

Participative Leadership Style and Organizational Performance in Nigeria's Public Sector: Evidence from the Public Complaints Commission, Imo State (2010–2020)

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Abstract- Leadership style remains one of the most significant determinants of organizational effectiveness in modern institutions. In both public and private organizations, leadership determines the direction, motivation, and performance of employees. This study investigates the relationship between participative leadership style and organizational performance using the Public Complaints Commission (PCC) in Imo State, Nigeria, between 2010 and 2020 as a case study. The research adopted a survey design and relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. Questionnaires were administered to staff of the commission, and the responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and mean score analysis based on the Likert scale. The findings reveal that leadership style significantly affects organizational performance in the Public Complaints Commission. Specifically, inadequate synergy between staff and leadership, poor motivation of workers, and insufficient training were identified as major factors affecting performance. The study further demonstrates that participative leadership enhances staff commitment, promotes teamwork, and improves service delivery in public institutions. The paper concludes that organizations that adopt participative leadership styles are more likely to achieve higher productivity and organizational efficiency. The study recommends the institutionalization of participative leadership approaches, increased staff training, and stronger collaboration between leadership and employees to enhance organizational performance in Nigeria's public sector.

Keywords: *Participative Leadership, Organizational Performance, Public Administration, Public Complaints Commission, Nigeria*

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a critical role in determining the effectiveness and performance of organizations. In

contemporary management discourse, leadership is widely regarded as the driving force behind organizational success or failure. Organizations require effective leadership to coordinate resources, motivate employees, and ensure the achievement of institutional objectives. Armstrong (2001) describes leadership as the process through which managers influence employees to achieve organisational goals through effective coordination of human resources. Leadership therefore represents a central element in organisational development and performance.

In the public sector, leadership is particularly important because public institutions are responsible for delivering services that affect the welfare of citizens. Ineffective leadership within public institutions can lead to poor service delivery, inefficiency, and loss of public trust. Drucker (1993) argues that the quality of leadership within an organisation determines its ability to transform resources into productive outcomes.

Nigeria's public sector has faced persistent challenges relating to poor leadership, inefficiency, and weak institutional performance. Many scholars have attributed these challenges to leadership failures and inadequate management practices within public institutions. Achebe (1983) famously argued that Nigeria's primary problem is the failure of leadership. According to Achebe, the inability of leaders to provide effective direction and exemplary leadership has undermined the country's development.

Within this context, leadership style becomes a crucial factor influencing organisational performance. Leadership style refers to the patterns of behaviour that leaders adopt when directing and motivating

employees. Ehrhart (2004) notes that leadership style influences employee behaviour, organisational culture, and the overall performance of organisations.

One leadership style that has gained increasing attention in organisational management is participative leadership. Participative leadership involves the inclusion of employees in decision-making processes and encourages collaboration between leaders and subordinates. According to Somech (2005), participative leadership involves consulting employees, considering their opinions, and involving them in organisational decision making.

The Public Complaints Commission (PCC), commonly known as the Ombudsman, was established in Nigeria to address administrative injustice and protect citizens from abuses of power by government institutions. The commission plays an important role in promoting transparency, accountability, and administrative justice in Nigeria. However, the effectiveness of the commission depends largely on the quality of leadership and organisational management within the institution.

This study therefore examines the role of participative leadership in enhancing organisational performance in the Public Complaints Commission in Imo State between 2010 and 2020.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership and Organizational Performance

Leadership has long been recognised as a key determinant of organisational success. Scholars across various disciplines have emphasised the importance of leadership in shaping organisational outcomes. According to Koontz and Wehrich (1994), leadership is the process of influencing people so that they willingly and enthusiastically pursue organisational objectives.

Leadership determines organisational culture, employee motivation, and strategic direction. Michael (2010) argues that leadership has a direct cause-and-effect relationship with organisational success because leaders determine organisational values and priorities.

Organisational performance refers to the extent to which an organisation achieves its goals and

objectives. Richard et al. (2009) identify three key dimensions of organisational performance: financial performance, market performance, and shareholder value. In the public sector, organisational performance is measured by the quality of services delivered to citizens, efficiency in resource utilisation, and the effectiveness of administrative processes.

Participative Leadership

Participative leadership is a leadership style that encourages collaboration between leaders and employees. Bass (1981) describes participative leadership as a system in which leaders share decision-making authority with subordinates and encourage employee involvement in organisational activities. Participative leadership is closely associated with democratic management practices. Mullins (2005) explains that participative leadership involves consultation, delegation, and shared decision-making between managers and employees.

Studies have shown that participative leadership improves employee motivation and organisational commitment. Yousef (2000) found that employees who perceive their leaders as participative are more satisfied with their jobs and demonstrate higher organisational commitment. Participative leadership also promotes innovation and problem solving within organisations because employees are encouraged to contribute ideas and perspectives.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Motivational Model of Participative Leadership, developed by Sashkin (1976). The model suggests that employee participation in decision-making increases motivation and improves organisational performance.

According to the motivational model, participative leadership enhances employees' sense of ownership and responsibility toward organisational goals. Deci, Connell, and Ryan (1989) argue that participative leadership fosters intrinsic motivation by giving employees a sense of autonomy and competence. The theory also suggests that participative leadership enhances psychological empowerment. Psychological empowerment refers to employees' belief that they

have the ability and authority to influence organisational outcomes.

Arnold et al. (2000) and Ahearne et al. (2005) argue that empowerment leads to improved job performance, organisational commitment, and employee satisfaction.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research design. The survey design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to collect data from a sample of employees within the Public Complaints Commission in Imo State. The population of the study consisted of 87 staff members of the Public Complaints Commission in Imo State. Questionnaires were distributed to all staff members using a simple random sampling method. Out of the 87 questionnaires distributed, 68 were returned, while 60 questionnaires were considered valid for analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and the Likert four-point scale, which included:

Strongly Agree (4)

Agree (3)

Disagree (2)

Strongly Disagree (1)

A cut-off mean score of 2.5 was adopted for decision making.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that leadership style significantly influences organisational performance within the Public Complaints Commission.

The findings reveal that inadequate collaboration between staff and leadership affects the efficiency of service delivery within the commission. Employees indicated that gaps between leadership and staff contributed to delays in resolving public complaints.

The study also found that autocratic leadership styles negatively affect organisational performance. Employees who feel excluded from decision-making

processes are less motivated and less committed to organisational objectives.

Another key finding is that inadequate training and poor staff motivation hinder organisational performance. Employees reported that limited opportunities for training and professional development reduced their ability to perform effectively.

These findings support earlier studies that emphasise the importance of participative leadership in improving organisational outcomes.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between participative leadership style and organisational performance in the Public Complaints Commission in Imo State.

The findings demonstrate that leadership style plays a critical role in determining organisational effectiveness. Participative leadership enhances employee motivation, strengthens teamwork, and improves service delivery within organisations. The study therefore concludes that public institutions in Nigeria should adopt participative leadership approaches to improve organisational performance and service delivery.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Public institutions should adopt participative leadership practices.
2. Staff training and professional development should be strengthened.
3. Organisational structures should encourage collaboration between leaders and employees.
4. Leadership development programmes should be introduced in public institutions.

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