-century role of human resource managers to motivate and retain a productive workforce is increasingly complex. The globalization of the workforce may have created difficulties for managers in attracting and retaining talented employees and fostering an enabling organizational climate where employees can make meaningful contributions to organizational goals as long-term competitive resources. Employee commitment is believed to be a vital resource for achieving corporate objectives considering that employees may be instrumental to the efficient and effective combination of the organization's resources in its quest to improve organizational effectiveness (Gberevbie, Joshua, Excellence-Oluye, & Oyeyemi, 2017; Shuck, Reio & Rocco, 2011; Ugochukwu & Egwuatu, 2021; Zareiea & Navimipour, 2016).

Employee commitment is conceptualized as an employee's passionate affection for the organization expressed in his devotion to help it achieve its objectives continually (Ongori, 2007). Expressed differently, it is a prevailing devoted relationship between employees and an organization reflected in employees' resolve to identify with the mission and vision of the organization they serve by productively remaining in its employment (Karami, Farokhzadian, & Foroughameri, 2017; Looor-Zambrano, Santos-Roldán, & Palacios-Florencio, 2022). According to Sharma, et al. (2021), employee commitment refers to the intention to behave beneficially to the organization, which may be demonstrated by going beyond the call of duty to show that they are proud to work for the organization.

Perhaps, the prevailing functional environment of organizations is very dynamic. Potentially, internal and external forces such as strategic vision, technological changes, globalization, expanding customer expectations, economic, political, and regulatory conditions may create an unstable business environment. The continuous environmental changes may be responsible for constant operational reviews and changes in organizational structure, processes, management team, and leadership style changes.

Interestingly, despite the belief that employees are a vital organizational resource to accomplish organizational effectiveness, many public and private organizations appear to ignore employee work-related attitudinal responses when contemplating and implementing management team changes and the aftermath of the change in leadership style. According to Cook, Hunsaker, Coffey (2001, p.491), leadership is the act of providing direction and energizing others by obtaining their voluntary commitment to the vision of an organization. It is a process by which a person at the helm of affairs of an organization influences subordinates to accomplish organizational objectives and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Acar, 2012).

However, leadership style is described as the behaviour used by a leader to motivate the subordinates to strive to achieve the organization's objectives (Mwaura, Thinguri, & Mwangi, 2014). The leadership literature presents a plethora of leadership styles which includes transformational and transactional leadership styles. Transformational leadership seeks to encourage employees to develop their full potentials, moralities, and motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Ismail, Mohamed, Sulaiman, Mohamad, & Yusuf, 2011).

Transactional leadership style refers to behaviors where the leader rewards employees for high effort and good performance or sanction them if their work results are unsatisfactory (Bass, 1985). Thus, incentive structures are used to increase employees' attainment of organizational goals in a transactional leadership setting.

The scholarly claim that organizational effectiveness may be an outcome of the link between employee commitment and leadership styles has elicited several empirical studies. Generally, the contexts of most studies were in typical business organizations including some of the few studies conducted in Nigeria (Acar, 2012; Asgari, 2014; Alemayehu & Batisa, 2020; Awoyemi, 2018; Fasola, Adeyemi, & Olowe, 2013; Ugochukwu & Egwuatu, 2021). Besides, studies based on Nigerian higher education institutions are rare, and the few did not focus on private universities, especially universities operated by religious organizations (Nweke, Okoye, & Dike-Aghanya, 2021). Considering the presence of ecclesiastical footprints in the work environment of universities run by religious organizations and the increasing roles and significance of private universities to national manpower development, private universities will be a veritable setting for new insights on the link between employee commitment and leadership styles. Johns (2006) avers that context affects organizational behavior and the neglect of contextual influence can affect research outcomes. Also, scholars seem to have unresolved tension on the leadership style and employee commitment link arising from the conflicting findings of extant studies (Alemayehu & Batisa, 2020; Mclaggan, 2013).

Thus, this paper's objective is to examine what is the extent to which transformational and transactional leadership styles affect employee commitment in a private Christian mission university. It also aims to fill the seeming contextual neglect of ecclesiastical-owned private universities in extant studies and empirically account for the likely implications of a leadership change on organizational employee commitment. Additionally, we respond to the need for more studies to resolve the ongoing scholarly tension on the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment.

Hence, the following research questions guide the study:

RQ1. *What is the effect of idealized influence on affective commitment in a private Christian Mission University?*

RQ2. *What is the effect of inspirational motivation on continuance commitment in a private Christian Mission University?*

RQ3. *What is the effect of contingent reward on affective commitment in a private Christian Mission University?*

RQ4. *What is the effect of management by exception on continuance commitment in a private Christian Mission University?*

The subsequent sections of this article review the concepts of employee commitment, transformational and transactional leadership styles. Also, the theoretical basis of the study is explained. Next, is a review of prior empirical studies on the relationship between employee commitment and leadership styles. Afterwards, the research method and data analysis process are explained. Thereafter, the result of our findings is presented and

discussed. Finally, the study's conclusions, contributions, implications and suggestions for future research are presented.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Employee Commitment*

Research shows that employee commitment has been conceptualised from diverse perspectives. Akanbi & Itiola (2013) considered employee commitment as the level to which employees associate with their organization and contribute to organizational efforts to achieve stipulated goals and objectives. This viewpoint aligns with Mensah, Akuoko & Ellis (2016), who stated that employee commitment is the level to which an employee is proud to be identified as an employee of an organization and the amount of enthusiasm exhibited in fulfilling his job roles. Moreover, Steyrer, Schiffinger & Lang (2008) consider employee commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization.

Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal (2011) explained the characteristics of employee commitment as an explicit aspiration to retain organizational affiliation, association with the aims and achievements of the organization. It includes employee loyalty and a disposition to exercise significant effort towards attaining corporate purposes. Akintayo (2010) avers that employee commitment is the extent to which workers feel dedicated to serving the interest of their employers. Ongori (2007) points out that employee commitment is the emotional attachment or loyalty employees have for the organization. As conceptualized by these authors, employee commitment suggests that it involves demonstrated employee loyalty and engrossment in accomplishing assigned tasks towards achieving organizational objectives.

Perhaps Meyer & Allen (1991, 1997) advanced the most comprehensive concept of employee commitment and upheld by Meyer, Stanley & Parfyonova (2012). He used a three-dimensional approach to define employee commitment. In their view, employee commitment has affective, normative, and continuance elements. The affective aspect of employee commitment refers to a passionate attachment to and membership of an organization. Affective commitment is perceived from an employee's unreserved willingness to remain in the organization's employment and devotion to achieving its goals. According to Meyer, Stanley, and Parfyonova, normative commitment is apparent when employees keep their employment with an organization out of a sense of moral duty and obligation. This mindset is born out of the employee's belief that the organization expects him to be loyal, probably because the organization has invested so much in him. Furthering their discourse on the concept of employee commitment, Meyer, Stanley, and Parfyonova avers that continuance commitment is a cognitive attachment of an employee to an organization because of the individual's perceived costs associated with resigning his membership of the organization. The foregoing suggests that an organization may face three variants of employee commitment to manage.

Employee commitment is believed to facilitate service quality improvement because it engenders employee satisfaction, loyalty, responsible and productive behaviors (Yilmaz & Çokluk-Bökeoğlu, 2008). It can propel employees to undertake voluntary actions necessary for organizational life and entrench high standard systems. Besides, employee commitment may encourage organizational citizenship behavior leading to innovations

with competitive advantages (Park, Christie & Sype, 2014). Moreover, it can enhance knowledge sharing among employees to facilitate adaptation to changing business environments for long-term success (Demirel & Goc, 2013). In the same vein, Visagie & Steyn (2011) declared that employee commitment is critical to the success of organizational change initiatives because of employees' passionate involvement with the organization. Consequently, because of the bond employees experience with their organization, the challenges associated with high rate of employee turnover may be reduced. A committed employee is usually loyal and concerned about the organization's future, making extra efforts to achieve organizational growth.

2.2. Leadership Styles

The organizational leadership literature suggests that leadership is a critical factor that determines the success or failure of an organization. According to Rivai (2017), leadership style is the behavioural disposition of leaders towards subordinates to influence them to contribute to efforts to achieve organizational effectiveness meaningfully. It entails the art of inspiring people to bring about beneficial changes in organizations and helps employees to be responsive to the leaders' directives and expectations (DuBrin, 2019; Nurani, Samdin, Nasrul, & Sukotjo, 2021)). Moreover, the literature presents several leadership styles which impact organizational success. Transformational and transactional leadership styles feature prominently in the literature as organizational leadership paradigms with significant potential to influence employee commitment and organizational outcomes.

2.2.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is conceptualised as a leadership style that seeks to encourage employees to develop their full potentials, moralities, and motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Ismail, Mohamed, Sulaiman, Mohamad, & Yusuf, 2011). It implies that the leader inspires subordinates to change their perception, behaviour, morals, ideas, interests, and values to embrace selflessness and be devoted to surpassing prescribed organizational goals in their job roles. Similarly, Bass & Riggio (2006), cited in Fok-Yew (2015), explained that transformational leadership involves a leadership disposition to constantly stimulate and inspire underlings to achieve exceptional outcomes and, in the process, develop their leadership abilities. It suggests that transformational leadership encourages changes regarding how organizational goals are accomplished. According to Lee, Cheng, Yeung, & Lai (2011), transformational leadership entails clear vision articulation, linking individual and collective interests, and providing subordinates with necessary props to achieve organizational goals.

There are four significant characteristics associated with transformational leadership. They are intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and inspirational motivation (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Nweke, Okoye, & Dike-Aghanya, 2021). A leader is deemed intellectually stimulating if his disposition impresses and encourages subordinates to attempt novel and creative work approaches. It implies the extent to which a leader inspires associates to challenge prevailing assumptions and engage in risk-taking actions (Lee, Cheng, Yeung, & Lai, 2011). Leadership behaviour characterised by attentive coaching or mentoring aimed at developing subordinates' potentials and enabling self-actualisation is referred to as individualised consideration. It promotes practices that link employee achievement and growth needs with organizational strategy and goals by

assigning more responsibilities (Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia, 2004). Idealised influence refers to a leader perceived as charismatic, confident, ethical, mission-oriented, trustworthy, respectable, and exemplary behaviourally (Lee, et al., 2011). Inspirational and motivating leaders are deemed to be skilful at articulating organizational vision in ways that motivate employees to buy into the vision and strengthen their resolve to achieve superior outcomes. Inspirational motivation implies that leaders behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by injecting meaning and challenge into their followers' tasks (Silva & Mendis, 2017).

In sum, transformational leaders exert considerable efforts to inspire and motivate their employees by creating vivid pictures of achievable goals. They are perceived as outstanding role models, and their followers emulate most of their actions. Moreover, they activate self-confidence in their followers, empowering them to strive for extraordinary performance in their tasks (Barth-Farkas & Vera, 2014). Transformational leadership is considered a leadership model with the potential to foster more significant follower commitment than other models.

2.2.2 Transactional Leadership

According to Aga (2016), transactional leadership is characterised by an exchange practice predicated on fulfilling contractual obligations. It involves setting objectives, monitoring, and controlling outcomes. In a transactional leadership context, the leader and follower agree on what roles and tasks the follower must accomplish. The bargain can include the material or psychological rewards the leader will provide the follower for completing the agreed tasks. Humphreys (2001) noted that a reward system is a prominent characteristic of transactional leadership. The reward system acts as an incentive for employees to achieve organizational goals. Transactional leaders are prone to appeal to the self-interest of their workers as a means to stir them towards the pursuit and achievement of set goals. Leaders who employ the transactional leadership model help their subordinates to take cognizance of their responsibilities and the prescribed goals to achieve. Also, they motivate their followers by developing their self-confidence about attaining expected levels of performance (Lo, Ramayah, Min, & Songan, 2010).

Transactional leadership is described in terms of two characteristics: the use of contingent rewards and management by exception (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). They described contingent reward as the leader's reward to bestow the subordinate once the latter has achieved the predetermined goals. According to Rawung, Wuryaningrant, & Elvinita, (2015), exception management is a leader's corrective or evaluative response to employees on the job mistakes. Thus, transactional leadership emphasises the task-related exchange of actions and rewards between followers and leaders. Udayanga (2020) suggests that transactional leadership involves two significant dimensions, namely task orientation and people orientation. He describes task-oriented leaders as persons with minor concerns for employee growth or personal satisfaction. They seem to have a penchant for assigning specific tasks, specifying procedures, scheduling work and clarifying expectations, encouraging hard work, emphasising deadlines, driving full capacity utilisation, and closely supervising employees. Conversely, people-oriented transactional leadership is characterised by a leadership orientation that creates an environment of emotional support, warmth, friendliness, and trust.

Through the contingent reward mechanisms, transactional leaders can elicit from employees a significant level of commitment, loyalty, organizational involvement, and productivity (Awoyemi, 2018; Garg & Ramjee, 2013; Wiza & Hlanganipai, 2014; Silva & Mendis, 2017). The leader's commitment to fulfilling reward promises such as enhanced pay, recognition, promotion, bonuses, etc., can facilitate the leader's organizational goals. Additionally, management by exception enables leaders to monitor and control the quality of job outputs. In times of relative goal stability, transactional leadership appears to be more expedient at securing employee commitment (Aga, 2016).

Based on the above, transactional leadership is perceived as a leadership model involving commensurate employee loyalty and productivity in response to incentives. The reward is based on predetermined expectations agreed to between leaders and followers. The individual work-related desires of employees are satisfied in the form of recognition, pay increase, promotion, and bonuses.

2.3 Theoretical Review

2.3.1 Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory professes that a mutual bond is activated as persons who incur obligations reciprocate in social interaction (Blau, 1964; Mugizi, Bakkabulindi, & Bisaso, 2015). The concept of social exchange theory suggests that when employers and employees interact, there is a tangible or intangible social exchange that may be more rewarding or costly to either of the parties. The organization management literature avers that one of the characteristics of organizations is being a social system comprising people with a defined purpose to which all members subscribe. Norms and rules regulate the behavior of organizational members. As organizations make and enforce human resource management-related rules and practices, employees respond with behaviors that impact corporate purposes (Marescaux, De Winne, & Sels, 2013). Thus, organizations can motivate employees to achieve organizational goals through leadership styles that recognize employees' social exchange-related aspirations.

Doubtlessly, employees play essential roles in the actualization of organizational purposes, and there are ensuing social exchanges emanating from their roles. From the standpoint of employee workplace-related behavioral research, social exchange theory offers a paradigm to evaluate and understand how leadership styles can influence employee attitude as organizations seek to achieve their objectives. Geetha & Mampilly (2012) suggest that HRM practices serve as organizations' commitment to employees, reciprocated with positive work attitudes such as loyalty and trust.

2.4 Empirical Review

2.4.1 Leadership Style and Employee Commitment

Leadership styles and employee commitment has been a subject of interest in the leadership and management literature. Researchers within diverse contexts have empirically explored it. Many studies reported a positive relationship, while others found the relationship negative.

Abasilim, Gberevbie, & Osibanjo (2019) examined the relationship between leadership styles and employees' commitment. The study used correlation and regression analysis to analyse the surveyed data sourced from 97 employees of the Lagos State Civil Service Commission. The authors reported a positive relationship between leadership

styles and employee commitment. Specifically, the report revealed that the association between transformational leadership style and employee commitment is significantly positive. However, transactional leadership style is negatively related to employees' commitment and is insignificant.

Ugochukwu & Egwuatu (2021) used Pearson Product moment correlation to assess how leadership style affects employee commitment in the banking sector of Anambra State, Nigeria. The data used for the study was sourced through structured questionnaires administered to 507 employees. The study's outcome showed a significant positive relationship between transactional leadership style and affective commitment, while the connection between transformational leadership and continuance commitment was significantly positive.

Dariush, Choobdar, Valadkhani, & Mehrali (2016) studied the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment dimensions. Their study was based on a sample of 223 employees of a government agency in Tehran, Iran. The multi-factorial leadership questionnaire (MLQ) and the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) were deployed as data collection tools. At the same time, structural equation modeling and Pearson Correlation Coefficient were used to analyze data. The results showed that transformational leadership was positively related to affective, normative, and continuance commitments. Similarly, the results indicated that transactional leadership is positively and significantly associated with continuance and normative commitments.

Jekelle (2021) explored how leadership styles affect employee commitment. A cross-sectional survey was conducted of 151 employees at a public sector agency in Abuja, Nigeria. The research engaged a quantitative approach to collect data using a questionnaire and analyzed the data with simple regression analysis. The author reported a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment. Similarly, the result of the association for transactional leadership was positive.

Alemayehu & Batisa (2020) analyzed surveyed data of 136 employees of three transport companies from the Wolita and Dawro zones of Ethiopia using Pearson Correlation Coefficient and simple regression analysis. The study's objective was to determine the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership styles and the three dimensions of employee commitment (affective, continuance, and normative). The researchers reported that transformational leadership significantly affected affective and normative commitment, but not continuance commitment. Besides, the effect was more substantial on affective commitment. Also, transactional leadership positively impacted affective, continuance, and normative commitments individually.

Chully & Sandhya (2016) used correlation and simple regression as statistical tools to analyze data from a sample of 308 faculty members of Bangalore-based higher education institutions. The authors aimed at determining how the perceived transformational leadership behavior of departmental heads impact members of faculty's affective commitment. The study showed a significant positive relationship between perceived transformational leadership and affective commitment.

Nurani, Samdin, Nasrul, & Sukotjo (2021) empirically examined the effect of leadership style on employee commitment and employee performance using an Indonesian institution as context. The sample consisted of 94 respondents, and SEM Smart PLS was engaged to analyze the data. The study's outcome showed that leadership style positively and significantly affected employee commitment. It implies that organizational leadership is a significant factor in fostering and sustaining employee commitment.

Fasola, Adeyemi, & Olowe (2013) undertook a study to ascertain the impact of the respective dimensions of transformational and transactional leadership styles on employee commitment. The authors employed correlation coefficient and simple regressions to examine data derived from their survey of 80 employees of 10 Nigerian banks through the multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) and organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ). The authors reported an insignificant positive relationship between transformational leadership styles and employee commitment, while the link between transactional leadership and employee commitment was significantly positive. They noted that Nigerian bank employees are more responsive to transactional leadership in their commitment than to the transformational leadership approach.

Shurbagi (2014) showed that the relationship between transformational leadership and employee commitment is a strong and positive one. The study's outcome was based on regression analyzed data sourced from a sample of 227 Libya's national oil corporation employees using the multi-factor leadership (MLQ) and organizational commitment questionnaires (OCQ). The study also revealed that idealized influence and normative commitment recorded the highest correlation among the various dimensions of transformational leadership and employee commitment. Comparatively, intellectual stimulation and affective commitment recorded the weakest relationship.

Wiza & Hlanganipai (2014) employed surveyed data of 160 university academic staff of South African-based institutions to investigate the effect of leadership styles on employees' commitment. The data were analyzed using Spearman correlation analysis. The study's findings revealed that affective and continuance employee commitment dimensions were significantly and positively impacted by transformational leadership style. Conversely, normative commitment was significantly and positively affected by transactional leadership style.

Garg & Ramjee (2013) employed the multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) and the organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) to collect data from 197 employees of selected South African public agencies. Their study examined the relationship between leadership style and employee commitment using the two-tailed Pearson analysis to make inferences from the data collected. Garg and Ramjee showed that the effect of transformational leadership on affective, normative, and continuance commitment is weak positively and significantly so. However, transactional leadership had a weak but significant positive correlation with normative commitment.

Overall, findings from available empirical literature suggest that leadership styles significantly influence the various dimensions of employee commitment.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design, Sample, and Data Collection

The study employed a survey research design to establish a causal relationship between variables. The study's population consisted of 440 faculty and 334 non-teaching staff of a private university in the South West of Nigeria. The sample size of 89 was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula on sample size determination with a 10% level of precision. The Yamane sample calculation is a way to determine the sample size for a study. It is an ideal method to use for survey research and when the population is finite (Uakarn, Chaokromthong, & Sintao, 2021). The Yamane sample size states that:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \tag{1}$$

Where:

n = Sample Size

N = Population = 774

e = Allowable error = 0.10

Hence, $\frac{774}{1 + 774(0.10)^2}$

n = 88.56

n = 89 respondents

Primary data was generated using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Meyer & Allen, 1997) and the Multifactor Leadership Style Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Both questionnaires were adopted because they have been widely used and recommended for their sound psychometric properties (Fasola, Adeyemi, & Olowe, 2013; Shurbagi, 2014). The results of prior evaluative studies (Cronbach alpha and confirmatory factor analysis) of both research instruments were used to assess the reliability and validity of both instruments. The OCQ's composite Cronbach alpha was 0.91. At the same time, the construct validity, namely RMR, GFI, TLI, CFI, and RMSEA, indicated models fit (Jonathan, 2020). The composite Cronbach alpha of the MLQ was 0.82, and the validity indices showed models fit (Muenjohn & Armstrong, 2008; Ugu & Okojie, 2016). Consequently, Ugu & Okojie (2016) avers thus: “...in sum, the MLQ (Form 5X) developed by Bass and Avolio (1997), has proven successful in adequately capturing the full leadership factor constructs of transformational and transactional leadership theory... the coefficient alpha of reliability were generally significant and above the minimum target of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978), and the correlation of the construct showed that the instrument was robust, reliable and valid for assessing the leadership style in Nigeria.”

Both questionnaires employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1= strongly disagree; to 5= strongly agree) to measure the study's variables. Employee commitment was measured using two elements of the OCQ (affective and continuance) commitment, respectively. Transformational leadership was measured through two dimensions of the leadership approach (idealized influence and inspirational motivation), while transactional leadership was measured through contingent reward and management by exception. Three indicators of the respective measuring instruments adopted were utilised to gauge respondents' perceptions of each of the study's variables. Table 1 shows the sources of the constructs and indicators.

Table 1 – Sources of constructs and indicators

Variables	Construct	Source
Employee commitment	Affective commitment continuance commitment	Adopted from Meyer & Allen (1997)
Transformational leadership	Idealized influence inspirational motivation	Adopted from Bass & Avolio (1997)
Transactional leadership	Contingent reward management by exception	Adopted from Bass & Avolio (1997)

The study adopted proportional and simple random sampling technique in the selection of respondents. The faculty and non-teaching staff of a private university in the South West

of Nigeria were classified as distinct groups, according to the University’s employee classification. Subsequent to the stratification of the target population, simple random sampling technique was used to select a representative sample from the respective groups. The proportionate size of their respective population was the bases for the distribution of the research instrument to each employee category (Kassa & Raju, 2014; Kothari 2010). Table 2 shows the proportionate allocation of the data collection instrument.

Table 2 – Proportional Distribution of Research Questionnaire

S/N	Employee Group	Number	Proportion %	Allocated Questionnaire
1.	Faculty	440	57*	51*
2.	Non-teaching	334	43**	38**
Total		774	100	89

* $440/774 \times 100 = 57\%$. * $57/100 \times 89 = 51$.
 ** $334/774 \times 100 = 43\%$. ** $43/100 \times 89 = 38$.

The researcher personally administered the survey instruments to 51 teaching and 38 non-teaching employees of a private university in the South West of Nigeria using proportional and simple random sampling methods. The field survey lasted for a period of two months and the response rate was 85% (76 returned questionnaires). Table 3 shows respondent’s demographic data.

Table 3 – The Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	51	67.1
Female	25	32.9
Age		
21-30	8	10.5
31-40	14	18.4
41-50	36	47.4
51-60	17	22.4
61 and above	1	1.3
Respondents’ highest education		
PhD	47	61.8
Masters	19	25.0
PGD	3	4.0
BSc/HND	7	9.2
Respondents’ educational background		
Business Administration	11	14.5
Sciences	19	25.0
Humanities/Arts	9	11.8
Engineering	15	19.7
Social Sciences	22	29.0
Respondents’ length of employment (years)		
1-5	12	15.8
6-10	18	23.7
11-15	27	35.5
16-20	19	25.0

3.2 Data Analysis Method

The dependent variable for this study was employee commitment measured as affective and continuance commitment. Independent variables were transformational (idealized influence and inspirational motivation) and transactional (contingent reward and management by exception) leadership styles. Based on the study's objectives, the collected data was analysed with simple linear regression to determine the level of influence independent variables have on dependent variables. The fitness test of the regression model was conducted with SPSS 23.0. The model fitness was estimated using the coefficient of determination, which helped explain how closely the predictor variables explain the variations in the dependent variable. A p-value of 5 percent significance level was determined as a basis for deciding on the directional relationship of independent and dependent variables.

3.3 Model Specification

$$Y = f(x)$$

Y is the dependent variable, i.e., Employee Commitment

$$\text{Hence } Y = (y_1, y_2)$$

X is the independent variable i.e. transformational leadership and transactional leadership

$$\text{Hence } X = (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4)$$

Where:

y_1 = Affective Commitment (AC)

y_2 = Continuance Commitment (CC)

x_1 = Idealized Influence (IF)

x_2 = Inspirational Motivation (IM)

x_3 = Contingent Reward (CR)

x_4 = Management by Exception (ME)

a_0 = is the intercept or constant in the equation

β_1 = regression co-efficient of x_1

β_2 = regression co-efficient of x_2

β_3 = regression co-efficient of x_3

β_4 = regression co-efficient of x_4

e_i = error term

Expressed in its functional form:

$$AC = a_0 + \beta_1 IF + e_i \tag{i}$$

$$CC = a_0 + \beta_2 IM + e_i \tag{ii}$$

$$AC = a_0 + \beta_3 CR + e_i \tag{iii}$$

$$CC = a_0 + \beta_4 ME + e_i \tag{iv}$$

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Idealized Influence and Affective Commitment

The result in Table 4 (R-squared = 0.905) emanating from the model summary of the relationship between idealized influence and employees' affective commitment indicated that variations in the perceived idealized influence of leadership accounted for 90.5 percent

of the observable changes in affective employees' commitment. It connotes a very high-level positive correlation ($R= 0.952$) between this approach to leadership and its outcome on employee commitment level. From the analysis of the variance result (Table 5), it was seen that the estimated model of affective commitment was found to be statistically significant (F -statistics= 2163.9; P -value = 0.00) at 1 percent and thus provides statistical validation for the result of the relationship between idealized influence and affective employee commitment.

The analysis of the coefficient estimates of the relationship between idealized influence and affective commitment in Table 6 portrayed a significant direct impact of this element of transformational leadership style on employees' affective commitment. The detailed analysis of the effect of idealized influence on employees' affective commitment ($Beta = 0.952$; T -statistics= 46.5; P -value =0.000) showed that 95.2 percent of affective employees' commitment was traceable to idealized influence. The result demonstrated that transformational leadership style influences employees' commitment level towards actualizing organizational objectives.

Table 4 – Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.952 ^a	.905	.905	.387

a. Predictor: (constant), idealized influence

Table 5 – ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	324.571	1	324.571	2163.884	.000 ^b
Residual	33.899	226	.150		
Total	358.469	227			

a. Dependent Variable: affective commitment

b. Predictor: (constant, idealized influence)

Table 6 – Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1 (Constant)	-.439	.083		-5.314	.000
1 Idealized influence	1.102	.024	.952	46.518	.000

a. Dependent Variable: affective commitment

4.1.2 Inspirational Motivation and Continuance Commitment

The result of the model summary (R -Square=0.633) in Table 7 showed that 63.3 percent of the changes in continuance commitment as a gauge of employees' commitment was attributed to inspirational motivation as a measure of transformational leadership style. The correlation ($R=0.795$) implied a significant positive relationship between inspirational motivation and continuance commitment.

The ANOVA result (Table 8) indicated that the estimated model of continuance commitment was statistically significant (F-statistic=389.4; P-value<0.01) at a 1 percent significance level. The result implied a significant positive relationship between inspirational motivation as a dimension of transformational leadership style and continuance commitment as a measure of employees' commitment. The analysis of the coefficients (Table 9) showed a positive impact of (T-statistics =19.733; Beta coefficient =0.795; P-value= 0.000) 79.5 percent of inspirational motivation on continuance commitment. Hence, through the inspirational motivation of employees, the level of employees' continuance commitment is significantly enhanced. The result showed that transformational leadership style could be considered a significant factor that boosts employees' workplace commitment.

Table 7 – Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.795 ^a	.633	.631	.773

a. Predictor: (constant), inspirational motivation

Table 8 – ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	232.684	1	232.684	389.391	.000 ^b
Residual	135.048	226	.598		
Total	367.732	227			

a. Dependent Variable: continuance commitment

b. Predictor: (constant, inspirational motivation)

Table 9 – Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
1 (Constant)	-1.270	.210		-6.034 .000
Inspirational motivation	1.109	.056	.795	19.733 .000

a. Dependent Variable: continuance commitment

4.1.3 Contingency Reward and Affective Commitment

The model result in Table 10 showed a strong correlation between contingency reward and affective commitment. It is further seen that 89.8 percent of the changes in affective commitment were traceable to contingency reward. The ANOVA (Table 11) result showed that the strong correlation between contingency reward and affective commitment is statistically valid at a 1 percent level of significance (F-statistic =1997.1; P-value =0.000). The analysis of the coefficient results in Table 12 showed a significant impact of 94.8 percent of contingency reward on affective commitment (Beta coefficient = 0.948; t-statistics = 44.68; P-value<0.01). Hence, utilizing more contingency rewards as a leadership style will significantly enhance affective commitment in an organization.

Table 10 – Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.948 ^a	.898	.898	.402

a. Predictor: (constant), contingency reward

Table 11 – ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	322.027	1	322.027	1997.074	.000 ^b
Residual	36.442	226	.161		
Total	358.469	227			

a. Dependent Variable: affective commitment

b. Predictor: (constant), contingency reward

Table 12 – Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.305	.083		-3.669	.000
Contingency reward	1.030	.023	.948	44.689	.000

a. Dependent Variable: affective commitment

4.1.4 Management by Exception and Continuance Commitment

The model summary results in Table 13 indicated a strong positive relationship between management by exception and continuance commitment. The result of the correlation coefficient (R=0.813) showed the existence of a strong correlation between management by exception and continuance commitment.

The statistical significance of the model (F-statistics = 441.6; P-value<0.01) at 1 percent level of significance in Table 14 suggested that the strong positive relationship between management by exception and continuance commitment was statistically confirmed. The coefficient estimates of the relationship between management by exception and continuance commitment are shown in Table 15. The result indicated a significant impact of 81.3 percent change in continuance commitment that was attributable to management by exception (Beta coefficient = 0.813; T-statistic = 21.0; P-value <0.01) at significant level of 1 percent. The result, therefore, suggested that management by exception could be considered a significant leadership style that affects the continuance commitment of employees in an organization.

Table 13 – Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.813 ^a	.661	.660	.742

a. Predictor: (constant), management by exception

Table 14 – ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	243.236	1	243.236	441.551	.000 ^b
1 Residual	124.496	226	.551		
Total	367.732	227			

a. Dependent Variable: continuance commitment
 b. Predictor: (constant, management by exception)

Table 15 – Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.719	.173		-4.166	.000
Management by exception	.927	.044	.813	21.013	.000

a. Dependent Variable: continuance commitment

4.2 Discussion

The regression results showed that idealized influence and inspirational motivation, which are elements of transformational leadership, have a significant positive effect on affective and continuance employee commitments. It reflects empirical persuasions that when subordinates perceive a leader as a role model and a source of motivation, employees tend to be emotionally attached to the organization and are inspired to give their devotion to its goals. It implies that infusing challenges and meaning into job roles would ultimately improve organizational effectiveness due to enhanced employee productivity and lower absenteeism and turnover rates. The literature on leadership styles suggests that transformational leadership styles affect employee commitment levels with implications on organizational outcomes.

This study's result is consistent with Wiza & Hlanganipai (2014), whose findings revealed that affective and continuance employee commitment was significantly and positively impacted by transformational leadership style. Similarly, Jekelle (2021) reported a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership style and employee commitment. Nevertheless, to some extent, this study's result was inconsistent with the findings of Alemayehu & Batisa (2020). They reported that transformational leadership positively affected affective commitment but negatively related to continuance commitment. The divergence in outcomes may be attributed to contextual and methodological factors.

Furthermore, the analysed data for this study indicated that contingent reward is positively related to affective commitment and significantly so. Also, the result showed that management by exception has a significant positive relationship with continuance commitment. This finding implies that transactional leadership facilitates positive work attitudes and high performance by provoking employees to set and realize diverse work targets, such as timely and efficient task completion, promotion, and salary upgrade. Besides, the result suggests that the social and economic exchange relationship fostered by transactional leadership behaviours such as the leader's clarification of the role and task

requirements for subordinates as well as the performance criteria and the rewards upon accomplishing desired goals, promotes employees' emotional attachment to the organization.

The findings agree with Xenikou (2017), which showed that employee affective identification with an organization is influenced by evaluating the resources and rewards that the organization offers to its employees through the transactional style of leadership. Ugochukwu & Egwuatu (2021) and Alemayehu & Batisa (2020) also demonstrated a positive link between transactional leadership and employee commitment. However, the findings of Abasilim et al. (2019) showed that transactional leadership style is negatively related to employees' commitment and is insignificant. Possible reasons for their differing results may be the study's settings, methodological approach, and population characteristics. Fasola, Adeyemi, & Olowe (2013) demonstrated that Nigerian bank employees are more responsive to transactional leadership in their commitment than to the transformational leadership approach.

5. Conclusion

We investigated the relationship between leadership styles and employee commitment by examining sampled data of a higher education institution in Nigeria. The result suggested that leadership style is positively related to employee commitment, particularly transformational and transactional leadership styles. The overall findings indicated that transformational and transactional leadership are complementary leadership approaches facilitating organizational effectiveness. While transformational leadership behaviours activate self-confidence in employees, empowering them to strive for extraordinary performance in their tasks, transactional leadership helps to clarify employee roles, task requirements, performance criteria, and the rewards upon accomplishing desired goals. These leadership attributes promote employees' emotional attachment to the organization leading to more positive work attitudes, extra effort, and higher employee performance.

The current study provides fresh insights into the literature on employee workplace behaviour and the leadership paradigm. It contextually demonstrated that transformational and transactional leadership styles encourage employees to identify with an organization emotionally, fostering long-term positive work behaviours. The study's finding helped resolve the prevailing tension on the leadership style and employee commitment link arising from the conflicting results of extant studies by reinforcing empirical convictions that there is a significant positive relationship between the variables. Also, the result demonstrated that change in leadership style associated with changes in an organization's leadership can significantly affect employees' devotion to the organization. Besides, the study's outcome reaffirmed the social exchange theoretical postulations, which argued that a mutual bond is activated when persons who incur obligations reciprocate in social interaction.

The ensuing recommendation from this study's findings is that organizational leaders should make conscious efforts to establish human resource policies and practices that foster employee trust, responsible, and productive behaviours. The agreed exchanges between the organization's leaders and subordinates should be fairly implemented as a means to establish employee emotional attachment to the organization.

While this study has provided new insights into the nexus of leadership style and employee commitment, future studies should address its limitations. First, limiting the contextual scope to one ecclesiastical-owned university may constrain a general application of the findings. Therefore, future studies may consider using several church-owned universities as context. In the same vein, future studies may benefit from comparative studies between church-owned and government-owned universities regarding leadership styles and employee commitment relationships. Second, the study focused on two out of the three perceived dimensions of employee commitment and two out of the four professed dimensions of transformational leadership. Therefore, interpretation of the result may be limited to the relationships regarding the examined dimensions.

Consequently, future studies may consider a comprehensive model involving all dimensions of employee commitment, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership. Finally, we used a survey approach for the data collected that was analyzed to determine the directional relationship between the variables. The response bias associated with the questionnaire as a data collection instrument possibly limited the general application of the findings. However, the reliability and validity assessment of the data collection instrument mitigated the occurrence of response bias.

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