

Leadership Styles of Heads of Department and Lecturers' Job Performance in Universities in Taraba State, Nigeria

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>This study investigated the leadership styles of heads of department (HODs) and their relationship with lecturers' job performance in universities in Taraba State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey and correlational research design were used, with a sample of 313 respondents selected through multi-stage sampling. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and correlation analysis. Findings revealed that HODs apply servant leadership style to a high extent (grand mean = 3.31), particularly in listening to staff challenges, empathizing with welfare needs, using foresight, fostering vision, and encouraging innovation, while persuasion (mean = 1.83) and awareness of developmental needs (mean = 2.17) were applied to a low extent. Emotional leadership style was also applied to a high extent (grand mean = 3.17), largely through social skills, motivation, empathy, self-awareness, and fostering a positive work environment, although regulation of staff thoughts was used to a low extent (mean = 1.67). Correlation analysis showed a weak negative relationship between servant leadership style and lecturers' job performance ($r = -.112$, $p = .833$), indicating no significant relationship. Similarly, emotional leadership style demonstrated a negative but non-significant relationship with lecturers' job performance ($r = -.594$, $p = .213$). These results suggest that while HODs frequently employ servant and emotional leadership practices, these styles do not significantly influence lecturers' job performance in the sampled universities. The study concludes that although servant and emotional leadership styles are practiced to a high extent, they do not significantly predict lecturers' job performance in universities in Taraba State. The study recommends enhanced institutional support, leadership training for HODs, and improved performance-monitoring systems to strengthen lecturer productivity.</i> Keywords: Leadership Styles; Lecturers' Job Performance; Servant Leadership; Emotional Leadership; University Administration.
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Copyright © 2025 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited. Citation: Gregory, D.M; Gyang, T.S; Akpa, G.O. (2025). Leadership Styles of Heads of Department and Lecturers' Job Performance in Universities in Taraba State, Nigeria. UKR Journal of Education and Literature (UKRJEL), Volume 1(2), 10-17.	

INTRODUCTION

Education is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, and acceptable norms that form the foundation of the society. It plays a crucial role in human development and is essential for the growth of the recipients and the society. University education is the training provided in order to prepare people for various professions exist in every nation. It equips the recipients for job in every nation, to start a business that offers a meaningful means of earning a living and the development of the society and other people in a giving environment. Quality education in universities requires good leadership and high lecturer job performance

in terms of teaching, research, and community service. In universities, some problems related to leadership include inadequate funding, shortage of infrastructural facilities, and insecurity, which may influence poor lecturers' job performance and low quality outputs (Daniels *et al.*, 2019).

Lecturers' job performance refers to how effectively lecturers fulfil their responsibilities, which includes teaching, research and community service. It is the key factor in determining the quality of education and the overall success of an institution. (Birch *et al.*, 2012). Some

of the challenges faced by lecturers in performing their task effectively include workload, work environment, stress, motivation, emotional intelligence and institutional support. Effective job performance requires excelling in their core duties while also contributing to academic and community environment. Effective leadership is crucial in addressing these challenges in order to enhance better overall performance in the universities.

Leadership style refers to the manner and approach leaders use to guide, motivate, and manage their teams. It encompasses a leader's behaviour, attitudes, and strategies for making decisions, setting expectations and fostering a positive work environment. (Cherry, 2020). However, different leadership styles can significantly influence team dynamics, productivity, and overall success to enhance lecturers' job performance. Examples of leadership styles are servant leadership style, transactional leadership style, transformational leadership style, emotional leadership style, and situational leadership style. Head of department is a leadership role responsible for overseeing specific academic department. They lead team of lecturers within their subject area, manage the curriculum, and ensure effective teaching and learning practices. Some of the key responsibilities of heads of department are curriculum development, instructional strategies, assessment and evaluation, professional development, collaboration, communication, resource management and monitoring and evaluation. However, heads of department face challenges such as role ambiguity, insufficient resources, administrative burdens, funding, and lack of training, research and administrative duties. These could also affect lecturers' job performance (Adebayo, 2016). When the heads of department use appropriate leadership style, the job performance of lecturers is enhanced.

Servant leadership is a leadership approach that puts serving others above all other priorities. Rather than managing for results. A servant leader prioritizes the growth, wellbeing, needs of employees, and provides timely feedback to maintain a healthy work environment or relationship. Servant leaders display characteristics such as strong listening skills, empathy, self-awareness, and the desire to create a healthy work environment that enhances performance (Robert Greenleaf, 2024). Servant leaders prioritize their followers' needs and use empathy insensitively by demonstrating a deep understanding of the feelings and needs of their staff. Servant leadership style enhances job performance by using persuasion to achieve departmental objectives (Adekalu *et al.*, 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Lecturers' contribution to teaching, research, and community service appear to have fallen short of

expectations; challenges such as excessive workload, inadequate resources, poor infrastructure, lack of management support, poor motivation, lack of professional development opportunities, lack of time for preparation, poor research funding, poor institutional culture among others. Insufficient time for research would lead to ineffectiveness of lecturers' job performance. Additionally inadequate and non-functional school facilities might hamper lecturers' job performance. These have resulted in turning out graduates who are unemployed or whose degrees are of little value.

Adegboyega and Awolusi (2021) supported that, part of the reason for the suboptimal performance is believed might be the consequence of ineffective leadership styles exhibited by heads of department. It is believed that leadership styles practiced by heads of department significantly influence the work environment of the lecturers and adequate supervision and motivation of lecturers helps in the quality of their service delivery. However, the implications of this problem are far-reaching. The university's set goals will not be achieved, and hence, quality of graduates produced will drastically reduce. A decline in the quality of teaching will negatively affect the intellectual growth of students, who are the future workforce. Reduced research output hinders knowledge advancement and innovation and this in turn affects the nation's development.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate the leadership styles of heads of department and lecturers' job performance in universities in Taraba State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. ascertain the extent to which heads of department apply servant leadership styles in universities in Taraba State, Nigeria.
2. ascertain the extent to which heads of department apply emotional leadership styles in the universities in Taraba State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted descriptive survey and correlational research design. Correlational research design examines the relationship between two variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them; it is non-experimental research that studies the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables (Boanmah *et al.*, 2018). Correlation study aims at finding out if there is any relationship between two variables with the aim of establishing the strength between the two. The correlational research design was used in examining the relationship between Leadership styles of heads of

department and lecturers' job performance in universities in Taraba State.

The researcher will collect data through a descriptive survey to assess both leadership styles and job performance, and then analyse the correlation between these variables to determine the strength and direction of their relationship. Collie *et al.*, (2022) relates descriptive research as a methodological approach that seeks to depict the characteristics of phenomenon or subject under investigation. More so, this design was found most appropriate since the study obtained data from a sample drawn from the population and their views will be used to represent that of the entire population. Reasons for using descriptive survey method provide a rich and detailed account that aids in understanding categorizing and interpreting the relationship between leadership between leadership styles and lecturers job performance.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

Population

The population of this study comprise 1715 participants namely: Heads of department and lecturers from all the three universities in Taraba State, Nigeria. Available data showed that the three universities combined have 114 Heads of department and 1601 lecturers. The Federal University Wukari has 925 lecturers (42 Heads of Department and 883 lecturers). Furthermore, Taraba State University Jalingo has 719 lecturers (47 Heads of Department and 672 lecturers). In addition, Kwaraara University Wukari has 71 lecturers (25 Heads of Department and 46 lecturers), giving a total of 1715 subjects.

Table 1: Population of (HODs and Lecturers) in Universities in Taraba State, Nigeria

University	Lecturer	HODs	Lecturers
A	925	42	883
B	719	47	672
C	71	25	46
Total	1715	114	1601

Source: NUC, Nigerian University Digest 2024

Sample

The sample size for the study was 313 lecturers from the three universities in

Taraba state, Nigeria, Heads of Department and lecturers inclusive using Krejcie and Morgan. Sample size of a study refers to a portion of the population that participated in the study that are referred to as respondents. It is subset of the population the researcher is interested in the study and it is used to generalize the result on the population (Chollete and Filip, 2023). A total 169 respondents comprising 8 Heads of Department and 161 lecturers of the sample size were drawn from Federal university Wukari. In addition, 132 respondents, made up of 9 Heads of Department and 123 lecturers drawn from Taraba State University, Jalingo, while 12 respondents comprising 4 Heads of Department and 8 lecturers were drawn from Kwaraara University, Wukari. The distribution of the sample by university is shown in table 2.

Sampling Technique

This study adopted a multi-stage sampling procedure to ensure that the selection of participants is both systematic and representative of the university population in Taraba State. Multi-stage sampling procedure is appropriate for large populations spread across multiple levels or strata, such as faculties, departments, and individual staff

members. The sampling were carried out in several structured stages using all the public and private universities to capture a broader perspective. In the first stage the stratified random sampling were employed to select faculties within each university. Faculties were grouped (stratified) based on academic disciplines (e.g., sciences, arts, education, management, engineering, etc.) to ensure coverage across different fields. From each stratum, a random selection of faculties was made to provide unbiased representation. This stratification ensures that no single field dominates the study, which helps generalize findings across disciplines.

In the second stage, a sample of 313 were selected using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of determining sample size having 21 HODs and 292 lecturers. After which sampling fractions of 0.3684, 0.4123 and 0.2193 was used to allocate the number of departments to be used in each university. Federal University of Wukari will use 8 HODs, Taraba State University of Jalingo used 9, while, Kwaraara University Wukari used 4. Simple random sampling were used to select 21 departments from the 114 departments in all the faculties in the three universities. All departments in a faculty will be listed, and random selection methods such as drawing lots will be used to choose the required number of departments from each faculty. This step is crucial to minimize researcher bias and ensure that all departments,

regardless of size or popularity, have an equal chance of being included. The third stage is the selection of heads of department. Since each department has only one head of department (HOD), purposive sampling was applied at this stage. The HOD of each selected department were automatically included in the sample, as they are the primary subjects for assessing leadership styles. Their inclusion is critical because the study aims to analyse how their leadership approaches impact the job performance of lecturers under their supervision.

The fourth stage is the selection of teaching staff proportionate random sampling was used to select lecturers from the chosen departments. The 292 number of lecturers sampled from each department were determined proportionally, based on the size of the academic staff in each department. In the selection, more teaching staff were selected from the larger department to reflect its greater staff strength. Within each department, the selection of teaching staff was done randomly to avoid selection bias and ensure that every lecturer has an equal chance of being part of the study. In selecting the lecturers, 0.5515, 0.4197 and 0.0287 sampling fraction was used to apportion the number of lecturers to federal University of Wukari (161), Taraba State University of Jalingo (123) and Kwararafa University Wukari (8) respectively. Simple random sampling were used to select 292 lecturers from the 21 departments in all the faculties in the three universities. This was done by writing 292 "YES" and 1309 "NO" on pieces of paper was taken to the various universities and departments for lecturers to pick. All the lecturers that picked "YES" were used for the study, while those that picked "NO" were not part of the sample for the main study. One hundred and sixty nine HODs (8) and Lecturers (161) will be selected from the federal university of Wukari, 132 HODs (9) and Lecturers (123) from Taraba State University Jalingo and 12 HODs (4) and lecturers (08) from Kwararafa University Wukari, giving a sample of 313 respondents (see appendix B).

Instruments for Data Collection

Two instruments were used for data collection for the study, they are researcher-structured questionnaires titled "Leadership Styles of Heads of Department Questionnaire" (LSHDQ) and "Lecturers Job Performance Questionnaire" (LJPQ).

Description of Instruments

Leadership Styles of Heads of Department Questionnaire (LSHDQ)

The instrument "Leadership styles of heads of department" (LSHDQ) is a questionnaire that were administered to lecturers to obtain information on their job performance based on the leadership styles of heads of department. This

instrument comprised two section; Section A and section, respectively. Section A consists of the demographic and personal data of the respondent such as; name of the university, department, and status. Section B addresses variables on job performance based on the Heads of department's leadership styles and will consist of three sub-units. Each sub-unit contains 7 items addressing the variables of the study as it relates to lecturer job performance based on leadership styles like; Teaching, Research, Community Service, Servant-Leader leadership style, having a total of twenty one items using four points rating scale. The respondents are expected to tick (✓) the appropriate items as it appeals to them. The Instruments were developed on a rating scale: Very High Extent (VHE) = 4, High Extent (HE) = 3, Low Extent (LH) = 2, Very Low Extent (VHL) = 1

Lecturers Job Performance Questionnaire (LJPQ)

The instrument "Lecturers' Performance Questionnaire" (LJPQ) is a questionnaire that were administered to lecturers to obtain information on their job performance based on the leadership styles of HODs. This instrument comprised two section; section A and section B, respectively. Section A will consist of the demographic and personal data of the respondent such as: name of the university, department, and status. section B addressed variables on job performance based on the heads of department's leadership styles and will consist three sub-units. Each sub-unit contained 5 items addressing the variables of the aims of the study as it relates to lecturers' job performance based on leadership styles; having a total of fifteen items using four points rating scale. The respondents are expected to strike or tick (✓) the appropriate items as it appeals to the respondent. The Instruments will be developed on a rating scale: Very High Extent (VHE)=4, High Extent (HE)=3, Low Extent (LE)=2, Very Low Extent (VLE)=1

Data analysis Procedure

Data for this study were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involving mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the extent to Heads of Departments were able to apply servant leadership style while correlation analysis was used to analyse the relationships between Heads of Department Use of Servant-Leader Leadership style and Lecturers' Job Performance as well as Relationship between Heads of Department Use of Emotional Leadership Style and Lecturers' Job Performance

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Extent Heads of Department Apply Servant Leadership Style in their Departments

S/N	Servant Leadership Style	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	N	Mean	Std.	Decision
1	I listen to my departmental staff challenges.	5	1	-	-	6	3.83	.408	HE
2	I empathize with my staff by prioritizing their welfare.	5	1	-	-	6	3.83	.408	HE
3	I use persuasion in building departmental goals.	-	1	3	2	6	1.83	.753	LE
4	I use foresight to understand the ethics of the department.	4	2	-	-	6	3.67	.516	HE
5	I use awareness to understand the areas of development in my department.	1	1	2	2	6	2.17	1.169	LE
6	I encourage innovation in my department.	6	-	-	-	6	4.00	.000	HE
7	I foster vision in my department.	5	1	-	-	6	3.83	.408	HE
Grand Mean							3.31		HE

VHE=very high extent, **HE**=high extent, **LE**= low extent, **VLE**= very low extent, **N**=number, **STD**= standard deviation

In Table 3, items 3 and 5 was rated low extent with mean scores of 1.83 and 2.17, while items 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 were rated high extent which ranged from 3.67 to 4.00, and the deviations of scores from the mean scores ranged from .000 to 1.17. This meant that heads of department apply servant leadership styles in their departments in the universities by listening to departmental staff challenges, empathizing with staff through prioritizing their welfare, using foresight to

understand the ethics of the department, encouraging innovation and fostering vision in the department. It was discovered that head of departments hardly use persuasion in building departmental goals and awareness to understand the areas of development in my department. The grand mean was 3.31, indicating that heads of department apply servant leadership styles in their departments in the universities in Taraba State to a high extent.

Table 4: Relationship between Heads of Department Use of Servant-Leader Leadership style and Lecturers' Job Performance

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	R	Df	P-value	Decision
Servant-Leader Leadership style	6	25.83	1.60				
Lecturers' Job Performance	26	69.73	6.23	-.112	30	.833	Accept H_0

$P < 0.05$

N=Sample, $\bar{x}$ = mean, **SD**= standard deviation, **Df**= degrees of freedom, **r** =correlation coefficient, **p value** = probability value

Table 4 shows the relationship between heads of department use of servant-leader leadership style and lecturers' job performance in universities in Taraba State, Nigeria. From the result, servant-leader leadership style had a mean score of 25.83 and a standard deviation of 1.60, while lecturers' job performance had a mean score of 69.73 and a standard deviation of 6.23. The result further yielded $r(30) = -112$, $p.833p > 0.05$, it showed a negative weak relationship between variables. It means

that as heads of department increasingly use servant-leader leadership style, then lecturers' performance declined. Since the p-value of .833 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is retained. It was concluded that there is no significant positive strong relationship between heads of department use of servant-leader leadership style and lecturers' job performance in universities in Taraba State, Nigeria.

Table 5: Extent Heads of Department Apply Emotional Leadership Styles in their Departments

S/N	Emotional Leadership Style	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	N	Mean	Std.	Decision
1	I use social skills to understand the emotions of others in the department.	1	5	-	-	6	3.17	.408	HE
2	I motivate staff to facilitate their growth in the department.	5	1	-	-	6	3.83	.408	HE
3	I regulate the thoughts of staff in my department.	-	1	2	3	6	1.67	.816	LE
4	I empathize with my staff by building trust in the department.	4	2	-	-	6	3.67	.516	HE
5	I use self-awareness to understand the values of my department.	2	3	-	-	6	3.33	.516	HE
6	I use emotion to foster a positive work environment in the department.	4	1	1	-	6	3.33	1.21	HE
Grand Mean							3.17		HE

VHE=very high extent, **HE**=high extent, **LE**= low extent, **VLE**= very low extent, **N**=number, **STD**= standard deviation

Table 5 showed results on the extent heads of department apply emotional leadership styles in the universities in Taraba State. From the findings, item 3 was rated low extent with mean scores of 1.67, items 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 were rated high extent by the respondents with mean scores ranging from 3.17 to 3.83 and deviations of the scores from the mean scores ranging from .408 to 1.21. This meant that heads of department apply emotional leadership styles by using social skills to understand the emotions of others in the department, motivating staff to

facilitate their growth in the department, empathizing with staff by building trust in the department, using self-awareness to understand the values of the department and using emotion to foster a positive work environment in the department. Also, heads of department hardly apply emotional leadership styles to regulate the thoughts of staff in the department. The grand mean was 3.17; this implies that heads of department apply servant leadership styles in their departments in the universities in Taraba State to a high extent.

Table 6: Table Relationship between Heads of Department Use of Emotional Leadership Style and Lecturers' Job Performance

Variables	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r	Df	P-value	Decision
Emotional Leadership style	6	20.17	2.23	-.594	30	.213	Accept H_0
Lecturers' Job Performance	26	69.73	6.23				

Source: Field Survey, 2025

In Table 6 the relationship between heads of department use of emotional leadership style and lecturers' job performance in universities was presented. From the result, emotional leadership style had a mean score of 20.17 and a standard deviation of 2.23, while lecturers' job performance had a mean score of 69.73 and a standard deviation of 6.23. The result further showed that $r(30) = -.594$, $p < 0.05$, it shows a negative relationship between the two variables. It means that as heads of department increasingly use emotional leadership style, then lecturers' performance declined. Since the p-value of .213 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is retained. It was concluded that there is no significant relationship between heads of department use of emotional leadership style and lecturers' job performance in universities in Taraba State, Nigeria.

Conclusion

The study examined the extent to which heads of department (HODs) apply servant and emotional leadership styles and how these styles relate to lecturers' job performance in universities in Taraba State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that HODs apply servant leadership to a high extent, especially in areas such as listening to staff challenges, empathizing with staff welfare, using foresight, fostering departmental vision, and encouraging innovation. However, they apply persuasion and awareness for developmental needs to a low extent. Emotional leadership was also used to a high extent by HODs, particularly in motivating staff, applying social skills, building trust, using self-awareness, and fostering a positive work environment. Nevertheless, regulating staff thoughts was applied to a low extent. Inferential analysis showed no significant relationship between servant leadership style and lecturers' job performance, and no significant relationship between emotional leadership style and lecturers' job performance. Both leadership styles demonstrated weak negative correlations with job performance, suggesting that increased application of these styles did not correspond to improved lecturer performance within the sampled institutions. This finding indicates that while HODs are adopting these leadership approaches, other underlying institutional, structural, or personal factors may be influencing lecturer performance more strongly than leadership styles alone.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were proffered

1. Universities should improve the structural and administrative conditions such as workload management, research funding, infrastructure, and welfare support that directly influence lecturer

performance. Leadership styles will be more effective when the enabling environment is supportive.

2. Regular professional development in modern, evidence-based leadership and departmental administration should be introduced for HODs. This will help them strengthen weaker areas such as persuasion, awareness of departmental developmental needs, and emotional regulation strategies.
3. Universities should establish clear job performance indicators for teaching, research, and community service, accompanied by periodic evaluations. Constructive feedback and mentorship programmes will enable lecturers to improve performance irrespective of leadership style variations.

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