

Establishing Ministerial Leadership: The Nehemiah of a Collapsed Dream in the Methodist Church Nigeria, with a Focus on Wesley University, Ondo

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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This article is part of a special issue titled Sustainability, innovation, and development: A Festschrift in honour of Rt. Rev. Prof. Obeka Samuel Sunday.



ABSTRACT

This paper examines pastoral responses to leadership. Good leadership is the hallmark of any successful administration, whether in small units like families, businesses, non-profit organizations, or religious organizations, among others (Northouse, 2021). The pastor, as a servant of God, is of course human and may, through human weakness, ignore the fear of God (Romans 3:23). This researcher was motivated to embark on this study because of the brilliant reports from Wesley University, Ondo, and the self-denial of its leadership—notwithstanding the earthly gains of episcopacy—which led to the turnaround of a situation that previously invited scorn, reflecting the spirit of Nehemiah in the Holy Scripture. A descriptive research method was employed for the study. The work revealed several leadership styles, the reasons for their usage, and their implications for achieving goals. The effect of these leadership styles, similar to the results of our findings from Wesley University, stands as a lesson for generations to come. While finance and other fascinating benefits may lead a man of God to failure in the process of achieving the desired goals of the church, the reverse is the case at Wesley University, Ondo. Reports on performance speak volumes, undoubtedly demonstrating excellence. The manifestation of ministerial leadership has been observed in today's Wesley University, and our prayer is for its continuation, which will lead to the achievement of the church's goals. It is therefore recommended that the leadership of Wesley University, Ondo, continue to be in the hands of God-fearing individuals and, of course, episcopacy. Secondly, the church must opt for less interference in its leadership to avoid distractions and achieve better results.

Research Focus Pastoral responses to leadership challenges and the transformative leadership at Wesley University, Ondo.	Key Methodology Descriptive research examining leadership styles and their implications for institutional achievements.	Main Finding God-fearing, self-denying leadership leads to institutional excellence and has a generational impact.
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Keywords: Making-proof, ministerial, leadership, Nehemiah, collapsed-dream, Wesley University

INTRODUCTION

"That I may go to cut, mend, pull down, arrange, and remold, so that the fallen dream may reemerge. The survival of our heritage should not vanish just like that, like Nehemiah's expressions (Nehemiah 2:18; Jeremiah 1:9-10 from Holy Bible, 2011); that is what I heard the man of God saying through his leadership character. Whatever the cost—be it the cost of shame, stress, and, of course, sleepless nights—let me endure, for the sake of our heritage's return, but this time, stronger than it was before. To do this, I needed to prove my ministerial leadership, not minding missing the accurate gains of Episcopacy at all levels, but looking for blessings from above..."

Leadership is a phenomenon that could be seen as a science, because it is concerned with the mixture of efforts and desires to bring about a common solution. It is a combination of personal effort and other people's efforts to achieve a desired goal. Leadership is a technical science, for it requires the manipulation of abilities to organize, direct, and manage to bring about desirable achievement (Northouse, 2021).

01	02	03
Leadership as Science	Leadership as Art	Divine Leadership
Combination of personal effort and people's efforts to achieve desired goals through organized direction and management.	Ability to encourage others to achieve collective objectives using personality, beliefs, convictions and people skills.	Leadership that challenges, inspires, enables, serves as a model, and encourages followers through God's grace.

On the other hand, leadership is an art, for it refers to the ability to do and to encourage others to achieve collective objectives. This is all about personality, being capable of using available hands to achieve collective goals. Leadership refers to beliefs, convictions, personality, and people skills; it is also an art of science that has to do with integrity, personality, understanding beliefs, conviction, and the use of people skills to achieve what was earlier stated (Yukl, 2013).

It is observed that when a leader is at their best, they challenge, inspire, enable, serve as a model, and encourage their followers (Kouzes & Posner, 2017); of course, good people desire good leaders. William Cohen says: leadership has an extraordinary power; it can therefore make the difference between success and failure in anything you do for yourself or any group you belong to (1990, p.1).

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES AND PRINCIPLES

It should be noted that when people have the opportunity to serve, there is always a temptation for the abuse of power (Northouse, 2021). This calls for the grace of God in overcoming such temptation. A leader leads, gives vision, and upholds a standard to pursue organizational goals. The work of a leader is to turn weakness into strength, obstacles into stepping stones, and disaster into triumph (Bass, 1985). B. O. Ukeje states, "The quality of leadership in an organization affects the success or failure of that organization" (1992, p. 192).

Core Leadership Factors

- Discovering needs and solving problems
- Inspiring shared vision and taking the lead
- Helping others to contribute effectively
- Serving as a model to imitate
- Motivating and encouraging hearts

Leadership Ingredients

- Vision - clear direction and purpose
- Passion - deep commitment to goals
- Integrity - consistent moral character
- Curiosity - openness to learning
- Daring - courage to take risks

The following are factors that determine ideal leadership: 1. Discovering needs and proactively solving problems. 2. Inspiring a shared vision and being willing to take the lead. 3. Helping and enabling others to act towards contributing to achieving results. 4. Serving as a model to imitate, as a good leader leads by example. 5. Motivating and encouraging the hearts of others (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Appreciation and compensation are keys for good leadership, and the basic ingredients for successful leadership are Vision, Passion, Integrity, Curiosity, and Daring (Northouse, 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

The research aimed to uncover the gains and challenges of leadership, specifically within Wesley University Ondo. For security reasons, the three consulted groups of individuals were anonymized as ABC.

The study employed a qualitative research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) using a purposive sampling method (Palinkas et al., 2015) to select 21 participants, divided equally into three distinct groups (Group A, B, and C), with seven individuals in each. Data were gathered through a semi-structured interview protocol (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), utilizing standardized questions to ensure consistency while allowing for an in-depth exploration of leadership perceptions. The collected qualitative data underwent thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to identify recurring patterns, insights, and key concerns. Throughout the research process, strict ethical considerations were observed, including robust protocols to ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality, hence the use of 'ABC' for group identification.

Research Group Findings

Group	Size	Key Findings	Concerns Identified
Group A	7 members	Universities can be cages of immorality.	Embezzlement, facility misuse, behavioral issues.
Group B	7 members	Welfare and benefits are usually lacking.	Strike actions, survival challenges, rule violations.
Group C	7 members	Leadership roles are trust-consuming.	Stressful activities, nightmare situations, obligations.

Wesley University Profile and Performance

Wesley University Ondo, established in 2007, has developed into an 18-year institution with a proven track record in higher education. It currently ranks #110 out of 157 Nigerian universities according to EduRank 2025, positioning it within the middle tier nationally. The university maintains full accreditation by the National Universities Commission (NUC) since 2007, underscoring its commitment to academic standards. With a 68% acceptance rate, Wesley University demonstrates selective admission standards. The institution offers diverse programs, including Engineering, Computer Science, and Business Administration, supported by a competitive tuition structure.

Comparative Analysis of Institutional Development

The university's current ranking of #110 among 157 Nigerian universities, despite the challenges highlighted by the research groups, indicates a steady trajectory of institutional development. This middle-tier placement suggests resilience and ongoing efforts to uphold academic quality and operational integrity amidst an often-complex educational landscape. The consistent NUC accreditation since its inception further reinforces its foundational strength and commitment to growth, providing critical context for interpreting the research findings on leadership perceptions within the university.

Group B members hold the opinion that welfare and other benefits are usually lacking. This leads to frequent strike actions, which compel workers to prioritize their survival, thereby violating university rules and hindering development. Furthermore, Group C members considered not only the heavy workload and obligations but also the unrest, nightmare, and stressful activities associated with leadership roles. One hundred percent of Group C viewed leadership at universities as trust-consuming and a threat to a faithful life.

Group A Perspective Only God-fearing servants at leadership levels escape moral destruction in university settings.	Group B Perspective Inadequate welfare leads to strikes and rule violations that hinder institutional development.	Group C Perspective University leadership roles are trust-consuming and threatening to faithful living.
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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

George E. Janvier and Bitrus U. Thaba (1997) say: Towards God, we know that leaders are supposed to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31). They should set their minds on things above (Colossians 3:2). They should seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33). Their ambition should be pleasing to God (2 Corinthians 5:9). A leader's first responsibility is towards God.

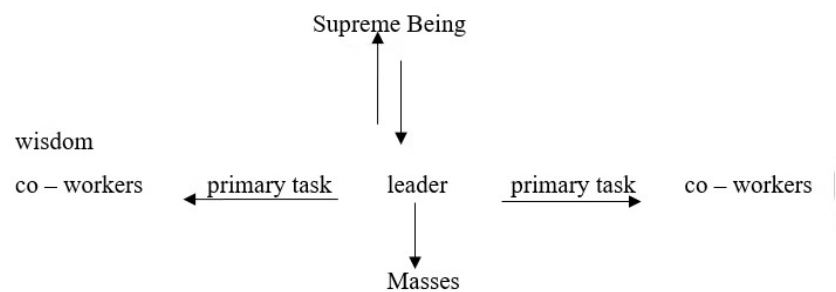
Leadership Operations Framework

The task of leadership, particularly for the Christian leader, is explained through the chart below. This chart outlines the four major directives of leadership operations (Northouse, 2021):



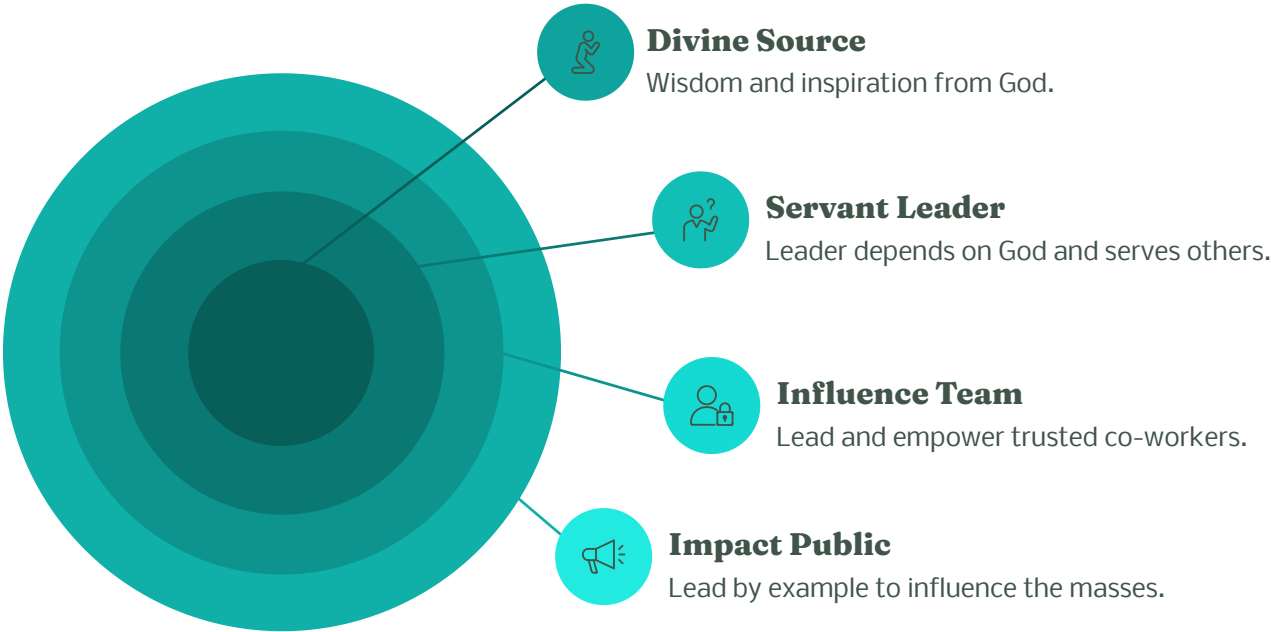
The leader receives from God to bless people with love and nurturing, thereby leading to the achievement of people's desires and goals. A leader leads to achieve. Achievement comes through people's cooperation, and people's cooperation is established through the help of a leader. Receiving from God is key to helping by influencing people for achievement. In contrast, a leader who counts on his or her own abilities is prone to failure.

The task of leadership is explained through the chart below, especially for the Christian leader. This chart exposes the four major directives of leadership operations, which can be viewed as follows:



The source of wisdom is God, the Supreme Being. A Christian leader (Stone et al., 2003) derives his power from God's inspiration through prayer. He (the leader) influences his co-workers through God's guidance (Northouse, 2021) and, together with his co-workers, influences the masses by leading rightly to achieve the set goals (Northouse, 2021). He is, of course, a servant leader (Canavesi & Minelli, 2021) who depends on God. The primary task of a leader is to influence his co-workers—those he can rely on (Northouse, 2021). His major task is to, together with his co-workers, influence the general public through leading by example, honesty, courage, motivation, overcoming hindrances, and other leadership qualities (Northouse, 2021).

A leader is someone who leads. Leadership involves doing and helping others to do as well. It entails carrying people along and accomplishing things through the act of leading (Northouse, 2021).



LEADERSHIP STYLES AND PATTERNS

Several types of leadership patterns exist (Northouse, 2021). One such pattern is leadership by force, known as dictatorship. It is a pattern in which the leader holds and controls power through force. He uses authority, arms, or strength to advance his leadership. It is observed that this kind of leadership is not profitable to the masses, serving only self-interest (Northouse, 2021).

1

Dictatorial Leadership

A leader holds power through force, authority, or strength (Northouse, 2021). This is not profitable to the masses and serves only self-interest.

2

Laissez-Faire Leadership

This style offers freedom of action, where everyone does what they think is right (Northouse, 2021). However, it often lacks the necessary dynamism and careful oversight.

3

Transformational Leadership

This style focuses on ethics and fosters growth through encouragement, motivation, correction, and training in internal values (Bass, 1985 or Burns, 1978).

4

Transactional Leadership

This "eat your own and I eat mine" style emphasizes self-satisfaction rather than serving the masses (Northouse, 2021).

5

Democratic Leadership

This style involves working together toward common goals, where all segments of society contribute to achieving collective aims (Northouse, 2021).

6

Leadership by Connections

This style relies on influential "godfathers" to pursue selfish ambitions, often lacking accuracy and authenticity.

The democratic leadership style is all about working together towards common goals. All segments of society have a voice and contribute to achieving these common objectives. Leadership by Connections, on the other hand, describes how people today often depend on influential individuals for their selfish ambitions, effectively "leading by godfathers."

Leadership by Connections

Today, people often depend on influential individuals for their selfish ambitions. This can be described as leading through "godfathers," so to speak. Leadership by connection often involves seeking the opinions of former leaders, influential people, or godfathers, and copying their patterns of leadership, whether good or bad. The underlying goal is often to rule for self-gain and dominate the populace. It is difficult to ensure integrity in such leadership because someone else is dictating actions. The danger is that if leaders operate solely based on their personal power, and a subsequent leader does not possess similar influence, leadership by connection tends to fail. Some leaders operate with undisclosed power, and attempting to emulate them can be perilous. When receiving guidance from someone, one must understand how that person wields their power.

Leadership by comparison is another pattern where a leader copies the style of another leader, disregarding the specific needs of the group they are leading (Northouse, 2021). A good leader first studies their followers (Northouse, 2021). For instance, today you can see preachers wanting to preach like powerful evangelists, such as Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. They attempt to compare themselves to great preachers and often fail. Each group has its peculiarities, and therefore, different leadership strategies are required for successful leadership (Northouse, 2021). Apart from style, the benefits, position, and abilities of individuals differ, so care must be taken to avoid disaster in leadership (Northouse, 2021).

No one should try to be exactly like anyone else. You are who you are, not who another person is.

Two different emotions play a role in leadership. The first is anger in leadership, a strong feeling of resentment toward someone or something. People describe this as a hostile emotion that creates conflict within a group and can destroy relationships. Another emotion in leadership is "healthy anger," which ultimately yields positive outcomes. This type of anger is directed against injustice, wrongdoing, and evil actions. It stands for sincerity and opposes hidden agendas, encouraging righteous conduct.

Criticism is a vital tool for successful leadership. Human beings are prone to exhibiting ego, but criticism is a weapon that enforces seriousness in leadership. If everyone always praises a leader, then something is amiss with that leadership. The actions of people serve to check a leader's unconscious biases and reawaken their zeal to prove themselves worthy.

Without someone holding a leader accountable, there will be a decline in leadership effectiveness.

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES AND HUMAN DYNAMICS

He who lead must expect criticism. It is natural that people of different views and goals surround the leader, such people includes complaining people, hostile people, indecisive people, negative people, know-it-all people, and uninvolved people. A good leader must have such people in mind and must be prepared for them.



Complaining People

Always complaining about situations but can never proffer solutions. Discover problems but cannot provide solutions.



Hostile People

Often aggressive, very influential, don't surrender quickly. Want recognition without good ideas.



Indecisive People

Have no decision, postpone actions. Pretend to want evidences before reacting, creating obstacles to progress.



Negative People

Have ready-made answers with statements like "it won't work," "that is not so," "we've tried that once."



Know-It-All People

Want to prove they know more than the leader. Always prove leader wrong. Require adequate preparation from leader.



Uninvolved People

Uncommitted people who remain silent to avoid criticism or trouble, contributing to other group problems.

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y Application

Douglas McGregor provided experiential facts and propounded theories to help control human beings to achieve targeted goals. Theory X assumes that human beings are naturally lazy, not motivated, and desire most of all their wages. Theory Y claims that human beings are not naturally lazy but desire to work and are self-motivated if placed in the right environment.

THE WESLEY UNIVERSITY ONDO MODEL

The evaluation of the submissions from groups A, B, and C boosts our confidence to assert the genuine need for demonstrating ministerial leadership, akin to the examples set by Nehemiah in the Holy Bible (Nehemiah 2:18) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:9-10). The brilliant reports from Wesley University Ondo demonstrate the reality of self-denial and the initiation of transformation that reflects Nehemiah's character.



Institutional Excellence

Reports on performance speak volumes, undoubtedly demonstrating excellence. Wesley University Ondo stands as proof that God-fearing leadership produces lasting results (Nehemiah 2:18).



Ministerial Leadership

The demonstration of ministerial leadership has been observed at Wesley University today, and we pray for its continuation (Patton, 2017).



Generational Impact

The effects of these leadership styles will serve as a model for future generations, thereby creating a lasting educational legacy.

While finance and other material benefits may lead a man of God to falter in achieving the desired goals of the church, the reverse is the case at Wesley University Ondo. Reports on performance speak volumes, undoubtedly demonstrating excellence. The demonstration of ministerial leadership has been observed at Wesley University today (Patton, 2017), and it is our prayer for its continuation to achieve the church's goals. God-fearing leadership produces lasting results (Nehemiah 2:18).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Leadership is a task ordained by God. God instituted it, sustained it, and recommended it for humanity. One of the strategies of leadership is the teaching and learning process, even within the church. The sound implementation of leadership theories significantly aids leaders in demonstrating ministerial leadership (Tchanaga & Nyakora, 2018). This calls for them to lead in God's way, exhibiting faith and courage, and emulating the profound concern of Nehemiah in the Holy Bible, thereby bringing honour to God and his generation.

01

God-Fearing Leadership

The leadership of Wesley University Ondo should continue to be in the hands of God-fearing individuals and the episcopacy (Holy Bible, 2011).

02

Reduced Interference

The church should opt for less interference in leadership to avoid distractions and achieve better results.

03

Appropriate Leadership Styles

Leaders should use leadership styles appropriate to situational demands and conditions for effectiveness (Northouse, 2021).

04

Nehemiah Model

Continue exhibiting faith, courage, and concern similar to Nehemiah, bringing honour to God and future generations (Holy Bible, 2011; Patton, 2017).

This legacy of Nehemiah is what the man of God had proven, thereby prompting the writer to continue researching (Holy Bible, 2011; Patton, 2017 or Weems, 2017). At any level, a leader is expected to use a leadership style appropriate to the demands of the situation and conditions, because sometimes a specific type of leadership is required (Northouse, 2021).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Not Applicable

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

FUNDING

This research received no funding from any agency.

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Received: June 18, 2025

Accepted: August 15, 2025

Published: November 19, 2025

Citation:

Jonathan, Y. A. (2025). Making proof of ministerial leadership by the Nehemiah of a collapsed dream in Methodist Church Nigeria: Wesley University, Ondo as the focus. *SustainE*, 3(2), 407-421. In A. A. Atowaju, E. O. Oyekanmi, A. A. Akinsemolu, & D. M. Duyile (Eds.), *Sustainability, innovation, and development: A Festschrift in honour of Rt. Rev. Prof. Obeka Samuel Sunday* [Special issue]. <https://doi.org/10.55366/suse.v3i2.19>

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