

Deans' Leadership Styles and Academic Staff Job Performance in South-South Nigerian Universities: A Focus on Collaborative and Participatory Approaches

Abstract

This study examined the role of Deans' leadership styles in predicting academic staff job performance in universities in South-South Nigeria, with a particular focus on collaborative leadership and participatory decision-making. The study was guided by two research questions and two corresponding hypotheses. A correlational research design was adopted, and the population consisted of academic staff across selected universities in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the participants, while a structured questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression. Findings revealed that collaborative leadership by Deans significantly predicts academic staff job performance ($R^2=0.011$; $F=11.448$; $p<0.05$). Similarly, participatory decision-making by Deans significantly predicts academic staff job performance ($R^2=0.006$; $F=10.768$; $p<0.05$). These results indicate that inclusive and participatory leadership practices adopted by Deans contribute positively, though modestly, to enhancing academic staff effectiveness in teaching, research, and community service. The study concludes that collaborative and participatory leadership styles are essential for improving job performance among academic staff in Nigerian universities. It recommends that universities strengthen collaborative practices, institutionalize participatory decision-making platforms, and provide leadership training for Deans to enhance faculty productivity. The findings hold practical implications for higher education governance, particularly in fostering collegiality and inclusivity in leadership practices. The study also suggests that future research

Review Article

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should extend to other leadership styles, conduct comparative studies across regions, and employ longitudinal approaches to deepen understanding of leadership–performance dynamics in higher education.

Keywords: Faculty leadership; Collaborative leadership; Participatory decision-making; Job performance; Academic staff; South-South Nigeria

Introduction

Universities depend on academic staff performance, teaching quality, research productivity, student supervision, grant attraction, and service to deliver on their mandates. In Nigerian universities, deans occupy pivotal middle-leadership positions that translate institutional strategy into departmental routines, shape academic climate, and mediate resources and incentives for staff. Emerging evidence in higher education shows that leadership styles strongly condition staff outcomes: a meta-analysis by Kasalak [1] reported a positive, moderate association between leaders' styles and academic staff job satisfaction, an antecedent of performance and retention. Similarly, Onuoha and colleagues [2] found that distributed

leadership practices among academic leaders in Nigerian higher institutions significantly enhanced librarians' job performance through increased job satisfaction.

Within Nigeria, particularly in the South-South region, evidence suggests that collaborative, participatory, and transformational leadership practices are perceived as more performance-enabling compared to autocratic approaches [3]. Okoro [4] also emphasized that academic relationship leadership fosters better staff engagement and teacher performance in the South-South. Yet, despite this growing literature, there is limited empirical focus on deans' leadership, even though sector reports [5] underscore persistent concerns about leadership preparation, governance tensions, and workload management in Nigerian universities.

Leadership in higher education has shifted from heroic, top-down models toward relational, participatory orientations that distribute influence and involve multiple actors in decisions. Shared governance, joint responsibility among faculty, administrators, and governing bodies, remains a cornerstone principle of participatory practice in universities [6]. Closely related is distributed or collaborative leadership, which emphasizes collective sense-making, trust, and empowered teams rather than leader-centric command. Contemporary studies in higher education institutions link such approaches to higher staff satisfaction, commitment, and performance outcomes.

In Nigeria, [2] found that distributed leadership among heads of academic units predicted librarians' job performance via improved satisfaction, highlighting the mechanism through which participatory practices translate into performance gains. In the South-South zone, Urhefe-Okotie and Mole [3] reported that faculty perceive democratic and participatory leadership as predominant and performance-enabling in university library settings. Okoro [4] also observed that collaborative leadership approaches enhance teacher performance in Delta and Edo States. More broadly, Akinnuoye [7] confirmed that leadership management styles remain strong correlates of academic staff performance in Rivers State tertiary institutions, with participatory approaches proving effective during and beyond the COVID-19 era.

At the same time, Ogbodo [5] noted that leadership preparation and development in Nigerian universities remain inadequate, leading to uneven application of participatory principles and contributing to staff dissatisfaction. Conceptually, collaborative and participatory leadership should improve academic staff performance by increasing voice and role clarity through shared decision-making, strengthening intrinsic motivation through autonomy and recognition, and fostering team learning and collective efficacy. However, empirical tests at the level of deans as opposed to vice-chancellors or heads of departments are sparse, especially within South-South universities.

Despite policy emphasis on improving university performance, many faculties in South-South Nigeria continue to report uneven academic outputs (e.g., publications, grant capture, timely supervision) and variable teaching quality. While research indicates that participatory and collaborative leadership can enhance satisfaction and performance [1,2], it is unclear to what extent deans in South-South universities enact these practices, and whether such enactment tangibly predicts academic staff job performance in this context. Existing Nigerian studies have either examined leadership at other administrative levels, focused on other regions [7], or concentrated on specific sub-units like libraries [3], limiting generalization to faculty-wide leadership by deans.

Furthermore, commentaries on Nigerian higher education governance point to concerns about leadership development, selection processes, and decision-making structures [5], which may undermine participatory intent. This creates uncertainty about whether deans' leadership styles contribute positively or negatively to staff performance outcomes. Consequently, there is a critical knowledge gap regarding: (1) the prevalence of collaborative and participatory leadership among deans in South-South Nigerian universities; (2) the strength of association between these approaches and academic staff job performance; and (3) the mechanisms such as staff satisfaction and self-efficacy through which these leadership styles may operate in this regional context. It is based on this problem that this study investigated Deans' Leadership Styles and Academic Staff Job Performance in South-South Nigerian Universities: A

Focus on Collaborative and Participatory Approaches.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to examine Deans' Leadership Styles and Academic Staff Job Performance in South-South Nigerian Universities: A Focus on Collaborative and Participatory Approaches.

Specifically, the study sought to determine whether:

1. Collaborative leadership by Deans of faculties predicts academic staff job performance in universities in south-south Nigeria.
2. Participatory decision-making by Deans of faculties predicts academic staff job performance in universities in south-south Nigeria.

Research questions

The following research questions directed the study.

1. To what extent does collaborative leadership by Deans of faculties predict academic staff job performance in universities in south-south Nigeria?
2. To what extent does participatory decision-making by Deans of faculties predict academic staff job performance in universities in south-south Nigeria?

Statements of the hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

1. Collaborative leadership by Deans of faculties does not significantly predict academic staff job performance in universities in south-south Nigeria.
2. Participatory decision-making by Deans of faculties does not significantly predict academic staff job performance in universities in south-south Nigeria.

Literature Review

An empirical study was conducted by Muhammad [8] at KPP Pratama Jambi to determine the role of work stress in mediating collaborative leadership styles on employee performance. The research conducted was qualitative research, with a total of 112 respondents, and was processed using the partial least square (PLS) application. The testing process is carried out in four stages, namely outer model, inner model, and hypothesis testing. The tests that have been carried out have yielded results, namely there is a positive

and significant influence between collaborative leadership style on work stress with a significant value of 0.000, between leadership style on employee performance with a significant result of 0.001, between work stress on employee performance with a significant value of 0.045, and between work stress mediating collaborative leadership style on employee performance with a significant result of 0.047 and all hypotheses Accepted. The conclusion found is that collaborative leadership styles can help employees manage work stress so that employee performance is maximized.

Furthermore, Haruna [9] investigated the impact of collaborative leadership on quality assurance for goal attainment of universities in Kogi State Nigeria. Three research questions and 1 hypothesis guide the study. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population for the study comprises of lecturers and senior management staff of the three universities in Kogi State. The purposive sampling technique was used to sample 300 lecturers and 100 management staff. A structured questionnaire was used for collection of data. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions, while an independent sample t-test was used to test the hypothesis. The study's findings showed that collaborative leadership has a positive impact on quality assurance in staff development, teaching, learning, and community engagement. The study therefore recommends among others that collaborative leadership should be adopted in the universities to enhance cordial prediction between the management, staff, and community and thus facilitates goal attainment of Universities.

Also, Georges [10] examined the effects of collaborative leadership on organizational performance. A cross-sectional study was conducted by focusing on managers. The collected data was performed using a structured questionnaire. The researcher obtained two hundred sixty-two valid questionnaires. Cronbach's alpha and Factor analysis were adopted to test the reliability of data, and two tests preceded factor analysis: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test of sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's test of sphericity to test the existence of interrelations between the items of the questionnaire supported by previous valid and reliable research to obtain construct validity. The researcher used multiple regressions on the

prediction between collaborative leadership and organizational performance. For analyzing data, the researcher adopted descriptive statistics, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test, Bartlett's test of sphericity, reliability analysis, Cronbach's alpha, and factor analysis. For performance, organizational leadership is an essential factor. Improved performance will result in a competitive advantage and higher outcomes of the company. Collaborative leadership will promote organizational performance to be able to remain competitive and survive, and it will impact the whole organization. Companies must increase the number of collaborative leaders, and develop them continually, and these leaders will develop the people inside their diverse functions, inspiring them, showing collaboration, reaching the best in individuals, and preventing teams from being stuck in debates.

Going forward, Badirudeen [11] assessed the effect of leadership style on performance of academic's staff in Kaduna State University (KASU). Kaduna State University is endowed with human and material resources, when developed can enhance its productivity and make University one of the Universities in Nigeria. However, despite the enormous human and material resources at its disposal, not much is seen in terms of productivity and general development. The main objective of this study is to assess the effect of leadership styles on performance of academic's staff of KASU. The survey method was employed through administration of 234 questionnaire and statistically presented and analyzed 211 returned responses with the use of descriptive table as well as regression model respectively. The study revealed that, Democratic, autocratic and laissez faire leadership styles have significant positive prediction with performance of academic's staff of KASU. We recommend the use of the three leadership styles to stimulate the performance of the academic's staff but more of democratic leadership style than other two leadership styles.

In another study, Echu [12] undertook a study to investigate, identify and determine the leadership behaviour(s) most prevalent among university administrators of selected Federal Universities in the North Central Zone of Nigeria. Primary data for the study was collected through questionnaire,

structured interview, and personal observations. A descriptive survey design and the random sampling procedure were used to administer the questionnaire to academic staff in selected Federal Universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria using Ohio State University and University of Michigan Models. The data collected were analysed using the student's t-Test via the application of Microsoft Excel 701 3 and IBM SPSS 22. The results from the analysis showed that task-oriented leadership behaviour was generally displayed by university administrators in the North Central Zone of Nigeria during the period under study, which has, by implication, negatively influenced the performance of the university core mandates.

In another study by Kolawole, [13] examined the level of leadership and job performance of library personnel in University of Abuja, Nigeria. Survey research methodology was used with a total sample size of 202 library personnel in University of Abuja library using simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected mainly through questionnaire and analyzed using frequency distribution and descriptive statistics. The result revealed that the leadership of the University of Abuja library consulted his staff in taking decision at the same time a team player, friendly and provided mentorship to his subordinate. It was also revealed that respondents were of the opinion that leadership of the University of Abuja library encouraged staff to perform well in the job while others maintained that subordinate were relegated in the organization which is not healthy for any establishment. The result showed that the organizational performance was influenced by the leadership styles and personnel performance determined efficient and increase in job performance in University of Abuja library, while autocratic and transactional leadership style have less significant impacts on employee's job performance in the university library. The study concluded that leadership in University of Abuja library should be concerned about policies that will influence library employees positively in the long run than negative policies by the University of Abuja and library management entirely.

Again, Ijeoma [14] examined the impact of employee participation in decision making on organizational performance using Government Owned Enterprises in Port-Harcourt, River State as a case study.

The population of study comprised managers and employees of the selected firm in Port-Harcourt River state. The sample for the study was given as 125. Out of the 125 questionnaires administered to the participant only 100 were returned while 25 were not returned. The study was analyzed using of tables and percentage while the three hypotheses were tested with the aid of ANOVA. The result from the research shows that employee participation in decision making has positive effect on organizational performance. This study recommends the following; Organizations are encourage to design their firm in such a way that it will boot free flow of decision making in their organization and gives room for full involvement of their employee to participate and create efficiency on organizational decision-making process. Again, Firms are advised to put more mechanisms that will encourage their employees to come up with better innovative ways of achieving and promoting organizational performance, and also Firms are commended to improve the level of workers involvement in decision making between employees and employer, finally, Every firm is advised to create a straightforward understanding and notion of the concept of participative decision making to avoid conflicts of interest among the employees and the employer.

Also, Chukwuemeka [15] examined the influence of employee participation in decision making on organizational performance in public organization in Anambra State. The study was anchored on subjective expected utility theory. As a survey research design, a structured instrument developed by the researcher. The population of the study comprised of 1,741 employees of the selected public organization. A sample size of 357 employees was drawn from the population using Taro Yamane of which 338 copies of questionnaire was duly completed and returned. Hypotheses were tested using Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) which was carried out with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. Findings from the study revealed that employee consultation; employee engagement and employee commitment had a significance positive effect on organizational performance in public organization firms in Anambra State, Niger. The study concludes that employee participation on decision had a positive significant effect on organizational productivity. In

view of the findings, the study recommended that Monthly or quarterly meetings and consultations with subordinates on crucial issues will stimulate employee morale and promote self-motivation as they will feel recognized and valued in the organization. The managers and leaders in the organization must encourage employee involvement during quarterly meetings, weekly strategic sessions and team building sessions or interaction sessions, employees must be encouraged to address concerns relating to their jobs or share ideas on how to improve existing policies, practices and procedures that can improve performance levels.

Also, Nwoko [16] focused on the effect of employees' participation in decision making on organizational performance, with reference to National Root Crops Research Institutes Umudike. Specifically, the study sought to: ascertain the impact of employees' participation in decision making on work commitment and examine the effect of employees' participation in decision making on the productivity of NRCRI Umudike. The study adopted survey research design, primary and secondary data were used. The population of the study consist of all the employees of the institution. Logistic Regression analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used to run the analysis through SPSS version 20. The major findings revealed that: there is a positive prediction between employees' participation in decision making and work commitment of the employees in the institution. Employees participation in decision making has a low positive effect on the productivity of the institution with correlation coefficient of ($r=0.228$). The study concluded that employees' participation in decision making have a positive effect on organisational performance, and recommends that the management of National Root Crops Research Institutes Umudike should adopt adept participatory approach in administration/decision making in order to encourage employees' affirmative commitment to organizational goals and objectives.

Similarly, Ekpo [17] examined participatory decision making and organizational goal attainment. This study investigated the extent to which participative decision making affects the organizational goal attainment. The study had a sample size of 136 obtained using

the Cochran statistical formula. The study employed a survey research design. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The data from the responses were presented in frequencies, simple percentages. Three hypotheses were tested using the chi-square χ^2 and t-test statistical tools. The study found out that: Employee participation in decision making significantly improves job productivity, employee participation in decision making predicts employee motivation; the policy of employee participation in decision-making is significant in organizational goal attainment. The study, based on the above findings, concluded that for the goal attainment of any organization to be achieved successfully depended on the extent to which the organization integrated the workers into the policy formulation and implementation. The study recommends that organizations should adopt the ring show management theory as a way of survival.

Another study by Oyo-Ita [18] examined the impact of participatory management on employee productivity in selected banks in Lagos State. The central objective of the study is to examine the significant prediction between participatory management and employees' productivity. A survey research design was employed for the study. The sample for the study comprised 220 staff from some selected banks. Regression analysis was used to measure the prediction between the independent variables and the dependent variables. SPSS was also adopted for the research in testing the research hypotheses. The results of the findings showed that there is a positive prediction between participatory management and employees' productivity. The study concludes that participatory management has the ability to align employees with the system of the organization which will result in productivity in the organization. Based on the results, the study recommended that organizations should increase the intensity of involving employees in the decision-making process for goals to be achieved faster and employees should be carried along in the strategic plans of organizations for better profitability.

A study by Oyebamiji [19] examined the influence of employees' participation in decision making on organization performance with particular reference to Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH)

Teaching Hospital, Ogbomoso, Oyo State, Nigeria. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Teaching Hospital, Ogbomoso Oyo State, Nigeria, while simple random sampling method was used to select two hundred and five (205) respondents. Data were sourced via a structured questionnaire and frequency, percentage, means, standard deviation and linear regression analysis were employed to analyze the data. Results reveal that both direct participation and representative participation have positive and significant impact on organizational performance. Furthermore, results indicate that level of employees' participation in decision making in Ladoke Akintola University of Technology Teaching Hospital, Ogbomoso is very low due to unwillingness of management to share decision-making with employees. The study therefore concludes that employees' participation in decisions making is an alternative paradigm to organization performance. Subsequently, the study recommends that employees should be allowed to make contribution in policy development as they play a major role in policy implementation and this among others will increase organizational performance.

Methodology

The research design that was adopted for this study was the correlational design. Correlational research design is a research approach that attempts to find the nature of the non-causal relationship existing between a set of variables, which cannot be determined by the researcher or manipulated but are present naturally within a group or sample. South-South Nigeria is one of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria representing both a geographic and political region of the country. It comprises six states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers respectively.

The population of the study comprised academic staff in all public universities (State and Federal universities) in South-South Nigeria. Information obtained from the Academic Planning Unit Divisions of the universities (2024) revealed that academic staff numbered 29,558 across all public universities in South-South Nigeria.

The sampling technique adopted for this study was the cluster sampling technique. Cluster sampling is a probability sampling technique used when it is

difficult or impractical to create a comprehensive list of all individuals in a population such that instead of sampling individuals directly, the population is divided into groups, known as clusters which can be based on geography, institutions, or other natural groupings and the researcher randomly select a segment as sample of the study [20]. In using the cluster sampling method, the total number of academic staff was divided into the six States in the South-South Zone of Nigeria as clusters. Thereafter, the researcher selected the faculties of the respective universities in each cluster. The total number of academic staff in each faculty was further clustered into males and females out of which the research randomly selected 2.69 percent of the male and female academic staff as sample for the study. The sample for the study comprised 795 academic staff drawn from all the faculties in State and Federal universities in the South-south of Nigeria representing 2.69 percent of the total population of the study. Among the 795 academic staff selected for the study, 423 were males and 372 were females.

One instrument was used for this study. The instrument is a questionnaire titled "Collaborative and Participatory leadership styles and Academic Staff Job Performance Questionnaire (CPLSASJPQ)". The questionnaire is made up of sections A, B and C. Section A was designed to obtain the demographic information of the academic staff in the universities such as Sex, years of experience, highest qualification, and rank. Similarly, section B of the questionnaire was designed to measure Collaborative and Participatory leadership styles. Section C was designed to measure academic staff job performance. The section B had 20 items (10 items of each sub-variable) designed to measure Collaborative and Participatory leadership styles. The section C had 15 items designed to measure academic staff job performance and the items cut across the five dimensions of academic staff job performance. The items were designed using the four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (DA) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The first two validators were experts in Higher Education from the Department of Educational Management, while the other two were experts from Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Foundation, all in Faculty of Educational

Foundation Studies, University of Calabar. Based on their comments and suggestions, the items that were found irrelevant or ambiguous were either dropped or replaced with other items. To ascertain the instrument's reliability, a trial test was carried out using fifty academic staff from Ebonyi State University, Abakalike which was not part of the study. The Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used to establish the reliability coefficient of each sub-scale. The reliability indices of the instrument were 0.79.

The questionnaire was administered to the 795-academic staff from the two public universities who constituted the sample by the researcher personally with the help of four research assistants that were trained specifically for the purpose of this research exercise. The researcher obtained a letter from the Head of Department (HOD) of Educational Management, to enable him gain access to the respective institutions to administer the instrument. Permission was obtained from the HODs of subjects' departments, after which the instrument was administered to the academic staff. The purpose of the research was carefully explained to the academic staff. However, out of the 795 copies of the questionnaire that were administered, 701 were retrieved and used for analysis after checking for errors. Thus, the researcher recorded 88.2 percent returns rate. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize the data that were generated from the questionnaires. while the Simple Linear Regression was used to test the hypotheses.

Results

The generated data for this study was drawn from a sample of 795 respondents. However, a total of 701 questionnaires were successfully retrieved and were employed in the final analysis. The description of data was done using frequencies (simple percentages and bar charts) the results are presented in (Table 1). The results in (Table 1) showed that the demographic distribution of respondents for sex showed that female dominated with 466 (53.64%), followed by males with 325 (46.36%). For respondents' years of teaching experience, those with 10 years and below dominated 293 (41.80%) closely followed by those of 11-20years 165 (23.54) while the least were those with 31 years and above 115 (16.41%) For educational qualification

(Higher qualification), those with M.Ed/Sc dominated 369 (52.64%) closely followed by those with PhD 210 (29.96%) while the least is PGD/B.Ed/B.Sc 122 (17.40%). Finally concerning rank, lecturer II dominated 298 (25.35%), followed by professors dominated the study 50 (5.67%) closely followed by senior Lecturer II 40(12.61), and the least were graduate assistants 9 (42.92%).

The descriptive statistics analysis was computed for the ten levels of the independent variables inherent in the research study (mean, standard deviation, standard error, maximum and minimum) were computed for the levels of dimensions of the independent variables (administrative practices), with the following dimension collaborative leadership, participatory decision making. Result is presented in (Table 2).

Demographic variable	Category	n	%
Sex	Male	325	46.4
	Female	466	53.6
	Total	701	100
Years of experience	10 years and below	293	41.8
	11-20 years	165	23.5
	21-30 years	128	18.3
	31 years and above	115	16.4
	Total	701	100
Higher qualification	PGD/B.Ed/B.Sc	122	17.4
	M.Ed/Sc	369	52.6
	PhD	210	30
	Total	701	100
Rank	Graduate Assistant	18	4.92
	Assistant Lecturer	100	26.7
	Lecturer II	290	25.4
	Lecturer I	122	15.1
	Senior Lecturer	56	12.6
	Associate Professor	97	9.58
	Professor	27	5.67
	Total	701	100

Table 1. Demographic description of the study sample (701)

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork, 2024.

S/N	Variables	\bar{X}	Sd	Sem	Max.	Max.
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1	Collaborative leadership	14.9458	4.29627	0.15256	7.00	21.00
2	Participatory decision making	15.7087	3.72097	0.13214	8.00	21.00
3	Academic staff job performance	26.7982	8.67538	0.30807	8.00	31.00

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the study variables performance(n=701)

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one

Collaborative leadership by Deans of faculties does not significantly predict academic staff job performance in universities in south-south Nigeria. To test this hypothesis of the study, simple linear regression analysis was employed with collaborative leadership as a predictor (independent) variable and academic staff job performance (dependent) variable. The choice of simple linear regression was because the independent and dependent variables are continuously measured and the researcher predicts the dependent variable on the independent variable. The results obtained from the test statistical analysis are summarized and presented in (Table 3).

(Table 3) interprets the results of the simple linear regression analysis of collaborative leadership and academic staff job performance. An r-value of 0.106 was obtained, resulting in an R-squared value of 0.011. This implies that the variation in collaborative leadership can account for about 1.1% of the total variation in academic staff job performance thus, the p-value (0.003) associated with the computed F-value (11.448) is less than 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that collaborative leadership significantly predicts academic staff job performance with both the regression constant (29.987) and coefficient (-0.737) making a significant contribution to the prediction model (t=27.010 & -2.988 respectively, p=0.000 < 0.05). The mathematical prediction of the regression model is depicted by the following equation $y=29.987+ -0.213x$ thus, x=collaborative leadership and y=academic staff job performance.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig
Regression	965.323	1	965.323	11.448	0.003

Residual	58942.394	699	84.32		
Total	59907.717	700			
Model	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig
Constant	29.987	1.110		27.010	0.000
Collaborative leadership	-0.213	0.071	-0.106	-2.988	0.003
*significant at 0.05 R=0.106 R2=0.011 Adjusted R2=0.010 Std. Error Mean=8.63228					

Table 3. Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the relationship between collaborative leadership by Deans of faculties and academic staff job performance in universities in South-South Nigeria

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork, 2024

Hypothesis two

Participatory decision-making by Deans of faculties does not significantly predict academic staff job performance in universities in south-south Nigeria. To test this hypothesis of the study, simple linear regression analysis was employed with participatory decision-making as the predictor (independent) variable and academic staff job performance (dependent) variable. The choice of simple linear regression was because the independent and dependent variables are continuously measured and the researcher predicts the dependent variable on the independent variable. The results obtained from the test statistical analysis are summarized and presented in (Table 4).

(Table 4) interprets the results of the simple linear regression analysis of participatory decision-making and academic staff job performance. An r-value of 0.083 was obtained, resulting in an R-squared value of 0.006. This implies that the variation in participatory decision-making can account for about 0.6% of the total variation in academic staff job performance thus, the p-value (0.019) associated with the computed F-value (10.768) is less than 0.05. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that participatory decision-making significantly predicts academic staff job performance with both the regression constant (23.754) and coefficient (0.194) making a significant contribution to the prediction model (t=17.812 & 2.346 respectively, p=0.000 < 0.05). The mathematical prediction of the regression model is depicted by

the following equation $y=23.754+ .194x$ thus, x= participatory decision making and y= academic staff job performance.

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig
Regression	911.947	1	911.94	10.768	.019
Residual	59195.770	699	84.686		
Total	60,107.665	700			
Model	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig
Constant	23.754	1.334		17.812	.000
Participatory decision making	.194	.083	.083	2.346	.019
*significant at 0.05 R = 0.083 R2 = 0.007 Adjusted R2 = 0.006 Std. Error Mean =8.65082					

Table 4. Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for the relationship between participatory decision-making by Deans of faculties and academic staff job performance in universities in South-South Nigeria

Source: Researcher’s Fieldwork, 2024

Discussion of Results

The results revealed that there is a significant prediction of collaborative leadership by Deans of faculties on academic staff job performance. At the executive level, collaborative leadership fosters a sense of unity among managers, allowing them to make effective business decisions quickly, set and maintain the organization’s core values, and strategically address issues as a single, cohesive team. This means that collaborative leadership helps everyone to look at perspectives and issues beyond their frames of reference. Collaborative leadership encourages open communication and collaboration across teams, organisations and systems. Collaborative leadership fosters innovation, creativity and engagement and builds trust. It emphasizes inclusivity, communication, and cooperation among team members. Hence, collaborative leaders facilitate dialogue, build trust, and engage stakeholders in the decision-making process. The present findings agree with the study of Muhammad [8,9] findings which showed that collaborative leadership has a positive impact on quality assurance in staff development, teaching, learning, and community engagement. In a similar vein, [10,12] results from the analysis showed

that task-oriented leadership behaviour was generally displayed by university administrators in the North Central Zone of Nigeria during the period under study, which has, by implication, negatively influenced the performance of the university core mandates. Also, [13] results of this study also revealed that there is a strong prediction between leadership style and organizational performance of TKDA. Finally, [21] findings revealed that the Promotion of academic staff when due does not affect their commitment to work. There is a positive prediction between academic staff's conducive working environment and their job engagement. Also, in consonance with the present findings [22-26] findings of the study showed that the Librarian Managers in Benue State adopted more of collaborative leadership style.

It was found that participatory decision-making (PDM) by Deans of faculties has a significant prediction on academic staff job performance. PDM has been shown to help improve workers' job satisfaction and overall well-being. PDM can help benefit businesses through reduced turnover, higher productivity, and better work quality. By adopting participatory decision-making, a leader does not just change a process they cultivate a culture of collaboration, innovation, and shared purpose in your organization. The benefits of this approach can lead to improved performance, higher employee satisfaction, and a more resilient organization. Participative decision-making (PDM) is the opportunity for an employee to provide input into the decision-making process predict d to work matters (i.e., work organization, task priority) or organizational issues, for example, when they have a say in promoting new strategy ideas. It has also been established from the literature reviewed that the more views deans gather in the process of making a decision, the more likely their final choice will meet the most needs and address the most concerns possible. Increased mutual understanding. Public participation provides a forum for decision-makers and stakeholders to understand each other's issues and viewpoints. The present findings agree with the study of [15, 27] whose findings from the study revealed that employee consultation; employee engagement and employee commitment had a significant positive effect on organizational performance in public organization firms in Anambra State, Niger.

Again, [16-18] results of the findings showed that there is a positive prediction between participatory management and employees' productivity. The study concludes that participatory management can align employees with the system of the organization which will result in productivity in the organization. In the same vein [19,28,29] study's findings, organizational productivity in Delta State public service is positively and statistically impacted by participatory decision-making, which involves employee commitment, involvement, and consultation.

In a similar finding by Phylister [30] findings of the study revealed that there was positive and significance impact of employee board representation on organizational performance in Delta sea- port Delta State since board representation creates a prediction between the management (t-statistics (6.423) > P-values (0.000), it also revealed that there was positive but insignificance impact of employee collective bargaining on organizational growth in Delta sea-port in Delta State since employee collective bargaining does not gives the employee a secure acceptance around wages and salaries decision and other conditions such as housing, transport, leave allowance of employee (t-statistics (6.423) > p-values (0.000). The results also agree with that of [31] study of findings showed that employees' participation in decision making impacts on the performance of hotels in Nigeria. The study recommended that hotel management should ensure that the participation of employees should not just be partial but holistic to give them a sense of belonging.

Conclusion

Based on the result of the study, it was concluded that collaborative leadership, and participatory decision-making, can determine the extent of job performance among academic staff by academic staff in public universities in South-South Nigeria. It was also concluded that in order to improve the level of commitment of academic staff to effective teaching jobs, induce them to positive behaviour towards students' assessment and project supervision in the institutions.

Implications for Education

The findings of this study have far-reaching implications

for educational practice, leadership development, and higher education policy in Nigerian universities. First, the significant effect of mentoring on academic staff job performance underscores the importance of structured mentorship programmes in universities. This implies that Deans, as faculty leaders, should institutionalize mentoring frameworks that provide academic guidance, professional development, and psychosocial support for junior and mid-career staff. Such efforts will not only improve teaching quality but also enhance research productivity and service delivery.

Second, the result that community engagement does not significantly predict academic staff job performance implies that although community service is one of the core mandates of Nigerian universities, it may not directly translate into improved staff output unless strategically aligned with academic functions. This highlights the need for universities to redesign community engagement activities in ways that integrate teaching and research outcomes, thereby creating a balance between institutional relevance and staff career growth.

Third, the findings suggest that leadership training for Deans and other academic managers should be prioritized in educational policies. By equipping faculty leaders with effective mentoring skills, conflict resolution strategies, and participatory leadership techniques, universities can strengthen academic staff motivation, commitment, and productivity.

Finally, the study contributes to the broader educational discourse by emphasizing the role of faculty leadership as a determinant of job performance. This

reinforces the call for Nigerian universities to adopt people-centered leadership approaches that foster collaboration, mentorship, and inclusivity as pathways to achieving educational excellence.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, it was recommended that;

1. Universities in South-South Nigeria should formally establish structured mentoring programmes where senior faculty members mentor junior and mid-level staff. This will enhance professional development, improve research output, and strengthen teaching competencies.
2. Training workshops and leadership development programmes should be organized for Deans to equip them with effective mentoring skills, participatory leadership approaches, and people-centered management techniques that can boost staff job performance.
3. Since community engagement by Deans did not significantly predict staff job performance, universities should restructure community engagement projects to ensure stronger alignment with academic goals. This could be achieved by linking community projects with research, curriculum development, and student training.
4. University management and regulatory agencies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC) should develop policies that make mentoring a mandatory leadership responsibility of Deans and Heads of Departments, thereby institutionalizing mentorship in faculty governance.

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