



Empowering Leadership as a Catalyst for Job Creativity and Innovative Work Behaviour in Non-Governmental Organisations: Insight from FCT-Abuja

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role of empowering leadership as a predictor of job creativity and innovative work behaviour among nongovernmental workers in FCT-Abuja. A cross-sectional research design was adopted and with a sample of 310 workers (male= 156, female= 154), an instrument containing leadership empowerment behaviour, a job creativity scale, innovative work behaviour and sociodemographics was administered to gather the research data. Hypotheses were tested via regression analysis. Findings revealed that the prevalence rate of job creativity was 61.3%, that of innovative work behaviour was 59.7%, and that of empowering leadership was 61.3% among workers. Additionally, the results identified that empowering leadership significantly predicted job creativity positively ($\beta = .37$, $t = 7.04$, $p < .01$). Similarly, empowering leadership significantly predicted innovative work behaviour positively ($\beta = .60$, $t = 13.04$, $p < .01$). The study recommends that employees should display proactive behaviour that will result in their goals and objectives attaining in good time.

Keywords: empowering leadership, job creativity, innovative work behaviour, nongovernmental workers, FCT-Abuja

INTRODUCTION

Every organisation wants its workers to be highly productive and capable of taking on difficult tasks while maintaining a greater level of work efficacy and efficiency. The accomplishment of these objectives will depend partly on workers' adaptability and inventiveness with their jobs. On this basis, organisational related researchers remain inquisitive and continue to explore the factors surrounding job creativity and innovative work behaviours. The concept of creativity in the workplace is characterised by being adaptable, adaptive, ingenious, and capable of developing new and improved methods for producing and promoting goods and services. However, in some circumstance, the essence of creativity reflects in contrast, thus portraying a high rate of work dissatisfaction (Vithayathil & Choudhary, 2022), a lack of intrinsic motivation, a lack of communication (Schwer & Hitz, 2018) and even turnover (Xianghua, 2020) when organisations do not allow workers to experience or exhibit creativity at work. Similarly, giving workers freedom and enabling tolerance for the risk of failure will foster the growth of innovative behaviour (Zhou & Wu, 2018).

Creativity and innovative work practices are essential for all organisations to preserve a competitive edge in the modern global economy and to progress through challenging times (Jung et al., 2003). An individual's expertise and experience are essential for the development of new ideas, but they must also be applied to solve entirely unexplored problems (Stoffers et al., 2015). The concept of creativity and innovation are widely researched in the western countries (Lina, 2024; Nijstad et al, 2026; Parolin & Pellegrinelli, 2025; Pratt, 2024). However, ideas and summations from such researches had not been able to tackle organisational issues in the developing countries as its associated problems persist. This is a reason why researching on such constructs among organisational workers in the developing countries like Nigeria is important. More specifically, among employees in the federal capital territory (FCT), which is the centre hub of the nation and also among employees in nongovernmental organisations (NGO) where the organisational primary motive is not profit oriented.

Nongovernmental organisations are saddled with the responsibilities and concerns for the weak and vulnerable in society. Even though they contribute to national development (Banks et al., 2015; Hassan et al., 2019), they

sometimes experience challenges with worker and volunteer funding (Never, 2011) which reflects limitations to the standards of training and development given to their workers in serving the community. In addition, research has revealed institutional problems such as poor leadership and governance (Noor et al., 2022), thus instigating the ability to understand possible connectivity with these factors among workers of nongovernmental organisations.

Even as the centre for policy making and international development funding, Abuja NGO workers still have to function in an environment that is characterised by systemic inefficiencies and high organisational cost of operation while faced with the pressure to deliver expected outcomes to donors. The difficulty with the work process affect the creativity and innovative work behaviour essential for tackling the environmental complexities like urban poverty, inequalities and governance deficits.

Most previous studies had considered the concepts of leadership and innovation in a relatively stable environment, and not in instances where the duality of political and fiscal inconsistency are merged with the provision of services to a vulnerable population. In addition, previous researches have not fully investigated the concept of leadership in the NGO sector from an empirical approach (Hailey & James, 2004). By investigating the ability of NGO employees to exhibit originality and innovation while carrying out their main responsibilities and how they are enabled by the leadership structure, this study seeks to address this gap in knowledge.

Organisations must constantly engage in innovative ways and approaches to remain sustainable and successful in the face of rapid technological breakthroughs and intense competition. Innovation is known to increase organisational efficacy, competitiveness, and overall business performance (Ali et al., 2020). With economic challenges, sociocultural unrest and heightened levels of insecurity, the work roles and expectations of NGOs would seem more difficult if they actually want to have a reasonable impact in the society.

Nongovernmental organisations are expected to relieve societal members (especially vulnerable individuals) of pressure and stress. However, the possibility of these benefits are limited when society itself is not enabling; thus a creative mind and an innovative approach may be required to achieve organisational goals. Innovative work practices benefit the entire organisation and extend beyond the creation of new products within the context of research and development. Innovation is connected to modifications as well as the creation and execution of concepts that are new to the company, the nation, the world, and the industry (Patterson et al., 2009).

The components of innovative work behaviour include concept generation, execution, and coalition building. Defining the problem, explaining it, and then looking for a workable solution are the initial phases in the innovation process. Workers willing to go down this lean will be able to do so only if they find themselves in a work environment that enables that and with leaders that see such part and allows room for the exploration of such. Employee creativity is significantly impacted by organisational leaders' capacity to cultivate creativity in their workforces (Reiter-Palmon & Illies, 2004).

Therefore, in contemporary organisations, the identification of innovative work behaviour is largely dependent on effective leadership (Zhang & Zhou, 2014). They encourage creative thinking and establish a productive work atmosphere to gain new knowledge, skills, and technologies (Jung et al., 2003). Leadership behaviour is often one of the most significant determinants of creativity (Mainemelis et al., 2015) and empowerment occurs when a leader purposefully delegates authority to subordinates and gives them more control and influence over their work (Ahearne et al., 2005; Hollander, 2009; Martin et al., 2013). Empowering leadership could have a major effect on worker creativity (Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Zhang & Zhou, 2014). Aside from regular profit-oriented organisations, which are driven mostly by the financial targets attached to their productivity, the understanding of the role of leadership in NGOs and in their workers is essential, and few researchers have delved into this area.

Promoting innovative work practices in nongovernmental sectors is vital, and leadership plays a critical role in the advancement of these practices in organisations. Effective nongovernmental leaders should be able to inspire, motivate, and make their mission clear to stakeholders (Abdullah & Varatharajoo, 2017). They should also have strong interpersonal, conflict resolution, and resource management skills. Since nongovernmental organisations usually have social or environmental goals, nongovernmental leadership is different from leadership in other

groups. As a result, the best leadership approach for achieving successful outcomes in nongovernmental organisations is to exercise effective leadership, of which empowering leadership may be an added valued perspective. Several empirical studies have demonstrated the effect of leadership on creativity and innovativeness (Carmeli et al., 2010; Oke et al., 2009).

Research has revealed that empowering leadership fosters creativity and innovation (Anderson et al., 2014; Hughes et al., 2018; Huang, et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2020). The integration of empowering leadership with the regular positivity associated with transformative leadership could builds a framework beyond the conventional. Transformational leadership emphasises critical reflection, moral elevation and commitment to social justice. This could enable employees tackle the political and environmental challenges associated with the study setting. Combining this with empowering leadership, which focuses on the delegation of authorities, promoting self-determination and self-capabilities would offer a different perspective and approach towards the management of bureaucratic rigidity that negatively affect the workplace.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the impact of empowering leadership on job creativity and innovative work behaviour in nongovernmental organisations located in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To assess the extent to which empowering leadership predicts job creativity among nongovernmental organisations in FCT- Abuja.
2. To examine how empowering leadership predicts innovative work behaviours among nongovernmental organisations in FCT- Abuja.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empowering Leadership and Job Creativity

Several researchers had studied job creativity and empowering leadership, however, attention had not been given to that aspect of research in recent times, even though challenges still emanate from such areas of work-life, especially in the developing aspect of the world. Studies on empowering leadership indicate a positive association with work outcomes, one of which is job performance (Nadeem et al., 2018). One of the identified ways through which empowering leadership improves worker performance involves increasing self-efficacy in one's career (Biemann et al., 2015), creative self-efficacy (Zhang & Zhou, 2014), and job creativity (Ahearne et al., 2005; Cheong et al., 2016). Empowering leadership provides employees with some sense of ownership and attachment to their work role, which instigates employees' achievement. The utilisation of creative ideas is one of the processes through which workers engage themselves to increase productivity. Considering the benefits for both organisations and workers, employee empowerment has a major effect on customer happiness, quality improvement, and organisational success (Mukwakungu et al., 2018).

The literature reveals that employee empowerment directly impacts work satisfaction (Raza et al., 2015; Wadhwa & Verghese, 2015), organisational commitment (Gholami et al., 2013; Insan et al., 2013; Kun et al., 2007), and employee performance (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012). Fostering an environment that encourages the application of empowerment at work increases employees' commitment and the success of the organisation (Hanayshahe, 2016; Laschinger et al., 2002). Therefore, Mukwakungu et al. (2018) recommended that businesses should consider workplace conditions more, as they increase worker productivity. It has also been established that employees' empowerment promotes success, productivity, and business growth (Hunjra et al., 2011); thus, management should communicate the company's strategic direction with every employee to monitor the company's commercial success.

From a different perspective, a negative indirect correlation was found between empowering leadership and employee task performance through obsessive passion, and a positive indirect correlation was found between employee task performance and creative performance through harmonious passion (Hao et al., 2017). Even with these many positive associations, certain researchers have found negative or insignificant connections between

employees' work performance and empowering leadership, despite empirical evidence suggesting otherwise (Cheong et al., 2016; Humborstad & Kuvaas, 2013). Although, variations exists in the societal development and political stability of the study locations.

Through various psychological mechanisms, researchers have examined the connection between employee work performance and empowering leadership (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015; Li et al., 2015; Raub & Robert, 2010). Although performance and productivity differ from creativity, their consistency in similar directions has shown the tendency to obtain similar outcome when considered with empowering leadership. From a more related angle, Celik et al. (2014) demonstrated that employee empowerment fosters organisational creativity and innovativeness among enterprises in the Konya Organised Industrial Zone in Turkey. They discovered that managers ought to approach employee empowerment methodically since it encourages creativity and innovation within the company. Investigating the extent to which empowered leadership enhances employee creativity among full time employees of multinational, electron, automobile and telecommunications corporations in South Korea, Gukdo et al. (2016) reported that employee creativity and empowering leadership have favourable association, and this aligns with the findings of Zhang and Bartol (2010).

A hundred and thirteen employees of the millennial generation who were employed in Indonesia's digital start-up creative sectors were studied while examining the role of empowering leadership in creativity and productivity (Alif & Nastiti, 2022). They noted that empowering leadership either directly or indirectly affects worker creativity and output through psychological empowerment and self-leadership. This therefore suggested the theoretical and practical implementation of empowering leadership within the millennial generation's creative environment.

In the literature search, few of studies have consider the associations among workers in West Africa, and more specifically, few studies have focused on the industrial behaviours of workers in public organisations and nongovernmental agencies. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature.

Empowering Leadership and Innovative Work Behaviour

The mediating role of psychological empowerment in the relationship between innovative work behaviour and empowering leadership was investigated by Yadav et al. (2023). On the basis of their findings, their conclusions demonstrated that empowered leadership strongly fosters innovative work behaviour, which aligns with the findings of several previous studies (AlMulhim, 2020; Dugar, 2021; Forrester, 2000; Hassi et al., 2022). A relationship between employees' creativity and empowering leadership has been observed; however, Joo et al. (2022) acknowledged this relationship only through knowledge sharing and work engagement mediators. It was believed that there were some mediating effects of psychological empowerment between employees' innovative behaviour and empowering leadership.

Employing empirical data from a major public transportation company in Norway, research has been conducted on individual learning orientation, work group cohesiveness, innovative behaviour, and empowering leadership in the public sector (Mutonyi et al., 2022). It was suggested that encouraging innovative behaviour on an individual basis is critical to an organisation's overall performance in innovation within the public sector. Owing to increased scrutiny of risk-taking behaviour and ambiguous aims, many public organisations operate in contexts that are unfriendly to innovation (Van der Voet et al., 2016).

Conducting a moderation mediation analysis on innovative work practices and empowering leadership, Rao et al. (2019) utilised 250 supervisors (and their direct reports) who worked for Indian pharmaceutical companies. The results demonstrated a highly positive relationship between innovative work practices and empowering leadership. Also, in a moderated mediation model on teacher creative behaviour and principle empowering leadership (Horoub & Zargar, 2022), three hundred public school teachers' data were examined (elementary and secondary education). The empowering leadership scale has three primary dimensions: cooperative action, opportunistic thinking, and independent action. The findings demonstrated that the principal's empowering actions have direct and indirect impacts on teachers' creative behaviour through inquiry. The findings suggest that future research should concentrate on private school teachers, investigating on how empowering leadership affects innovative behaviour among them.

Another moderation study on employee empowerment and innovative work behaviour considered leader-member interchange as a moderating factor (Kanake & Kemboi, 2020). Notably, innovative work practices are positively and significantly impacted by leader-member interchange and employee empowerment. The findings also show that leader-member exchange strongly moderates the relationship between creative work practices and employee empowerment.

According to several studies, employees' creativity and innovation are thought to be significantly influenced by leadership (Anderson et al., 2014; Shalley & Gilson, 2004; Tierney, 2008). However, none of the considered reviews were studies conducted within the geographical and cultural boundaries of the present study. Additionally, few or no known studies have considered NGOs as sampled employees. Finally, the concern for empowering leadership and not just leadership as previous studies operationalized is relevant.

Hypotheses

The research hypotheses establish the direction of research measurement and serve as the foundation for the study's analysis. The following are the research hypotheses for this study:

1. Empowering leadership will significantly predict job creativity among non-governmental organisations in FCT - Abuja
2. Empowering leadership will significantly predict innovative work behaviour among non-governmental organisations in FCT – Abuja.

METHODS

A cross-sectional research design was adopted and self-administered questionnaires were used to gather data from 310 workers in NGO located within Abuja, Nigeria. With an uncertain population size for NGOs workers in Abuja, Krejcie and Morgan's formula for an infinite population was utilised (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), and a minimum sample size of 323 was achieved, with a proportion of the target population at 30%. To create chances for alterations, 330 questionnaires were distributed; however, 310 were retrieved and found valid for the research. This gave a response rate of 93.9%.

The study used an online survey tool (Google Form) for questionnaire administration; thus, a convenience sampling technique was utilised. Even with these technique, the researcher still obtained approval from the organisations' management to utilise their workers for research purposes and the Google link was sent through the organisation's router to the workers. The cover page of the online survey had an informed consent section where the participants were able to read through the purpose of the study and provide their consent. The study inclusion and exclusion criteria were also stated. For example, casual workers were not eligible to participate in the research. The research link was made available for a period of 3 weeks.

The distributions of the sampled participants' sociodemographic characteristics revealed that 50.3% were male and 49.7% were female. With respect to religion, 67.1% were Christians, and 32.9% were Muslims. In terms of the participants' marital status, 38.7% were single, 60.0% were married, .6% were divorced, .3% were separated and .3% were widowed. The results also revealed that 1.6% of the participants had an O'level and below as their highest attained form of education, 8.1% were OND holders, 74.2% were HND holders/first degree, and 16.1% were master's degree holders. The participants' ages ranged from 23 years to 49 years ($M = 29.77$, $SD = 4.53$).

Instrument

A questionnaire containing 4 sections was utilised. The first section sourced for information on sociodemographics, whereas the other three sections include standard measures of the research areas.

Leadership Empowerment Behaviour (LEB) is a 12-item scale adapted by Ahearne et al. (2005). Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (to a very much extent). The scale is a four multi-item subscales that focused on (a) enhancing the meaningfulness of work (three items $\alpha = .76$), as an example item: "My leader helps me understand how my objectives and goals relate to that of the Company"; (b) fostering

participation in decision making (two items $\alpha = .92$) as an example item: “My leader makes many decisions together with me”; (c) expressing confidence in high performance (two items $\alpha = .90$), as an example item: “My leader believes that I can handle demanding tasks”; and (d) providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints (three items $\alpha = .86$), as an example item: “My manager allows me to do my job my way”. Therefore, the four subscales were averaged to create a single composite score that exhibited an alpha of .88. This study obtained a reliability coefficient of .93. The mean score was the norm and scores from the norm and above it reflected high levels of leadership empowerment behaviour.

Job Creativity – This comprises a 28-item scale developed by Smith (2010). The scale has 4 subsections namely, generating ideas (7 items), digging deeper into ideas (7 items), exploring ideas (7 items) and listening to one’s inner voice (7 items). Rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0–never to 3–often, the sample items include “I often have a strong vision for my projects” (generating ideas), “The meaning of a piece of work evolves as I work on it” (digging deeper into ideas), “I can reflect back on my own work” (exploring ideas) and “I need time alone when developing ideas” (listening to your inner voice). A Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient of .73 was obtained for the scale by Adyasha and Duraipandian (2016). The measure was interpreted on the basis of the mean score such that scores from the mean and above implied a high level of creativity, whereas scores below the mean implied low creativity. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability obtained in this study was .91.

Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB) is a 9-item scale by Janseen (2000). Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Sample items include “With what frequency do you engage in creating new ideas for difficult issues?” and “With what frequency do you engage in introducing innovative ideas into the work environment in a systematic way?”. These nine items measure the extent to which an employee engages in innovative work behaviours. The items yielded a coefficient alpha of 0.94. Data coding was performed such that a higher score indicated a higher level of innovative work behaviour. The reliability derived for this current study was .91.

Data Analysis

Pearson product moment correlation analysis was conducted to test the relationships among the study variables. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested via regression analysis. All analyses were conducted with SPSS IBM 25.0v and Smart PLS 4.

RESULTS

The sampled data were subjected to statistical tests to establish the sample mean, which was utilised to calculate the occurrence rates of job creativity, innovative work behaviour, and empowering leadership among nongovernmental workers in Abuja. This was such that workers who scored from the mean and above were categorised as high in the constructs, whereas those who scored below the obtained mean were regarded as low in the construct. The results are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency, Percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation Showing the Occurrence Pattern of the Study Variables

Variables	Prevalence					
	Mean	SD	Low		High	
			F	%	F	%
Job Creativity	69.66	10.27	120	38.7	190	61.3
Innovative Work Behaviour	37.18	6.14	125	40.3	185	59.7
Empowering Leadership	64.06	15.34	120	38.7	190	61.3

N=310.

Table 1 shows the occurrence pattern of job creativity, innovative work behaviour and empowering leadership. A greater percentage of workers (61.3%) reported high job creativity; however, 38.7% reported low job creativity. The prevalence of innovative work behaviour revealed that 40.3% of the participants displayed low innovative behaviour at work, whereas 59.7% displayed high innovative behaviour at work. The findings on empowering leadership revealed that most of the employees indicated that their leaders (61.3%) displayed a high level of empowering leadership, whereas 38.7% displayed a low level of empowering leadership. By implication, there is chances for improvement in the study variables among workers of NGOs in Abuja, Nigeria.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship among the Study Variables

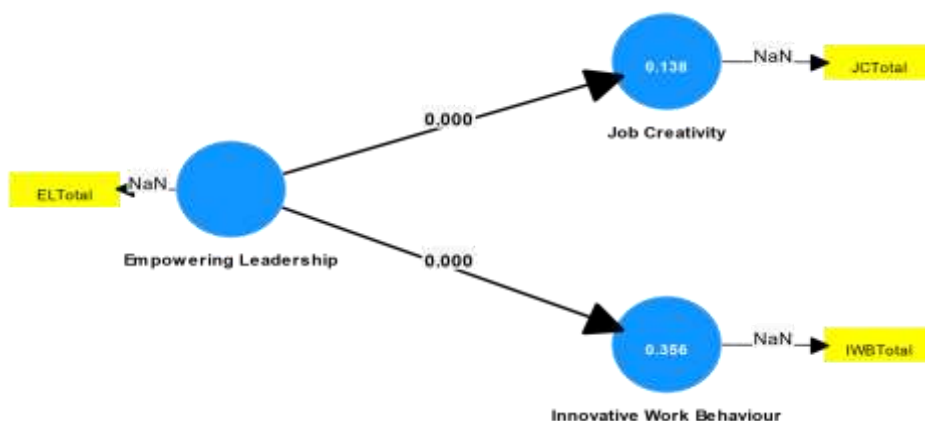
Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Job Creativity	1	.82**	.37**	-.24**	.28**	.02
2. Innovative Work Behaviour		1	.60**	-.23**	.13*	.02
3. Empowering Leadership			1	-.20**	.02	.08
4. Sex				1	-.23**	.03
5. Age					1	.42**
6. Educational Qualification						1
Mean	69.99	37.18	64.06	-	29.77	-
SD	10.27	6.14	15.34	-	4.53	-

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, $N=310$. Sex was coded as male-1, female-2. Educational qualification was coded as 1- O'level and below, 2- ND/NCE, 3- HND/First Degree, 4-Master's Degree.

Table 2 displays the test of the variable-to-variable relationship. It was observed that empowering leadership had a significant positive relationship with job creativity $r(308) = .37$, $p < .01$, and that empowering leadership also had a significant positive relationship with innovative work behaviour $r(308) = .60$, $p < .01$.

The test of sociodemographic factors indicated that sex had a significant relationship with job creativity $r(308) = -.24$, $p < .01$, and innovative work behaviour $r(308) = -.23$, $p < .01$ such that when compared with their female counterparts, male workers displayed greater values of these constructs. Age had a significant positive relationship with job creativity $r(308) = .28$, $p < .01$, and innovative work behaviour $r(308) = .13$, $p < .05$. Educational qualification was not significantly related to job creativity $r(308) = .02$, $p > .05$, and innovative work behaviour $r(308) = .02$, $p > .05$.

Figure 1. Framework Showing the Association between Job Crafting, Empowering Leadership, Core Self-Evaluation, and Withdrawal Behaviour



The modelled structure and findings revealed that empowering leadership predicted both job creativity and innovative work behaviour. This was associated with 13.8% variance and 35.6% variance in job creativity and innovative work behaviour respectively due to empowering leadership. A regression model was used to confirm this association while controlling for those sociodemographics that reflected significant associations.

Table 3. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Showing the Predictive Value of Job Creativity

Predictors	Step 1		Step 2	
	β	t	β	t
Sex	-.19	-3.37**	-.12	-2.19*
Age	.24	4.36**	.25	4.83**
Empowering Leadership			.34	6.70**
R	.34		.48	
R ²	.11		.23	
ΔR^2	-		.11	
Df	2, 307		3, 306	
F	19.48**		29.80**	
ΔF	-		44.86**	

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, N=310. Sex was coded as male-1, female-2. Educational qualification was coded 1- O'level and below, 2- ND/NCE, 3- HND/First Degree, 4-Master's Degree

Two step hierarchical regression was conducted and in the first step of the model, the sociodemographic attributes were included. The results show that sociodemographics significantly predicted job creativity such that they contribute 11% to changes in job creativity $R^2 = .11$, $F(2,307) = 19.48$, $p < .01$. Sex was a significant predictor of job creativity ($\beta = -.19$, $t = -3.37$, $p < .01$). This implies that, compared with female workers, male workers display a high level of creativity in their jobs. Age significantly predicts job creativity ($\beta = .24$, $t = 4.36$, $p < .01$) which signifies that creativity increases with the age of workers.

In step 2 of the model, empowering leadership was added, and it was observed that there was no presence of multicollinearity in the test as the collinearity statistics values (tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF)) did not vary from the expected values. Notably, all the factors contributed a significant variance of 23% to changes in job creativity $R^2 = .23$, $F(3,306) = 29.80$, $p < .01$. Independently, empowering leadership significantly predicted job creativity ($\beta = .34$, $t = 6.70$, $p < .01$) such that job creativity increased with increasing empowering leadership. Empowering leadership contributed a significant variance of 11% on its own to variance in job creativity ($\Delta R^2 = .11$, $\Delta F = 44.86$, $p < .01$). This confirmed Hypothesis 1.

Table 4. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Showing the Predictions of Innovative Work Behaviour

Predictors	Step 1		Step 2	
	β	t	β	t
Sex	-.22	-3.78**	-.10	-2.04*



Age	.08	1.37	.09	1.99*
Empowering Leadership			.58	12.49**
R	.24		.61	
R ²	.06		.37	
ΔR ²	-		.32	
Df	2.307		3,306	
F	9.72**		61.74**	
ΔF	-		155.96**	

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, $N=310$. Sex was coded as male-1, female-2. Educational qualification was coded as 1- O'level and below, 2- ND/NCE, 3- HND/First Degree, 4-Master's Degree

To test the prediction of innovative work behaviour, two-step hierarchical regression was conducted and in the first step of the model, the sociodemographic attributes were included. The result showed that sociodemographics significantly predicted innovative work behaviour such that they contributed 6% of the changes in innovative work behaviour $R^2 = .06$, $F(2,307) = 9.72$, $p < .01$. Sex was a significant predictor of innovative work behaviour ($\beta = -.22$, $t = -3.78$, $p < .01$). This implies that male workers display more innovative behaviour at work compared to female workers. Age had no significant effect on innovative work behaviour ($\beta = .08$, $t = 1.37$, $p > .05$).

In step 2 of the model, empowering leadership was added, and no presence of multicollinearity was observed. Notably, all the factors contributed a significant variance of 37% to changes in innovative work behaviour $R^2 = .37$, $F(3,306) = 61.74$, $p < .01$. Independently, empowering leadership significantly predicted innovative work behaviour ($\beta = .58$, $t = 12.49$, $p < .01$) such that innovative work behaviour increased with increasing empowering leadership. Empowering leadership contributed a significant variance of 32% on its own to variance in innovative work behaviour ($\Delta R^2 = .32$, $\Delta F = 155.96$, $p < .01$). This confirmed Hypothesis 2

DISCUSSION

The study examined the role of empowering leadership in the experience of job creativity and innovative work behaviour among nongovernmental workers, FCT-Abuja. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested. The results of the first hypothesis, which stated that empowering leadership significantly predicts job creativity among nongovernmental workers, indicate that empowering leadership is a good predictor of workers' level of creativity on the job.

Previous studies have identified the connection between empowering leadership and job creativity (Ahearne et al., 2005; Alif & Nastiti, 2022; Cheong et al., 2016; Gukdo et al., 2016; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). Hypothesis two, which states that empowering leadership significantly predicts innovative work behaviour among nongovernmental workers, indicates that empowering leadership is a good predictor of workers' innovative behaviour at work. These findings are supported by those of previous studies (AlMulhim, 2020; Dugar, 2021; Forrester, 2000; Hassi et al., 2022; Yadav et al., 2023). The analysis revealed that sociodemographic factors had a significant relationship with job creativity and innovative work behaviour. The factors were controlled so that they would not affect the results of the findings. The factors that were controlled for were the participants' sex and age. In the literature, sex has been reported to influence job creativity and innovative work behaviour (Mostafa, 2005). In Mostafa's (2005) study, it was discovered that age had no influence on job creativity or innovative work behaviour, however, younger workers will display higher level of job creativity and innovative work behaviour than older workers because they will not leave the status quo

CONCLUSION

The present study examined empowering leadership as a predictor of job creativity and innovative work behaviour among nongovernmental workers in FCT-Abuja. The correlation matrix analysis indicated that empowering leadership had a significant positive relationship with job creativity, and innovative work behaviour.

Sociodemographic factors such as sex had a significant negative relationship with job creativity, and innovative work behaviour. Age had a significant relationship with job creativity, and innovative work behaviour. With respect to educational qualification, there was no significant relationship with job creativity or innovative work behaviour.

The regression analysis proved that empowering leadership predicted job creativity. This confirmed that when empowering leadership is the style of leadership in an organisation, workers will be willing and active to create new ideas when given job roles. It also proved that empowering leadership predicted innovative work behaviour. This confirmed that when empowering leadership is the style present in an organisation, workers will be ready and active to implement ideas that could either be a new concept or restructure the older concept and make it a beneficial process for the organisation. Sex and age were the sociodemographic factors that were controlled for in the analysis because it showed a significant relationship with job creativity and innovative work behaviour. Few studies have considered sociodemographic factors on job creativity and innovative work behaviour.

RECOMMENDATIONS

An effective leadership style enables employees to ultimately function at their best by being creative and innovative because employees are inspired and encouraged by the leader. Empowering leadership is an effective style because it fosters the meaningfulness of work for the employees to understand what the job entails from the job description. This leadership style also encourages employees to participate in decision-making process. For example, when a project is accomplished, it will not be the leader who will make decisions; there is room for deliberation, and employees are given free will to contribute their ideas to the project. This makes work easy.

The presence of an empowering leadership style can also increase employees' confidence in high performance. This affects their self-esteem and self-efficacy. In a sense, that they know whatever ideas they generate will result in implementation, resulting in high productivity, the achievement of an organisation's goals and objectives, and the employees derive satisfaction on the job, which rubs off in other aspects of their life. Finally, this leadership style promotes autonomy from bureaucratic restrictions. When workers are given the freedom and authority to make choices, they are more inspired to develop fresh solutions and deliver high-quality customer service (Karatepe, 2016).

On the basis of this study, organisations should ensure that their leadership style is not a style that will make the work environment a toxic area for workers to work with. An empowering leadership style should be adopted in both the government and private sectors. Leaders should give their workers room to be creative and innovative when they are given tasks on the job. Workers should also display proactive behaviour that will result in them attaining their goals and objectives effectively and efficiently. For further research, leadership styles, organisational commitment, and job satisfaction should be investigated to determine how they affect job creativity and innovative work behaviour. Research can also be carried out in other government sectors.

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