

# Office Leadership Paradigms and Adaptation: Implications and Benefits

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## **Abstract**

*The study examined the adaptation implications and benefits of office leadership paradigms among corporate organisations in Nigeria. Three hundred (300) staff were sampled from 25 corporate organisations in the south-south states of Nigeria. The convenience and purposeful methods of sampling were used in the selection of the respondents. The mean and standard deviation were used to analyse research questions using SPSS statistical software. From the data gathered, the study found that shifting from traditional leadership to more contemporary styles has substantial benefits for corporate organisations, such as increased employee engagement, productivity, creativity, and decision-making capabilities. Also, despite the benefits, it was found that a paradigm shift from traditional authoritative leadership styles to more contemporary approaches may result in resistance from employees who are accustomed to traditional leadership styles, and unlearning traditional behaviours may induce fear and uncertainty among the workforce. The study recommends that organisations consider a phased and well-planned transition from traditional to modern leadership paradigms. Providing extensive training programmes for employees can help mitigate resistance and facilitate a smoother adaptation process.*

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**Keywords:** adaptation, implication, leadership, office, traditional, paradigms

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## **1.1. Introduction**

As enterprises navigate an age of fast technological breakthroughs, globalisation, and altering workforce demographics, understanding the many leadership paradigms becomes critical. Conventional hierarchical models are being replaced by more adaptable and inclusive methods that recognise the varied abilities and viewpoints of contemporary teams.

The notion of adaptive leadership has been more prominent in recent years, highlighting the leader's capacity to successfully address and navigate change (Sarta et al., 2020). In the dynamic and ever-changing environment of the 21st century, leadership is experiencing a significant and fundamental change in its way of thinking and operating. The conventional hierarchical leadership paradigm, which involves a top-down approach and an inflexible organisational structure, is being replaced with a more flexible and inclusive style (Mohapatra, 2023). A convergence of causes, such as technical progress, shifting demographics in the workforce, and an increased recognition of the significance of diversity and cooperation, propels the transition.

Mohapatra (2023) recognised that an essential element of this fundamental change is the transition towards servant leadership. Now, leaders are viewed as facilitators who empower and assist their colleagues, rather than being seen as dictatorial personalities. This method promotes a culture characterised by trust, openness, and open communication. Leaders are now required to possess the ability to listen empathetically, comprehending the distinct requirements and ambitions of every member of their team. Leaders may now enhance workforce engagement and motivation by prioritising the well-being and professional growth of their staff.

Technology also has a crucial impact on transforming leadership paradigms. The increasing prevalence of remote work and virtual collaboration necessitates leaders who possess the skills to effectively navigate digital platforms and cultivate a strong sense of connectedness among team members located in various parts of the world (Karl, Filip, & Carl, 2022). 21st-century leaders effectively use technology as a facilitator, using it to optimise procedures, improve communication, and stimulate creativity.

Diversity and inclusion are key aspects of modern leadership, as highlighted by Mohapatra (2023) and Karl, Filip, and Carl (2022). Organisations acknowledge that diverse teams provide a wealth of viewpoints, ideas, and methods, eventually fostering creativity and effective resolution of problems. Inclusive leaders proactively seek and appreciate various perspectives, fostering a work environment that embraces diversity and guarantees equitable chances for everyone.

Nigeria, with its diverse cultural fabric and quickly developing economy, provides an intriguing context for examining how leadership models adapt and contribute to the achievement of organisational goals. The literature on leadership has not adequately addressed the duties of contemporary leadership, its adaptation challenges, and its benefits, despite its widely recognized importance and value. Considerable numbers of management academics have engaged in discussions on the efficacy of leadership styles and behaviours (Karl, Filip, & Carl, 2022; Mohapatra, 2023). This current study raises several unresolved inquiries and deficiencies. This study mainly focused on examining the implications of adopting contemporary leadership practices and their benefits for organisations in Nigeria. This research aims to analyse office leadership paradigms in Nigerian corporate companies, investigating the distinct difficulties and possibilities presented by the country's diversified business ecosystem.

## 1.2. Research Questions

In view of the objective of the study, the following research questions were answered:

1. What are the implications of the positive adaptation of the modern office-leadership paradigm among corporate organisations in Nigeria?
2. What are the challenging implications of the modern office-leadership paradigm among corporate organisations in Nigeria?
3. What are the benefits of the modern office-leadership paradigm among corporate organisations in Nigeria?

## **2.0. Literature Review**

### **2.1.1. Leadership Paradigms**

Office leadership paradigms include the dominant theories and frameworks that shape the approach and manner of leadership in a working environment. These paradigms adapt in accordance with changes in organisational structures, worker dynamics, and social influences. The authoritative or autocratic leadership style is a classic paradigm in which a single leader has the responsibility of making decisions and directing the team. This method may provide positive results in some circumstances, but it has the potential to impede innovation and limit employee involvement.

The conventional model of office leadership encompasses autocratic leadership, transactional leadership, and hierarchical leadership (Karl, Filip, & Carl, 2022; Jing & Avery, 2008). The autocratic leadership paradigm entails a solitary leader or a small cohort of leaders with substantial decision-making power and authority. Employees are required to adhere to instructions with little opportunity for feedback or collaboration. Leaders establish the transactional leadership paradigm by implementing a framework of incentivization and disciplinary measures. Leaders use a transactional approach by offering rewards for exemplary performance and implementing corrective actions for unsatisfactory outcomes. Likewise, hierarchical leadership systems often exhibit a distinct hierarchy in which decision-making power is centralised at the highest level. Communication often follows a hierarchical pattern, with leaders conveying information to workers in an organised way.

Conversely, contemporary office leadership models include transformational leadership, servant leadership, democratic leadership, adaptive leadership, laissez-faire leadership, and coach-style leadership. Transformational leaders inspire and encourage their people through the cultivation of a collective vision and the promotion of innovation (Karl, Filip, & Carl, 2022). Their primary emphasis is on fostering personal growth, enabling individuals to take control of their own lives, and cultivating a constructive work environment. The servant leadership paradigm prioritises leaders actively serving their team members, with a particular emphasis on facilitating their personal and professional development, while also cultivating a nurturing and encouraging work atmosphere. Servant leaders place a high emphasis on empathy, humility, and teamwork. The Democratic Leadership Strategy entails leaders actively engaging team members in decision-making processes and actively seeking their participation and feedback. It facilitates the creation of an atmosphere that is more inclusive and participatory, cultivating a feeling of ownership and involvement among workers.

Leaders in contemporary organisations often need to demonstrate adaptability and responsiveness to change in order to practice adaptive leadership. Adaptive leaders effectively manage ambiguity, promote knowledge acquisition, and foster creativity inside the

organisation (Mohapatra, 2023). Conversely, the laissez-faire leadership style entails a non-interventionist approach, whereby leaders give their team members authority to make choices and oversee their own work (Jing & Avery, 2008). It fosters autonomy and self-reliance. The coach-style leadership approach emphasises the development of skills and potential among team members. They provide direction, assistance, and constructive criticism to aid workers in attaining their objectives and enhancing their performance.

The transformational leadership approach is another emerging paradigm that focuses on inspiring, motivating, and developing a common vision. Leaders adopting this strategy concentrate on empowering their team members, promoting a pleasant work atmosphere, and encouraging creativity. This paradigm is in line with the current focus on cooperation and adaptation in response to rapid technological improvements. It fosters a work climate that is more inclusive and participatory, enhancing workers' sense of worth and motivation to make their best contributions.

In addition, the servant leadership model has gained popularity, highlighting leaders' commitment to helping their team members and achieving greater organisational objectives (Sarta et al., 2020). This approach places a high value on empathy, humility, and a dedication to fostering the development and welfare of workers. Servant leaders prioritise the elimination of barriers, facilitating the growth of their team members, and establishing a supportive and caring workplace atmosphere. This paradigm indicates a trend towards a people-centric leadership style that understands the significance of interpersonal interactions in creating organisational success.

### **2.1.2. Organizational Adaptation**

Organisational adaptation pertains to an organisation's capacity to adapt and alter its structures, processes, strategies, and behaviours in light of internal and external changes and difficulties. The key is to possess the adaptability and nimbleness necessary to negotiate an ever-changing landscape and secure enduring prosperity. Sarta et al. (2020) define organisational adaptation as the process by which an organisation adjusts its performance via changes and strategies to ensure its survival. Adaptation is a comprehensive process in strategic leadership that refers to the organisation's capacity to evolve and grow. According to Podsakoff, MacKenzie, and Podsakoff (2016), adaptation refers to the deliberate decision-making process carried out by members of an organisation, resulting in observable activities that try to minimise the gap between the organisation and its economic and institutional surroundings.

The objective of the adaptation is to use strategic modifications in order to facilitate the organisation's adjustment to abrupt changes in its external or internal environment. An external change, such as an environmental change, refers to changes occurring in the external surroundings, like a fiscal downturn or a shift in consumer behaviour. An internal change refers to an abrupt alteration in the composition of personnel or unanticipated reductions in the budget (Karl, Filip, & Carl, 2022). Prior studies have characterised organisational adaptation as an intricate process that must consider both environmental change and its intricacy (Jacobs et al., 2013; Lehmann, 2010).

Organisational adaptation may exhibit many features, depending on the specific event and the nature of the change. The citation is from Langley et al. (2013). When considering various types of change, it might impact the different departments within the organisation. As stated by Karl, Filip, and Carl (2022), change is a very encompassing notion since its effectiveness relies on the employees' mentality when using it optimally (Karl, Filip, and Carl, 2022; Dominguez et al., 2015).

Prior studies have shown instances when the environment, outside an organisation's control, has influenced strategic leadership. This, in turn, amplifies uncertainty as the anticipation of future events becomes unpredictable (Karl, Filip, & Carl, 2022). Unforeseen change is often associated with the antithesis of deliberate decision-making and adaptability inside an organisation. Internal adaptation is a crucial process that relies on the organisational structure, culture, and overall identity of the organisation (Karl, Filip, & Carl, 2022).

## **2.2. Theoretical Review**

The research is based on the Great Man idea, which was introduced by Thomas Carlyle in the year 1840. The hypothesis posits that the capacity for leadership is innate and hereditary. According to this notion, leadership is believed to be an innate quality that one either has from birth or does not possess at all. The epithet 'great man' was originally embraced due to the prevailing belief that leadership, especially in the military, was mostly reserved for men. The philosophy of leadership known as the great man hypothesis gained significant recognition throughout the 19th century. The myths surrounding renowned figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, Alexander the Great, and Julius Caesar have perpetuated the belief that exceptional leaders are born, not produced. Historian Thomas Carlyle had a significant influence on this idea of leadership by asserting that the history of the world is essentially the life narrative of exceptional individuals. Belmejdoub (2015) emphasised that effective and efficient leaders possess both inspiration and the appropriate qualities and attributes.

Throughout the years, there has been a contentious argument about the persuasiveness of whether leaders have innate qualities or acquire them through development. In their 1996 research, Sarros & Butchatsky explored the concept of leadership by surveying senior executives from several organisations to get their perspectives on the innate or acquired nature of leadership (Belmejdoub 2015). As expected, their research showed that most senior executives believe that leaders are not simply born or formed but rather a blend of both. They see leaders as modest individuals who recognise that there is more to life than just circumstances. They further disclosed that leadership involves both psychological factors and contextual or circumstantial factors.

## **2.3. Empirical Evidence**

Karl, Filip, and Carl (2022) investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on organisational adaptation as it relates to strategic leadership. An individual case study involving óhléns AB and its subsidiaries, óhléns Outlet and Designorget, forms the basis of this research. Utilising qualitative research methods, the study gained a comprehensive comprehension of the research topic. The study's conclusion is that organisational adaptation has been impacted by the transcendent leadership style, according to the research that has been conducted.



By analysing 443 adaptation articles using both computational and hand-coded methods, Sarta, Durand, and Vergne (2020) generate an interactive visual representation of the themes that adaptation scholars have devoted the most attention to. By deriving an inductive definition, they establish that adaptation is defined as deliberate decision-making by members of an organisation that results in observable behaviours that seek to minimise the separation between the organisation and its institutional and economic surroundings. Upon analysing the literature from six theoretical perspectives and three primary areas of inquiry, they identified eleven obstacles that have impeded adaptation research for the past half century. In order to facilitate the progression and accumulation of future research, they propose strategies to deal with these challenges.

According to the leadership style of chief teachers in primary, general secondary, and technical institutions in Cameroon, Silamine and Rodrigue (2019) forecast the organisational performance of employees' work. School administrators distributed a practical questionnaire to 345 personnel employed at the primary and secondary education levels to conduct the inquiry. Khoza (2015) utilised the transformational leadership questionnaire and the transactional leadership questionnaire to collect data regarding leadership style. The assessment of organisational performance was conducted through the use of a questionnaire that incorporated behavioural indicators from the industrial system (Guenou, as cited in Benlamam, 2015). The findings of this analysis suggest that transformational leadership and organisational performance are significantly and positively correlated. Consequently, educational administrators ought to employ the various components of transformational leadership in order to inspire and engage their personnel in scholastic endeavours with the ultimate goal of surpassing their own anticipated outcomes. Moreover, the findings indicate that the organisational performance of employees is determined by the sociodemographic variables of maximum degree and institution type.

Boateng, Okronipa, and Amofa (2016) investigated the relationship between organisational productivity and leadership styles in Ghana. To accomplish its research objectives, the study utilised convenience and purposive sampling techniques to gather qualitative and quantitative data. The study utilised a sample size of forty (40) recipients in total. According to the conclusions, leadership is a crucial component of high performance. Additionally, it became apparent that effective leadership is characterised by the active participation of subordinates in the decision-making process. Additionally, the study found that leadership improves employee output and fosters stronger relationships and competencies. In summary, leadership remains a critical instrument that confers a competitive edge on each entity by fostering employee productivity and efficacy.

### **3.1. Method**

The researcher used the descriptive survey method for the study. This method was used because it provides an in-depth analysis and study assessment of all the information that was obtained. The study sampled 300 staff selected from 25 corporate organisations within the south-south states of Nigeria. This includes four (4) senior managers, four (4) middle-level managers, and four (4) junior managers. The convenience and purposeful methods of sampling were used in the selection of the respondents. A questionnaire was used to obtain relevant data. The instrument was validated by experts, and the Cronbach's alpha reliability test was used to ascertain the dependability of the instrument, which yielded an overall coefficient of 0.83,

indicating the instrument was dependable. The mean and standard deviation were used to analyse research questions using SPSS statistical software.

#### 4.0. Result and Discussions

##### 4.1. Result

**Research Question One:** What are the implications of the positive adaptation of the modern office-leadership paradigm among corporate organisations in Nigeria?

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of response on the implications of the positive adaptation of modern office-leadership paradigm.**

SN	ITEMS	N	Mean	Std.
1	Shifting power dynamics from hierarchical to flatter structures might require employees to adjust to increased responsibility and decision-making authority.	300	2.9	0.73786
2	Embracing transparency in communication and information sharing necessitate positive adaptation in terms of comfort levels with sharing ideas and feedback.	300	3.0	0.66667
3	Utilizing digital tools for collaboration and performance management might require upskilling or digital literacy training for some employees.	300	3.1	0.73786
4	Prioritizing innovation and change necessitate fostering a culture of experimentation and risk-taking and might require flexibility, open-mindedness, and willingness to learn from failures.	300	3.1	0.8756
5	By prioritizing mental and physical health might involve changes in work-life balance practices, flexible work arrangements, and access to wellness resources. Effective communication and setting clear expectations are crucial.	300	2.9	0.73786
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>0.75117</b>

The means of the five items utilised in response to research question one were 2.9, 3.0, 3.1, 3.1, and 2.9, respectively, which exceeded the criterion mean of 2.5. This means that using modern leadership styles like coach-style leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, democratic leadership, and information sharing would mean fewer hierarchical power structures and more flat ones. It would also mean being open about sharing information and communicating; using digital tools for teamwork and managing performance; and encouraging a culture of experimentation. In a similar vein, the overall mean score of 3.0 indicates that participants concurred that the aforementioned elements are consequences of the effective implementation of the contemporary office-leadership paradigm.

**Research Question Two:** What are the challenging implications of the modern office-leadership paradigm among corporate organisations in Nigeria?

**Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of response on the challenging implications of the modern office-leadership paradigm.**

SN	ITEMS	N	Mean	Std.
1	Unlearning traditional behaviours with some employees might be accustomed to more authoritative leadership styles and resist the shift to empowering dynamics.	300	3.1	0.56765
2	Fear of uncertainty in embracing change and experimentation can be unsettling for some.	300	3.4	0.5164
3	Open communication can sometimes lead to misinterpretations or information overload.	300	3.1	0.73786
4	If digital tools are heavily relied upon, ensuring everyone has access to necessary equipment and training is crucial to avoid marginalization and inequity.	300	3.2	0.42164
5	While a modern paradigm advocates for flexibility and personalization, overlooking individual needs in favor of a one-size-fits-all approach can be detrimental to organisational goal.	300	3.0	0.8165
	<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.16</b>	<b>0.61201</b>

In response to research question two, the mean scores for items one through five were 3.1, 3.4, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.0, respectively, which exceeded the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that the implementation of contemporary leadership paradigms may present certain difficulties. For instance, employees accustomed to more authoritative leadership styles may exhibit resistance to and unlearning of traditional behaviours. Additionally, some may find it unsettling to embrace change and experimentation due to a fear of uncertainty; open communication may lead to misinterpretations or information overload; and ensuring that all individuals have access to essential equipment and training may prove to be a challenge. Once more, the overall mean score of 3.16 indicates that participants concur that the aforementioned factors pose difficulties for the contemporary office-leadership paradigm.

**Research Question Three:** What are the benefits of the modern office-leadership paradigm among corporate organisations in Nigeria?

**Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of response on the benefits of the modern office-leadership paradigm.**

SN	ITEMS	N	Mean	Std.
1	Modern leadership styles can lead to increased employee engagement and ownership, which in turn can boost productivity and creativity.	300	3.2	.63246
2	Modern leaders prioritize open communication and collaboration across all levels of the organization can break down silos and create a more inclusive and supportive work environment, which can lead to better problem-solving and decision-making.	300	3.1	.56765



<b>3</b>	Modern leaders encourage experimentation and risk-taking, which can foster a culture of innovation. This can help organizations stay ahead of the competition and adapt to change more quickly.	<b>300</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>.63246</b>
<b>4</b>	Modern leaders focus on creating a healthy and supportive work environment, which can help to reduce stress and burnout among employees. This can lead to improved employee well-being and reduced absenteeism.	<b>300</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>.66667</b>
<b>5</b>	Modern leadership practices can make organizations more attractive to top talent.	<b>300</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>.78881</b>
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>300</b>	<b>3.14</b>	<b>.65761</b>

In response to research question three, the mean scores for items one through five were 3.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.0, and 3.2, respectively, which exceeded the criterion mean of 2.5. This implies that the implementation of contemporary leadership paradigms may result in enhanced employee engagement and a sense of ownership, thereby potentially bolstering productivity and creativity; fostering a work environment that is more inclusive and supportive can facilitate improved problem-solving and decision-making; assist organisations in maintaining a competitive edge and swiftly adapting to change; contribute to enhanced employee well-being and decreased absenteeism; and ultimately enhance the appeal of the organisation. Furthermore, the overall mean score of 3.14 indicates that participants concurred that the aforementioned are possible advantages of adopting the modern office-leadership paradigm.

#### 4.2. Discussion of Findings

Tables 1 and 2 reflect the implications of the positive adaptation and the challenging implications of the modern office-leadership paradigm in corporate organisations in Nigeria. The results show that using modern leadership styles like transformational leadership, servant leadership, democratic leadership, adaptive leadership, laissez-faire leadership, and coach-style leadership would mean changing the structure of power from a hierarchy to a flat one, which would make things more open. However, such a shift in leadership would result in resistance and unlearning traditional behaviours from employees who are accustomed to more authoritative leadership styles, as well as creating a fear of uncertainty in embracing change and experimentation among employees. Again, the challenge of ensuring everyone has access to necessary equipment and training in a digitalized environment and overlooking individual needs in favour of a one-size-fits-all approach can be detrimental to organisational goals.

This result supports the work of Sarta, Durand, and Vergne (2020), who found that changing from traditional to modern leadership paradigms would result in multiple adaptation implications, which the firm needs to deal with. Table 3 shows benefits accruable to organisations that adopt the modern leadership paradigm. The result revealed that modern leadership practices boost employee engagement, productivity, creativity, and decision-making. They foster a supportive work environment, adapt to change, improve employee well-being, reduce absenteeism, and attract top talent. These results conform to those of Silamine and Rodrigue's (2019) research, which revealed a significant positive relationship between the modern leadership paradigm (transformational leadership) and organisational performance.

Also, Amofa, Okronipa, and Boateng (2016) added that the leadership style that involves subordinates in decision-making is the one that works. In view of these, organisations should use the different factors of modern leadership to motivate their staff to become more involved in organisational tasks and deliver results beyond their own expectations.

### **5.1. Conclusion**

The study examined the adaptation implications and benefits of office leadership paradigms among corporate organisations in Nigeria. The sample for this study comprised three hundred (300) employees selected from twenty-five corporate organisations located in the south-south state of Nigeria. Corporate organisations derive substantial benefits from the transition from traditional to more contemporary leadership styles, according to the study's findings. Increased employee engagement, productivity, innovation, and decision-making abilities are a few of these advantages. Additionally, it promotes the development of a nurturing workplace atmosphere, strengthens the ability to adjust to new circumstances, enhances the welfare of employees, decreases absenteeism, and draws in highly skilled individuals.

Notwithstanding the benefits, a paradigm shift in leadership from conventional authoritative styles to more modern approaches, including coach-style leadership, transformational, servant, democratic, adaptive, laissez-faire, and laissez-faire leadership, which promote transparency and flatter organisational structures, is not devoid of obstacles. Employees who are acclimated to being led in a hierarchical fashion may exhibit resistance towards the proposed change, while the process of unlearning established behaviours may evoke feelings of dread and uncertainty within the workforce.

Moreover, the research paper identifies obstacles associated with the digitalized environment. An instance of overemphasising the significance of guaranteeing universal access to essential equipment and training while failing to consider the unique requirements of each individual exposes the possibility of implementing a standardised approach that impedes the achievement of organisational objectives.

### **5.2. Recommendations**

The following recommendations were put forth in consideration of the conclusion reached:

1. It is advisable for organisations to contemplate a systematic and gradual shift from conventional to contemporary leadership paradigms. Implementing comprehensive training programmes for personnel can effectively reduce resistance and promote a more seamless process of adaptation.
2. In order to mitigate opposition and apprehension linked to the transition, it is imperative that leaders place an emphasis on open and honest communication. Consistent communication regarding the rationale for the modification, its advantages, and the assistance rendered can mitigate apprehension and cultivate a more constructive mindset among personnel.
3. It is essential to identify and accommodate the unique requirements of each individual throughout the transition process. Implementing a customised approach will aid in mitigating adverse impacts on employee morale and organisational objectives.

4. It is imperative for organisations to allocate resources towards providing essential digital instruments and training to all employees. This initiative will facilitate a smooth transition to a digitalized work environment and aid in bridging the digital divide.
5. By applying contemporary leadership paradigms that incorporate employees into the decision-making process, it is possible to increase employee engagement and positively impact organisational performance.

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