



LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS AND VIABILITY OF TRANSPORT FIRMS IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The transportation business is an important part of the economy since it creates jobs and allows commodities and people to move around. However, the business faces several hurdles, including leadership issues, which might jeopardize the survival of transportation companies. This study investigates the leadership problems and viability of transportation companies in the southern part of Nigeria. The study employed a survey design and gathered data from ten transportation companies in the region. The findings indicate that leadership problems such as poor communication, a lack of transparency, and inadequate training, are common in the sector. The study also discovered that these leadership problems might have an impact on the financial viability of transportation companies, resulting in decreasing productivity, higher costs, and lower competitiveness. The report suggests that transportation companies in the region prioritize leadership development, improve communication, and give proper training to increase their viability

Keywords: Leadership problem, viability, poor communication, transparency, and training.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is vital in management. It entails convincing people to take action in order to achieve a goal. It is built on interpersonal relationships rather than administrative tasks and orders. (udokwu, 2020). The transportation business is an important

component of the economy, creating jobs and allowing the movement of products and people (Aderamo, 2011). However, the industry has several hurdles, including leadership issues, which might jeopardize the survival of transportation companies (Ogbonna 2015). Leadership problems can take many forms, including poor communication, a lack of transparency, and insufficient training (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). These issues can have far-reaching effects, including decreased production, higher costs, and lower competitiveness (Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson, 2011). Market demand, financial stability, technology developments, and regulatory compliance all contribute to transportation firms' success. Firms that fail to address leadership weaknesses frequently face operational inefficiencies, low staff morale, and diminishing consumer satisfaction (Kotler and Keller, 2019).

Furthermore, the transportation sector is under increasing pressure to implement sustainable practices and digital transformation, needing adaptive and innovative leadership (Burns, 2019).

This article investigates the leadership challenges confronting transportation companies and their impact on long-term profitability. By evaluating case studies and current literature, it tries to develop solutions for boosting leadership effectiveness and assuring sustainable growth in the transportation business.

Statement of the problem

Despite the necessity of strong leadership in the transportation industry, several companies in South-East Nigeria are experiencing substantial leadership issues. Research has demonstrated that strong leadership is crucial for organizational success because it allows firms to adapt to changing circumstances, innovate, and increase productivity (Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson, 2011).

However, a survey of the current literature reveals a considerable vacuum in our understanding of the leadership challenges confronting transport enterprises in South-East Nigeria. While there is a large body of research on leadership and organizational success, there is little research on the unique leadership problems that transport enterprises face in South-East Nigeria. There is a lack of understanding of the specific

leadership challenges that transport enterprises in South-East Nigeria face, especially their nature and breadth. Furthermore, there is a dearth of empirical research on the influence of leadership problems on the profitability of transport enterprises in South-East Nigeria, as well as insufficient guidance for practitioners on how to manage leadership problems in transport firms in South-East Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The primary objective of this study is to examine leadership problems and the viability of transport firms in south-east Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study include to;

- (i) determine the relationship between poor communication and viability of transport firms in south east.
- (ii) assess the nexus between lack of transparency and viability of transport firms in south east.
- (iii) examine the association between inadequate training and viability of transport firms in south east.

Research questions

- (i) What is the relationship between poor communication and viability of transport firms in south east?
- (ii) To what extent is the nexus between lack of transparency and viability of transport firms in south east?
- (iii) What is the association between inadequate training and viability of transport firms in south east?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between poor communication and viability of transport firms in south east.

H₀₂: There is no significant nexus between lack of transparency and viability of transport firms in south east.

H₀₃: There is no significant association between inadequate training and viability of transport firms in south east.

Scope of the study

The scope is examined based on content scope, geographic scope and unit scope. The content scope studies the relationship between leadership problems and the viability. The area of leadership problem this study examines included; poor communication, lack of transparency and inadequate training. The geographic scope is the selected transport firms in south east Nigeria. The states in the south east selected include, Imo state, Anambra state and Abia state. The unit scope is the staff of the selected transport firms in the selected states.

Review of Related Literature

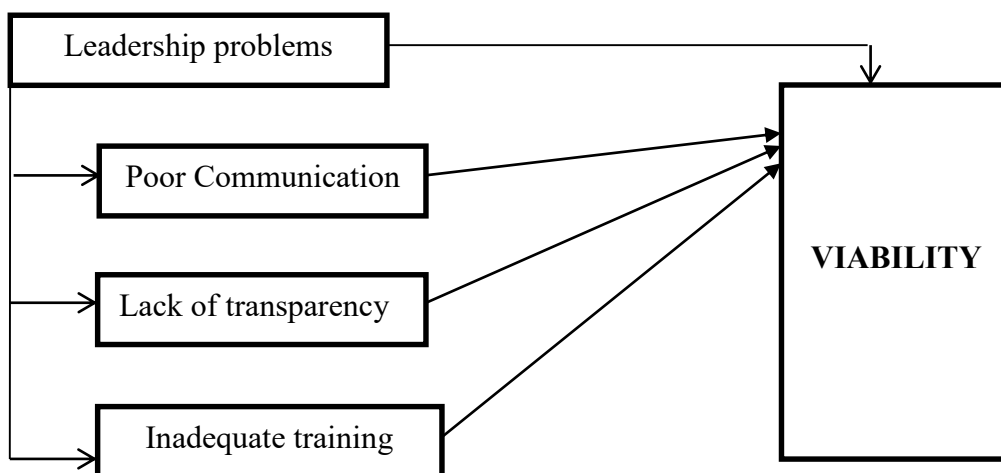


Fig 1: Operational Conceptual Framework

Source: Researchers Desk 2025

Conceptual Review

Leadership is crucial to the success of any business, especially transportation companies (Bass, 1985). Effective leadership can inspire and motivate staff, improve communication, and help with decision-making (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). However, leadership issues can have negative implications such as decreased productivity, higher

expenses, and worse competitiveness (Hitt Ireland & Hoskisson, 2011). Leadership is generally defined as the practice of persuading others to accomplish specified goals. Northouse (2019) defines leadership as a process in which a person inspires a group to attain a common purpose. Similarly, Kotter (1990) distinguishes between leadership and management, arguing that management focuses on planning and organization, whereas leadership focuses on vision, motivation, and inspiration. Nigerian transportation companies confront various obstacles, including poor infrastructure, insufficient money, and inefficient management (Aderamo, 2011). These problems can have an impact on transportation enterprises' viability, resulting in decreasing productivity, higher prices, and worse competitiveness (Ogbonna, 2015).

In business organizations, leadership is defined as an individual's or group's capacity to advise, influence, and inspire others to achieve common goals. Effective leadership is critical for generating corporate success, cultivating a positive workplace culture, and overcoming business obstacles. Various leadership theories and styles serve to explain how leaders work and their impact on organizations.

Importance of Leadership in Business Organizations

a. Vision and Strategy

Effective leaders set a clear vision and strategic direction. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), transformational leaders present a compelling vision that inspires people to work toward organizational goals.

b. Employee Motivation and Engagement

Good leadership promotes motivation, which increases productivity. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), intrinsic motivators like recognition and responsibility are important for employee engagement. Leaders who recognize employee contributions foster a more engaged staff.

c. Organizational Culture and Change Management

Leaders influence organizational culture and drive change. To successfully execute change, Kotter's 8-Step Change Model (1996) emphasizes the need of leaders communicating vision, empowering people, and achieving short-term goals.

d. Decision-Making and Problem-Solving

Leaders make strategic decisions that affect corporate performance. Mintzberg (1973) defined managerial functions, emphasizing that leaders must balance interpersonal, informational, and decisional responsibilities in order to be effective.

Theoretical review

Trait Theory

The Trait Theory of Leadership, proposed by Ralph Stogdill (1948, 1974), holds that good leaders have certain innate characteristics that set them apart from non-leaders. It holds that leaders are born, not manufactured, and emphasizes personal traits like intelligence, confidence, charisma, and decisiveness.

Key Traits of Effective Leaders (as identified by Stogdill)

1. Intelligence – Ability to analyze situations and make informed decisions.
2. Self-confidence – Assurance in one's abilities and decisions.
3. Determination – Strong willpower and perseverance in achieving goals.
4. Integrity – Honesty and ethical behavior.
5. Sociability – Ability to build relationships and communicate effectively.

Criticism

- Leadership is situational, meaning traits alone do not guarantee success.
- Some great leaders lack traditional leadership traits.
- It does not account for leadership skills that can be learned or developed

Behavioral Theory

Leadership is a collection of acquired behaviors rather than inherent characteristics (Blake & Mouton, 1964). The Managerial Grid model reveals leadership styles that prioritize people and productivity.

Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Transformational leadership (Bass, 1985) aims to inspire and grow employees through vision and motivation. Transactional leadership (Burns, 1978) is based on predefined duties, rewards, and consequences.

Situational Leadership

This idea, developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969), contends that effective leadership is dependent on situational adaptability and team member maturity.

Anchored Theory

The research is based on transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes the role of leadership in motivating and increasing organizational performance.

Empirical Review

Weli and Eguzoroibe (2024) investigated the impact of principals' leadership styles on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers state. Statistical tools used include mean, standard deviation, and Z-test statistics. The findings revealed that both authoritarian and democratic leadership styles had a substantial impact on students' academic performance, highlighting the importance of leadership approaches in determining educational results.

Udokwu, Okoye, Oshioste, and Azubuike (2023) investigated the importance of leadership in organizational management: A case study of First Bank in Abuja metropolitan. Smart-PLS regression was the statistical technique employed. The results demonstrated that democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles all had a positive and statistically significant impact on employee performance, indicating that multiple leadership methods can be effective depending on the organizational situation.

Mayowa-Adebara and Opeke (2019) evaluate leadership style as a predictor of employee commitment in university libraries in South-West Nigeria. Statistical tools used included descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that leadership style had a considerable impact on staff engagement, with transformational leadership contributing more than transactional leadership, indicating the efficacy of inspirational leadership approaches in academic contexts.

Abubakar, S., Yebimodei, and Eru (2019) investigated the impact of leadership style on employee performance: A case study of a private organization in Lagos State,

Nigeria. The statistical tools used were frequency tables and simple percentages. The findings demonstrated that democratic leadership style had the most positive influence on employee performance, followed by laissez-faire and autocratic styles, highlighting the importance of participative decision-making in improving employee results.

Igwe, Ozofo, and Alinno (2017) investigated the relationship between principals' leadership styles and students' academic performance in Enugu Metropolis: A Comparative Survey of Public and Mission Secondary Schools. The statistical tools used were Chi-squared and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation. The study found that autocratic leadership style was positively associated to students' academic performance, implying that certain authoritative styles may improve academic achievements in specific settings.

In a similar study, Jalal-Eddeen (2015) conducted an assessment of leadership styles and employee performance in small and medium enterprises in Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria. Statistical tools used include descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests. The findings demonstrated that the prevalent leadership style identified was participative democracy, which positively influenced employee performance, underlining the benefits of inclusive leadership in SMEs.

Gap in Literature

The literature gap is determined by three factors: content, geography, and indices.

Content gap: It could be examined that most of the empirical work examined were unable to identify the leadership problems rather they concentrated on the style of leadership. This study examined the leadership problems in relation to viability.

Geographical gap. The studied empirical evidences in the empirical review were carried out outside the south east Nigeria and with different study organizations like schools, private firms, deposit money banks. This present study centers on transport firms in south east Nigeria within south eastern region.

Indices gap: The indices used in this study are poor communication, inadequate training and lack of transparency as well as viability of transport firms. The reviewed empirical works never used such variables.

Methodology

Section three focused on the methodology, which was organized to include the research design, population, sampling, data collection, and analysis techniques.

Research Design

The study's nature lends itself to a descriptive design in which the subject of investigation is seen or studied objectively. Descriptive designs are best suited to circumstances in which respondents need complete freedom to participate. It is also appropriate since respondents would demonstrate the features of the study objectives while continuing at their workplace from which they responded.

Sources of Data

The data needed for a study was gathered from primary sources by administering a questionnaire to the targeted respondents.

Population of the study

The study's target audience consisted of employees from transportation companies in southeast Nigeria. In this scenario, the enterprises' total target population, as shown in table 3.1, is 650. These numbers were acquired from the human resource departments of the individual companies.

Sampling Design

Sampling design refers to the various methods a researcher can use to collect samples from a specific population (Anyanwu, 2016). Thus, the sampling design included both sample size determination and sampling process.

Sample Size Determination

In determining the sample size, the Taro Yamane's formula was employed. The formula is stated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size and is the number of the item in the population.

e= sample error or level of significance which is 5%

N= Population of the study

Therefore, n can be determined thus:

$$n = \frac{650}{1 + 650(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{650}{1 + 650(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{650}{1 + 1.625}$$

$$n = \frac{650}{2.625}$$

$$n = 248$$

Total Sample Size for the study = 248

Sampling Procedure

The study used the non-probability technique, namely judgmental sampling. This strategy allowed the researcher to distribute the questionnaire solely to those who were regarded to be knowledgeable about the organization's historical background in the field of innovation. Employees who have stayed for more than three years are eligible to participate in the study.

Validity of Research Instrument

In this study, content validity was used. The research instrument was shared with the supervisor, who assessed its suitability in content, clarity, and adequacy in obtaining the required data. Similarly, comments from the pilot research helped determine which questions to eliminate, rephrase, or correct in order to obtain accurate data.

Reliability of Research Instrument

The data's reliability was assessed in SPSS using the Cronbach coefficient alpha, which reflected the level of internal consistency of the items under each variable. Thus, the instrument was dependable because the Cronbach coefficient alpha for each of the variables was equal to or greater than 0.70%.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data analysis approaches used in this work include key statistics like the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). The hypotheses proposed in this study were examined using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) can be calculated manually as follows:

$$r = \frac{N\sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

Where X = Independent Variable

Y = Dependent Variable

$\sum XY$ = Summation of X and Y

Decision Rule

If P-value ≤ 0.05 accept H_A (Alternative Hypothesis)

≥ 0.05 reject H_A (Alternative Hypothesis)

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Univariate Analysis

In this section, the responses to the questionnaire items for each of the research variables were examined. The mean score was utilized to examine the replies to the questionnaire items on the research variables. The frequency of replies to each item was determined, and the average score for each item on the research variables was calculated.

Table 1: Mean responses of employees on the extent of poor communication in their company

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Grand Total	Mean $\bar{X}$	Crit. Mean	Decision
1.	I often receive unclear or ambiguous messages from my colleagues/supervisors.	85	69	41	28	223	2.95	2.50	Accepted
2.	I have to ask for clarification multiple times before I understand the message.	79	82	35	27	223	2.96	2.50	Accepted
3.	I feel that our organization's communication is often confusing or misleading.	71	75	47	30	223	2.84	2.50	Accepted
4.	I have to spend a lot of time trying to understand the intended message.	75	66	51	31	223	2.82	2.50	Accepted
5.	I often receive information too late to take action or make decisions.	69	73	46	35	223	2.79	2.50	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 1 presents the mean responses of employees of transport company in south-east on the extent of communication in their company. The table shows that the mean responses of employees are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 which implies that most of the respondents agreed with the items listed in the table.

Table 2: Mean responses of employees on the extent of transparency

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Grand Total	Mean X	Crit. Mean	Decision
6.	Important decisions are often made without input from relevant stakeholders.	75	70	48	30	223	2.85	2.50	Accepted
7.	I am often unaware of the criteria used to make important decisions.	64	77	42	40	223	2.74	2.50	Accepted
8.	Decisions are often made without consideration for their impact on the organization.	72	84	45	22	223	2.92	2.50	Accepted
9.	I feel that decision-making processes are fair and transparent.	87	76	40	20	223	3.03	2.50	Accepted
10.	Lack of transparency in decision-making has negatively impacted our organization's viability.	77	70	41	35	223	2.85	2.50	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 contains the mean responses of employees of transport firms on the relationship between transparency and viability. The table indicates that most of the respondents agreed with the items listed in the table with their mean responses greater than the criterion mean of 2.50.

Table 3: Mean responses on inadequate training

S/N	Items	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Grand Total	Mean X	Crit. Mean	Decision
11.	I have access to regular training and development opportunities.	67	76	44	36	223	2.78	2.50	Accepted
12.	Training programs are often cancelled or postponed.	71	79	53	20	223	2.90	2.50	Accepted
13.	I am able to attend training sessions during work hours.	74	62	50	37	223	2.77	2.50	Accepted
14.	I feel that training and development opportunities are a priority in our organization.	65	73	47	38	223	2.74	2.50	Accepted
15.	Inadequate training has negatively impacted my job performance	72	85	43	23	223	2.92	2.50	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 presents the mean responses of inadequate training. The table shows that the mean responses of inadequate training are greater than the criterion mean of 2.50 which implies that most of the respondents agreed with the items listed in the table.

Bivariate Analysis

The bivariate analysis was used to determine the link between the independent and dependent variables in each hypothesis. The Pearson product moment correlation (r) was utilized to evaluate and determine the relationship between the two variables in each of the hypotheses put forth in this study. The r value was calculated with SPSS version 23.0, and the findings are shown below based on the hypotheses:

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between poor communication and viability of transport firms in south east.

Table 4: Result of bivariate analysis between poor communication and viability of transport firms in south east.

			Poor Communication	Viability
Pearson (r)	poor communication	Correlation	1.000	.726**
		Coefficient	.	.001
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.223	.223
		N		
	viability	Correlation	.726**	1.000
		Coefficient	.001	.
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.223	.223
		N		

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-Generated Output, 2025

Table 4 shows the results of a bivariate examination of the relationship between poor communication and the viability of transportation enterprises in the Southeast. The findings demonstrate that inadequate communication is highly and positively connected with viability ($r = .726^{**}$), and this association is significant at the 0.01 level, as indicated by the symbol ** . As a result, we reject the null hypothesis (H_01) and support the alternate hypothesis, which asserts that poor communication is a substantial predictor of survivability.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02} : There is no significant nexus between lack of transparency and viability of transport firms in south east.

Table 5: Result of bivariate analysis between lack of transparency and viability of transport firms in south east.

			Lack of Transparency	Viability
Pearson (r)	lack of transparency	Correlation	1.000	.839**
		Coefficient	.	.001
		Sig. (2 tailed)	223	223
		N		
	viability	Correlation	.839**	1.000
		Coefficient	.001	.
		Sig. (2 tailed)	223	223
		N		

** Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-Generated Output, 2025

Table 5 shows the results of the bivariate study conducted on the relationship between lack of openness and transport company viability. The results demonstrate a very strong and positive association between lack of transparency and transport businesses' viability ($r = .839^{**}$), which is significant at the 0.01 level, as indicated by the symbol

** . As a result, the null hypothesis (Ho2) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

Ho3: There is no significant association between inadequate training and viability of transport firms in south east.

Table 6: Result of bivariate analysis between inadequate training and viability of transport firms in south east.

			Inadequate Training	Viability
Pearson (r)	inadequate training	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.819**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	223	223
	viability	Correlation Coefficient	.819**	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	223	223

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-Generated Output, 2025

Table 6 illustrates the results of the bivariate study conducted on the relationship between inadequate training and transport firm viability. The findings show that poor training has a very strong positive correlation with the viability of transportation enterprises ($r = .819^{**}$), and this correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, as indicated by the symbol **. As a result, the null hypothesis (Ho3) is rejected, whereas the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The study on leadership problems and the viability of transportation enterprises was examined, and the findings revealed that poor communication is highly and positively connected with viability ($r = .726^{**}$), and this correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, as indicated by the symbol **. In a comparable research, the findings revealed

a very strong and positive association between lack of transparency and the viability of transportation businesses ($r = .839^{**}$), which is significant at the 0.01 level, as indicated by the symbol ** . As a result, the null hypothesis (H_02) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

The third hypothesis results show that inadequate training has a very strong positive association with transport firm viability ($r = .819^{**}$), and this correlation is significant at the 0.01 level, as indicated by the symbol ** . As a result, the null hypothesis (H_03) is rejected, whereas the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

This is consistent with the empirical work of Abubakar, Yebimodei, and Eru (2019), who investigated the effect of leadership style on employee performance. The findings demonstrated that democratic leadership style had the most positive influence on employee performance, followed by laissez-faire and autocratic styles, highlighting the importance of participative decision-making in improving employee results. According to the data, failing to use a participative leadership style exacerbates the majority of leadership issues.

Summary of Findings

1. There is a significant relationship between poor communication and viability of transport firms in south east.
2. There is a significant nexus between lack of transparency and viability of transport firms in south east.
3. There is a significant association between inadequate training and viability of transport firms in south east.

Conclusion

This study investigated the leadership issues and viability of transport companies in South-East Nigeria. The survey found that leadership issues such as poor communication, a lack of transparency, and insufficient training are common in the sector. The study also found that these leadership issues might have an impact on the profitability of transportation companies, resulting in decreasing productivity, higher costs, and lower competitiveness.

Recommendations

1. Transport firms in the region should prioritize leadership development to enhance their viability.
2. Transport firms should improve communication to reduce misunderstandings and errors.
3. Transport firms should provide adequate training to enhance the skills and knowledge of employees.

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