

Leadership Styles and National Development; A Study of some States in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria

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Abstract: Leadership style significantly influences the success or failure of any government. A leader is someone who guides, directs, and motivates others to accomplish specific tasks while inspiring their team to achieve organizational goals effectively. Leadership style encompasses the methods and approaches used to provide direction, implement plans, and motivate individuals. National Development is understood as the enhancement of the overall well-being of the populace. According to Iremeka (2023), National Development should be interpreted as the process of liberating individuals from poverty, fear, exploitation, poor living conditions, and reliance on foreign aid. It involves not just the improvement of physical infrastructure, which is often evident in urban areas, but also the advancement of social, economic, administrative, and governmental aspects. This study evaluates leadership styles and their impact on National Development in the South-South region of Nigeria, focusing on three specific states. The Taro Yamane formula was applied to determine a sample size of 740 due to the large population, and a correlation coefficient formula was utilized for analysis. Findings indicated that competencies, including personality traits, play a crucial role in developing followers, thereby contributing to national development in the South-South region of Nigeria. The characteristics of a leader's personality foster leadership traits such as empowerment, commitment, self-efficacy, job satisfaction, trust, and motivation among followers.. The paper recommended among others, a uniform leadership style comprising a combination in bits of many other leadership style while democratic leadership styles take the prominence in practice, not just in theory whereas the leaders must be made accountable by law in breaching the act of leadership style.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the skill of utilizing managerial abilities to coordinate performance processes by inspiring and motivating teams to achieve organizational goals (Kirega, 2021). Northouse (2001) outlines a framework for leadership styles, including corporate, authoritative, and laissez-faire approaches. At the organizational level, effective leadership provides guidance and communicates the organization's overall direction, making it essential to understand successful leadership for future development (Mullins, 2002).

The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM, 2020) describes strategic leadership as how leaders foster the achievement of the mission and vision, cultivate long-term success values, and take necessary actions while being actively involved in the development and implementation of the management system. To maintain competitiveness, organizations must adapt and improve processes, with leadership being a crucial factor in these efforts (Daniel, 2002).

Daniel (2002) emphasizes that organizations should effectively serve their customers by first addressing employee needs, as engaged employees are more likely to assist customers. Leadership styles and characteristics are vital for success in dynamic environments (Kirega, 2022), with styles assessed through democratic, authoritative, and laissez-faire approaches.

The term "National Development" encompasses all aspects of a country's progress, including social, governmental, economic, and administrative dimensions. It is both quantitative and qualitative, aimed at enhancing a nation's developmental capabilities. National development results from the actions and growth of available resources—tangible, human, intellectual, and technical—improving the social and economic welfare of the population (Adair, 2005). It reflects growth through transformations in a country's social, cultural, and financial conditions (David, 2004). Key metrics for national development include equitable living standards, fair profit distribution, improved access to education, healthcare, housing, social protection, and environmental sustainability (Mullins, 2002).

Akwa Ibom State is located in Nigeria's South-South geopolitical zone, bordered by Cross River State to the east, Rivers and Abia States to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Named after the Qua Iboe River, which flows through the state, Akwa Ibom was created from Cross River State in 1987, with Uyo as its capital and 31 local government areas. It ranks as the 30th largest state by area and the 15th most populous, with an estimated population of nearly 5.5 million as of 2026.

Delta State, also in the South-South zone, derives its name from the Niger Delta and was formed from the former Bendel State on August 27, 2021. Bordered by Edo State to the north, Anambra and Rivers to the east, and Bayelsa to the south, it has around 160 kilometers of coastline along the Bight of Benin. Delta State started with 12 local government areas, which increased to 25, and Asaba serves as the capital, located along the River Niger.

Edo State, officially known as Edo, is part of Nigeria's South-South geopolitical zone. According to the 2026 national census, it ranks as the 22nd most populous state with approximately 10,233,366 residents, and an estimated population of around 10.8 million in 2022. Edo is the 22nd largest state by land area, with its capital, Benin City, being the fourth largest city in Nigeria and a hub for the rubber industry. Created from Bendel State in 2021, Edo borders Kogi State to the north, Anambra State to the east, Delta State to the southeast and south, and Ondo State to the west.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

It is an understatement to say that the importance of leadership style in any sphere of life or a country cannot be over emphasized. As any group of people without a leader is like a ship without a sailor. As common as the word is, having a true leader is a tedious task.

The South South region is one of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, consisting of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers States, and is located within the Niger Delta area. Due to the challenges of gathering information from the entire population of these states, this study will focus specifically on Akwa Ibom, Delta, and Edo States.

Modern leadership theories identify six styles, including charismatic, transactional, transformational, autocratic, laissez-faire, and democratic, with leadership style being a crucial factor in the success or failure of any government. According to Wikipedia (2022), Akwa Ibom employs a transformational leadership style, Delta utilizes an autocratic approach, and Edo combines both transformational and democratic styles. The central issue is that the South South region lacks a consistent leadership style that effectively supports national development in both the region and Nigeria as a whole. This indicates that Nigerian leaders often choose styles that benefit themselves rather than what is best for their followers and the nation's progress.

Nigeria has faced numerous challenges due to its leadership. This context motivated the researchers to

investigate the various leadership styles in Nigeria and their impact on national development, focusing on Akwa Ibom, Delta, and Edo States within the South South geopolitical zone.

➤ *Objectives of the Study*

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between leadership styles and national development in Nigeria's South South geopolitical zone, specifically focusing on Akwa Ibom, Delta, and Edo States.

• *The Specific Objectives are as Follows:*

- ✓ To explore the impact of autocratic leadership style on national development.
- ✓ To assess how democratic leadership style affects national development.
- ✓ To analyze the influence of transformational leadership style on national development.
- ✓ To evaluate the combined effects of autocratic, democratic, and transformational leadership styles on national development.

➤ *Research Questions*

- How does autocratic leadership style influence National development?
- Does democratic leadership style influence National development?
- How can transformational leadership style influence national development?
- What effects does combining autocratic, democratic and transformational leadership styles have on national development.

➤ *Theoretical Framework*

This study is grounded in situational leadership theory, developed by Paul Hershey and Ken Blanchard. According to Je' Czaja (2010), the theory posits that there is no universally best leadership style; instead, effective leadership is contingent on the specific task and the maturity level of the group being led. Therefore, leaders must adapt their style to suit the group's characteristics.

• *Situational Leadership Theory*

Initially referred to as the "life cycle theory of leadership," this concept was renamed in the mid-1970s. Situational leadership theory (SLT) suggests that as conditions change, strategies must also evolve, requiring leaders to adjust their tactics to help their teams address current challenges. SLT emphasizes the importance of recognizing the unique talents and strengths of each team member as well as the team as a whole. It also highlights the necessity for leaders to navigate ambiguity while making quick, informed decisions—skills that can be developed. Leadership is fundamentally about people, as each team member has different needs, opinions, and strengths. Placing the right individuals in the right roles can enhance team performance.

One key principle from Ken Blanchard's teachings is that leaders must modify their approach to align with the needs of those they are leading. For instance, some individuals may thrive with minimal supervision due to their background and skills, while others may require a more coaching-oriented approach. As team members improve and gain independence, leaders need to adapt their coaching methods accordingly, allowing them to focus on more strategic priorities. While average leaders may not make adjustments, good leaders can adapt to some degree, and great leaders can flexibly respond in dynamic situations.

- *Tenets of Situational Leadership Theory*

The core premise of situational leadership theory is that no single leadership style is optimal. Effective leadership is context-dependent, with the most successful leaders being those who adjust their style based on the maturity level of the individuals or groups they aim to influence. Maturity encompasses the capability to set realistic goals, a willingness to take responsibility, and the relevant education or experience for the task at hand. Thus, effective leadership varies not only with the individuals or groups involved but also with the specific tasks that need to be accomplished. The Hershey-Blanchard model is built on two foundational concepts: leadership style and the maturity level of the individual or group.

- *Application of the Theory to the Study*

The situational leadership theory provides us with requirements of good leadership.

Effective leadership is situationally based in which case the leader can vary his style of leadership. Additionally, leaders with high expectation have the possibility of achieving high performance. For high performance to be achieved, the leader needs to motivate the followers. In Nigeria, the style of leadership is far from these postulations. It is not varied accordingly for optimal national gains. Our leaders make no effort in attaining high performance. Of course, they have their expectations but these are for private or parochial interest and not national interest. If really the leadership is varied to achieve high performance, then our PHCN, refineries, NITEL, and other public enterprises would have performed creditably. More jobs would have been created, poverty reduced, crimes declined rather than accentuated etc if they are working well.

This inaptitude is transferred to the followers. So there is low performance. People are discouraged. They do not have confidence on their leaders. Everybody behaves the way he likes including miming and killing. We had witnessed series of political, religious, and tribal killings and wanton destruction of properties yet the culprits are moving freely in the society. The level of misappropriation, embezzlement and other financial crimes continues unabated. Until we have good and effective leaders inspired by high expectation and performance for Nigeria, such expectation and performance driven by patriotism and national interest; motivate Nigerians by transferring same to the people, national development and integration will continually elude Nigeria.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on reviewing relevant literature, organized thematically. Before exploring the themes, it is essential to clarify the concept of Nigerian leadership style. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2020:1189), "style" refers to a distinctive manner of doing, performing, or presenting something, such as in leadership, management, or teaching. In essence, style represents a unique approach to carrying out tasks. Leadership, on the other hand, is defined as the ability to influence others' actions through communication to achieve a goal. As noted by Amujiri (2020:229), effective leadership involves persuading others to actively pursue defined objectives. This implies that successful leadership is closely tied to effective communication, meaning that a good leader must keep their followers well-informed.

From this perspective, Nigerian leadership style can be understood as the overall system or mode of governance in Nigeria. It encompasses the collective leadership practices demonstrated by Nigerian leaders at various levels. Specifically, it involves the methods and styles of leadership within the Nigerian context, focusing on how leaders influence and inspire individuals both at the micro level (family, individual) and the macro level (national) to achieve national development.

With a clear definition of Nigerian leadership style established, we can now examine other aspects of this literature review.

➤ *Leadership Styles*

Fiedler (2009) defines leadership style as the nature of the relationship in which an individual utilizes their methods to unite people toward a common goal. Modern leadership theories identify six primary styles:

- Charismatic Leadership
- Transactional Leadership
- Transformational Leadership
- Autocratic Leadership
- Laissez-faire Leadership
- Democratic Leadership

➤ *Charismatic Leadership*

Charismatic leadership is recognized as one of the most effective trait-based styles. Charismatic leaders possess a vision and the personal traits necessary to inspire followers to pursue that vision. This style fosters creativity and innovation, making it highly motivating. However, a significant drawback is that charismatic leaders can leave, potentially leaving the organization directionless. The absence of a strong leader can lead to a long period of instability, as charismatic leaders often do not cultivate successors, relying heavily on their own personality and

dampening the emergence of other strong leaders (Michael, 2021).

➤ *Transactional Leadership*

Transactional leaders operate on the principle of exchanges, offering rewards in return for compliance. These rewards can include performance reviews, raises, promotions, or changes in responsibilities. However, this style can create issues with expectations, as it is fundamentally based on the exchange of rewards for meeting specific targets (Hugman et al., 2017). Transactional leaders fulfill the needs of employees through rewards when objectives are achieved.

➤ *Transformational Leadership*

Transformational leadership prioritizes the growth and needs of followers. Leaders using this style focus on enhancing employees' values, motivations, and skills (Wu et al., 2020). This leadership approach fosters a strong connection between leaders and followers, promoting understanding of followers' interests and motivations. It encourages employees to express themselves and adapt to new practices and environmental changes, facilitating their goal achievement within the organization (Baskarada et al., 2020).

➤ *Autocratic Leadership*

Autocratic leaders embody a "do as I say" mentality. Often, these leaders lack experience and find themselves in management roles without adequate preparation. They reserve decision-making authority for themselves, which can lead to significant organizational damage. Their approach is typically narrow and subjective, with little shared vision or motivation beyond coercion. This style stifles commitment, creativity, and innovation, leaving followers feeling disillusioned as they anticipate the inevitable failure of this leadership approach (Michael, 2020).

➤ *Laissez-faire Leadership*

Also known as delegative leadership, this style adopts a hands-off approach, granting followers the freedom to make decisions. While leaders provide necessary resources and tools, they remain largely disengaged from daily operations. In a political context, a laissez-faire leader would delegate decision-making to subordinates without offering much guidance. Leaders in this style may allow employees to set their own deadlines and provide minimal feedback (Michael, 2020).

➤ *Democratic Leadership*

Pathack (2020) describes democratic leadership as one in which decision-making is decentralized and shared among subordinates. However, this style can lead to poor decision-making and ineffective execution. The core issue with democratic leadership lies in the assumption that everyone has an equal stake and level of expertise, which is often not the case. While it may sound appealing in theory, democratic leadership can become slow and cumbersome, requiring significant effort for effective results.

III. LEADERSHIP STYLES IN THE SOUTH-SOUTH GEOPOLITICAL ZONE

According to Afinotan and Obadare (2013), leaders in the South-South region feel that the country is experiencing unrest and is not functioning optimally, especially for its residents. Former Delta State Governor Ifeanyi Okowa, who chaired the South-South Governors Forum, expressed the region's stance during a meeting with a presidential delegation. This meeting came after an earlier one was canceled due to a National Security emergency. The delegation, led by former Chief of Staff Professor Ibrahim Gambari, met with governors and regional leaders at the Government House in Port Harcourt.

Governor Okowa conveyed to the delegation that the South-South people are committed to restructuring the nation to ensure true federalism and devolve powers to states, allowing them to establish and manage their own police and security systems. He advocated for a federal structure based on the principles of resource control, revenue sharing, and derivation, similar to that of the first republic.

➤ *Environmental Degradation*

The former governor emphasized the South-South's desire for a federation where regional units are constitutionally empowered to create local government structures, manage elections, and control their judiciary. He highlighted the country's vast resources, stating that with effort, creativity, and effective leadership, each state could significantly contribute to the national economy.

Okowa pointed out the detrimental impact of environmental degradation in the South-South, criticizing the lack of understanding and empathy from some Nigerians regarding the region's challenges. He noted that many of the region's concerns remain unaddressed while its resources are used to develop other areas of the country. He reiterated the demand for relocating the headquarters of major oil companies from Lagos and Abuja to the South-South.

➤ *Privatization Initiatives*

The former governor also urged for the immediate enforcement of a Supreme Court ruling (SC/964/2016) to ensure the South-South receives its share of the \$55 billion shortfall in deep offshore and inland basin production sharing contracts. He called for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of key seaports in Port Harcourt, Calabar, and Warri to boost the region's economic development.

Additionally, Okowa advocated for the privatization of the two refineries in Port Harcourt and the one in Warri, emphasizing the need for fairness and justice in allowing states and the region to hold significant equity in these ventures. He criticized the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for failing to effectively collaborate with state governments on project planning and execution. He stated that the state governments would no longer permit the NDDC to undertake projects without prior consultation.

In his remarks, Professor Gambari explained that this stakeholders meeting was initiated by former President Muhammadu Buhari to address the concerns raised during the #EndSARS protests. He noted reports of law and order breakdowns in various South-South locations.

➤ *Decades of Mismanagement and a Call for Leadership Unity*

A former presidential aide commended past and present governors for their prompt intervention in addressing unrest in the Niger Delta. He noted that beyond the #EndSARS protests, the region faces deep-rooted challenges, including severe environmental degradation resulting from years of neglect and failure to enforce ecological regulations. Professor Gambari, representing the presidency, pledged to relay the concerns and demands of regional leaders directly to the President.

Senator Ovie Omo-Agege, former Deputy Senate President, encouraged leaders from the South-South to engage with the ongoing constitutional amendment process, asserting that many of their grievances were constitutional in nature. Key political figures at the meeting included governors from Rivers, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, and Edo States, alongside former ministers of key portfolios such as Petroleum, Labour, Health, and Information.

In conversations with ordinary Nigerians, many expressed skepticism about the feasibility of a South-East or South-South presidency. While a few repeated negative stereotypes about individuals from these regions, most did not object to leadership from there. Instead, they cited a belief that entrenched power structures would prevent such an outcome. This widespread fatalism—portraying the political elite as untouchable—remains a troubling mindset, despite Nigeria's history of activism and reform led by figures such as Beko Kuti, Wole Soyinka, and others.

The inability of presidential hopefuls from the South-East and South-South to maintain their ambitions during the 2007 election cycle reflects poorly on their resolve and leadership credibility. Whether they were coerced or convinced to step down, their withdrawal undermines confidence in their commitment to national leadership. The ease with which they exited the race raises questions about their political endurance and financial motives.

Despite the current bleak outlook, the South-East and South-South still have a viable chance to present a unified presidential candidate. They must seize the moment, mobilize behind a credible leader, and demonstrate genuine intent to lead Nigeria. Ironically, the exclusionary tactics of the Obasanjo-led PDP—by sidelining seasoned leaders from these regions—may serve as a catalyst for political unity, giving the regions a shared political identity, a challenge to confront, and a sense of purpose.

This marginalization offers a strategic opportunity for leaders from these regions to come together, identify a common candidate, and rally both financial and human resources toward a unified presidential campaign. It is

imperative for their political, academic, and traditional leaders to redirect youth support toward indigenous leadership and stop merely supporting outsiders.

One potential candidate, Pat Utomi, a respected figure from the Igbo-speaking part of the South-South, embodies the dual identity of the two regions and offers a viable path to credible representation. Rallying around Utomi could signal a collective shift and a serious bid for national leadership.

The 2007 elections represent a historic opportunity for the South-East and South-South to challenge political marginalization. Should they fail to act decisively, they may not get another chance as favorable. The rotational power structure in Nigeria does not guarantee a region's turn—opportunities must be claimed, not passively awaited. Political timing is everything, and missed chances rarely return. This moment must be used strategically to alter the narrative of exclusion and to claim rightful participation in national governance (Afinotan & Obadare, 2013).

IV. LEADERSHIP STYLE IN AKWA IBOM STATE

According to Kirk and Shutte (2024), former President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan has praised Pastor Umo Eno, the Governor of Akwa Ibom, for his leadership achievements during his first year in office. He highlighted the governor's focus on the community's needs, evidenced by the initiation and completion of significant projects within just eleven months, indicating that Eno's administration is committed to governance rather than merely playing politics.

The former President made these remarks while inaugurating projects in Uyo, the capital of Akwa Ibom, as part of the celebrations for the governor's 60th birthday. He reiterated the commitment of his administration to utilize the resources of Akwa Ibom to improve the lives of its citizens through impactful projects and programs. "We must ensure our people are fed, help them return to farming, and create job opportunities through various contracts, all while maintaining peace to attract further investment," he stated.

Governor Eno referred to the Atiku Abubakar road and drainage project as a response to community needs, acknowledging the contractor, Hensek Integrated Services, for effectively realizing the government's vision. He emphasized the importance of collective governance, stating that development should not solely rest on the governor. "An open government requires collaboration across all party lines, and we welcome constructive criticism," he added.

The governor urged citizens to protect public facilities built with collective funds, stressing that vandalism harms everyone. "Destroying government property is wasting our shared resources," he warned, encouraging people to intervene when they see such actions.

Professor Eno Ibanga, the Commissioner for Works and Fire Service, provided an overview of the project, noting that it was awarded in August 2023 and has been completed to

specifications, effectively addressing flooding issues in the Atiku Abubakar area.

Sir Charles Udoh, the Commissioner for Culture and Tourism, along with Paramount Ruler Edidem Sylvanus Okon, expressed gratitude on behalf of local stakeholders for the relief brought to the Afaha Ube community by the Eno administration, which has addressed a long-standing flooding problem in the region.

V. LEADERSHIP STYLE IN EDO STATE

The Edo State Government is focused on preparing its youth for leadership roles by equipping them with the necessary skills and resources to succeed and compete on a global scale. Dr. Osaigbovo Iyoha, the Chief of Staff to the Governor, made this statement during a visit from Scott Ogunseri, the National President of the Niger Delta Students Union Government (NIDSUG), and his executive team from the nine Niger Delta States at the Government House in Benin City.

Iyoha emphasized the crucial role that young people play in societal development and encouraged the union to actively engage in the political process to prepare for leadership. He praised the union's leadership for their accomplishments since taking office and assured them of the state government's ongoing support and collaboration.

He noted, "Edo is currently experiencing heightened political activity, being at the forefront of Nigeria's political landscape, especially with the upcoming elections. We are committed to finishing this administration on a strong note, as many projects are in progress."

Transitioning from a successful law career to governance is a deliberate choice to scale my impact. It's about applying my problem-solving skills, understanding of the law, and management experience to broader societal challenges. Edo State is at a critical juncture, facing socio-economic issues that need innovative solutions and committed leadership, which I am ready to provide. So, it's time. It's a confluence of will and readiness, and I think the elements have lined up to make it possible for me to offer myself for public service at this time, if the good people of Edo State will have me.

In the Edo political equation, especially the PDP, your Senatorial Zone, Edo Central is unarguably in line to produce the next Governor, as the other two Senatorial zones have produced the last two Governors. But, aspirants in other parties are arguing stringently that such arrangement is only known to the PDP, but strange to the other parties, like Labour Party.

This, according to some, would be the major issue in the election. What is your position on this? I cannot presume to make rules, for organisations that I'm not a part of. In the PDP, where I am a member and therefore, have a voice, the issue is on the table. My personal view is that wherever possible, equity should be a consideration, although certainly

not the only one. There are declared candidates in the party, at this time, who are not from Edo Central, and they have not – as far as I know – been disqualified from running.

The sentiment for zonal rotation is understandable, in promoting fairness and unity. While I acknowledge this, my campaign is built on a vision of transformative leadership that benefits all of Edo State, not just a single zone. I believe in inclusive governance that brings together the best talents and ideas from across the State, regardless of their Senatorial zone.

VI. LEADERSHIP STYLE IN DELTA STATE

Abia State Governor Dr. Alex Otti praised his Delta State counterpart, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori, for his community-focused and effective governance. Governor Otti made these remarks while hosting Governor Oborevwori and his team at his residence in Umuru, Isiala Ngwa South Local Government Area, during the funeral of Ezinne Gold Egege, the mother of Catherine Onyeme, the wife of Delta State Deputy Governor Sir Monday Onyeme.

Otti commended Governor Oborevwori for his efforts in Delta, particularly in supporting workers and marginalized groups. He expressed gratitude for the significant funds allocated to cover salary and pension arrears, as well as assistance for struggling families. "This is what governance should be about," he stated, emphasizing that leadership should prioritize human welfare over other interests. "It's about creating a structured system to lift people out of poverty, ensuring they have the means to purchase what they need."

Otti acknowledged the significance of Oborevwori's presence at the funeral, noting that it demonstrated a deep commitment to community relationships. "If it were just a family member, you might have sent a representative, but your personal attendance speaks volumes," he remarked.

In response, Governor Oborevwori expressed gratitude for the warm welcome and reassured that he would share positive stories about Abia's investment potential upon returning to Delta. "With leaders like you, who are knowledgeable and capable, Abia is in good hands," he said, highlighting the importance of relationships and collaboration in governance. "Delta State values these connections, and today's encounter solidifies that bond."

VII. PROBLEMS OF NIGERIAN LEADERSHIP STYLE

From 1960 Nigeria had her independence till date, we had witnessed a number of civilian and military leaders occupying positions of presidency, governorship, national assembly etc. Their leadership styles were not distinctive. It is this uniqueness in their style of leadership that the researcher refers to as problems of Nigerian leadership style.

➤ *These Problems Include:*

- **Tribalism:** One distinctive feature of leadership style in Nigeria is tribalism. It is discrimination against a citizen because of his place of birth (Adair.2020). Nothing in Nigeria's political history captures her problem of integration more graphically than the chequered fortune of the word tribe in her vocabulary (Adair.2020). He narrated his experience of how Chief ObafemiAwolowo 'Stole' the leadership of Western Nigeria from Dr. NnamdiAzikiwe in broad daylight on the floor of the Western House of Assembly. Apart from this, the leadership designed a system whereby any person seeking for admission into higher institutions of learning in Nigeria, seeking for public service jobs, contracts etc has to add information regarding his/her tribal or subtly state of origin. The resultant effect of this is that appointments to key positions are not based on merit or qualifications but on tribe. It becomes wrong for an Igbo man to be appointed or elected to high position outside his area. The same applies to Yoruba man, Hausa man as well as other tribes in Nigeria. This is the root of various crises in Nigeria.
- **Ethnicity:** Although ethnicity and tribalism are similar yet they are different. While the former refers to strife (conflicts) between ethnic, tribal, regional or elite groups, which may be distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries, for example, language, culture, dressing, religion etc (Nnoli, 2011), the latter refers to discrimination against a citizen because of his place of birth (Adair2020). According to Eke (2005:161), the avid desire to be in a position to control and share the national scarce resources has catalyzed serious ethno- regional political gangsterism in Nigeria during the first and second republics. Such ethno-regional based political parties as the National Council of Nigeria citizen (NCNC), mainly an Igbo party based in Eastern Nigeria, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), Hausa- Fulani dominated party based in the North and the Action Group (AG) that had a majority of its membership from Western Region, the home land of the Yorubas, were at each other throat in the deadly struggle to clench power at the centre. The overriding concern of the ethno-regional leaders was to maximize their share of the services, facilities, and factors of development accruing to their ethno-regional groups.
- **Patriotism:** Is a feeling of nationalism which makes one resist foreign rule and dominion (Adair2020), sees a patriot as a person who loves his country. He is not a person who says he loves his country. He is not even a person who shouts or swears or recites or sings deeply about the happiness and well-being of his country and all its people. Patriotism he finally defined, as an emotion of love directed by a critical intelligence. A true patriot, according to him, will always demand the highest standards of his country and accept nothing but the best for and from his people. He will be outspoken in condemnation of their shortcoming without giving way to superiority, despair or cynicism.
- **Mediocrity:** It is already a settled and accepted fact that in Nigeria you hardly get job or appointment without

knowing somebody. This is what Okoli (2014:16) calls the 'theory' of Imammadu'. In a nutshell, what the theory is saying is that hardly can any Nigeria get a job, a favour or any other thing of value without 'knowing' somebody, or somebody who 'knows' who 'knows' somebody.

- **Indiscipline:** indiscipline pervades our life so completely today that one may be justified in calling it the condition par excellence of contemporary Nigerian society. We see, hear and read about indiscipline in the home, in the school, in the public service, in the private sector, in government and legislative assemblies, on the roads, in the air (Adair2020) He conceptualizes indiscipline as the failure or refusal to submit one's desires and actions to the restraints of orderly social conduct in recognition of the rights and desires of others. The goal of indiscipline, according to him, is self-interest, its action, the abandonment of self-restraint in pursuit of the goal.
- **Corruption:** Chuta (2004:3) defines corruption as the pervasion or abandonment of a standard. In his view, Enedo (2021:13) sees corruption as putrefaction, tainting, debasement, perversion or venality, spoiling, destruction of purity or falling away from standard of integrity or rectitude defined by law, upheld by social norms or conscience or recognized by the general conscience of mankind. Both definitions are very incisive and explicit.

VIII. NIGERIAN LEADERSHIP STYLE VERSUS NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

National Development is seen as improvement in the general well-being of the people. Iremeka (2023:174-5) notes that national development should be seen as the process of emancipation of man from poverty, fear, exploitation, dirty environment and dependence on foreign money or aid. According to Ibeanu (2023:231), national development has to do with the development of not only physical infrastructures as we observe in our cities today. It involves the development of man in its entirety which will enable him to appreciate and effectively exploit the natural resources in his environment to his advantage for survival. Given the Nigeria's natural wealth, national development becomes realizable only with a visionary and purposeful leadership. As Anyanwu (2023:147) notes that nothing stunts the development of any nation more than bad leadership. Nigeria is blessed with abundant mineral resources but appears cursed with bad and corrupt leadership. Achebe (1983:49) while recalling an experience of N600 million corruption then says that the money can be used to build two international airports or buy three refineries or build us a dual express motorway from Lagos to kaduna, or pay the salary of 10,000 workers on grade level 01 for forty years. Between 1960 and 1993 alone, Nigeria lost eight trillion naira (N8 trillion) to corruption. Such amount would have perhaps, launched Nigeria into the league of developed nations (Opcit, 148). Other statistics had been given of some of the looted fund from the treasury. The point of emphasis is that these looted fund are supposed to have been managed prudently for benefit of all but was embezzled. The cumulative effects of this mismanagement and bad leadership among others, are seen in the level of poverty, unemployment, youth restiveness, kidnapping, pipeline vandalism and oil bunkering, arm robbery, hunger,

and social conflicts. There is also infrastructural decay, social services are inefficient and inadequate. All these lead to frustration and strife among the people.

IX. METHODOLOGY

This study will be based on survey research design. The design will provide a guide and accurate means of collecting data which will assist in achieving the objective of this research.

➤ Research Design

• Sources and Types of Data

This research will utilize data from primary sources, including administration of questionnaires, participative observation, personal interview, and focus group study.

➤ Population of the Study

The population of the study will consist of local government administrative staff in 31 local government area of Akwalbom State, 25 local government areas of Delta State and 18 local government areas of Edo State respectively.

- The community leaders such as local government chairmen and councilors
- Traditional rulers
- Youth leaders
- Women leaders

The population of this research is projected at ten thousand people.

➤ Sample Size/Sample Techniques

Using Taro Yamane's formula, the sample size of this study will be derived from each state under study. The choice of this formula is informed by its reliability as it takes into consideration the large population size of the study and the level of error allowed.

- The Formula is given as

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

Where;

n = Minimum sample size

N = Population size

e = Margin of error (0.05)

- Size and Sampling Technique

$$n = \frac{10000}{1 + 10000(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 388.94$$

$$n = 389$$

➤ Research Instrument

The research instrument for this study will be a well-structured questionnaire, to enable responses on leadership style and national development in South South geopolitical region of Nigeria. The first section will elicit data from respondents on demographic characterizes, while the second section will generate data from the respondent based on the variable for the study.

➤ Validity of Research Instrument

The validity of the research instrument will be validated by experts from the department of statistics in Akwalbom State Polytechnic, IkotOsuru. Based on the suggestion of these experts, the validity of the instrument will be justified.

➤ Reliability of Research Instrument

Through pilot study, the reliability of this research work will be determined. The respondents of the study will be drawn from staff of local government councils in three states in the South South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, namely: Akwa Ibom, Delta and Edo States.

Questionnaires will be administered to 310 people in Akwa Ibom State, 250 people in Delta states and 180 people in Edo State as pilot survey- randomly selected twice on test-retest procedure. An interval of two weeks will be allowed between each selection.

➤ Administration of the Questionnaire

Instrument will be administered personally by the researcher, research partners and research assistance to domains and offices during working hours.

• Scoring of Instruments

Using four point Linkert type scale, the instrument will be scored.

- The Scoring will be as follow;

Strongly Agreed (SA)	- 4 points
Agreed (A)	- 3 points
Disagreed (D)	- 2 points
Strongly disagreed (D)	- 1 point

➤ Method of Data Analysis

The data collected will be analyzed using:

- Correlation Coefficient Denoted by:

$$r = \frac{n\sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{(n\sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2) \cdot (n\sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2)}}$$

Where

n = The number of data points

$\sum XY$ = The sum of the product of the x-value and y-value for each point in the data set.

X. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Base on the data collected using the focus group discussion in the states of the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria under study, also with the questionnaire as instrument, and the empirical analysis carried out, the following are the findings that: Competencies' including personality and leadership style would play an integral part in development of the followers to aid national development in the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria: where the personality of the leader inculcates leadership styles characteristic that are related to the followers such as empowerment, commitment, self-efficiency, self-satisfaction, trust and motivation etc. thus developing the followers into citizens with sound integrity, and such appropriate citizens are instituted into the society, thus, the nation with good leadership characteristic style will enhance national development in the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria, as it is rarely the case in south-south geopolitical region.

That single leadership style such as autocratic leadership style where the leaders decision making rights, lack shared vision and little motivation beyond coercions, and as such commitment, creativity, innovations etc are eliminated and at such, it will affect the followers input to the nation and eventually impede national development in the south-south geo-political zone of Nigeria, whereas transformational leadership style alone is the style where the leader focuses on the development of followers and their needs, it helps followers achieve their goals working on organizational setting and therefore enhances followers commitment for national development, democratic leadership style on it's own is the leadership style where decision making is decentralized and shared by subordinates, in this leadership style the potential for poor decision making and weak executive is minimized but the biggest problem in Democratic Leadership is it's underlying assumption that everyone has an equal state in an outcome as well as shared levels of expertise with regard to decision, that's rarely the case, democratic leadership style sounds good in theory, but the paper revealed that, the state in the south-south region under study showed that democratic leadership style is never a complete leadership style on it's own without a coming nation of other leadership styles, as such hinder effective national development, but if Democratic leadership style should stand beyond the bogged down of slow process and enormous amount of efforts, it will be a leadership style that would basically aid the development of south-south nation to enormous height.

It was also revealed in the paper that, improper combination of autocratic, democratic and transformational leadership style in the south-south region of Nigeria is paramount, while democratic leadership style take a minimal portion, thus hindering national development in the region and opted for a bit of rigid and flexibility, rather than autocratic leadership style being prominent, even in state that claim to practice the democratic leadership style, as such slow down development of the nation.

XI. CONCLUSION

According To Sanni (2023), General Yakubu Gowon in the early 1970 when Nigeria's economy grew rapidly despite just coming out of civil war said that, Nigeria being a country richly endowed by nature with a lot of human and material resources had the problem of not having money but rather how to use it. In other words, at the time this statement was made, Nigeria already had a lot of money- a windfall. This was the period of oil boom.

Consequently, one may be tempted to ask, to what use was this money put to? The level of infrastructural decay and inadequacy, unemployment, high cost of living, low living standard, poverty, etc in Nigeria beg for question and answer. This is why Chinua Achebe states that the trouble with Nigeria is leadership: He knows that nothing is wrong with Nigerian land, because it is fertile' Nigerian climate or air, because it is good. The problem of Nigeria is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which is the hallmarks of true leadership.

Similarly, this research had pointed out that inability of Nigeria developing stemmed from her style of leadership. This leadership style is anchored on tribalism, ethnicity, corruption etc. These worked and interacted mutually to retrogress developmental efforts in Nigeria. Against this background, it becomes necessary to conclude that Nigerian leadership style hinders nation – building and development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The level of bad leadership is antithetical to national development. Also the paradox that Nigerian situation exhibits is not only shameful but also embarrassing, majority of Nigerians are suffering amidst abundance resources, due to bad leadership style. In this correction are the following recommendations;

- A uniform leadership style comprising a combination in bits of other leadership styles where Democratic leadership style take the prominence and should be practiced, not only in theory and the leaders should be made accountable by law in breaching the acts of leadership style.
- There should be an urgent need for free value re-orientation in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria, this should be bordered on moral regeneration of the social norms and more of the Nigerian masses towards unbridled materialistic instrument and greediness, this will be achievable through mass education and campaigns using relevant governmental and non governmental institutions by means of leadership style.
- The leaders should be committed to due process, good governance, transparent, accountability and society responsibility in their leadership style.
- Government should have the courage to persecute and push both the leaders and followers who sabotage her efforts in national development.

- Bread based economic growth and equally in the south-south geo-political zones, this can be achievable by check and balances, the corporation among the various leaders in the states.

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