

Transformational Leadership as a Better Alternative to Micromanagement in Private Universities in Nigeria

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Abstract- *The article aimed to investigate how the positive attributes of transformational leadership (TFL) could replace the negative impacts of micromanagement in private universities in Nigeria. Micromanagement has been observed to negatively affect the productivity, morale, job satisfaction, innovation and self-efficacy of employees of private universities. The systematic literature review was employed to answer the research questions through which findings from studies on micromanagement and TFL were synthesised and analysed. Results show that micromanagement has been applied in private universities in Nigeria and is less effective and productive than TFL in the educational sector. The research charged leaders and founders of private universities in Nigeria to apply less micromanagement and more of the attributes of TFL in the administration of these institutions. The article also recommended that the Nigerian Government establish policies that could address excessive micromanagement by top leaders of private universities in the country.*

Keywords: *Micromanagement, Transformational Leadership, Private Universities, Nigeria, Productivity, Morale, Leadership, Education, Self-Determination Theory, Motivation, University Administration*

I. INTRODUCTION

Micromanagement is one of the current administrative and leadership issues confront private universities in Nigeria. This is the case where proprietors unapologetically interfere with the day-to-day running of the universities they founded, such that it becomes difficult to demarcate the lines of leadership of those institutions (Stephen, 2020). This leadership approach can result in high turnover, low employee morale, decreased productivity and customer dissatisfaction (Aguilar and Kosheleva, 2021; Bans-Akutey, 2020; Mishra et al., 2019). These evaluations from researchers indicate that micromanagement is not effective for the

sustainability of organisations and so it must be addressed by policymakers.

Some alternative leadership styles have been suggested as replacements for micromanagement. Wright (2000) argued for leaders to be coaches to their subordinates where there will be room for feedback and the communication of ideas between the two parties.

White Jr. (2010) and Franken and Plimmer (2019) advocated for distributed leadership through which managers delegate tasks to subordinates. For them, delegation is one of the most important productivity skills a manager can master and when properly exercised, it establishes responsibility and accountability, and builds mutual trust and reciprocity between superiors and subordinates. DeLeon and Tripodi (2022) argues that micromanagement should be replaced with mission command philosophy that empowers the best-positioned leader to make critical decisions and also provides subordinates the autonomy to exercise disciplined initiative. Ryan and Cross (2024) advocated for circumventing micromanagers entering the workplace by subjecting employees to psychometric testing as a means of predicting counterproductive behaviours within the selection process. emphasised distributed leadership.

Among the previous attempts at suggesting better alternatives for micromanagement, none has attempted to employ transformational leadership (TFL) as the corrective for it. Moreso, not much has been done to address micromanagement in private universities in Nigeria where this management style is currently being practiced. That is the gap in literature that this study seeks to fill. TFL is suggested in this study as a better replacement for micromanagement because it has been considered as

the most effective style of leadership for higher institutions (Scott and Hines, 2014; Nurtjahjani et al., 2020) and so it can provide a guide for addressing the menace of micromanagement so that private universities in Nigeria can deliver on their mandate more successfully. This study then argues that TFL presents a better style of leadership in the administration of private universities in Nigeria when compared to micromanagement.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How is micromanagement applied in private universities in Nigeria?
2. How can the attributes of TFL be used to address the ills of micromanagement in private universities in Nigeria?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Justification for Private Universities in Nigeria

From its inception, the values of founders and key leaders gradually shape the culture of an organisation. Members of an organisation are progressively influenced by this culture which finds its spirit in the vision of the founder. It is the values of founders that form the practices of members (Hofstede et al., 1990). Schein and Schein (2017) also stated that leaders shape the identity and role of new members who join a group by determining the direction of their involvement. Thus, for them, culture begins with the ideas and styles of the leaders of a group. Leaders have a major impact on how a group defines and solves its external adaptation and internal integration problems. It is the vision of leaders and their abilities to sustain a strong culture that leads to the success of their organisations.

In Nigeria, individuals who wish to contribute to the educational sector are securing licenses to operate universities (Omomia et al., 2014). This is in line with international practices where countries in America, Europe, Asia, Australia, Latin America and Africa have benefitted immensely from the contributions of the private sector in the improvement of their education (Akpotu and Akpochafo, 2009). The involvement of the private sector in higher education keeps growing across the globe and this should continue (Oni, 2012; Suleiman et al., 2017).

To some extent, private universities in the country have helped to solve the problem of limited space to absorb students (Akpotu and Akpochafo, 2009; Ilusanya and Oyebade, 2008). Private universities have also tried to address some social and administrative issues that have befallen the public ones like unstable academic calendars caused by strike actions by workers, cultism, student unrest and the like (Akindele, 2013; Ejoigu and Sule, 2012; Olawore and Ajayi, 2016).

Private universities also boast of better learning environments from the serene campus to teacher-student interaction (Eze et al., 2018; Odediran et al., 2015). Students are most likely to choose private universities to avoid the stress of studying at the public (Olaleye et al., 2020). Yet, school fees at private universities are exorbitant because they are not funded by the government (Oyediran et al., 2020). They also rely heavily on part-time lecturers from public universities. The over-dependence of private universities on part-time lecturers is contrary to the prescription of the NUC (Ajadi, 2010; Okoro and Okoro, 2014; Suleiman et al., 2017).

The Practice of Micromanagement in Private Universities in Nigeria

The highest level of leadership in private universities in Nigeria is the Board of Trustees of which the proprietor is a member. Most strategic decisions are taken at the level of the Board of Trustees. For example, it is the Board of Trustees that appoints the Vice-Chancellor who is the Chief Executive Officer of the university. The Board of Trustees also makes policies that shape the life and future of universities. It is the Board of Trustees also appoints and determines the terms of office of members of the Governing Council (Barringer and Riffe, 2018). Immediately below the Board of Trustees is the Governing Council. The Council is charged with the general control and superintendence of the policy, finances and property of the University including, but not limited to, its public relations. The Council is responsible to the Board. The Senate is the highest academic decision-making body for all academic matters and is headed by the Vice-Chancellor (Gabadeen and Abuja, 2015).

In this type of layer of leadership, there is always the tendency to micromanage in which those at the higher level of leadership control every action of their subordinates. Micromanagers are known to monitor less important activities of the workflow such as minor details or economising on lesser inputs (Rauh, 2019). While there could be many reasons for micromanagement, the unwillingness and inability to trust in subordinates' capability to make proper decisions (Badger et al., 2009) and the feeling of insecurity about their position or abilities are some of the reasons for micromanagement of organisations (White Jr, 2010). Micromanagement thus risks conflating surveillance and care. Raveendhran and Wakslak (2014) also found that when leaders exhibit a managerial philosophy that is consistent with micromanagement, people form negative perceptions about their power security and leadership strength. Furthermore, micromanagement deprives subordinates of purpose and narrows a leader's focus away from the greater picture. It is also harmful to the development of junior leaders by limiting their opportunities to manage duties autonomously (DeLeon and Tripodi, 2022). As such, micromanagement is seen as a negative leadership style when compared with transformational leadership which boasts of positive leadership behaviours.

Micromanagers are concerned about the functionality of the private universities they founded or are in charge of. They are aware of the intense competition in the educational sector in the country and so they pay attention to every detail (White Jr, 2010). They also get involved in the daily affairs of the universities because it is their 'personal business' and they would not like to see it fail. Thus, they make every attempt to ensure that the institution gets every support it needs to thrive and compete. In some cases, micromanagers ensure that their institutions are provided with the necessary tools to promote academic excellence (Mishra et al., 2019).

In the context of private universities in Nigeria, micromanagement comes into play when, for instance, the Board of Trustees controls the affairs of the Council and prevents the members from acting freely. In some cases, the Proprietor might be seen giving direct instructions to the Vice-Chancellor on

the actions he should take regarding certain happenings in the University. The Proprietor may impose a worker on the university without ensuring that the candidate goes through the right process of employment. A proprietor may also direct the Vice-Chancellor to terminate the appointment of a staff he believes is no longer needed in the university without considering the legal implications of this action. These forms of interference by the top leaders are capable of disrupting the administrative processes of the university and depriving the university of its much-needed autonomy. Many micromanagers are driven by the desire to succeed and so they expect significant results from their managers who have been assigned particular responsibilities and so they are always eager to see the results of their management. It is the unnecessary desire to meet unrealistic expectations and outrageous deadlines that pushes them to the point of micromanagement (Bans-Akutey, 2020). On the contrary, Alam (2022) observed that a professional and personal relationship should be established between the Board of Trustees and the management leaders of private universities to ensure their smooth running.

According to Aguilar and Kosheleva (2021), micromanagement has negative effects on the confidence and the morale of those who are micromanaged. It prevents them from taking initiative in the decision-making process. In the end, micromanagement reduces work output as workers gradually shy away from solving problems in the workplace. Moreover, micromanagement prevents workers from working with little or no supervision and from thinking for themselves. This style of management usually results in frustration for the more seasoned workers (Wright, 2000). Micromanagement also implies that the micromanager does not trust the people and the processes and, in the end, adds nothing to the system but rather introduces managerial imbalance which results in low productivity (Bans-Akutey, 2020). In micromanagement, abuse of power takes place and this again brings discontent among employees (Stephen, 2020). While micromanagement may have some short-term benefits like in the appointment and onboarding of new employees, enhancement of the efficiency level of underperforming employees, management of high-risk areas and where a vacuum

is created by the absence of staff, the general impression in literature is that micromanagement has negative impacts on employees as it lowers the rate of their development (Mishra et al., 2019).

The application of micromanagement as a leadership style in these institutions with its attending excesses which can adversely impact their sustainability calls for concern and study among scholars who are interested in the survival and effectiveness of private universities in Nigeria. As indicated earlier, micromanagement tampers with the university system's structure and will not help the growth of higher education. In the opinion of some scholars like Iro-Idoro and Jimoh (2021) and Ndidi et al. (2022), micromanagement is not negative if it is applied under certain conditions and circumstances and certain instances and settings, micromanagement could be beneficial and advantageous to an organisation if it is done correctly. However, the benefits of micromanagement are short-term while TFL promises long-term goals. The ineffectiveness of micromanagement in ensuring a formidable private university system makes it a topic for discussion in this essay.

The Prospects of Transformational Leadership

Now, among other styles of leadership, TFL has been stated to be the most effective to use in most higher education institutions (Scott and Hines, 2014). This is because of its ability to motivate and activate the inner potentials of the individual beyond the controlling reward and punishment used in transactional leadership and micromanagement. Likewise, it is recognized that the TFL style is very suitable for higher education because it focuses on mutual accountability; thus, it increases the existing hierarchical structure in higher education (Anderson and Johnson, 2006, Bolden et al., 2008, as cited in Nurtjahjani et al., 2020). That is why leaders in higher education are considered to be effective if they apply TFL (Nurtjahjani et al., 2020).

The vast scholarly attention which has been given to TFL has suggested that it is positively related to organizational performance. Choudhary et al. (2013) noted that TFL has a relatively more positive impact on organizational performance than servant leadership with organizational learning as a

mediating factor. Other studies like Eliyana and Ma'arif (2019), Han et al. (2018), Layaman et al. (2021) and Soane et al. (2015) argue that TFL is effective for organisational performance. The study of Ng (2017) also showed that affective, motivational, identification, social exchange, and justice enhancement explain the effects of TFL on performance outcomes. This is akin to distributed leadership which emphasises sharing responsibilities and participation in decision-making, leading to organisational transformation (Bashir and Alam, 2024).

More so, TFL found to have a positive effect on employees' job satisfaction at private universities (Bayram and Dinç, 2015). Transformational leaders are known to raise morale and provide members of staff with appropriate teaching and coaching that produces innovative ideas, in both public and private education. Transformational leaders in private universities encourage their followers to look at old problems in new, creative ways and make them feel that their contributions are valued, making them open to new approaches to designing courses, research projects, and curricula, to attending training programmes, and to the adoption of new technology (Al-Husseini and Elbeltagi, 2016). It was also noted that TFL is needed to address the backwardness witnessed at private higher education in Guangxi. TFL could be used to significantly improve private higher institutions' progress in scale, quality of education and teaching. This improvement will help to close the significant gap between private and public universities (Cao et al., 2023). In sum, implementing TFL will help private universities rise above their leadership challenges and make sustainable progress.

IV. METHOD

This study answered the research questions with the use of the systematic literature review (SLR). It is an effective method of literature review that helps researchers to synthesize the literature under review. It was chosen for this research because when it is done at a high quality, it supports better decisions for policy-makers and managers. The research is a kind of a standalone literature review since it is not an introduction to an empirical paper and a foundation

for hypotheses (Kraus et al., 2020). However, SLR may not be effective in studying a broader topic that has been conceptualized differently and also in multidisciplinary studies. On the other hand, an integrative review approach is more appropriate for combining perspectives to create new theoretical models (Snyder, 2019). Also, the narrative review is the least rigorous but “costly” in terms of time and resources (Xiao and Watson, 2019). Yet, SLR is appropriate for this study because it helps to identify relevant studies, to summarize the results, to comment and recommend improvements for future research (Tremmel et al., 2017).

Articles on previous studies on examination malpractice were sourced from the Google Scholar search engine. The open search generated results from several publishing houses like Taylor and Francis, SAGE, Emerald, Plos One, Elsevier, Cogent, ECU Libraries, University of Arizona, Open Access Library Journal, Wilolud Journals, Wiley, Econstor, most of which were open access articles. The search strings were based on the terminology identified in the article title and research questions (Claire et al., 2021; Mengist et al., 2020) which were ‘micromanagement’, ‘micromanagement in private universities’ and ‘transformational leadership’, ‘micromanagement in higher institutions’, ‘transformational leadership in higher institutions. This search generated empirical studies on the effects of micromanagement and transformational leadership on different dimensions of organisational effectiveness.

Articles published in the last ten years (2015-2025) on the various themes were given preference. This was to help the study observe any patterns in previous studies' findings and establish recency in

scholarship. Older articles that offer deeper insights on the topic were also considered. The results from these searches were synthesised to help the study draw its conclusions. The language of publication was also restricted to English, and only peer-reviewed articles were considered. The process of the search for previous studies for SLR is what Cooper et al. (2018) referred to as systematic literature searching and is recognised as a critical component of SLR.

Table 1. A Breakdown of Articles Under Study by Continent

	Africa	Asia	Europe	North America	South America	Total
Micromanagement	2 (Nigeria)	3	1	1	1	8
Transformational Leadership	2 (Nigeria)	4	1	-	-	7

The data collected from the systematic literature search were analysed by synthesizing the searched literature and highlighting important issues that can provide evidence of effect that can inform policy and practice, knowledge and conclusions (Kraus et al., 2020; Mengist et al., 2020; Snyder, 2019).

Findings

The study presents its findings from existing literature in tabular form to systematically review the concepts of micromanagement and transformational leadership in private universities in Nigeria.

Table 2: Empirical Studies on Micromanagement

Author and Date	Topic and Continent of Research	Key Findings
Khoury and Tannous (2020)	Micromanagement’s impact on banks’ performance (Asia)	Although most of the micromanagement traits used negatively affect the bank, some are not harmful, proving that every work environment needs an adjusted leadership style that best fits into it.
Stephen (2020)	Do women leaders micromanage- the	Micromanagement drains out productivity and inflicts fear upon the workforce.

	Employees' perspective (Asia)	
Aguilar and Kosheleva (2021)	What is wrong with micromanagement: economic view (North America)	Even in the absence of psychological discomfort, micromanagement is still detrimental to productivity. The negative effect of micromanagement increases as the population becomes more diverse.
Iro-Idoro and Jimoh (2021)	Micromanagement and Job Performance of Employee in Manufacturing Industry in Ogun State, Nigeria (Nigeria - Africa)	Micromanagement is not totally negative if it is applied under certain conditions and circumstances.
Ndidi et al. (2022)	Micromanaging Behaviour and Employee Productivity in SMEs in Rivers State (Nigeria - Africa)	Under certain instances and settings, micromanagement could be beneficial and advantageous to an organisation if it is done correctly.
Ghamrawi et al. (2024)	Destructive leadership behaviours: The case of academic middle leaders in higher education (Asia)	Micromanagement not only stifles autonomy and creativity but also undermines faculty members' sense of competence and professional fulfilment.
Ryan and Cross (2024)	Micromanagement and its impact on millennial followership styles (Europe)	Micromanagement could be responsible for various negative followership reactions such as anxiety, demotivation, dissatisfaction, disengagement, reduction in support for managers, limited upward feedback, team conflict, reduced productivity and innovation due to fear of making mistakes, ultimately facilitating a toxic workplace.
Villacrés et al. (2025)	Counterproductive Leadership in Military-Academic Institutions: An empirical investigation (South America)	Micromanagement is a counterproductive leadership style, and higher education institutions must rethink and reform their leadership strategies to enhance academic environments; institutions must prioritise leadership development programs that promote empowerment, participatory decision-making, and autonomy in the learning environment.

Table 2 presents the pattern of key findings from recent studies on micromanagement (2020 – 2024). The results show conflicting positions on the practice of micromanagement. Stephen (2020), Aguilar and Kosheleva (2021), Ghamrawi et al. (2024), Ryan and Cross (2024) and Villacrés et al. (2025) all argued strongly for the negative impacts of micromanagement on different organisations including higher institutions and the detriments it poses. On the contrary, Iro-Idoro and Jimoh (2021), Khoury and Tannous (2020) and Ndidi et al. (2022) opined that not all traits of micromanagement are harmful to an organisation. This implies that some traits of micromanagement could be used for the

good of organisations. Notwithstanding the divergent views, these scholars are of the position that micromanagement poses some levels of threats to organisations and where it is required, it must be carefully applied. Another pattern observed is that scholars like Stephen (2020), Aguilar and Kosheleva (2021), Ghamrawi et al. (2024), Ryan and Cross (2024) noted that micromanagement drains productivity and also diminishes the employee's level of motivation. These negative organisational outcomes are formed through excessive monitoring and distrust of employees (Badger et al., 2009; Rauh, 2019; White Jr, 2010).

Table 3: Empirical Studies on Transformational Leadership

Author and Date	Topic	Key Findings
Bayram and Dinç, (2015)	Role of transformational leadership on employee's job satisfaction: The case of private universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Europe)	There is a moderate, positive relationship between the dimensions of TFL and employees' job satisfaction for both work nature and operating conditions.
Al-Husseini and Elbeltagi (2016)	Transformational leadership and innovation: a comparison study between Iraq's public and private higher education (Asia)	TL plays a pivotal role in enhancing product and process innovation and TFL would be ideal in an educational context as it would promote strategies for developing innovation in both sectors.
Abubakar and Ahmed (2017)	The Effect of a Transformational Leadership Style on the Performance of Universities in Nigeria (Africa)	Transformational leadership style had a significant positive effect on university performance.
Huang et al. (2020)	How transformational and contingent reward leaderships influence university faculty's organizational commitment: the mediating effect of psychological empowerment (Asia)	Both transformational and contingent reward leaderships had positive effects on university faculty's psychological empowerment and organizational commitment.
Habeeb and Eyupoglu (2024)	Strategic Planning, Transformational Leadership and Organization Performance: Driving Forces for Sustainability in Higher Education in Nigeria (Africa)	Moreover, transformational leadership positively mediates strategic planning and organizational performance.
Kou et al. (2024)	The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Performance in Shandong Universities: The Mediating Role of the Psychological Contract (Asia)	Transformational leadership significantly enhances faculty members' psychological contract, consequently improving their performance levels.
Sarmiento et al. (2024)	Lecturer Performance in Higher Education: Transformational Leadership, Knowledge Sharing, Change Adaptability and Its Relationship (Asia)	Transformational leadership has a significant effect on knowledge sharing and lecturer performance.

Table 3 presents an outline from studies from the past ten years on TFL (2015 – 2025) which shows a consistent pattern of a positive relationship between TFL and several organisational dimensions like job satisfaction, citizenship and innovative behaviours, university faculty's psychological empowerment and organisational commitment, psychological contract, knowledge sharing and lecturer performance. More specifically, the studies reviewed all point to the positive impact of TFL and performance in higher institutions. TFL achieves a high organisational outcome through its four attributes of idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Bass, 1985, as cited in Singh and Krishnan, 2005; Northouse, 2019). This is contrary to micromanagement, which shows an inconsistent

relationship with organisational dimensions through its excessive monitoring and distrust. All the studies considered in this analysis were conducted in higher institution, which is the population under study. However, it was challenging to find copious studies on micromanagement in higher institutions. The search conducted by this study could not find any studies on micromanagement in private universities in Nigeria.

V. DISCUSSION

The research set out to review how micromanagement has been practised in private universities in Nigeria. While there is no empirical evidence to establish the practice, it is common knowledge that this is the case in these institutions.

This is because some of these private universities are owned by individuals who are personally interested in every detail of administration in their universities and do not hesitate to dictate to the managers. The literature review results indicate that the owners' micromanagement of private universities in Nigeria seeks to ensure the sustenance of the institutions by keeping a close watch on every activity in the university.

More importantly, the research also seeks to apply the attributes of TFL to address the perceived practice of micromanagement in these universities. Findings show that there are divergent views on the practice of micromanagement in organisations. Some believe that it could be practised under certain circumstances, while others note that it is counterproductive to organisations. The findings of this study indicate that micromanagement generally leads to reduced productivity and an unmotivated workforce as a result of traits like excessive monitoring and distrust of subordinates. On the contrary, it is a general opinion, as observed from the findings of this study, that TFL is an effective leadership style in most organisations. Unlike micromanagement, TFL can improve the performance of private universities in Nigeria.

The systematic literature review conducted shows that TFL is a better style of leadership when compared to micromanagement because of its positive attributes. Scholars have discussed TFL under its four attributes: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Bass, 1985, as cited in Singh and Krishnan, 2005; Northouse, 2019). Through these four components, which could be understood as the attributes of TFL, TFL presents a better leadership style compared to micromanagement which operates on excessive monitoring and distrust of subordinates.

Instead of the excessive monitoring applied in micromanagement which results in reduced productivity, TFL applies idealised influence through which they become models to followers because they feel a sense of autonomy which helps them to achieve their individual goals as well as the common goal (Asmawi, Zakaria and Wei et al., 2013). While

micromanagement is a system of distrust, TFL builds trust with followers and more achieve greater results. With this ability, leaders are also able to motivate their followers to create new visions and goals for themselves (Han et al., 2018). This is contrary to the influences exerted by micromanagement which prevents followers from taking initiative and stalls their development.

Also, through inspirational motivation, communicates high expectations to followers and so boost their confidence for the organisation. This also improves their work output because of the level of freedom they enjoy. TFL achieve this performance height by making training and development programs available to their followers so they can acquire the appropriate skills they need to improve their performance (Northouse, 2019). A TFL leader would articulate compelling visions and goals of the organization to followers so that they work towards the same purpose (Han et al., 2018). Unlike micromanagers, TFL helps followers find meaning in their work because they feel valued (Gyanchandani, 2017).

While micromanagers do not entertain contrary opinions and ideas from their followers, through intellectual stimulation, TFL inspires followers to be creative and innovative and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of their leaders and the organizations they work for (Lodders and Meijers, 2017; Northouse, 2019; Walumbwa and Hartnell, 2011, Zwingmann et al., 2016). TFL also encourages followers to question the basic assumptions they have always had about the organisations. Through this, they contribute in proffering solutions to problems (Nissinen et al., 2022). Unlike micromanagers, TFL in private universities gives staff a sense of belonging as they take part in decision-making in the universities (Gyanchandani, 2017; Huang et al. 2021). TFL creates a culture in universities where critical thinking and problem-solving skills are encouraged and rewarded.

Micromanagement tends to be result-oriented and not person-oriented. Through individualised consideration, TFL corrects this by serving as a coach and mentor to their followers in line with their unique

needs and abilities geared towards their development and achievements (Bass, 1985, as cited in Zwingmann et al., 2016; Breevaart et al., 2016). TFL in private universities realises the personal needs of staff members and moves to support them (Walker, 2021). TFL channels resources of time, energy and finances towards achieving this (Lin et al., 2019).

Where these negative tendencies of micromanagement like excessive supervision and distrust are in operation, academic performance is likely to drop over time because the morale of staff is badly damaged. They are not able to give their best to the students, even when modern teaching and learning facilities are provided. Micromanagement can have a long-term negative impact on the sustainability and survival of these institutions. It poses dangers to the delivery of quality service to the public and could also have psychological impacts on the lower levels of leadership in these universities. Sadly, this phenomenon is gradually becoming rampant in the country and, in the long run, affects the autonomous nature of universities.

Also, against the lack of trust of micromanagement, the delegation of tasks establishes responsibility and accountability and builds mutual trust and reciprocity between superiors and subordinates. From the leader-members exchange (LMX) theory perspective, when managers delegate authority to their subordinates, they prepare them for difficult assignments and provide the special information necessary to accomplish their tasks (White Jr, 2010). TFL has been associated with the delegation of tasks and decision-making authority to their teams through which it facilitates team innovative performance (Jiang and Chen, 2016; Yoon et al., 2016). TFL provides effective leadership by empowering followers, fostering trust, and providing guidance and support rather than excessive control and oversight which is the approach of micromanagement.

While there are four basic attributes of TFL, they do not have the same level of impact on organisational dimensions. The findings of Huang et al. (2020) shows that individualised consideration had the strongest correlation of .912 with psychological empowerment and organizational commitment. However, this finding is slightly different from that

of the study of Gyanchandani (2017) which indicated that idealised influence has the strongest correlation (.91) with team performance and followed by individualised consideration (.86) and likewise that of Okoli et al. (2021) where idealised influenced has a strong correlation of .731 with the organisational success while individualised consideration has a moderate correlation of .548 with the dependent variable. Huang's (2020) and Okoli's et al. (2021) studies were conducted in universities while Gyanchandani's (2017) was conducted in the information technology sector. In summary, Huang (2020) suggest that individual consideration is the most impactful component of TFL in universities. Thus, paying attention to the personal needs of employee at private universities in Nigeria through the attributes of TFL will be more effective than the traits of micromanagement.

VI. CONCLUSION: CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study has called the attention of stakeholders to the proper management of private universities in Nigeria. Micromanagers are not usually conscious of their approach to management and so this has to be brought to their attention. The National Universities Commission (NUC) which is the regulatory body for universities in Nigeria should establish a reporting system which makes it possible for lower levels of management in private universities to report micromanagement, especially when it endangers the growth of the universities in question. More importantly, the NUC should have a policy that addresses this phenomenon among founders and leaders of private universities in Nigeria. On the other hand, this study presents TFL as the style of leadership that most serves as a better alternative to the practice of micromanagement in private universities in the country, which poses more harm than good for these establishments.

Conversely, TFL presents better opportunities for employees and institutions because it motivates and promotes followers' initiative. When lower levels of authority are allowed to solve problems independently, they are given the confidence to grow and become leaders themselves instead of interfering in the activities proper to their level which is the

approach of micromanagers. Another lesson for managers and leaders is the need to distinguish between the personal interests of the founder and the growth of the university. In some cases, the personal interests of micromanagers may not align with what the system needs to grow.

The major contribution of this study is the argument that while micromanagement offers both help and harm to private universities in Nigeria, TFL is more suited to these institutions because it is more enduring as a leadership style than micromanagement. Most of the literature we have reviewed on micromanagement shows that micromanagement does not promote team performance as it stifles initiative and suppresses autonomy among the lower levels of management. On the contrary, for the effective administration of educational institutions in Nigeria and around the world, TFL presents the most viable option. As such, founders of private universities and their top leaders should incline more towards the attributes of TFL which have been shown to support organisational effectiveness and gradually distance themselves from the temptation of micromanagement. While micromanagement delivers short-term benefits, TFL assures organisations of the achievement of their long-term goals.

Limitations and implications for future research

Relying purely on literature review and not subjecting the study to an empirical investigation presents a limitation to the study. Also, the study did not consider the diverse impacts that other styles of leadership can have on micromanagement. Further studies can examine how authentic leadership, ethical leadership, and transactional leadership can provide better alternatives to micromanagement. There is also a need to further study the micromanagement of public universities and how TFL can be used to address it.

Declaration of conflict of interest

The author declares that they have no conflicts of interest.

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