

Transactional Leadership Practices and Employee Performance in the Nigerian Construction Industry: A Case of H&M Nigeria Limited, Kano State

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Abstract

Original Research Article

The employee performance has been one of the major challenges in the construction industry, at Nigeria, because the industry is project based, has rigid deadlines, safety issues, and requires regular supervision and motivation. Ineffective leadership practises have been associated with low productivity, low quality of work, and low adherence to organisational standards in most construction companies such as the H&M Nigeria Limited, Kano State. It is on this background that this conceptual paper will explore the association between the practise of transactional leadership and the performance of employees in the construction industry in Nigeria. The general aim of the research is to conceptually examine the effects of dimensions of transactional leadership contingent reward, active management-by-exception, passive management-by-exception and performance-based punishment/corrective discipline on the performance outcomes of the employees. The paper uses a conceptual research approach, where the researcher uses only secondary sources (scholarly journals, academic books, conference papers, newspaper articles and other institutional and historical publications). Using systematic literature review and thematic analysis, the available theories and empirical information on leadership and performance were modelled to generate a conceptual framework on what explained the leadership-performance relationship. The results of the analysis indicate that contingency rewards and active management-by-exception are theoretically linked to better employee productivity, quality of work, and compliance, whereas the passive management-by-exception has poorer results of the performance. Corrective discipline based on performance is discovered to increase accountability as long as it is applied equally. The research concludes that proper implementation of transactional leadership practises can help increase the performance of employees in construction companies considerably. It suggests formal reward mechanisms, active supervision and impartial disciplinary measures to enhance the performance and project success.

Keywords: Transactional leadership, Employee performance, Contingent reward, Construction industry, Nigeria.

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1.0 Introduction to the Study

1.1 Background of the Study

Internationally, the leadership factor has been largely recognised as an important factor that determines the effectiveness of organisations, employee behaviour

as well as work performance within an industry. In the context of ever competitive and project based organisation, leadership practises play a tremendous role in enabling organisations to align the efforts of its employees to organisational objectives, motivate



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task completion, and promote productivity. Empirical and the conceptual research have always shown that the leadership styles, especially transactional and transformational leadership, are influential in their contribution to the employee performance and organisational results (Keller, 1992; Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Alharbi and Aljounaidi, 2021). Although transformational leadership is associated with innovation, creativity, and intrinsic motivation (Gumusluoglu and Ilsev, 2009; Gong et al., 2009; Grant, 2012), transactional leadership is the key approach to the regulation of performance, goal achievement, and operational efficiency, particularly in the task-oriented industry (Muliyati et al., 2023). As a part of the African context, the effectiveness of leadership is nowadays regarded as a major contributor to the performance of employees and the sustainability of the organisation. Organisations in the continent are in environments, with resource limitations, the skills gap, and the dynamic nature of the workforce, which require systematic leadership practises and efficient human resource practises. HRM practises and strategic leadership are reported to be critical tools of increasing the productivity of employees, aligning the work of each employee with the objectives of the organisation, and facilitating the involvement of everyone in economic processes (Aliyu et al., 2024; Mohammed and Sundararajan, 2024). Leadership is also critical in the development of opportunities to engage in and enhance performance of diverse workforce in the emerging and developing economies (Shanmugam & Aliyu, 2022).

In the West African region, leadership practises are especially significant since the region is characterised by dynamic economic situations and increasing need of organisational efficiency. Research indicates that leadership behaviour has a massive impact on staff attitudes, involvement, and performance levels in the growing economies (Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Muliyati et al., 2023). The effectiveness of transactional leadership has been particularly discovered to be useful in situations where there should be accountability and productivity, which requires clear tasks, supervision, and rewards based on performance. Empirical studies also show that transactional leadership

positively affects work performance, especially in the case of proper reward systems and remedial systems (Xu et al., 2024). Construction industry in Nigeria is a sensitive sector which leads to the development of infrastructure, creation of job opportunities and economic growth. Regardless of its significance, the industry still experiences certain challenges associated with low productivity, project delay, quality shortcomings, and non-optimal employee performance. Such difficulties have been significantly associated with the inefficiencies in leadership and management such as poor performance monitoring, ineffective reward and disciplinary systems. The relevance of transactional leadership practises which include contingent reward, active and passive management-by-exception and performance-based punishment is therefore very applicable in the construction firms where work operations are task-oriented, deadline-oriented, and compliance oriented. However, previous research demonstrates that transactional leadership gives clear expectations, strengthens performance standards, and improves employee output in case of sufficient application (Alharbi and Aljounaidi, 2021; Muliyati et al., 2023; Mohammed, 2024).

It is against this backdrop that this study conceptually analyses the leadership practises, and the performance of employees in the Nigerian construction industry, and in particular the H&M Nigeria Limited, Kano state. The study aims at enhancing the knowledge of leadership-performance relationships in construction organisations in developing economies by concentrating on the main aspects of the transactional leadership.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the Nigerian construction sector, employee performance is a thorn on the flesh as low productivity, inefficiency, poor workmanship, and project deadline failures remain the thorns in the flesh that have hampered organisation performance. The construction companies are task-oriented and highly structured to the extent that they need a strong leadership to organise activities, impose standards, and maintain consistent performance of employees.

Nevertheless, the role of leadership-related gaps has been cited as one of the primary contributors to poor performance results in industries based on projects (Hargis et al., 2011; Rowold and Schlotz, 2009). Transformational leadership is the most prevalent component of existing leadership literature in terms of promoting creativity and innovation as well as learning-based behaviours (Hyypiä and Parjanen, 2013; Khalili, 2016; Jyoti and Dev, 2015). Although such studies support the relevance of inspirational and culture-focused leadership styles (Bass and Avolio, 1993; Bass, 1996; Bass, 2014), they offer minimal information on the leadership styles that put emphasis on performance control, corrective supervision, and reward-based exchanges such mechanisms are especially applicable in the construction environment. Theoretical alignment of transactional leadership has placed it as a necessity to ensure the structure, compliance, and performance consistency within an operation setting because it is associated with contingent reward, management-by-exception, and corrective discipline (Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987; Hargis et al., 2011).

Poor management performance system, ineffective supervision, and poor alignment of employee effort and organisational demands also complicate leadership issues in the Nigerian construction environment. Despite the fact that leadership has been associated with behaviour of employees, stress levels and work outcomes (Rowold and Schlotz, 2009), there has been a lack of conceptual clarity on the role of specific dimensions of transactional leadership and their influence on employee performance in construction companies. Research studies on leadership vis-a-vis creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial behaviour are also prone to knowledge-based or entrepreneurial contexts at the expense of operational industry, such as construction (Afsar et al., 2017; Aliyu and Kumar, 2022; Sundararajan and Mohammed, 2023). In addition, the human resource and leadership approaches adopted by developing economies are not usually put in proper perspective with industry specific realities. Whereas strategic HR practises and talent management have been noted to play a crucial role in organisational performance (Shanmugam et al., 2024), little has been done to integrate them with

leadership practises that directly govern the performance of employees working in construction firms. This is especially the case in Kano State where there is a paucity of empirical and conceptual research into the role played by transactional leadership practises in construction organisations.

As a result, there is one conceptual gap on the role of contingent reward, active management-by-exception, passive management-by-exception and performance-based punishment/corrective discipline in influencing the employee performance in the Nigerian construction industry. This gap should be addressed to give a systematic view of the leadership performance relationships and to give practical understanding on the construction business like H&M Nigeria Limited, Kano State where performance effectiveness is the determinant of the success of the projects and the sustainability of the organisation.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The importance of this study is that it brings a systematic conceptual knowledge on the level of which the transactional leadership practises affect the employee performance especially in an operationally intensive and project-based industry. Transformational leadership in connexion to creativity, innovation, and employee attitude has already been studied extensively by the existing leadership literature (Mittal and Dhar, 2015; Chen et al., 2009; Ng, 2017), and the limited literature has not provided much conceptual consideration to transactional aspects of leadership and its applicability to performance regulation. This paper can help address this gap by shedding light on the ongoing applicability of transactional leadership behaviour in performance-based organisational settings through relying on the existing theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence on the subject (Bycio et al., 1995; Howell and Avolio, 1993). Practically, the research can be of great use to any construction company or manager who wants to enhance the performance of their employees by using effective leadership practises. It has been demonstrated that the leadership style has a tremendous impact on employee attitudes toward

leadership and performance outcomes (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016), which explains the significance of incorporating leadership styles that provide clear expectations, rewards and corrective mechanisms. The role of transactional leadership practises in the construction industry is important because most of the aspects remain critical in terms of productivity, efficiency and quality of work, hence knowing how these practises operate would help managers design effective supervision strategies, reward systems, and performance monitoring processes. The study is also consistent with the general human resource management discourse about how leadership practises can be combined with talent management and workforce development approaches (Aliyu and Shanmugam, 2024; Mohammed et al., 2024).

Besides, the research has policy and managerial implications on leadership development programmes in Nigeria. With organisations moving more towards digitalization, workforce change, and performance demands, leadership development should be informed by relevant and evidence-based practises depending on context. Studies conducted on leadership antecedents and organisational performance indicate that leadership styles should be used to aid control as well as consistency in performance (Bommer et al., 2004; Howell and Avolio, 1993). In addition, the connexion between leadership practises and the changing HR systems and analytics has been found to be the key to long-term performance of organisations (Sundararajan and Mohammed, 2022). This research aims at equipping policymakers, organisational leaders and practitioners with a basis to develop leadership development frameworks that ensure organisational effectiveness and improved performance of employees by focusing on the transactional leadership practises in the construction industry in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to conceptually examine the relationship between transactional leadership practices and employee performance in the Nigerian construction industry. Specifically, the

study seeks to:

1. Conceptually examine the relationship between transactional leadership practices and employee performance
2. Analyze the effect of contingent reward on employee performance
3. Examine the influence of active management-by-exception on employee performance
4. Assess the effect of passive management-by-exception on employee performance
5. Evaluate the influence of performance-based punishment/corrective discipline on employee performance

1.5 Research Questions

In line with the stated objectives, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between transactional leadership practices and employee performance?
2. How does contingent reward influence employee performance?
3. What effect does active management-by-exception have on employee performance?
4. How does passive management-by-exception affect employee performance?
5. What is the influence of performance-based punishment/corrective discipline on employee performance?

2.0 Literature Review

The literature review gives a theoretical and conceptual background of understanding the relationship between transactional leadership practises and the employee performance. The leadership literature has continually proved that the attitudes, motivation, creativity, and performance of the employees in different industries are greatly influenced by the managerial behaviour (Wang et al., 2011; Dionne et al., 2004). In the modern environment of organisations in the state of technological disruption and competitive pressure,

the role of leadership as a key element in maintaining performance is no less important (Mohammed, 2024; Sundararajan and Mohammed, 2024). In spite of the fact that the transformational leadership approach has been prevalent in most leadership studies, transactional leadership still remains very vital in the performance-driven settings, including the construction industry, where tasks articulation, oversight, adherence, and remedial measures are critical (Prasad and Junni, 2016; Howell and Avolio, 1993). This review as such dwells on the conceptual basis of transactional leadership practises with special emphasis on contingent reward and management-by-exception and their applicability to employee performance.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Transactional Leadership Practices

Concept and Evolution of Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership refers to a type of leadership theory that is based on exchange relationship between the followers and the leaders in which compliance and performance are rewarded whereas deviations are punished with well-organised control mechanisms (Bass, 1996; Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987). It is focused on meeting the goals, understanding the roles, and tracking the achievements, which is why this style will be especially appropriate in such spheres like construction that are organised and projects-focused. In the past, transactional leadership was developed together with transformational leadership as a subset of the full-range theory of leadership introduced by Bass, which acknowledges that leaders can also combine both leadership styles according to their needs in a given organisation (Bass and Avolio, 1993; Bycio et al., 1995). As transformational leadership promotes innovation and creativity (Wang and Rode, 2010; Shafi et al., 2020), transactional leadership cannot be ignored because of the necessity to promote discipline, efficiency, and performance consistency, particularly in settings that are characterised by a high need to follow the proper standards and schedules (Prasad and Junni, 2016). In the technologically changing work environments,

transactional leadership remains instrumental to the contemporary HR practises because they mitigate the mismatch of performance expectations and reward systems as well as corrective disciplines (Mohammed, 2024; Muhammed and Sundararajan, 2024).

Contingent Reward

Contingent reward is a leadership practise where the leaders explain what they expect and reward them upon the fulfilment of the performance agreements (Bass, 1996). This aspect is said to be the most constructive aspect of the transactional leadership because it strengthens the intended behaviours with the help of recognition, incentives and feedback (Howell and Avolio, 1993). Empirical and conceptual research indicates that contingent reward contributes to motivation in employees, engagement in tasks, and performance levels due to the establishment of a clear connexion between effort and reward (Asrar-ul-Haq and Kuchinke, 2016; Wang et al., 2011). In performance-based industries, including construction, contingent reward schemes are useful in minimising ambiguity, enhancing productivity, and enhancing accountability among workers. Furthermore, the current HR and talent management literature demonstrate the topicality of systematic reward systems that help to maintain the workforce performance in the conditions of organisational and technological change (Aliyu and Shanmugam, 2024; Mohammed, 2024). Contingent reward is therefore, an important transactional leadership practise that can be used to drive the staff performance of construction companies.

Active Management-by-Exception

Active management-by-exception requires that leaders constantly watch the performance of the employees, actively diagnose deviations of the standards, and take corrective measures in a timely manner (Bass and Avolio, 1993). In contrast to passive types of control, this dimension focuses on vigilance and prevention of issues before they turn out of control. Research on leadership and performance suggests that proactive supervisory

behaviour plays a role in the accomplishment of tasks, fewer mistakes, and quality work, especially in operational and safety-sensitive workplaces (Dionne et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2011). Operation efficiency and the reduction of risk in construction environments, where errors can lead to cost overruns, safety risks, and project delays, active management-by-exception facilitates the operational efficiency. In a more general organisational standpoint, active performance monitoring is in line with formal management systems and enhances adherence to organisation rules and performance standards (Prasad and Junni, 2016; Noruzy et al., 2013). As a result, this dimension of leadership as a transaction is very important in determining the productivity and reliability of the employees.

Passive Management-by-Exception

Passive management-by-exception is one such leadership practise whereby leaders step in after performance standards have been breached or issues have been noticed (Bass and Avolio, 1993). Based on the management-by-exception as opposed to active management-by-exception, it is reactive and not preventive where corrective actions are taken after the results have already been influenced by the deviations of the expected performance. According to leadership and organizational studies, promptness in intervention may deteriorate trust, accountability, and the consistency in performance especially in a task-intensive environment (Yunus and Anuar, 2012; Bagga et al., 2023). In situations where leaders do not proactively track performance, employees might feel that they have no guidance and support and this may have a detrimental impact on productivity and quality of work. Nevertheless, in certain organisational situations, low intervention can give experienced employees more freedom, and it can affect behavioural outcomes based on organisational culture and climate (Wang et al., 2013; Uddin et al., 2016). In the construction sector, where compliance to safety requirements, time demands and quality requirements is of utmost importance, over-dependence on passive management-by-exception

can lead to more errors, rework and inefficiencies. As such, it is necessary to comprehend its implications to assess the results of employee performance in the construction companies of Nigeria.

Performance Based Punishment / Corrective Discipline

Performance-based punishment or corrective discipline Performance-based punishment or corrective discipline is the action of the leader intended to resolve non-compliance, poor performance or behavioural infractions by use of formal punishment or correctional efforts. In the transactional theory of leadership, corrective discipline is a control mechanism and is aimed at enforcing the rules and performance standards of the organisation (Bass, 1996). Based on scholarly literature, the application of corrective discipline may have both positive and negative performance effects depending on the way it is implemented. When applied with equality and uniformity, it will help to strengthen accountability and discourage counterproductive behaviours (Mittal and Dhar, 2016; Razavi and Ab Aziz, 2017). On the other hand, too much, or inadequately conveyed punishment can destroy motivation, trust and commitment hence have a negative impact on performance within the workforce. Strategically speaking, corrective discipline should be adjusted to larger talent management and performance management systems to make sure that the organisation achieves positive results (Mohammed and Sundararajan, 2024). Performance-based punishment may also be instrumental in the implementation of the safety compliance, work discipline, and quality assurance in construction firms and it is thus an important dimension of transactional leadership that can affect employee performance.

2.1.2 Employee Performance

Employee Performance Concept

Employee performance can be defined as the level of successful execution of the given tasks and contribution of the given employees to the

organisational goals in terms of both the task-specific and context-specific behaviour. It is a multidimensional construct that entails efficiency, quality of output, compliance and cooperative behaviours (Wang et al., 2011). As research on leadership has continuously shown, the managerial practises play an important role in the performance outcomes by determining the motivation, behaviour of the employees and the climate of work (Dionne et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2013). Performance of employees, especially in construction projects, is of great concern because it directly affects delivery of the project and cost control and safety.

Task Performance

Task performance is associated with the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness at which the employees carry out the core job duties. It involves the fulfilment of technical requirements, accomplishment of tasks within the established deadlines, and compliance with the working process. Research has shown that the leadership practises that focus on clarity, monitoring, and accountability can increase the performance outcomes in terms of tasks (Uddin et al., 2016; Muhammed and Sundararajan, 2024). High task performance in construction environment results in better workmanship, lesser errors, and completion of the projects ahead of time, which are important in enhancing the competitiveness of an organisation.

Contextual Performance

Contextual performance encompasses **extra-role behaviors** such as teamwork, cooperation, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors that support the broader organizational environment. Research suggests that leadership styles influence contextual performance by shaping trust, collaboration, and organizational culture (Yunus & Anuar, 2012; Bagga et al., 2023). Although transactional leadership primarily targets task performance, its structured reward and disciplinary mechanisms can indirectly influence contextual behaviors by reinforcing norms,

responsibility, and role clarity within workgroups (Wang et al., 2013).

Measurement Indicators of Employee Performance

In line with prior leadership and performance studies, employee performance in this study is conceptually assessed using the following indicators:

- **Productivity** – the level of output achieved relative to input
- **Work quality** – adherence to standards, accuracy, and craftsmanship
- **Timeliness** – completion of tasks within scheduled timeframes
- **Compliance with organizational standards** – adherence to rules, safety procedures, and performance expectations

These indicators are widely supported in leadership, HR, and organizational performance literature and are particularly relevant to construction industry operations (Mohammed, 2024).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This paper is based on three complementary theories that can all be used to explain the effects of the transactional leadership practises on the employee performance: Transactional Leadership Theory, Goal-Setting Theory, and Expectancy Theory. The theories offer a solid conceptual framework of explanations about leadership practises grounded on rewards, surveillance, and corrective measures in the organisational context, especially in the construction industry.

Transactional Leadership Theory

Bass (1990) developed the Transactional Leadership Theory which states that the effectiveness of the leadership is attributed to systematic interactions between the leaders and the followers. Leaders make expectations clear, set standards of performance and provide rewards or corrective measures depending on the performance outcomes of the employees. The main elements of this theory are contingent reward,

active management-by-exception and passive management-by-exception. In this context, employee performance is promoted when both the rewards are not given before reaching the predetermined goals and when the noncompliance with the standards is promptly addressed. Transactional leadership offers a viable process in construction organisations whose activities are highly controlled and performance outcomes easily measurable, which is a way of ensuring that productivity, quality, and adherence to safety regulations remain constant.

Goal-Setting Theory

Locke and Latham (1990) created Goal-Setting Theory, which stated that clear goals that are specific and challenging to achieve are very effective in enhancing performance of individuals. According to the theory, employees are more effective when they are aware of their expected performance and their progress is also provided. This theory is very much compatible with transactional leadership; because, it sets clear targets of performance and attainment of the goals is pegged to either tangible reward or disciplinary measures. In construction work, project objectives that are well established in terms of time schedule and quality, and safety levels also ensure employees stick to their focus and responsibility, which makes performance results improve.

Expectancy Theory

Vroom (1964) introduced the Expectancy Theory, in which he attributes employee motivation to the three important conditions; expectancy (performance will be achieved by effort), instrumentality (performance will be received through reward), and valence (worth of rewards). The assumptions of the expectancy theory are very evident in the transactional leadership practises because concern is taken to ensure each employee has a clear sense of the relationship between effort, performance, and

outcomes. When the workers at the construction site feel that adhering to the performance targets will yield rewards or that failure to meet performance targets will result in correctional punishment, they will tend to control the level of effort to attain the intended performance.

2.3 Rationale for Theory Selection

The choice of the Transactional Leadership Theory, Goal-Setting Theory, and Expectancy Theory is explained by the high level of applicability of these theories to the research topic which is the reward-based leadership mechanisms and the performance control systems. To begin with, the Transactional Leadership Theory lends a first-hand clarification on how contingent rewards and management-by-exception practises impact on employee behaviour and performance. Its focus on formal supervision and rehabilitation punishment is in line with the workability of construction companies. Second, Goal-Setting Theory helps in justifying the importance of clear performance expectations and feedback as key popular practises of transactional leadership. The theory describes the way in which goals that are clearly communicated increase employee effort, efficiency and accomplishment of tasks. Third, Expectancy Theory augments the framework by elaborating on the driving force of the reward- performance associations. It explains the positive reaction of employees to contingent rewards and performance-based sanctions especially in a situation where the result of performance is quantifiable and directly related to organisational success.

Collectively these theories present a clear and unified model of how transactional leadership practises stimulate employee performance by creating a clear goal, motivation and control processes, which are therefore very appropriate in this conceptual research of the Nigerian construction industry.

2.4 Theoretical Model of the Study



Figure 1: Theoretical Model of Transactional Leadership Practices and Employee Performance

The theoretical framework presents the impact of the transactional leadership practises or contingent reward, active management-by-exception, passive management-by-exception, and, performance-based punishment/corrective discipline, on employee performance in the Nigerian construction industry presented using the existing motivational and behavioural theories. The model also relocates transactional leadership practises as the main independent constructs that define the employee performance outcomes including productivity, quality of work, timeliness, and compliance. Self-Determination Theory elucidates the impact of rewards and corrective actions on employee motivation and their psychological needs; Goal-Setting Theory elucidates the role of clear expectations, monitoring and feedback incorporated into the transactional leadership style in shaping task focus and goal achievement; and Expectancy Theory elucidates the role of employee belief about effort-reward relationship to performance-related behaviour. Together the model proves that the

practises of transactional leadership have both direct and theory-based impacts on employee performance and offers a consistent theoretical basis of explaining performance results in project-based and control-intensive workplace environment as is the case in the construction industry.

2.5 Empirical Review

Experimental research in various organisational settings has shown repeatedly that the leadership style is a very important factor in influencing the performance outcomes of employees. According to the research on transactional leadership, well-established expectations, reward systems, and corrective feed-back systems have a great impact on the employee behaviour and performance. As an example, Ibrahim, Yusof, and Ibrahim (2022) based on evidence in Nigeria discovered that transactional leadership has a pronounced impact on employee commitment as well as minimises workplace deviance under circumstances where performance

expectations are clearly stated and reinforced. On the same note, Edeh (2020) also found that transactional leadership behaviour is important in emotional regulation and consistency in performance of workers in the hospitality industry in Nigeria, providing support to the importance of reward punishment systems in controlling work environments. Research initiated in the sectors of construction and project based business also emphasises the efficiency of the transactional leadership practises. In construction projects, there is always a fixed time schedule, safety provisions and performance criteria, and transactional leadership suits well. Kalambayi et al. (2021) have developed that leadership styles and transactional leadership in particular are a strong predictor of employee performance in construction companies because of their focus on supervision and compliance. In line with this perspective, Sankar and Anandh (2024), noted that a structured leadership practise can increase safety performance and execution of tasks in the construction industry, which once again supports the relevance of the transactional leadership within high-risk, performance-based context.

This correlation is further reinforced by the developments in the developing economies such as Nigeria and other African settings. In a study by Segun (2015), leadership styles were found to have great influence on employee performance in the Nigerian public institutions and transactional leadership played a positive role in terms of providing organised control and performance reviews. Similarly, Bushra, Usman and Naveed (2011), in their developing-country setting, found that leadership actions that focus on contingent rewards are better at encouraging job satisfaction and commitment which subsequently increases performance outcomes. In addition to the direct effects of performance, empirical literature indicates that leadership practises also have indirect performance impacts as a result of motivation, commitment, and innovation. Despite the fact that a great part of this evidence is based on the research of transformational leadership, the results are applicable to transactional leadership because of the

similarity of the outcome pathways. Indicatively, Yasin et al. (2014) and Cheung and Wong (2011) showed that innovation and better performance in SMEs are enabled by leadership support and well-organised guidance. On the same note, Basu and Green (1997) noted that the leader job member exchange relationship boosts innovative work behaviour, which leads to overall performance effectiveness.

Recent researches also associate leadership practises with an extended organisational performance in dynamic and technology-driven settings. Aliyu and Sundararajan (2025) have stressed the importance of using leadership structures that define expectations and balance rewards with performance in changing sectors to enhance the organisational adaptability and performance. The results of the empirical study by Chen et al. (2022) also indicate that leadership clarity can decrease burnout rates in employees and increase their performance due to better role clarity and intrinsic motivation. In the Nigerian context, the studies of leadership have indicated the importance of situational leadership. Shanmugam and Aliyu (2022) also identified structural and cultural issues to the efficacy of leadership in Nigeria, whereas Aliyu and Shanmugam (2023) suggested that leadership practises needed to be aligned with new realities within an organisation to maintain employee performance. The findings reveal the importance of conceptual clarity in the way in which the dimensions of transactional leadership work in the Nigerian construction industry.

On the whole, the empirical data supports the high level of significant and stable relationship between the transactional leadership practises and employee performance in various industries and regions. Nevertheless, among the numerous empirical studies, there is a sense of insufficient conceptual assimilation due to the fact that limited empirical research has been conducted on how certain transactional aspects of leadership that are contingent, active management-by-exception, passive management-by-exception, and corrective discipline influences employee performance within Nigerian construction companies. This oversight

gives great rationale to the current conceptual research.

2.6 Research Gap

Although there is a significant literature on the topic of leadership styles and organisational performance, there are still some gaps that are critical in the comprehension of the relationship between transactional leadership practise and the performance of the employees. Available literature has mostly focused on transformational leadership and innovation-based results and neglected the unique components that the dimensions of transactional leadership have on employee performance. Meta-analytic and theoretical studies by Bass (1985, 1990) and Wang et al. (2011) have affirmed that the leadership styles have an influence on the performance at the levels, but offer sparse conceptual clarity, on how certain elements of transactional, including contingent reward, active management-by-exception, passive management-by-exception and corrective discipline, work separately and jointly to influence the outcomes of employee performance. Another considerable gap in theoretical terms of understanding the leadership performance is that much of previous research has focused on innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial results rather than traditional performance measures including productivity, quality of work, and efficiency of tasks. As an illustration, works by Uddin, Fan, and Das (2016), Razavi and Ab Aziz (2017) and Wang and Rode (2010) are more inclined to transformational leadership and the creative outcomes, without properly theorising the concept of transactional leadership, although it is relevant in structured and performance-driven settings. Likewise, studies on leadership that relate reward systems and performance demands, based on the Goal-Setting Theory (Locke and Latham, 1990) and Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) have not been adequately incorporated in the conceptual framework of transactional leadership practises.

Contextually, much of the empirical and conceptual evidence is based on developed economies or industries that are more driven by innovations, including the finance, technology, and the research

and development environment. Aliyu and Shanmugam (2024), Aliyu (2024), and Aliyu and Shanmugam (2024) have conducted their studies with an emphasis on leadership dynamics in the environment of digitalization of financial and entrepreneurial processes, but their implications have been seldom applied to more traditional and labour-intensive industries such as construction. Moreover, studies in developing economies, especially Nigeria, have given insignificant attention to the construction sector, which is of strategic significance to the state development and creation of jobs. It is also evident that the theoretical gap in the application of leadership theories in explaining employee performance in construction firms is quite big. Although foundational leadership theories as proposed by Bass (1985, 1990) are highly mentioned, a number of studies have not explicitly aligned the transactional leadership dimensions with either Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) or Goal-Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990) in a single conceptual framework. Moreover, the studies of leadership in different environmental conditions including Prasad and Junni (2016) have mainly addressed the topic of executive-level leadership and organisational innovation, not including the performance of frontline employees in project-based industries.

All in all, there are conceptual, contextual and theoretical gaps in the existing literature on the effects of transactional leadership practises on employee performance, especially in the construction industrial in Nigeria. These gaps filled with a well-organised conceptual framework will add to the literature on leadership, offer contextual details applied in the developing economies, and offer some practical help to the construction companies that aim to improve the performance of their employees with the help of a well-organised concept of transactional leadership.

2.7. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework of this research is used to explain the relationship proposed to exist between the transactional leadership practises and employee performance in the Nigerian construction sector.

Transactional leadership is considered as a multi-dimensional independent variable, that is, contingent reward, active management-by-exception, passive management-by-exception and performance-based correction/punishment. The conceptualization of employee performance is that of unidimensional dependent variable, and it is the effectiveness,

efficiency and adherence of the employees to organisational standards. The assumption made by the framework is that, transactional leadership practises have a direct effect on performance of employees via well-organised rewards, monitoring, and correction.

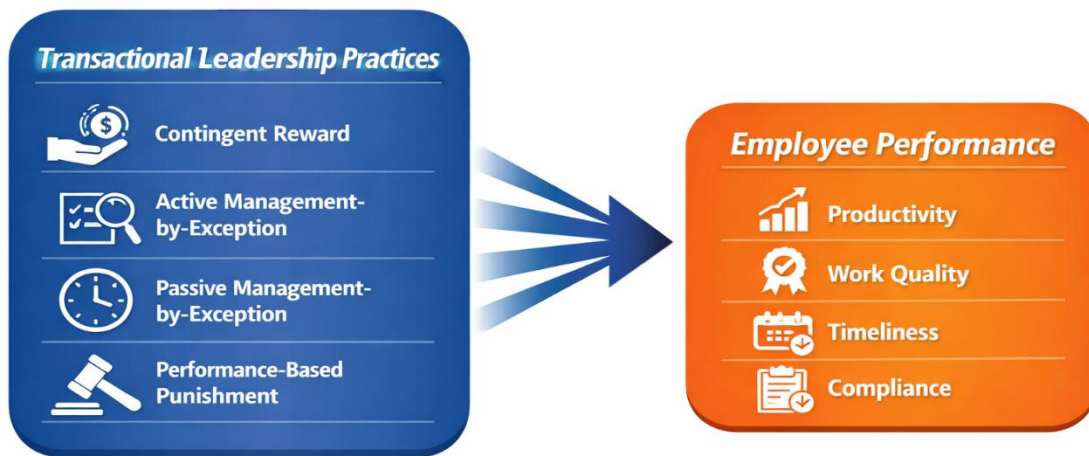


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Transactional Leadership Practices and Employee Performance

The conceptual framework demonstrates that there is a direct correlation between the transactional leadership practises and staff performance in the Nigerian building sector. The model places transactional leadership as a multidimensional independent variable which is contingent reward, active management-by-exception, passive management-by-exception and performance-based punishment/corrective discipline, which are all hypothesised to be capable of affecting employee performance. The directional arrows refer to the fact that every dimension of leadership has a direct and combined influence on such performance outcomes as productivity, the quality of work, timeliness, and adherence to organisational norms. It is assumed that contingent reward will have a positive effect on performance as it will give a clear relationship between effort and rewards, whereas active management-by-exception will ensure efficiency

due to constant monitoring and prompt corrective measures. Passive management-by-exception relates to leadership intervention of deviations that have taken place and this can have mixed consequences of performance, performance-based punishment instils discipline and rules obedience. On the whole, the framework implies that the positive use of transactional leadership practises is likely to result in a better performance of the employees in construction companies by strengthening goal-focus, accountability, and performance-oriented behaviours.

3.0 Research Methodology

The current study will use a conceptual research design, as it fits the purpose of creating theoretical knowledge and combining the already known

information about the transactional leadership practises and employee performance in the context of the Nigerian construction industry. Being a conceptual paper, the research does not imply the collection of empirical data; its aim is at the building of the theory, the development of a model, and the logic argument based on the existing literature on leadership, motivation, and performance. This will allow integrating different theoretical standpoints to infer the role of transactional leadership dimensions in determining the performance outcomes of employees working in project-based organisational settings. The research is based on the systematic literature sourcing and selection of the well-known and peer-reviewed scholarly sources such as scholarly journals, books, conference proceedings, and institutional authoritative sources. The seminal works on transactional leadership, employee-performance, and motivation theories as well as the recent literatures were given priority, that is, they were in relation to construction, developing-economies, and the Nigerian context. The selection criteria were focused on the relevancy of the study variables, theoretical rigour, and methodological credibility in addition to being consistent with the conceptual objectives of the paper.

The analysed data based on the literature reviewed was analysed through a conceptual and thematic analysis approach. The major constructs, dimensions of leadership, theoretical assumptions, and the outcome of performance were defined, contrasted, and arranged into the rational themes. The proposed conceptual and theoretical models were developed based on these themes as they describe the directional relationships among transactional leadership practises and the performance of the employees. The analysis eventually gives a systematic theoretical background to inform the new empirical research and policy debate in the Nigerian construction sector.

4.0 Findings of the Study

1. Transactional Leadership Practises and Employee Performance: The study conceptually proves that there is a strong and direct relationship between transactional

leadership practises and employee performance in the Nigerian construction industry. Theoretically, clear role expectations, formal supervision, and reward-control systems are associated with enhanced productivity, quality of work and adherence to rules in project based settings.

- 2. Impact of Contingent Reward on Employee Performance:** Results indicate that contingent reward has a positive impact on employee work performance because it helps to establish the performance expectations and support the intended behaviours. Employees feel more moral to make deadlines, reduce quality and improve efficiency when they are explicitly rewarded in connexion with accomplishing tasks and achieving results.
- 3. Impact of Active Management-by-Exception on Employee Performance:** The researchers conclude that the active management-by-exception can enhance better employee performance because the management constantly monitors employee performance, early identifies deviations, and takes timely corrective measures. This leadership style applies especially in construction environments where safety, accuracy, and procedures are very important.
- 4. Impact of Passive Management-by-Exception on Employee Performance:** Conceptual evidence shows that passive management-by-exception can have a less potent and even deleterious effect on employee performance. Late intervention by the leadership when there are performance issues can result in low productivity, making mistakes and low morale among the construction workers.
- 5. Effects of Performance-Based Punishment/Corrective Discipline on Employee Performance:** The researchers conclude that performance-based punishment and corrective discipline can impact performance of employees when used fairly and consistently. Although too much punishment can be counterproductive; well-organised corrective punishment can foster accountability, adherence to rules, and behaviour conformity to the organisation.

5.0 Study Recommendations

1. **Embracing of Balanced Transactional Leadership Practises:** Construction companies are advised to embrace balance transactional leadership style which incorporates rewards, surveillance and corrective systems to increase employee performance and project deliverables.
2. **Empowering Contingent Reward System:** To effectively motivate employees, managers ought to come up with clear-cut and performance based reward system that rewards timely fulfilment of tasks, good workmanship, and adherence to safety regulations.
3. **Optimal Implementation of Active Management-by-Exception:** Construction managers are advised to closely contribute to the monitoring of the working processes and take immediate action in case of deviations to avoid mistakes, delays, and safety hazards.
4. **Reduce over Leadership through Passive Management-by-Exception:** Passive leadership behaviours should be discouraged and proactive supervision should be encouraged in order to guarantee constant improvement of performance and interest of the employees.
5. **Clear and Fair Corrective Discipline Policies:** Firms ought to institute clear corrective discipline policies that not only focus on fairness and consistency, but also one that focuses on learning through feedback, and at that corrective discipline should and must be able to increase performance, not to de-motivate employees.

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