

Discourse Analysis of Leadership Styles for Effective Management in Kwara State Organizations

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Abstract

Leadership remains a critical determinant of how well organizations function, especially in culturally diverse contexts such as Kwara State, Nigeria. Beyond administrative strategies and managerial routines, the way leaders communicate their vision, values, and “Discourse Analysis of Leadership Styles for Effective Management in Kwara State Organizations” expectations shapes the effectiveness of their management. This study investigates the relationship between leadership styles and effective management in Kwara State organizations, with particular attention to the role of discourse. Adopting a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 285 respondents across 141 organizations, carefully selected through stratified sampling. The study employed a structured questionnaire, and data were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation at a 0.05 significance level. Findings indicate that transformational leadership emerged as the most predominant style, characterised by vision-sharing, motivation, and personal mentoring of employees. Statistical results show a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and effective management outcomes ($r = 0.376, p < 0.05$). Communication-focused leadership, although less common in practice, demonstrated an even stronger relationship with management effectiveness ($r = 0.551, p < 0.05$), underscoring the centrality of language in leadership practice. Transactional leadership, while moderately present, was more effective for short-term compliance than for sustaining long-term organizational growth. The study concludes that leadership styles cannot be divorced from the way they are communicated. Leaders who are able to align their language with cultural values, inspire through vision, and maintain transparent dialogue are more likely to achieve sustainable management outcomes. Based on these insights, the paper recommends leadership development initiatives focused on transformational practices, improved communication training, and the use of discourse analysis as a practical tool for leadership evaluation in Nigerian organizations.

Keywords: leadership styles, discourse analysis, communication, management

Introduction

Leadership has remained a central subject of inquiry across management and organizational studies because it fundamentally shapes performance, productivity, and sustainability. In Nigeria, and particularly in Kwara State, organizations whether public institutions, private firms, or non-governmental bodies depend on effective leadership to navigate the challenges of governance, service delivery, and competitiveness in a dynamic environment. Leadership effectiveness, however, does not emerge solely from positional authority or managerial techniques. It is deeply tied to the discourse leaders adopt, the communication strategies they employ, and the ability to connect their vision to the realities of followers. This intersection of leadership style and discourse underscores the need for closer analysis of how leadership practices are enacted within organizational settings. Scholars have consistently argued that leadership styles determine the degree of trust, motivation, and productivity among employees (Adebayo & Akinola, 2021). In Nigeria, transformational leadership has been linked with higher organizational commitment and innovative performance because it emphasises shared vision and motivation (Eze, 2022). Transactional leadership, on the other hand, has been associated with compliance and short-term achievements but has shown limitations in fostering sustainable change (Owolabi & Jimoh, 2021). Laissez-faire leadership, though less common in structured Nigerian organizations, often results in weak accountability and inconsistent performance (Bello & Mohammed, 2023). What is often overlooked in these analyses is the critical role of language, persuasion, and communicative practices in shaping how these leadership styles are perceived and enacted.

Discourse analysis provides a useful lens for examining leadership beyond traditional behavioural categorizations. It focuses on the language leaders use to construct authority, negotiate meaning, and inspire followership. In Kwara State, where cultural diversity and hierarchical workplace dynamics are prevalent, leadership discourse becomes even more relevant. Leaders in government parastatals, schools, and private firms are frequently judged not only by their outcomes but also by how effectively they articulate goals, mediate conflicts, and foster inclusion (Yusuf & Abdulkareem, 2020). As such, effective management is tied not just to administrative strategies but also to how leadership is communicated. The Nigerian organizational environment is currently confronted with challenges such as inadequate resources, poor employee morale, corruption, and weak institutional structures (Okorie & Ibrahim, 2022). Within this environment, leaders must engage in discourse that motivates employees, builds trust, and sustains collective purpose. Transformational leaders, for instance, may achieve this by framing organizational goals in ways that align with employees' personal values and aspirations. Conversely, transactional leaders may rely on directive or reward-based discourse to ensure compliance, while laissez-faire leaders might communicate through minimal intervention, often to the detriment of employee engagement. Understanding these nuances is crucial for promoting effective management in Kwara State organizations.

Empirical evidence from Nigeria highlights that leadership communication directly influences organizational performance. A study by Adegboye and Salihu (2021) on organizational leadership in the North Central zone found that leaders who engaged in transparent dialogue and participatory discourse recorded higher employee commitment than those who relied solely

on hierarchical authority. Similarly, in a study on educational leadership in Kwara State, Ajibade (2023) observed that principals who embraced communicative and participatory leadership practices achieved better teacher morale and student outcomes than those who adopted authoritarian approaches. These findings emphasise that leadership discourse is not merely symbolic but a practical tool for effective management. Despite these insights, many organizations in Kwara State still underutilize discourse as a deliberate leadership tool. Leadership training often emphasises administrative techniques such as planning, organizing, and controlling while neglecting the communicative strategies that sustain them. As a result, leadership effectiveness is sometimes undermined by poor articulation of goals, lack of transparency, and weak engagement with employees. This creates a research gap that necessitates a closer look at how leadership styles are discursively enacted and how this, in turn, influences organizational management outcomes.

This study therefore seeks to conduct a discourse analysis of leadership styles in Kwara State organizations with the aim of examining their implications for effective management. By focusing on both the leadership styles adopted and the communicative practices that sustain them, the study provides a dual perspective that enriches understanding of leadership effectiveness in the Nigerian context. Specifically, it interrogates whether transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire leadership styles when combined with particular discourse practices contribute to or hinder effective management. The significance of this study is twofold. First, it advances theoretical knowledge by bridging the gap between leadership studies and discourse analysis in Nigerian organizational research. While leadership theories are widely applied, there is limited attention to how leaders' language choices and communication strategies shape management effectiveness. Second, it provides practical insights for policymakers, organizational leaders, and training institutions in Kwara State and beyond. By highlighting the communicative dimensions of leadership, the study offers guidance for designing leadership development programs that not only focus on managerial skills but also equip leaders with discourse strategies for motivation, conflict resolution, and vision-sharing.

Ultimately, the paper argues that leadership styles cannot be fully understood without considering their discursive enactment. In an environment like Kwara State, where organizations operate within socio-cultural complexities and institutional challenges, effective management requires leaders who can merge appropriate leadership styles with effective discourse practices. This integration has the potential to transform organizational culture, enhance productivity, and ensure long-term sustainability.

Statement of the Problem

Leadership has long been recognised as a major determinant of organisational success, yet the challenge of aligning leadership styles with effective management outcomes remains unresolved in many Nigerian organisations. In Kwara State, like in other parts of the country, organisations operate in a dynamic environment shaped by cultural diversity, economic pressures, and shifting employee expectations. While leadership research in Nigeria has often examined the influence of transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire styles on organisational outcomes, much of this scholarship has overlooked the role of discourse that is,

the ways leaders communicate and construct meaning through language in shaping management effectiveness.

Recent Nigerian studies have acknowledged that poor communication practices among leaders contribute to low staff morale, conflict, and inefficiency in organisational settings (Adebayo & Abiodun, 2021; Akinwale, 2022). Similarly, Eze and Umeh (2023) emphasise that many organisational failures in Nigeria are not only due to inadequate resources but also to the inability of leaders to deploy appropriate communication strategies that align with employee needs and cultural realities. In Kwara State, anecdotal evidence shows that employees often feel excluded from decision-making processes, which weakens trust and reduces organisational commitment. Despite these concerns, there is limited empirical research in Nigeria that integrates discourse analysis into the study of leadership styles. Most available studies continue to focus narrowly on leadership typologies without interrogating the communicative practices that make such styles effective or ineffective (Ogunyemi, 2021; Yusuf & Afolabi, 2022). This leaves a critical gap: how exactly does the language of leadership influence management outcomes in Kwara State organisations? Filling this gap is essential, as organisations increasingly require leaders who can inspire, motivate, and sustain performance not only through their style of leadership but also through how that style is expressed in everyday organisational discourse.

Purpose of the Study

The Objective of the Study was to:

1. identify the predominant leadership styles in kwara state organizations.

Research Question

1. What are the predominant leadership style in kwara state organization management?

Research Hyptheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

H1: There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership style and organization management in kwara state.

H2: There is no significant relationship between leaders' language communication style and organization management in kwara state.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey design to examine how leadership styles, through discourse analysis, influence management practices in organizations across Kwara State. The choice of this method was informed by its suitability in capturing opinions, behaviours, and practices from a relatively large population while providing both descriptive and inferential insights.

The population of the study consisted of 1,046 registered companies operating within Kwara State. To ensure a balanced and inclusive representation across industries, a stratified sampling

technique was employed. This approach allowed the researcher to divide the population into relevant subgroups (strata) and draw samples proportionately, thereby minimizing sampling bias and strengthening the validity of findings. From this population, 141 companies were selected, and a total of 285 respondents were drawn, in line with the Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table. According to the table, when dealing with a population range between 1,000 and 2,000, an appropriate sample size falls between 276 and 384. The choice of 285 respondents was therefore justified, as it falls within the recommended range and enhances the reliability of the data.

Data were gathered from employees and managers of the sampled companies using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was carefully designed to capture information on leadership discourse, managerial practices, and organizational effectiveness. Collected data were analysed in two stages. First, descriptive statistics such as mean scores, percentages, and standard deviations were used to summarise and interpret responses in line with the research questions. To strengthen the analysis, mean scores between 0.00 and 2.49 were interpreted as low-level responses, while scores ranging from 2.50 to 4.00 were considered high-level. For hypothesis testing, inferential statistics were employed. Specifically, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was applied at the 0.05 level of significance to determine the strength and direction of relationships between leadership styles and management effectiveness. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25, was utilised to run all analyses and ensure accuracy in the results.

Research Question One

What are the predominant leadership styles in Kwara State organizations?

Table 1

Predominant leadership styles in Kwara State organizational management (N = 285)

Leadership Questionnaire Items	Style	SA	A	SD	D	M	SD	R
Transformational Leadership Style								
My leader has a clear vision for the organization and inspires me to work towards achieving it		124	112	38	9	3.24	0.803	1
My leader encourages me to think critically and develop innovative solutions to problems		67	147	56	10	2.97	0.764	2
My leader takes a personal interest in my development and provides feedback for improvement		100	115	59	7	3.10	0.812	3
Grand Mean = 3.10 (1st Position)								
Transactional Leadership Style								

My leader recognizes and rewards me when I achieve goals and objectives	101	112	62	6	3.10	0.810	4
My leader closely monitors my work and corrects mistakes	98	105	64	14	3.02	0.802	5
My leader intervenes only when a problem becomes serious	79	107	92	6	2.91	0.825	6
Grand Mean = 3.01 (2nd Position)							
Communication Leadership Style							
My leader clearly communicates goals and expectations	91	123	65	5	3.06	0.787	7
My leader regularly communicates to provide feedback, guidance, and support	75	120	84	5	2.93	0.792	8
My leader encourages open and honest communication and is approachable	72	122	85	3	2.93	0.773	9
Grand Mean = 2.97 (3rd Position)							
Leader's Language and Communication Style							
My leader uses clear and concise language in communication	84	91	53	50	2.75	1.073	10
My leader's communication style is inspiring and motivating	75	98	35	55	2.72	1.096	11
My leader actively listens to employees' concerns and ideas	69	103	67	42	2.71	1.000	12
Grand Mean = 2.72 (4th Position)							

Source: Fieldwork(2025)

Note. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, R = Rank.

The results presented in Table 1 show that transformational leadership emerged as the most predominant style among organizational managers in Kwara State, with a grand mean of 3.10. This indicates that leaders in the region are more inclined toward visionary and motivational practices, emphasizing employee development, inspiration, and innovation. The finding aligns with Akinbode and Okafor (2022), who observed that transformational leadership promotes creativity and enhances organizational commitment in Nigerian workplaces. Similarly, Adeyemi (2021) highlighted that leaders who articulate a clear vision and encourage innovation are more effective in sustaining productivity and employee engagement. The transactional leadership style ranked second, with a mean of 3.01. This suggests that while recognition, reward, and performance monitoring remain important, they are less dominant compared to transformational attributes. This supports the assertion of Musa and Bello (2023), who argued

that transactional leadership is still relevant in Nigerian organizations, particularly in performance-driven sectors, though it may not fully stimulate innovation and long-term commitment.

The communication leadership style ranked third with a mean of 2.97. Although communication is critical for clarity and coordination, the findings reveal that many leaders in Kwara State may not consistently sustain open, honest, and regular communication channels. According to Olatunji and Jimoh (2021), poor communication practices in Nigerian organizations often hinder collaboration and create disconnects between leaders and employees. Finally, the leader’s language and communication style had the lowest ranking, with a mean of 2.72. This reflects challenges in how leaders convey messages, listen actively, and use language as a motivational tool. In support, Adebayo (2020) argued that ineffective communication often results in misunderstandings, reduced morale, and resistance to change within organizations.

In sum, these findings suggest that Kwara State organizations are transitioning towards transformational leadership practices, but they still need to strengthen communication competencies to achieve holistic and effective management. Leaders must not only inspire but also adopt inclusive communication approaches that bridge gaps and foster stronger organizational cultures (Ogundele & Salami, 2024).

Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational management in Kwara State.

Table 2

Relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational management in Kwara State (N = 285)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	r	p	Decision
Transformational Leadership Style	285	3.07	0.793	283	0.376	.000	Rejected
Organizational Management	285	3.01	0.841				

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

The analysis in Table 2 shows that transformational leadership has a meaningful and positive connection with organizational management in Kwara State. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.376, p < 0.05$) suggests that leaders who adopt transformational practices are likely to create environments where management becomes more effective. Because the result was significant, the null hypothesis was rejected.

In simple terms, when leaders present a clear vision, inspire employees, and nurture their professional growth, organizational management tends to improve. This finding agrees with earlier Nigerian studies. For example, Akinola and Ajibade (2021) observed that transformational leaders motivate workers by sharing compelling visions and encouraging them to go beyond routine expectations. Bello and Lawal (2022) also highlighted how such

leaders promote innovation and collaboration, both of which strengthen management systems. For organizations in Kwara State, the implication is straightforward: transformational leadership is not just a leadership style but a practical tool for better management outcomes. Leaders who actively inspire and mentor employees create more cohesive, efficient, and innovative workplaces.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between leaders' language and communication style and organizational management in Kwara State.

Table 3

Relationship between leaders' language and communication style and organizational management in Kwara State (N = 285)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	r	p	Decision
Leaders' Language and Communication Style	285	2.72	1.056	283	0.551	.000	Rejected
Organizational Management	285	3.01	0.841				

Source: Fieldwork (2025)

The result in Table 3 indicates that leaders' communication style has a strong and positive influence on organizational management in Kwara State. With a correlation of $r = 0.551$ ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that the way leaders communicate whether through clarity, inspiration, or active listening directly shapes how well organizations are managed. In practice, leaders who express themselves clearly, listen to employees, and encourage open dialogue make it easier for teams to work together effectively. Nigerian scholars support this view. Yusuf and Afolabi (2022) found that inclusive communication builds stronger commitment among workers. Similarly, Ogundele and Salami (2024) emphasized that good communication often determines whether leadership succeeds or fails. Adegboye and Salihu (2021) also stressed that when leaders encourage openness and transparency, trust and collaboration within organizations are enhanced.

For Kwara State organizations, the message is clear: leadership is not just about setting goals but also about communicating those goals in ways that inspire confidence and cooperation. Overall, the findings from both hypotheses show that leadership style and communication are inseparable pillars of effective organizational management in Kwara State. Transformational leaders give direction and purpose, while effective communication ensures that their vision is clearly understood and embraced by employees. This agrees with the argument of Eze and Umeh (2023), who pointed out that organizations in Nigeria need leaders who not only have strong ideas but also the communication skills to rally people toward those ideas.

Discussion and Findings

This study highlights the central role leadership plays in shaping how organizations in Kwara State are managed. The evidence makes it clear that effective leadership is not only about the type of leadership style adopted but also about the way it is communicated. Both the leadership

approach and the language leaders use to convey their vision and decisions are crucial for effective management.

The results show that transformational leadership stood out as the most dominant style among the organizations surveyed, with an overall mean score of 3.10. Leaders who embrace this style are known for inspiring their teams, encouraging creative thinking, and showing genuine concern for employee development. This aligns with the findings of Olawale et al. (2022), who argued that transformational leadership boosts morale and nurtures innovation in Kwara State's education sector. Given Nigeria's collective and community-driven culture, such leadership resonates strongly because it reflects shared values and a collective vision. Importantly, the study revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.376$, $p < 0.05$) between transformational leadership and organizational management. This confirms earlier observations by Ibrahim and Muhammad (2020) that when leaders clearly communicate organizational goals, employees feel more motivated and management processes become more effective.

While transformational leadership was the most common, communication-based leadership turned out to have the strongest impact. Although its mean score was lower (2.72), the correlation with organizational management was higher ($r = 0.551$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that communication is a powerful driver of effective management. Akinyemi and Adeyemo (2022) emphasized that leaders succeed not only through strategy but also through how they engage with people. Good communication goes beyond clarity; it involves active listening, empathy, and the ability to inspire trust. When leaders in Kwara State use communication to connect with their teams, employees feel valued and become more committed to organizational goals. Abdulrahman and Abiola (2021) also noted that communication tailored to cultural realities fosters loyalty and strengthens organizational relationships.

Transactional leadership had a moderate presence (mean = 3.01). This style focuses on rewards and corrective actions a "carrot and stick" approach. As Adebayo (2023) observed, transactional leadership is common in traditional government structures and corporate organizations. While it helps maintain discipline and ensures compliance in the short term, it is less effective for promoting creativity and long-term organizational growth. Similarly, the communication-centered leadership style (mean = 2.97) showed moderate influence. On its own, it might not be the most powerful leadership approach, but when combined with visionary leadership, it becomes much more effective. Leaders who set clear expectations, encourage open dialogue, and create supportive environments are better able to reduce misunderstandings and align employees with organizational objectives. Abdulraheem and Tosin (2021) underscored that such communication helps foster cohesion and collaboration in workplaces.

A broader insight from the findings is that leadership styles are not applied in isolation they are interpreted and shaped by the cultural and social realities of Kwara State. In a setting where respect for authority and communal values are deeply embedded, effective leadership must adapt to these norms. Ogunyemi (2023) further observed that leadership in Nigeria is also being reshaped by changing economic conditions and the evolving expectations of the modern workforce. This suggests that effective leadership in Kwara State must strike a balance between cultural sensitivity and contemporary organizational demands.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine leadership styles in organizations across Kwara State through the lens of discourse analysis and to determine what this means for effective management. The findings make it clear that leadership in Kwara State organizations is not merely a matter of formal positions or administrative procedures but rather a dynamic process shaped by how leaders express themselves and connect with their teams. Among the leadership styles studied, transformational leadership emerged as the most dominant and effective, with leaders demonstrating qualities such as vision, inspiration, encouragement of innovation, and genuine concern for employee development. This finding reinforces the argument of Olawale et al. (2022), who found that transformational leadership enhances motivation and creativity in the education sector of Kwara State. Similarly, Ibrahim and Muhammad (2020) reported that leaders who inspire and articulate a clear organizational vision tend to promote higher levels of employee commitment. The significant positive correlation between transformational leadership and management outcomes in this study highlights its practical value for organizational performance in the region.

At the same time, the results underscore the importance of communication as a critical component of leadership. While communication-focused leadership had a lower mean score compared to other styles, it showed the strongest relationship with organizational management ($r = 0.551$). This suggests that leadership cannot be divorced from language, since the way leaders communicate their expectations, listen to concerns, and foster dialogue is central to their effectiveness. Yusuf and Afolabi (2022) similarly argued that effective communication in Nigerian organizations builds trust, enhances collaboration, and strengthens employee commitment. Abdulrahman and Abiola (2021) also observed that leaders who communicate in culturally sensitive ways improve loyalty and cooperation among workers. These findings collectively confirm that leadership success is heavily mediated by communication practices.

The study also revealed the role of transactional leadership, which, although moderately practiced, was useful in maintaining order, discipline, and compliance. Adebayo (2023) noted that transactional leadership is particularly prevalent in government agencies and corporate bodies in Nigeria, where structured accountability systems are essential. However, while it ensures short-term stability, it is less effective for promoting innovation and long-term adaptability. This suggests that for organizations in Kwara State, a balance is required: transactional practices may secure compliance, but transformational and communication-based approaches are better suited for sustainable growth. One of the broader conclusions from this research is that leadership styles are not static; they are shaped by cultural values, organizational contexts, and evolving socio-economic realities. In Kwara State, respect for authority and communal values influence how leadership is expressed and received. Ogunyemi (2023) emphasized that the Nigerian workplace is undergoing change due to economic pressures and shifting workforce expectations, requiring leaders to adapt their styles accordingly. Thus, leadership in the region must remain flexible, blending visionary direction with culturally attuned communication practices.

Overall, the study demonstrates that leadership works best when it is both strategic and personal. Transformational leadership offers vision and innovation, transactional leadership provides structure, and effective communication bridges the gap between leaders and their teams. The major takeaway is that organizations in Kwara State can only achieve sustained effectiveness when leaders pay as much attention to how they communicate as to the strategies

they implement. As Adegboye and Salihu (2021) suggested, strong communication and inclusive leadership are essential for building trust and cohesion in Nigerian organizations. In conclusion, leadership in Kwara State organizations must be seen as a relational and communicative practice. Leaders are not only responsible for setting goals but also for translating those goals into language and actions that inspire confidence, foster trust, and reflect the cultural realities of their teams. For managers and policymakers in Kwara State, this means investing in leadership training that emphasizes communication skills, emotional intelligence, and cultural awareness. By doing so, organizations can move beyond routine administration toward management that is truly effective, innovative, and people-centred.

Recommendations

Drawing from the findings of this study, several practical steps are suggested to strengthen leadership and improve management practices in organizations across Kwara State:

1. Since transformational leadership emerged as the most effective style, organizations should design leadership development programmes that train managers to inspire employees, articulate a clear vision, and provide mentorship. Such training would help leaders move beyond routine supervision to building teams that are innovative, motivated, and forward-looking.
2. The study highlighted that communication had the strongest correlation with organizational management. Leaders should therefore be trained to communicate in ways that connect with people by practicing active listening, giving constructive feedback, and being approachable. Communication should be seen not as an afterthought but as a core leadership skill.
3. Findings revealed that organizations perform better when employees feel heard. Leaders should create safe spaces where staff at all levels can share ideas, raise concerns, or make suggestions without fear of victimization. This promotes trust and enhances collaboration within organizations.
4. Organizations should evaluate not only what leaders achieve but also how they achieve it. Paying attention to leaders' language and daily interactions in meetings, memos, and conversations can provide useful insights into their effectiveness. Communication behaviour is as important as managerial outcomes.
5. No single leadership style works in every situation. Leaders in Kwara State organizations should combine elements of transformational, transactional, and communication-focused leadership depending on the context. For instance, transactional leadership may work for enforcing discipline, while transformational leadership is better for motivating innovation.
6. The study showed that when leaders respond to employee needs and concerns, management improves. Organizations should therefore establish channels for staff to provide honest feedback about leadership practices. This will allow leaders to make adjustments and remain in touch with their teams' realities.
7. Leadership programmes should be culturally grounded, reflecting the values, communication norms, and socio-economic realities of Kwara State. When leadership models resonate with

local culture, they are more likely to succeed than when foreign approaches are simply imported.

8. Finally, leadership is not static it evolves with changing workplace expectations and economic realities. Organizations should collaborate with academic institutions to support ongoing research and apply emerging insights into leadership and management. This will ensure that leadership practices remain relevant and effective over time.

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