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LEADERSHIP IMPLEMENTATION AND BUSINESS SUCCESS IN REAL ESTATE FIRMS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between leadership implementation and business success in real estate firms in the South-South, Nigeria. The study was guided by four research questions and four research hypotheses. The study adopted a cross-sectional correlational survey design with a population of 220 real estate firms in the South-South, Nigeria. A sample size of 140 was drawn using the Krejcie & Morgan table on sample size determination. 140 copies of questionnaires were administered to respondents, out of which 131, representing 93%, were found valid for the analysis. All items on the questionnaire had a Cronbach's alpha threshold of 0.70 and above in the reliability test. The research questions were answered and the hypotheses tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The result of the data analyzed revealed that there is a positive relationship between leadership implementation and business success in real estate firms in the South-South, Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended that managers of real estate firms should foster a culture of effective leadership that supports strategy implementation. This includes providing training and development opportunities to enhance employee skills and knowledge, recognizing and rewarding employees who demonstrate desired behaviours, and encouraging open communication and feedback.

***Keywords:** Leadership implementation, Business Success, Profitability, Market Share, Customer Satisfaction*

Introduction

Businesses are guided by clear visions that necessitate the establishment of specific, time-bound goals short-term, medium-term, and long-term (Igbaekemen, 2014). These goals are distributed across various departments, each contributing through its own objectives to the organisation's overall success. According to Yusuf-Habeeb and Ibrahim (2017), success is determined by the extent to which actual outcomes align with organisational goals and objectives. They further argue that organisations use a set of parameters as benchmarks to measure success. Hafat and Ali (2022) identify key indicators such as profitability, market share, sales growth, employee retention, and customer satisfaction as critical facets of business success. This aligns with Amankwah-Amoah and Wang's (2019) assertion that both social and economic factors are essential to a business's success. Effective leadership plays a pivotal role in achieving these organisational goals. Organisational effectiveness and productivity can suffer when leadership fails to foster a strong sense of commitment among employees, leading to suboptimal performance (Cemaloglu, Sezgin, & Kilinc, 2012). Micha Popper (2000) emphasises that leadership is fundamentally about the actions of leaders and the impact those actions have on others.

The study of leadership has been a subject of interest and debate since the time of Plato, often focusing on observable behaviours in real-world contexts. Rossouw and Vuuren (2013) assert that leadership is a principal factor enabling organisations to survive, grow, and adapt to environmental challenges. The distinction between successful and unsuccessful organisations often lies in differences in intellectual development and leadership effectiveness. Leadership implementation is therefore imperative for supporting strategy execution within organisations (Chowdhury, 2016). It drives the necessary engagement and motivation among stakeholders, ensuring alignment and coordinated pursuit of organisational objectives (Crossan et al., 2022). Research underscores the importance of integration and coordination for organisational performance, particularly regarding the quality of services and products, which is enhanced when members share a common understanding of organisational realities (Chowdhury, 2016; Agut et al., 2019; Alvarez-Miranda & Watkins, 2021). As a result, effective leadership implementation is crucial for driving economic well-being and competitiveness within an organisation's context and market.

In the real estate sector, the business environment is especially dynamic and turbulent, with rapid changes rendering outdated strategies obsolete. The hypercompetitive landscape in Nigeria and globally compels organisations to adopt strategic management practices that inform better planning, decision-making, and competitiveness, ultimately leading to improved profitability and wealth creation. The effectiveness with which an organisation implements its policies, programmes, and strategic objectives in line with its mission and vision is therefore of paramount importance. Despite the recognized importance of leadership implementation for business success, there is limited research examining this relationship within real estate firms, particularly in the South-South, Nigeria. This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the impact of leadership implementation on business success in this specific context.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between leadership implementation and business success in real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to:

i. Ascertain the relationship between leadership implementation and profitability in real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria.
ii. Determine the relationship between leadership implementation and market share in real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria
iii. Find out the relationship between leadership implementation and customer retention in real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria

iv. Ascertain the relationship between leadership implementation and customer satisfaction in real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria

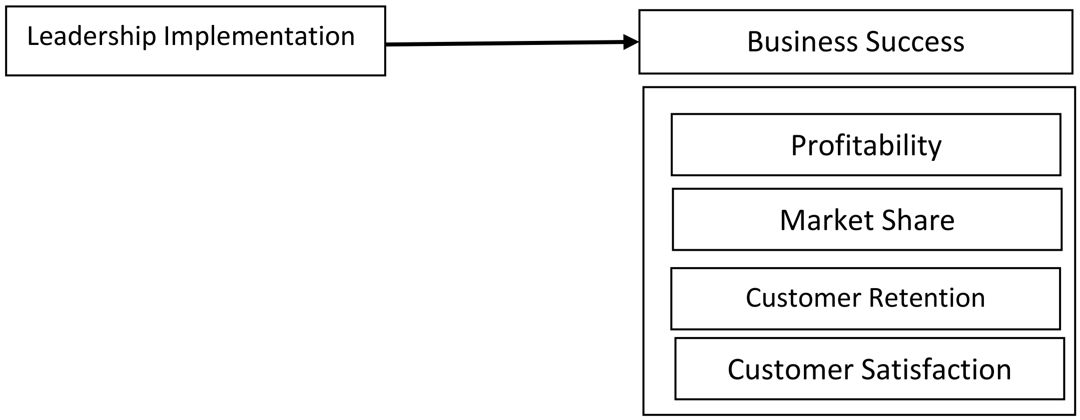

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for leadership implementation and business success
Source: Desk Research, 2026

The following research questions and Hypotheses guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between leadership implementation and profitability in real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between leadership implementation and market share in real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between leadership implementation and customer retention in real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria?
4. What is the relationship between leadership implementation and customer satisfaction in real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria?

Ho$_1$: There is no significant relationship between leadership implementation and profitability in real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Ho$_2$: There is no significant relationship between leadership implementation and market share in Real Estate Firms in South-South, Nigeria.

HO$_3$: There is no significant relationship between leadership implementation and customer retention in Real Estate Firms in South-South, Nigeria.

HO$_4$: There is no significant relationship between leadership implementation and customer satisfaction in Real Estate Firms in South-South, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Contingency Theory of Leadership

This study adopts the contingency theory of leadership as its theoretical foundation. Originally proposed by Fiedler in 1964, the contingency theory highlights the uncertainties and unpredictability inherent in business environments, thereby necessitating a flexible and dynamic approach to leadership (Elbanna & Fadol, 2016). According to Elbanna and Fadol (2016), the theory underscores the importance of leadership fluidity in both the development and implementation of strategies, ensuring that organisational plans and actions are responsive to the environment’s unique characteristics and evolving features. When leadership implementation is tailored to the specific nature and dynamics of an organisation's environment or market, it enables more synchronised behaviour allowing organisations to adapt effectively to emerging trends and changes (Candido & Santos, 2019; Helfat & Martin, 2015). This adaptability is crucial for organisational success in rapidly changing or uncertain contexts.

The contingency theory is particularly relevant for explaining and predicting the relationship between leadership implementation and business success. It recognizes that each business context is unique, shaped by distinct social and economic factors. As such, it emphasises the need for leadership to be adaptive and reflexive, addressing the specific demands of the environment (Candido & Santos, 2019; Elbanna & Fadol, 2016). Karari et al. (2017) further assert that organisations must be able to strategically align themselves with their environment and keep pace with market changes in order to succeed. By grounding this study in contingency theory, the research is enriched through its advocacy for a more integrated approach to leadership one that encourages collaboration with stakeholders and emphasises continuous adaptation to environmental conditions..

Conceptual Review

Leadership Implementation

Leadership implementation describes the extent of management's involvement and actions in strategy execution (Chowdhury, 2016; Hourani, 2017). It reflects the role of leaders in human resource planning, coordinating resources, and integrating organisational functions and operations. According to Crossan et al. (2022), leaders play a central role in communicating the organisation's vision and motivating employees to achieve organisational objectives. Similarly, Helfat and Martin (2015) highlight that leaders are responsible for charting the organisation's future direction, ensuring that internal processes and policies align with long-term goals, and driving the efficient and effective pursuit of strategic objectives.

In this sense, leadership serves as the pivot of strategy implementation, providing direction, coordination, and harmonisation across organisational units to advance strategic outcomes (Alvarez-Miranda & Watkins, 2021). Defining leadership remains a complex challenge, as its qualities and functions can be multifaceted. Abdullah and Faraj (2020) describe leadership as the ability to evaluate and anticipate long-term plans and policies, and to influence others to achieve those strategies. Asubiojo, Adewusi, and Oyediran (2005) define leadership as the art of influencing people to willingly and committedly pursue group goals. Dessler (2000) further emphasizes that leadership involves mobilizing all resources to achieve objectives in the most economical and profitable manner, while Kazim (2004) characterizes leadership as the focal point of organisational activities that drive goal attainment. Fundamentally, leadership is about influencing and directing efforts to accomplish goals as efficiently as possible.

During strategic implementation, leadership assumes a paramount role by guiding organisations through the complexities of executing strategic plans. Effective leadership inspires, influences, and mobilizes individuals towards a shared vision, fostering productivity, collaboration, and adaptability. A critical aspect of leadership in this context is the ability to articulate a compelling vision that resonates with stakeholders at all levels (Capon, 2016). By crafting a narrative that clearly outlines the desired future, leaders can generate enthusiasm and motivate teams to embrace strategic objectives. Furthermore, successful leadership during strategy implementation requires an astute understanding of the organisational context, including its capabilities, strengths, weaknesses, and external environment. Leaders must leverage this insight to formulate realistic and tailored strategies. Through informed decision-making, leaders allocate resources, prioritize initiatives, and navigate potential challenges, thereby steering the organisation effectively toward its goals.

Business Success

Business success refers to an organisation's ability to achieve both its social and economic goals (Hafat & Ali, 2022). Social success is reflected in the business's capacity to strengthen its presence and market position through positive relationships with various stakeholders, while economic success is achieved by delivering value and generating revenue or profit (Lynch, 2019; Amankwah-Amoah, 2016). Success in business is inherently multi-dimensional, encompassing the organisation's ability to compete by addressing market needs innovatively and sustaining its position within the industry. However, the criteria for defining success can vary significantly across industries and contexts (Karari et al., 2017). Traditionally, business success was measured primarily by economic returns and financial interests.

In contrast, contemporary perspectives shaped by evolving socio-political and socio-cultural values view business success as dependent not only on financial performance but also on sustainable practices and social responsibility (Barber et al., 2019).

Profitability

The concept of profitability pertains to an organisation's ability to generate financial returns and achieve economic benefits (Othman et al., 2015). In economic analysis, business performance is often measured using indicators such as output, sales, and profit. However, these absolute indicators alone are insufficient for assessing an enterprise's overall effectiveness. To provide a more comprehensive evaluation of efficiency, economic analysis also considers the profitability of various operational areas. Profitability, in its broadest sense, reflects the efficiency and returns generated by the organisation (Balabanov, 2007).

Market Share

Market share refers to the extent of control and presence the organisation has in its market. Organisations compete constantly for significance in their markets and through that, their recognition and share of the market (Bonomi & Ledur, 2012). Hafat and Ali (2022) noted that market share is an important criterion for assessing the success of the organisation. According to Gamble *et al* (2021), there is a significant relationship between the organisation's market share and its economic well-being. This is because the evidence or substantiality of the market share also determines the extent of recognition and customer engagement with the products and services of the organisation.

In this vein, market share can also be considered as reflecting or representing the organisation's position and extent of dominance within its market. Hafat and Ali (2022) affirmed that a strong market share is also a good sign for investors and business partners as it demonstrates the organisation's viability and potential for long-term revenue generation.

Customer Retention

Customer retention describes the organisations capacity to keep and ensure its customers continued patronage (Buttle, 2004). Crossby *et al*. (1990) defined customer retention as dependent or as an outcome of the workers experience of service or product and their appreciation of such. According to Buttle (2004) customer retention is the number of customers doing business with a firm at the end of a financial year expressed as a percentage of customers that were active at the beginning of the year (Gamble *et al*, 2021; Othman *et al*, 2015). Customer retention has been shown to be a primary goal in firms that practice relationship marketing. While the precise meaning and measurement of customer retention can vary between industries and firms there appears to be a general consensus that focusing on customer retention can yield several economic benefits (Buttle, 2004). As customer tenure lengthens, the volumes purchased grow and customer referrals increase.

Customer Satisfaction

The importance of customers has been highlighted by many researchers and academicians. Zairi (2000) said "Customers are the purpose of what we do and rather than them depending on us, we very much depend on them. The customer is not the source of a problem; we shouldn't perhaps make a wish that customers 'should go away' because our future and our security will be put in jeopardy". That is the main reason why organisations today are focusing on customer satisfaction. Many researchers have investigated the importance of customer satisfaction. Kotler (2000) defined satisfaction as a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations. Hoyer and MacInnis (2001) said that satisfaction can be associated with feelings of acceptance, happiness, relief, excitement, and delight. There are many factors that affect customer satisfaction.

Empirical Review

Karani (2022) conducted a study to examine the influence of strategic leadership techniques on the performance of the Tharaka Nithi County Government. Guided by resource-based theory and upper echelon theory, the study found that the county's top management had integrated strategic leadership practices into their operations. These practices included establishing a clear organisational vision and mission, fostering teamwork and collaboration, promoting ethical and moral leadership through a code of ethics, providing support to employees, and encouraging strategic thinking.

Ultimately, the study concluded that strategic leadership significantly enhances the county's performance. Similarly, Gimhani Nandasinghe (2020) reviewed both theoretical and empirical perspectives on leadership and organisational performance. The purpose of the review was to explore leadership qualities, skills, models, the importance of leadership, and its impact on organisational change and performance. The findings indicated that organisational success is closely linked to the quality of leadership, which influences both organisational behaviour and performance outcomes.

In another study, Mutole (2019) investigated the influence of strategic leadership practices on the performance of NGOs involved in environmental campaigns under the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) in Kenya. The research identified that factors such as shareholder accountability, delegation, and strategic direction significantly affected the operational performance of the NGOs studied. Anees Ullah (2013) carried out a case study on the impact of leadership on organisational performance at D&R Cambric Communication. The results demonstrated a strong relationship between leadership behaviours and organisational performance. Specifically, the CEO's interactions with employees were highlighted as a major contributor to the company's success, underscoring the importance of leadership as a key factor for growth in the service sector.

Overall, the literature consistently suggests that leadership implementation plays a crucial role in influencing business success. However, there is a noticeable gap in research specifically examining the relationship between leadership implementation and business success within real estate firms in the South-South region of Nigeria.

Methodology

The study utilized a quasi-experimental, cross-sectional, and correlational survey design targeting 220 real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria, as listed on the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers website. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) criteria, leading to a selection of 140 firms through simple random sampling. One owner from each selected firm, presumed to have comprehensive knowledge of strategy implementation and firm success, was chosen, resulting in 140 respondents. Data was collected via a structured questionnaire, with its internal consistency measured by the Cronbach Alpha method, yielding reliable indices above 0.70. Out of 140 distributed questionnaires, 131 were returned and analyzed. Research questions were addressed by evaluating correlation coefficients, categorizing values between 0.1–0.4 as low correlation, 0.5 as moderate, and 0.6–1.0 as high correlation. The hypotheses were tested at a significance level of 0.05, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation for inferential analysis to explore the relationships among the variables..

Table 1: **Cronbach's Alpha Values for Variables studied**

Dimensions/Measure	**No. of Items**	**Alpha Values**
Leadership implementation	5	.932
Business success		
Profitability	5	.932
Market Share	5	.943
Customer Retention	5	.945
Customer Satisfaction	5	.936

Source: Research Data, 2026

Data Analysis and Findings

Leadership Implementation and Business Success

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on Relationship between Leadership Implementation and Business Success in real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Correlations

		Leadership	Profitability	Marketshare	CusRet	CusSat
Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.682**	.660**	.655**	.614**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	131	131	131	131	131
Profitability	Pearson Correlation	.682**	1	.369**	.331**	.946**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	131	131	131	131	131
Marketshare	Pearson Correlation	.660**	.369**	1	.969**	.347**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000

	N	131	131	131	131	131
CusRet	Pearson Correlation	.655**	.331**	.969**	1	.317**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	131	131	131	131	131
CusSat	Pearson Correlation	.614**	.946**	.347**	.317**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	131	131	131	131	131

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2026

Table 2 shows the result of the test of correlation which provides answers to the research questions of the study, demonstrating through R coefficients, the extent and direction of the relationship between the variables. This is as the relationship between leadership implementation and profitability (R = .682), market share (R =. 660), customer retention (R = .655) and customer satisfaction (R = .614) are all revealed to be positive and high.

This suggests that the prevalence and increase in leadership implementation within the context of the real estate firms, would most likely contribute to increase in profitability, market share, customer retention and customer satisfaction. Thus, from the findings, the research questions are answered as follows:

i. The relationship between leadership implementation and profitability is positive and high, within the real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria
ii. The relationship between leadership implementation and market share is positive and high, within the real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria
iii. The relationship between leadership implementation and customer retention is positive and high, within the real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria
iv. The relationship between leadership implementation and customer satisfaction is positive and high, within the real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria

Table 2 illustrates the result on the test on the relationship between leadership implementation and the measures of business success. Results from the analysis show that leadership implementation significantly impacts on the outcomes of profitability (R= 0.682 and P=0.000), market share (R=0.660 and P=0.000), customer retention (R=0.655 and P=0.000) and customer satisfaction (R=0.614 and P=0.000). The evidence from the analysis thus demonstrates the significance of leadership implementation in predicting business success. Thus, related null hypothetical statements earlier postulated are rejected as the result show as follows:

H_1: There is a significant relationship between leadership implementation and profitability in Real Estate firms in South-South, Nigeria.

H_2: There is a significant relationship between leadership implementation and market share in Real Estate firms in South-South, Nigeria.

H_3: There is a significant relationship between leadership implementation and customer retention in Real Estate firms in South-South, Nigeria.

H_4: There is a significant relationship between leadership implementation and customer satisfaction in Real Estate firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Discussion of the Findings

The correlational analysis conducted in this study reveals a significant positive relationship between leadership implementation and business success. Specifically, effective communication, progress monitoring, employee motivation, inspiring trust, commitment, and providing support to employees are key components of leadership that drive successful strategy implementation and positively influence organizational outcomes. In this context, leadership implementation plays a crucial role in setting the direction for a workgroup, securing the group's commitment to that direction, and motivating members to achieve desired results. To explore this relationship further, the first four hypotheses of the study were formulated to test whether there is a significant link between leadership implementation and business success. Initially, it was hypothesized that no such relationship exists. These hypotheses were examined using the correlation coefficient technique, and the findings indicated a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables. These results align with previous research.

For instance, Karani (2022) found that strategic leadership techniques, such as establishing a clear vision and mission, promoting teamwork and collaboration, upholding ethical leadership, supporting employees, and encouraging strategic thinking, enhance performance within the Tharaka Nithi County Government.

Similarly, Nandasinghe (2020) concluded that organizational success is heavily dependent on the quality of leadership. Additionally, Mutole (2019) demonstrated that strategic leadership practices such as accountability, delegation, and setting strategic directions significantly influence the operational success of NGOs involved in environmental campaigns in Kenya. Anees (2013) also highlighted the importance of leadership behavior, finding that the CEO's interactions with employees were a major factor contributing to the success and growth of D&R Cambric Communication. Drawing from both the current study and supporting literature, it is evident that effective leadership implementation is essential for business success. The findings underscore the direct impact that strong leadership practices have on organizational performance..

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions of this study as it relates to real estate firms in South-South, Nigeria, this study recommends that firm leaders prioritize the implementation of effective leadership practices. Specifically, leaders should foster open communication, regularly monitor team progress, motivate and support employees, and build trust and commitment within their organizations. By adopting these leadership strategies, real estate firms can enhance profitability, increase market share, improve customer retention, and achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction. It is also recommended that ongoing leadership development programs be instituted to ensure that management skills remain aligned with best practices and evolving industry demands:

1. Managers of real estate firms should foster a culture of effective leadership that supports strategy implementation. This includes providing training and development opportunities to enhance employee skills and knowledge, recognizing and rewarding employees who demonstrate desired behaviours, and encouraging open communication and feedback.
2. Managers of real estate firms should develop effective leadership development programmes by identifying key leadership competencies required for a successful strategy implementation and providing opportunities for leaders to practise and apply new skills.

3. Managers of real estate firms should implement employee engagement initiatives by conducting regular employee engagement surveys to identify areas for improvement; develop and implement initiatives that address employee engagement, such as recognition programmes, training and development opportunities, and work-life balance initiatives; encourage open communication and feedback; and recognize and reward employees who demonstrate high levels of engagement.
4. Managers of real estate firms should enhance cross-functional collaboration by encouraging collaboration among different departments and functions, establish cross-functional teams to work on specific projects or initiatives, and provide training and development opportunities to improve collaboration and communication skills.
5. Managers of real estate firms should develop a performance-based reward system by establishing clear performance metrics and goals, develop a reward system that ties rewards to performance and provide regular feedback and coaching.

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