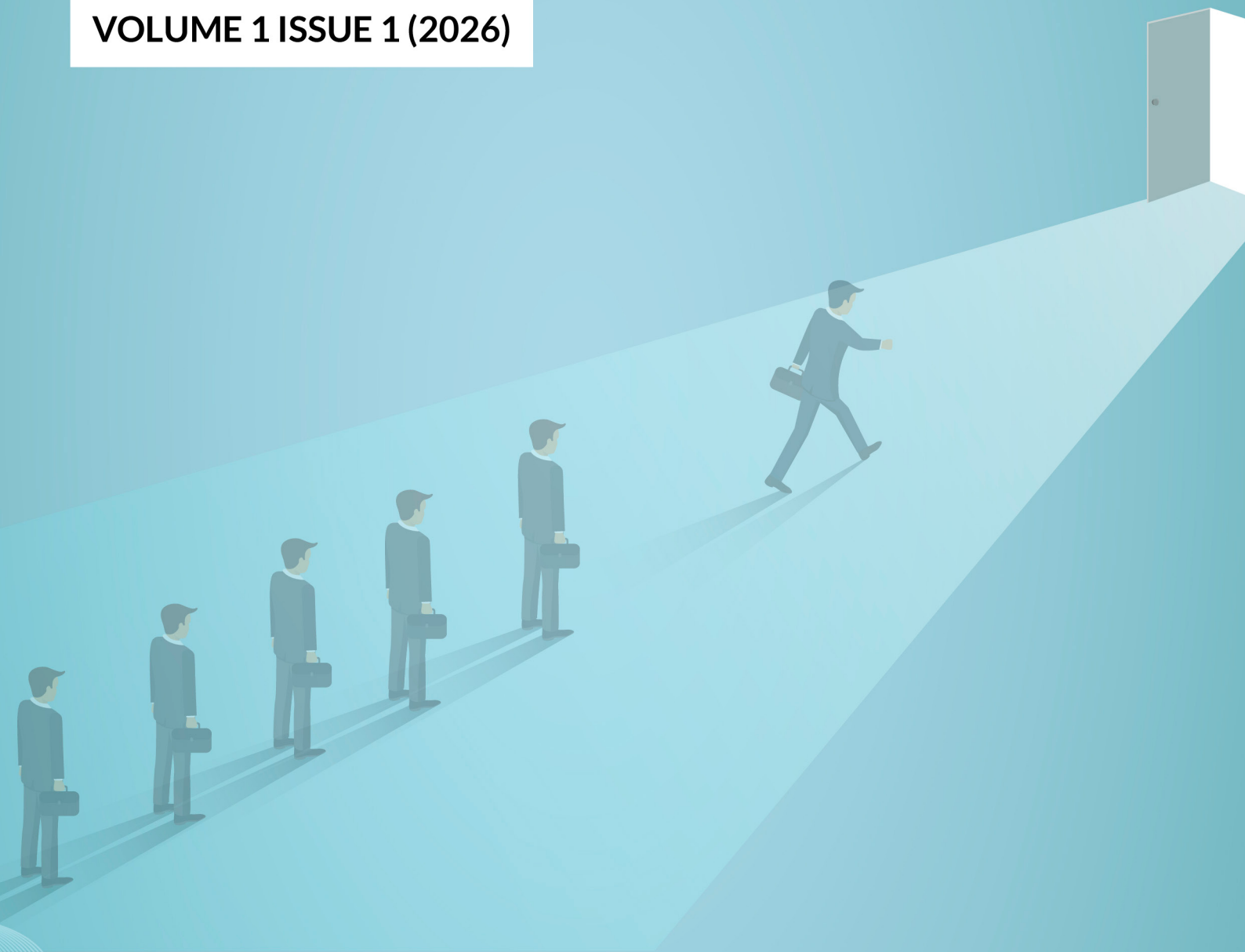




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Leadership Styles and Motivational Strategies as Predictors of Staff Performance in High-Growth Service Organizations in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance is a critical determinant of organisational success, particularly in high-growth service organisations where continuous expansion and the delivery of high-quality services are essential for sustaining growth. In such environments, employees are expected to be flexible and adaptable to changing business demands in order to meet organisational objectives. Although extensive research has examined employee performance, limited attention has been given to the combined influence of leadership styles and motivational strategies within Nigeria's rapidly growing service sector. This study investigated the extent to which leadership styles and motivational strategies predict employee performance in selected high-growth service organisations in Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design. A total of 200 employees were purposively selected from organisations operating in four sectors—banking and financial services, information and communication technology, healthcare, and professional and business services—across Lagos and Ogun States. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and multiple regression analysis with SPSS Version 29. The findings revealed that leadership styles were significantly and positively correlated with employee performance ($r = .770, p < .001$) and significantly predicted employee performance ($\beta = .770, R^2 = .593, p < .001$). Similarly, motivational strategies demonstrated a significant positive correlation with employee performance ($r = .746, p < .001$) and significantly predicted employee performance ($\beta = .746, R^2 = .557, p < .001$). Furthermore, the joint regression model indicated that leadership styles and motivational strategies collectively accounted for 71.8% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = .718, F = 249.880, p < .001$), with leadership styles contributing slightly more to the explained variance than motivational strategies. The study concludes that effective leadership practices and motivational strategies jointly enhance employee performance. It recommends that high-growth service organisations strengthen leadership development initiatives and implement a balanced mix of financial and non-financial motivational strategies to improve employee performance and sustain organisational growth.

INTRODUCTION

Staff performance is significant to organisational effectiveness as it demonstrates staff's contribution towards organisational objectives by the standard and continuity of their work. This is especially significant in highly dynamic service companies where the effectiveness of the organisation relies largely on the skills of its staff, their interactions with customers, knowledge, and their capacity to respond to new requirements. Besides the task performance, contextual performance and adaptive performance (Koopmans *et al.*, 2014) are evaluated. In service organizations, employees are now required to carry out their essential roles effectively, collaborate with their peers, meet customer demands and embrace new technological and process innovations (de Andrade *et al.*, 2022).

Staff performance is related to an important organisational factor which is leadership. Based on this, the Full Range Leadership Model distinguishes between transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles (Avolio *et al.*, 1999). Transformational leadership inspires staff by setting a vision, stimulating them intellectually, providing support for them and setting a positive example for them

while transactional leadership involves the setting of clear expectations and linking the achievement of those with rewards. Laissez-faire leadership is a leadership style characterized by minimal managerial intervention. The positive relation between the transformational and contingent-reward leadership behaviours and employee and organisational performance has been suggested by previous research (Bass *et al.*, 2003; Wang *et al.*, 2011). However, these leadership styles might be effective in different organisational contexts.

Organisations can also impact staff performance by using motivational strategies. This involves strategies such as financial reward, recognition, career development, job enrichment, empowerment and supportive working conditions. Mottaz (1985) discovered that there were two sources of employee satisfaction which are intrinsic rewards and extrinsic rewards, while Cerasoli *et al.* (2016) argued that the satisfaction of employees' needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness would be linked to improved performance. Furthermore, longitudinal evidence shows that employee motivation is a key determinant of subsequent job performance (Wang *et al.*, 2024), suggesting that motivation plays a crucial role in

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maintaining employee effort and performance.

Although there are research that links leadership and motivation to employee performance, little is known about the individual and combined role of leadership and motivation in predicting employee performance in the context of high growth service organisations in Nigeria. Past studies have tended to focus on either leadership or motivation alone and on performance-related measures such as job satisfaction, organisational commitment or engagement. Relations between these factors and the wider aspects of staff effectiveness in fast-growing service companies are relatively under-researched.

This is a gap that is applicable in Nigeria's service sector, where Banking, FinTech, Healthcare, Professional Services, and other sectors are all evolving with new expectations from customers, technological advancements and competition for talent. It's therefore crucial for organisations to recognise the organisational factors that can affect staff performance if they want to continue to grow and deliver services effectively. This study considers the role of motivational practices and leadership styles as predictors of employee performance in selected high growth service organizations in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The demand for service companies to keep their employees' productivity up even as they deal with technological shifts, evolving customer demands, and a shortage of skilled workers is growing. While some prior research has found links between leadership styles, motivation, and employee outcomes, most of the existing literature has explored one of each and only job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement. There is very little evidence to show their individual and collective contribution to staff performance in fast growing services organisations in Nigeria. This gap makes it difficult to define which organizational practices are most effective to enable employees to perform effectively. This study is therefore based on examination of the leadership styles and motivational strategies as predictors of staff performance in selected high growth service organisations in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine leadership styles and motivational strategies as predictors of staff performance in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria.

Specifically, the study seeks to

- Examine the relationship between leadership styles and staff performance in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria.
- Determine the relationship between motivational strategies and staff performance in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria.
- Investigate the relationship between leadership styles and motivational strategies in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria.
- Assess the relative and combined predictive effects

of leadership styles and motivational strategies on staff performance in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions

- What is the relationship between leadership styles and staff performance in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between motivational strategies and staff performance in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria?
- What is the relationship between leadership styles and motivational strategies in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria?
- To what extent do leadership styles and motivational strategies individually and jointly predict staff performance in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will contribute to both theory and practice by providing empirical evidence on the influence of leadership styles and motivational strategies on staff performance in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria.

The study will be beneficial to organisational leaders by providing insights into leadership behaviours that enhance employee productivity and organisational effectiveness. The findings will assist managers in adopting leadership practices that promote employee engagement, teamwork, adaptability, and high performance within dynamic work environments.

The study will also benefit human resource practitioners by improving their understanding of the motivational strategies that effectively enhance employee performance. The findings will support the development of evidence-based human resource policies and practices relating to employee recognition, career development, performance management, reward systems, and employee engagement. Furthermore, the study will provide valuable information for business owners and executives of high-growth service organisations seeking to sustain organisational growth through improved employee performance. By highlighting the influence of leadership styles and motivational strategies, the findings will inform strategic decisions aimed at enhancing organisational competitiveness, service quality, and long-term sustainability.

Academically, the study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge in organisational behaviour, leadership, and human resource management by providing empirical evidence from the Nigerian service sector. It will serve as a useful reference for scholars and researchers interested in leadership, employee motivation, and employee performance. In addition, the study will provide a foundation for future research exploring other organisational and behavioural factors that influence employee performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Staff performance is a central concept in organisational research because it reflects the extent to which employees contribute to achieving organisational goals through their work-related behaviours and outcomes. Contemporary literature no longer views staff performance as a unidimensional construct; rather, it is regarded as a multidimensional concept encompassing various aspects of employee contributions within the workplace. Koopmans *et al.* (2011) identified four major dimensions of individual work performance: task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour.

Task performance refers to how effectively employees execute duties formally prescribed in their job descriptions. It emphasises employees' competence in carrying out assigned technical and operational responsibilities. Contextual performance encompasses behaviours that support the organisational and social environment, including cooperation with colleagues, initiative-taking, organisational citizenship behaviours, and the maintenance of positive interpersonal relationships. Adaptive performance refers to an employee's ability to adjust to changing work processes, technological developments, organisational restructuring, and evolving customer demands. Counterproductive work behaviour comprises actions that negatively affect organisational effectiveness, such as absenteeism, deliberate inefficiency, misconduct, and behaviours that undermine colleagues or organisational objectives.

Substantial empirical evidence supports this multidimensional perspective of staff performance. Campbell and Wiernik (2015) argued that employee performance should be viewed as a composite of behaviours that directly and indirectly influence organisational effectiveness. They proposed a framework integrating task competence, contextual behaviours, and adaptability into a holistic conception of work performance, which is increasingly relevant in contemporary, dynamic work environments. This perspective is particularly applicable to service organisations, where employees frequently interact with customers, collaborate across functional teams, and respond to changing operational demands.

To facilitate the measurement of these dimensions, Koopmans *et al.* (2014) developed the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ), which has become one of the most widely used instruments for assessing employee performance across occupational groups. The instrument has demonstrated strong psychometric properties and has been successfully validated across diverse work settings. It effectively distinguishes varying levels of employee performance and exhibits meaningful relationships with related constructs such as work engagement and presenteeism (Koopmans *et al.*, 2014). The availability of a validated multidimensional measure has significantly advanced empirical research on employee performance beyond traditional productivity indicators. The importance of multidimensional performance has

become particularly evident within the service sector. Service organisations depend heavily on employees' knowledge, interpersonal skills, and commitment to meeting customer needs. Consequently, performance encompasses not only task completion but also behaviours that enhance service quality, strengthen customer relationships, and promote organisational learning. However, many empirical studies continue to focus primarily on task and contextual performance while paying limited attention to adaptive performance (de Andrade *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, Krijgsheld *et al.* (2022) identified adaptive performance as one of the least examined dimensions of employee performance despite its growing importance in rapidly changing work environments. This observation is especially relevant to high-growth service organisations, where employees are expected to adapt continuously to technological innovations, changing customer expectations, and organisational expansion. Adopting a multidimensional perspective therefore provides a more comprehensive understanding of the organisational factors influencing employee effectiveness.

Leadership remains one of the most extensively researched organisational factors influencing employee performance. Leadership styles refer to the relatively stable patterns of behaviour through which leaders influence, support, and direct employees towards the achievement of organisational goals. Different leadership behaviours significantly affect employees' attitudes, commitment, motivation, and willingness to exert discretionary effort. One of the most influential frameworks in leadership research is the Full Range Leadership Model developed by Bass and Avolio, which categorises leadership into transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles (Avolio *et al.*, 1999).

Transformational leadership involves inspiring employees to exceed expectations through a compelling vision, intellectual stimulation, individualised support, and exemplary role modelling. Transformational leaders seek to develop employees' capabilities and foster commitment to organisational goals. Transactional leadership, in contrast, is based on clearly defined expectations and exchanges between leaders and employees, with rewards contingent upon performance. Laissez-faire leadership is characterised by minimal managerial involvement, delayed decision-making, and limited guidance or support for employees (Avolio *et al.*, 1999).

Empirical research widely supports the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance. A meta-analysis of 87 independent studies by Judge and Piccolo (2004) found that transformational leadership exhibited stronger positive relationships with performance outcomes than many other leadership approaches. Furthermore, contingent reward, a key component of transactional leadership, was positively associated with employee performance, whereas laissez-faire leadership was negatively related to organisational outcomes. These findings suggest that leadership

behaviours differ substantially in their capacity to enhance employee effectiveness.

Subsequent studies have reinforced these conclusions. Wang *et al.* (2011), in a review of 25 years of leadership research, found that transformational leadership consistently predicts individual task performance, contextual performance, team effectiveness, and organisational performance. The authors further reported that transformational leadership explained additional variance in performance outcomes beyond that accounted for by contingent reward behaviours, particularly in relation to contextual and team-level outcomes. Similarly, Bass *et al.* (2003) found that transformational leadership and contingent reward behaviours positively influenced unit performance during periods of organisational stress, partly through enhanced group cohesion and collective efficacy. More recently, Hoch *et al.* (2018) demonstrated that transformational leadership continues to exert strong effects on employee, team, and organisational outcomes, while many emerging leadership models offer limited explanatory power beyond that of the Full Range Leadership Model. Collectively, these findings indicate that leadership styles remain important predictors of employee performance across diverse organisational contexts, particularly where innovation, collaboration, and sustained commitment are essential for organisational growth.

Motivational strategies constitute another critical organisational mechanism for enhancing employee performance. These strategies comprise deliberate organisational practices designed to stimulate, energise, and direct employee efforts toward organisational goals. Motivational strategies generally encompass both intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation. Extrinsic strategies include financial incentives, bonuses, recognition programmes, promotions, and other organisational rewards, whereas intrinsic strategies focus on creating meaningful work experiences through job enrichment, empowerment, professional development opportunities, autonomy, and supportive work environments.

The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has been influential since the work of Mottaz (1985), who demonstrated that both intrinsic job rewards and organisational rewards contribute significantly to employee satisfaction, although intrinsic rewards often exert a stronger influence across occupational groups. These findings suggest that organisations should adopt balanced motivational systems that combine tangible rewards with opportunities for personal growth and meaningful work experiences.

Subsequent research has continued to support this perspective. Condly *et al.* (2003), in a meta-analysis of incentive systems, found that well-designed incentive programmes positively influence employee performance, with team-based incentive systems generally producing stronger effects than individual-based incentives. Their findings indicate that reward systems can enhance not only individual effort but also teamwork and collective

performance.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides an important framework for understanding how motivational strategies influence employee behaviour. According to SDT, employees are more likely to perform effectively when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied. Supporting this perspective, Cerasoli *et al.* (2016) found that the fulfilment of these psychological needs is consistently associated with higher employee performance. They further observed that organisational incentives are most effective when they complement rather than replace intrinsic motivation.

Additional studies highlight the broad organisational benefits of effective motivational strategies. Van den Broeck *et al.* (2021) found that intrinsic motivation is strongly associated with employee well-being and positive work attitudes, while identified regulation is more strongly linked to performance and organisational citizenship behaviour. Likewise, Nascimento *et al.* (2025) reported that both financial and non-financial reward systems contribute positively to employee satisfaction, motivation, creativity, knowledge sharing, organisational commitment, and retention. These findings demonstrate that motivational strategies influence not only productivity but also wider organisational outcomes.

The relationship between motivation and performance has also received substantial empirical support. Using a longitudinal meta-analysis, Wang *et al.* (2024) found that employee motivation at earlier stages of employment significantly predicts subsequent job performance, whereas high performance does not necessarily lead to increased future motivation. This finding strengthens the argument that motivation serves as an antecedent rather than merely a consequence of employee performance.

Overall, the literature reviewed indicates that staff performance is a multidimensional construct encompassing task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behaviour. The review further identifies leadership styles and motivational strategies as important organisational factors influencing employee performance across diverse contexts. Transformational leadership and contingent reward behaviours have consistently demonstrated positive relationships with employee performance, while balanced motivational approaches that combine financial and non-financial rewards promote sustained employee effort and effectiveness. Although substantial evidence supports these relationships, there remains a need to examine their relative and combined effects within high-growth service organisations in Nigeria, where continuous environmental change requires employees to perform core tasks effectively, contribute to organisational functioning, and support sustained organisational growth.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Full Range Leadership Theory (FRLT) and the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). These theories provide complementary explanations

for how leadership behaviours and organisational motivational practices influence staff performance. While the Full Range Leadership Theory explains the effects of different leadership styles on employee attitudes and work outcomes, Self-Determination Theory explains the motivational processes through which organisational practices influence employee behaviour and performance. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive framework for examining the influence of leadership styles and motivational strategies on staff performance in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria.

Full Range Leadership Theory

The Full Range Leadership Theory (FRLT), developed by Bass and Avolio, is one of the most widely applied leadership theories in organisational research. The theory proposes a continuum of leadership behaviours comprising transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership (Avolio *et al.*, 1999). These leadership styles differ in the manner through which leaders influence employees and facilitate the achievement of organisational objectives.

Transformational leadership involves behaviours that inspire employees through a compelling organisational vision, encourage innovative thinking, provide individualised support, and serve as positive role models. Leaders who adopt this style seek to develop employees' capabilities and motivate them to contribute meaningfully toward organisational goals. Transactional leadership, on the other hand, is based on clearly defined expectations, performance monitoring, and the provision of rewards or corrective actions contingent upon employee performance. In contrast, laissez-faire leadership is characterised by minimal managerial involvement, limited supervision, delayed decision-making, and a general avoidance of leadership responsibilities.

The relevance of the Full Range Leadership Theory has been widely supported by empirical evidence. Judge and Piccolo (2004) found that transformational leadership consistently demonstrates strong positive relationships with employee performance and other organisational outcomes. Their study further revealed that contingent reward, a key component of transactional leadership, is positively associated with employee effectiveness, whereas laissez-faire leadership is generally linked to lower levels of performance and organisational effectiveness. Similarly, Wang *et al.* (2011) reported that transformational leadership positively influences task performance, contextual performance, team effectiveness, and overall organisational performance across diverse organisational settings.

These findings suggest that leadership behaviours influence not only employees' ability to perform their duties but also their motivation, commitment, and willingness to contribute to organisational success. This is particularly important in high-growth service organisations where employees are required to respond effectively to changing customer demands, technological

developments, and evolving organisational expectations. Consequently, the Full Range Leadership Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how different leadership styles influence employee performance within dynamic service-sector environments.

Self-Determination Theory

The second theoretical foundation of this study is Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan. SDT seeks to explain the different forms of motivation and the processes through which motivation influences behaviour and performance. The theory distinguishes between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. Autonomous motivation occurs when individuals engage in activities because they find them meaningful, enjoyable, or aligned with their personal values, whereas controlled motivation arises when behaviour is driven by external demands, obligations, rewards, or pressures (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

According to SDT, individuals are more likely to demonstrate sustained effort, commitment, and high performance when their motivation becomes internalised rather than being driven solely by external incentives. The theory therefore emphasises the quality of motivation rather than merely its quantity.

A central proposition of Self-Determination Theory is that autonomous motivation and psychological well-being are enhanced when three fundamental psychological needs are satisfied: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci *et al.*, 2017). Autonomy refers to employees' sense of choice and control over their work activities. Competence relates to employees' confidence in their ability to perform tasks effectively and achieve desired outcomes. Relatedness reflects employees' sense of belonging and meaningful connection with colleagues and the organisation.

Organisational practices such as employee recognition, promotion opportunities, job enrichment, empowerment, professional development, and supportive supervision can help satisfy these psychological needs. Furthermore, SDT argues that external rewards do not necessarily undermine intrinsic motivation when they are implemented in ways that support employees' autonomy, competence, and personal growth. Consequently, financial rewards combined with supportive organisational practices are more likely to promote long-term employee motivation and sustained performance.

The relevance of SDT to this study lies in its ability to explain how motivational strategies influence employee behaviour and performance. In high-growth service organisations, where employee commitment, adaptability, and continuous effort are essential, motivational practices that satisfy employees' psychological needs are likely to enhance performance outcomes.

Integration of the Theories

The Full Range Leadership Theory and Self-Determination Theory jointly provide a comprehensive explanation for the relationships examined in this study. Leadership

behaviours shape the organisational environment within which employees perform their duties, while motivational strategies influence employees' willingness to exert effort and remain committed to organisational goals.

There are notable points of convergence between the two theories. For example, transformational leadership behaviours such as individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation can foster employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness as proposed by SDT. Similarly, transactional leadership may positively influence motivation and performance by establishing clear expectations and providing appropriate rewards for desired behaviours. Conversely, laissez-faire leadership is less likely to satisfy employees' psychological needs due to its lack of guidance, support, and involvement.

Together, these theories explain how leadership styles and motivational strategies influence the task, contextual, and adaptive dimensions of staff performance. They therefore provide an appropriate theoretical framework for examining leadership styles and motivational strategies as predictors of staff performance in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Leadership Styles and Staff Performance

A substantial body of empirical research has examined the relationship between leadership styles and staff performance across diverse organisational contexts. Evidence consistently suggests that leadership behaviours significantly influence employees' ability to perform assigned tasks, contribute to organisational functioning, and support the achievement of organisational goals. Among the leadership styles identified in the literature, transformational and transactional leadership have generally been associated with positive employee outcomes, whereas laissez-faire leadership has often been linked to less favourable performance outcomes.

One of the earliest comprehensive syntheses was conducted by Judge and Piccolo (2004), who performed a meta-analysis of 87 independent studies examining the effectiveness of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Their findings revealed validity coefficients of .44 for transformational leadership and .39 for contingent reward leadership, while laissez-faire leadership demonstrated a negative validity coefficient of $-.37$. The study further showed that transformational leadership explained additional variance in employee performance beyond that accounted for by transactional leadership behaviours. These findings suggest that leaders who inspire, support, and intellectually stimulate employees are more likely to foster superior performance than those who rely solely on reward exchanges or demonstrate limited involvement in organisational activities.

Similarly, Wang *et al.* (2011) conducted a meta-analysis involving 117 independent samples drawn from twenty-five years of leadership research. Their findings indicated that transformational leadership was positively associated

with individual task performance, contextual performance, team effectiveness, and organisational effectiveness. The study further demonstrated that transformational leadership explained additional variance in employee performance beyond that attributed to contingent reward behaviours, particularly in relation to contextual and team-level outcomes. This suggests that transformational leadership not only facilitates task accomplishment but also promotes collaboration, organisational commitment, and overall effectiveness.

These findings have been supported by empirical studies conducted in organisational settings. Bass *et al.* (2003), in a study of military units operating under stressful conditions, found that transformational leadership and contingent reward behaviours were significant predictors of subsequent unit performance. Their study further revealed that group cohesion and collective efficacy partially mediated the relationship between leadership behaviours and performance outcomes. This suggests that effective leadership enhances performance by fostering trust, confidence, and cooperation among employees.

More recent studies continue to reinforce the relevance of transformational leadership. Hoch *et al.* (2018) reported that transformational leadership maintains moderate to strong relationships with individual, team, and organisational outcomes. They further concluded that many recently proposed leadership models contribute little additional explanatory power beyond that provided by the Full Range Leadership Model. Collectively, these findings indicate that transformational leadership and contingent reward behaviours remain among the most effective leadership approaches for enhancing employee performance. Conversely, laissez-faire leadership continues to demonstrate negative associations with employee performance due to the limited guidance, feedback, and support provided to employees.

Motivational Strategies and Staff Performance

Empirical evidence also demonstrates the important role of motivational strategies in enhancing employee performance. Organisations utilise a combination of financial and non-financial motivational approaches to encourage employees to maintain high levels of effort, improve productivity, and remain committed to organisational goals. These strategies influence employee behaviour through both extrinsic and intrinsic motivational processes.

Condly *et al.* (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 45 empirical studies examining the effectiveness of organisational incentive programmes. Their findings revealed that incentive systems increased employee performance by approximately 22 percent on average, with team-based incentive systems producing stronger performance gains than individual-based incentives. These findings highlight the value of motivational strategies that simultaneously encourage individual and collective performance, particularly within service organisations where teamwork is essential for service delivery.

Research has also provided strong support for the role of intrinsic motivation in employee performance. Cerasoli *et al.* (2016) examined the relationship between psychological need satisfaction and employee performance and found that employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness significantly predicted work performance, with correlation coefficients ranging from .25 to .37. Furthermore, the study revealed that organisational incentives are most effective when they complement employees' intrinsic motivation. This suggests that organisations are likely to achieve superior performance when supportive work environments and opportunities for personal growth are combined with appropriate financial rewards.

Van den Broeck *et al.* (2021) synthesised findings from 124 independent samples to examine different forms of work motivation. Their meta-analysis revealed that intrinsic motivation was most strongly associated with employee well-being and positive work attitudes, whereas identified regulation demonstrated stronger relationships with job performance and organisational citizenship behaviour. These findings suggest that different forms of motivation influence distinct organisational outcomes, highlighting the importance of motivational strategies that address both employee and organisational needs.

Longitudinal evidence also supports the predictive role of motivation in employee performance. Wang *et al.* (2024) investigated the temporal relationship between work motivation and job performance and found that earlier levels of employee motivation significantly predicted subsequent job performance. In contrast, higher levels of job performance did not significantly predict future motivation. This finding supports the argument that motivation serves as an antecedent of performance rather than merely a consequence of it.

Similarly, Nascimento *et al.* (2025) examined the effects of organisational reward systems and found that both financial and non-financial rewards positively influence employee satisfaction, organisational commitment, autonomy, knowledge sharing, creativity, and employee retention. These findings indicate that motivational strategies not only improve immediate performance outcomes but also create conditions that sustain employee commitment and organisational effectiveness over time.

Overall, existing empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that motivational strategies significantly influence staff performance, particularly when organisations maintain an effective balance between extrinsic rewards and intrinsic motivational factors.

Leadership Styles, Motivational Strategies, and Staff Performance

Although extensive research has examined the direct relationships between leadership styles and employee performance, as well as between motivational strategies and employee performance, comparatively fewer studies have investigated their combined effects. Existing evidence suggests that leadership and motivation are

closely interconnected organisational factors that jointly contribute to improved organisational outcomes.

Meirinhos *et al.* (2023) explored the relationships among leadership styles, employee motivation, communication practices, reward systems, and organisational performance. Their findings revealed significant positive relationships among these variables, suggesting that effective leadership enhances the effectiveness of motivational practices in promoting organisational performance. Leadership behaviours and motivational systems therefore appear to operate synergistically in creating work environments that foster employee commitment and productivity.

Earlier studies have also examined motivation as a mediating mechanism linking leadership and employee performance. Research conducted in financial institutions and service organisations has consistently shown that transformational and transactional leadership styles positively influence employee performance partly through their effects on employee motivation. These findings indicate that effective leaders do more than direct and supervise employees; they create environments that encourage employees to contribute meaningfully to organisational objectives.

Despite these contributions, important gaps remain in the literature. Much of the existing research has examined leadership styles and motivational strategies independently, with relatively few studies investigating their combined influence on multidimensional staff performance. There is also limited empirical evidence from high-growth service organisations, which operate under unique conditions characterised by rapid expansion, innovation, and continuous change. Furthermore, research focusing specifically on the Nigerian service sector—including banking, telecommunications, financial technology, healthcare, and professional services—remains relatively scarce. In addition, many studies continue to emphasise traditional performance measures while giving limited attention to contextual and adaptive performance dimensions that are increasingly important in modern service organisations.

These gaps highlight the need for further empirical investigation into the individual and combined effects of leadership styles and motivational strategies on multidimensional staff performance. Such evidence will contribute to a better understanding of how organisational factors influence employee effectiveness in high-growth service organisations operating within competitive and dynamic environments. Consequently, this study examines the individual and combined predictive effects of leadership styles and motivational strategies on staff performance among employees of selected high-growth service organisations in Lagos and Ogun States, Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design to examine the predictive influence of leadership styles and motivational strategies on staff performance in high-growth service organisations

in Nigeria. The cross-sectional design was considered appropriate because it enabled data to be collected at a single point in time, thereby facilitating the examination of relationships among the study variables without manipulating the research environment. The design is widely used in organisational behaviour and human resource management research where the objective is to investigate relationships and predictive associations among variables.

Population of the Study

The target population comprised employees of selected high-growth service organisations located in Lagos and Ogun States, Nigeria. The organisations were drawn from key service sectors characterised by rapid growth and innovation, including Banking and Financial Services (including FinTech), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Telecommunications, Healthcare, and Professional and Business Services. Employees within these sectors were considered suitable participants because they operate in dynamic organisational environments where leadership practices and motivational strategies significantly influence employee effectiveness and organisational performance.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 200 employees for the study. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because the study specifically required participants with sufficient organisational experience to assess leadership practices, motivational strategies, and staff performance within high-growth service organisations. The sample size was considered adequate for correlation and multiple regression analyses and aligned with recommendations for behavioural and organisational research employing predictive statistical techniques.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire comprising four sections.

Section A obtained demographic information, including gender, years of service within the organisation, and industry classification.

Section B measured leadership styles using ten items adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995).

Section C assessed motivational strategies using ten items adapted from the instrument developed by Mottaz (1985). Section D measured staff performance using ten items adapted from the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ) developed by Koopmans *et al.* (2014).

All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Higher scores indicated more favourable perceptions of leadership effectiveness, motivational practices, and staff performance.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instruments employed in this study were adapted from previously validated and widely used scales in organisational and management research. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed for clarity, contextual relevance, and alignment with the objectives of the study.

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The Leadership Styles Scale yielded a reliability coefficient of .70, while the Motivational Strategies Scale and Staff Performance Scale produced coefficients of .84 and .80, respectively. Since all coefficients exceeded the recommended minimum threshold of .70, the scales were considered sufficiently reliable for data collection.

Procedure for Data Collection

Approval was obtained from the management of the participating organisations prior to data collection. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that all information provided would be treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before questionnaire administration. Completed questionnaires were screened for completeness before coding and statistical analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 29. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and tables, were used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationships among leadership styles, motivational strategies, and staff performance. Simple linear regression analyses were conducted to determine the individual predictive effects of leadership styles and motivational strategies on staff performance, while multiple regression analysis was used to assess their combined predictive effects. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered strictly to established ethical principles governing social science research. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. No personally identifiable information was collected, thereby ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality. All data were securely handled and used exclusively for research purposes to protect participants' privacy and maintain the integrity of the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The study analysed responses from 200 employees drawn from selected high-growth service organisations in Nigeria.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Tables 1-3 and Figures 1-3.

Table 1 : Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	81	40.5
	Female	119	59.5
Years in Current Organisation	Less than 1 year	7	3.5
	1-3 years	53	26.5
	4-6 years	122	61.0
	6 years and above	18	9.0
Industry	Banking/FinTech	47	23.5
	ICT/Telecommunications	82	41.0
	Healthcare	61	30.5
	Logistics & Professional Services	10	5.0

Gender Distribution

Distribution of respondents by gender.



Figure 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents



Figure 2: Years in Current Organisation

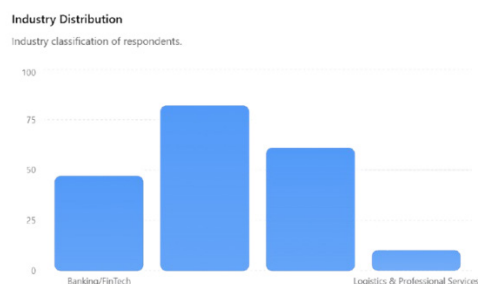


Figure 3: Industry Distribution

Out of the total number of respondents, 59.5% were females and 40.5% were males. The majority (61.0%) had been employed in their organisation for 4 to 6 years, suggesting a lot of experience in the organisation. Sectoral distribution indicated that the respondents were mostly from ICT and Telecommunications (41.0%), Healthcare (30.5%), Banking and FinTech (23.5%) and Logistics and Professional Services (5.0%).

Correlation Analysis

Leadership styles were strongly and positively associated with staff performance ($r = .770$, $p < .001$). Motivational

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3
Staff Performance	1		
Leadership Styles	.770**	1	
Motivational Strategies	.746**	.593**	1

Note. $p < .001$

strategies also demonstrated a strong positive relationship with staff performance ($r = .746$, $p < .001$). In addition, leadership styles were moderately correlated with motivational strategies ($r = .593$, $p < .001$). These findings suggest that employees who perceived stronger leadership practices and more effective motivational strategies also reported higher levels of work performance.

Regression Analysis

The leadership styles had a significant effect on staff performance ($R^2 = .593$, $F = 289.084$, $p < .001$). The same was true for motivational strategies which accounted for 55.7% of the variance in staff performance ($R^2 = .557$, $F = 247.579$, $p < .001$). Leadership styles and motivational strategies accounted for 71.8% of the variance in staff performance ($R^2 = .718$, $F = 249.880$, $p < .001$) when entered into the regression model at the same time. Leadership styles was the stronger predictor ($\beta = .499$) than motivational strategies ($\beta = .450$) in the model. The results suggest that effective leadership and employee motivation can be viewed as complementary aspects

Table 4: Regression Models Predicting Staff Performance

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	F
Model 1: Leadership Styles									
Constant	9.762	1.357	—	7.193	<.001				
Leadership Styles	1.067	0.063	.770	17.002	<.001	.770	.593	.591	289.084
Model 2: Motivational Strategies									
Constant	3.836	1.834	—	2.091	.038				
Motivational Strategies	0.506	0.032	.746	15.735	<.001	.746	.557	.555	247.579
Model 3: Multiple Regression									
Constant	0.497	1.500	—	0.331	.741				
Leadership Styles	0.695	0.066	.499	10.597	<.001				
Motivational Strategies	0.306	0.032	.450	9.567	<.001	.848	.718	.715	249.880

of the organisation which can significantly contribute to employee performance in high growth service organisations.

Discussion of Findings

The present study examined the predictive effects of leadership styles and motivational strategies on staff performance in high-growth service organisations in Nigeria. The findings revealed that both leadership styles and motivational strategies independently and jointly exert significant positive influences on staff performance. These results support the view that employee performance is shaped not only by employees' skills and competencies but also by organisational factors such as leadership behaviours and motivational practices that encourage employees to perform effectively within dynamic work environments.

The first objective examined the relationship between leadership styles and staff performance. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between leadership styles and staff performance ($r = .770$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, regression analysis showed that leadership styles significantly predicted staff performance, accounting for 59.3% of the variance in employee performance. This finding suggests that employees who perceive their leaders as effective are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance. Effective leaders provide direction, establish clear expectations, encourage desirable work behaviours, and foster teamwork, thereby creating conditions that enable employees to perform effectively. Such leadership behaviours are particularly important in high-growth service organisations, where employees are continually required to adapt to changing customer demands, technological developments, and organisational expansion.

This finding supports the propositions of the Full Range Leadership Theory, which suggests that leadership behaviours influence employee attitudes and work outcomes in different ways (Avolio *et al.*, 1999). Transformational leadership behaviours inspire employees to exert greater effort and exceed expectations, while

transactional leadership promotes performance through clear expectations and reward systems. The findings of the present study therefore reinforce the importance of leadership behaviours in predicting employee performance within fast-growing service organisations.

The results are also consistent with previous empirical studies. Judge and Piccolo (2004) reported that transformational leadership demonstrates stronger positive relationships with employee performance than other leadership styles, while contingent reward behaviours are positively associated with performance outcomes. Similarly, Wang *et al.* (2011) found that transformational leadership significantly predicts task performance, contextual performance, team effectiveness, and organisational performance across various organisational settings. Bass *et al.* (2003) likewise reported that transformational leadership and contingent reward behaviours enhance unit performance by fostering group cohesion and collective efficacy. The present findings extend this body of evidence by demonstrating that leadership behaviours remain significant predictors of employee performance within Nigeria's high-growth service sector.

The second objective examined the relationship between motivational strategies and staff performance. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between motivational strategies and staff performance ($r = .746$, $p < .001$). Regression analysis further indicated that motivational strategies accounted for 55.7% of the variance in staff performance. This finding suggests that employees who perceive organisational motivational practices positively are more likely to perform effectively in their roles. Reward systems, employee recognition, promotion opportunities, empowerment initiatives, and supportive work environments appear to encourage employees to remain engaged, maintain high performance levels, and respond positively to workplace demands.

This finding is consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which posits that employees perform more effectively when organisational practices satisfy their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci *et al.*, 2017). When organisations provide opportunities for

professional growth, recognise employee contributions, and create supportive work environments, employees are more likely to develop intrinsic motivation and demonstrate sustained performance. Although financial incentives remain important, the findings suggest that organisations can enhance employee performance by complementing financial rewards with practices that support employee development and meaningful participation in organisational activities.

The findings are also consistent with previous empirical evidence. Condly *et al.* (2003) reported that organisational incentive programmes significantly improve employee performance, while Cerasoli *et al.* (2016) found that satisfaction of employees' psychological needs consistently predicts work performance. Similarly, Van den Broeck *et al.* (2021) observed that intrinsic motivation is associated with positive work attitudes, whereas identified regulation is more strongly related to job performance and organisational citizenship behaviour. Wang *et al.* (2024) further demonstrated that employee motivation predicts subsequent job performance over time. The present study confirms these findings and highlights the continued importance of motivational strategies in enhancing employee performance within high-growth service organisations.

The third objective examined the combined influence of leadership styles and motivational strategies on staff performance. The findings revealed that both variables jointly accounted for 71.8% of the variance in staff performance. Leadership styles ($\beta = .499$) and motivational strategies ($\beta = .450$) both made significant contributions to the prediction of staff performance, with leadership styles demonstrating a slightly stronger predictive effect.

These findings suggest that leadership and motivation function as complementary organisational mechanisms rather than independent influences. Leadership provides direction, establishes expectations, and fosters productive working relationships, while motivational strategies sustain employee commitment, engagement, and willingness to exert effort. Consequently, organisations that invest in both leadership development and employee motivation are more likely to achieve higher levels of staff performance than organisations that focus on either factor in isolation.

The findings further support the integrated theoretical framework underpinning this study. While the Full Range Leadership Theory explains how leadership behaviours influence employee performance through guidance, inspiration, and performance management, Self-Determination Theory explains how motivational practices enhance employees' willingness to contribute effort toward organisational goals. The strong combined influence of these variables suggests that employee performance is best understood through a broader organisational perspective that considers both managerial behaviours and motivational practices.

Overall, the findings contribute to the growing body

of literature on employee performance by providing empirical evidence on the influence of leadership styles and motivational strategies within high-growth service organisations in Nigeria. The study also addresses an important gap in the literature by examining the combined effects of these organisational factors on multidimensional staff performance within a rapidly growing service-sector context. The findings underscore the importance of leadership development and employee motivation in promoting commitment, adaptability, and sustained high performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

First, high-growth service organisations should strengthen leadership development initiatives aimed at enhancing transformational and effective transactional leadership competencies among managers. Particular emphasis should be placed on communication skills, employee development, coaching, constructive feedback, and employee recognition. Such leadership practices are likely to improve task performance, teamwork, adaptability, and overall employee effectiveness.

Second, organisations should implement comprehensive motivational systems that integrate both financial and non-financial rewards. In addition to offering competitive compensation, organisations should provide employee recognition programmes, career development opportunities, job enrichment initiatives, mentoring programmes, professional development activities, and employee empowerment practices. A balanced motivational system is more likely to sustain employee commitment and enhance long-term performance.

Third, managers should establish regular performance feedback mechanisms that recognise employee achievements while identifying opportunities for improvement. Constructive feedback enables employees to understand organisational expectations, monitor their progress, and continuously improve their performance.

Fourth, organisations should cultivate participative work environments that encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing, and employee involvement in decision-making processes. Employees who perceive that their opinions and contributions are valued are more likely to demonstrate commitment, creativity, and adaptability, all of which contribute to organisational growth and competitiveness.

Finally, policymakers, professional bodies, and management development institutions should encourage organisations to incorporate leadership development and employee motivation into their performance improvement strategies. Rather than implementing isolated interventions, organisations should adopt integrated approaches that align leadership practices with motivational initiatives to achieve sustained employee performance and organisational effectiveness.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study employed a cross-sectional research design, which involved collecting data at a single point in time. Although significant predictive relationships were identified, causal relationships cannot be conclusively established. Future studies may adopt longitudinal designs to provide deeper insights into changes in leadership behaviours, motivational practices, and staff performance over time.

Second, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data. Although validated instruments were utilised, respondents' perceptions may have been influenced by social desirability bias or subjective interpretations. Future research could strengthen the findings by incorporating supervisor ratings and objective organisational performance measures.

Third, the study focused on employees of selected high-growth service organisations in Lagos and Ogun States. While these states represent major commercial centres in Nigeria, the findings may not be fully generalisable to other regions or sectors of the economy. Future studies should consider broader geographical coverage and a wider range of industries to enhance generalisability.

Finally, the study examined only leadership styles and motivational strategies as predictors of staff performance. Other organisational factors such as organisational culture, employee engagement, psychological safety, job satisfaction, and work environment may also influence employee performance and should be investigated in future research.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study showed that the leadership styles and motivational strategies explain Nigerian staff performance in high growth service organisations. Leadership styles showed greater predictive power while both factors shared a significant proportion of variance with staff performance. The results show that leadership and good motivational tactics play a vital role in the development of employees' performance. It is, therefore, important for the high growth service companies to develop their leadership skills and motivation systems to keep staff performing well continuously.

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