

AN INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND FOLLOWERSHIP SKILLS

Seth Osehahumen Akhilele, Followership Development Institute (FDi)
Bruce E. Winston, Regent University

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to create an instrument to measure organizational support and followership skills. We followed DeVellis' scale development method. From the literature review, we found 44 items for the item-pool. Two rounds of review by a panel of experts reduced the number to 33 items. Survey data came from 175 participants from 40 branches of a financial institution, private sector in Nigeria. Principal component analysis resulted in two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. Optimization of the factors resulted in two five-item scales with the five highest loading items for each of the two scales. Factor 1 (loading ranged from .901 – 1.00) has a Cronbach alpha of .948, and Factor 2 (loading ranged from .855 – .945) has a Cronbach alpha of .945. We tested the instrument for concurrent and discriminant validity and test-retest reliability and found the scales both valid and with high reliability.

Keywords: *Organizational support, Followership Skills, Training Support for Followership Skills, and Organizational Empowerment*

AN INSTRUMENT TO MEASURE ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND FOLLOWERSHIP SKILL

The purpose of this study was to develop an instrument to measure organizational support and followership skills. Though Latour and Rast's (2004), Nguyen and Seung-Wan's (2018), and Allen et al. (2007) studies gave evidence of POS's positive relationship with follower skills development and continuance, there have been no studies to develop a single instrument that measures organizational support and followership skills. However, Yufan et. al (2024) argued that a leader's relational power arouses follower creativity, and this helpful relationship is facilitated by the follower's interpersonal identification with the leader. Also, the indirect consequence of a leader's interpersonal power on follower creativity is moderated by perceived organizational support(leadership) for creativity.

Organizational support is employees' belief regarding the degree to which the organization vigorously supports them to use their strengths at work (van Woerkom, Mostert, et al., 2016). Yilmaz (2019) argued that the concept of organizational support is expressed as the general belief that employees are members of the organization that they value and contribute to their well-being. The value of the efforts put forward by employees and the perception of this value by individuals is critical for both employee satisfaction and the future of institutions (Eisenberger et al., 1986: p501; Wang & Netemeyer, 2002). Perceived organizational support believes that employees value the organization's contributions and are interested in their well-

being (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Kraimer & Wayne, 2004). Perceived organizational support affects all organizational policies. Creating the desired working conditions, providing executive support, and having an accepted reward and a sense of justice in the working environment increases personal respect, trust, and personal development. In this way, employees feel less under pressure, provide more satisfaction from their jobs and perform better.

There are four important factors in providing the desired organizational support; fairness, executive support, and organizational reward and working conditions (Yaghoubi et al., 2014). Organizational support is the perceptions employees develop depending on the value of their contribution to the organization and the degree of caring for their happiness (Taştan et al., 2014). Tharushika, Sellar, and, Anton-Arulrajah (2025) confirm that transformational leadership has both direct and indirect effects on employees' (followers) creativity, with perceived organizational support helping as a partial mediator. Organizational support can be defined as the motivation of organizational bosses to rate their employees' contributions and to care about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 2020). In summary, high levels of POS help increase positive work outcomes and decrease negative ones (Wu & Liu, 2014).

Latour and Rast (2004) argued that literature had paid little attention to followership skills development. Latour and Rast (2004) also believe that few professional development curricula, plus those of the U.S. military, devote time to developing hands-on follower skills and culture. Instead, commissioning bases, executive seminars, college business plans, and professional military education curricula focus on training leaders. It is possible this may be the reason why there is no instrument available to study organizational support and followership skills. Stephen and Lynne (1990) claimed that there are skills that empower followers. These skills are interpersonal communication, problem-solving skills, information gathering, coping with change, and conflict management (Stephen & Lynne, 1990). Akhilele et al. (2021) study confirmed known followership skills and new followers' skills such as (a) humility skills, (b) analytical skills, (c) skills to study one's boss, (d) skills to understand the leader, (e) followers' listening skills, (f) followers' inquisitive skills, (g) skills for speed, (h) understanding of work culture, (i) emotional intelligence skills, (j) skills to study rules, (k) teachability skills, (l) accuracy skills, (m) commitment skills, (n) followers' discipline skills, (o) work ethics, (p) followers' patience skills, (q) skills to manage the leader, (r) skills to help in vision, (s) skills to help in the mission, and (t) skills to be on the same page.

Akhilele et al. (2021), found that the construct followership skill is not as popular as leadership skill. However, Akhilele et al. identified some amount of organizational support. So, this study seeks to take advantage of this portion of the relationship to develop a quantitative instrument for future research on organizational support and followership skills. This is significant as it allows a large sample size for the of study organizational support and followership skills development in organizations.

Participants were from some selected junior staff of the private sector in Nigeria. Participants were requested to self-report on their own demographic characteristics (also called biodata), attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, feelings, and behavior. Self-reports can be done either by a questionnaire or an interview. Self-report is a commonly used method of measurement and is frequently criticized for its vulnerability to social desirability bias.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Organizational support will be measured by (a) causes of feelings of powerlessness are diagnosed, and empowerment strategy is employed, (b) subordinates are provided with efficacy information, (c) subordinates feel empowered as a result, and (d) behavioral effects of empowerment are noticed (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). The variable followership skill is possessing followers' skills set such as courage following skill, report-writing skills, accuracy skills, loyalty skills, good relationship skills, commitment skills, followers' discipline skills, work ethics, and many others (Akhilele et al., 2021). These skills set enable followers to play their roles in their organizations. Participants were selected from some selected junior staff of the private sector in Nigeria. Self-Report will be used to define these variables (Peter et al., 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational support

Organizational support denotes the employment of resources, structures, and processes that aid organizations to achieve their goals effectively. It comprises the knowledge, skills, and capabilities needed for achieving planned objectives. These competencies assist organizations in being better equipped to adapt to inventions and sustain their competitive benefit (Khotijah et al., 2023).

Organizational support for followership skills development has backing from the works of Conger and Kanungo (1988). Their studies on leadership have revealed a positive relationship between empowering subordinates (followers) and organizational success. They concluded that the empowerment of subordinates creates an understanding of organizational effectiveness. The objective of their study was to address and provide an analytical treatment of the empowerment construct. They believed that empowering subordinates(followers) can be done in the following stages:

1. Causes of feelings of powerlessness are diagnosed, and empowerment strategy is employed.
2. Subordinates are provided with efficacy information.
3. Subordinates feel empowered as a result.
4. Behavioral effects of empowerment are noticed.

One can say that organizations that provide skill acquisition for followers have an excellent chance of succeeding.

They believe that despite increasing attention to the concept of empowerment, understanding of the construct and its underlying processes remains inadequate. Conger and Kanungo attempted to deal with these inadequacies by offering an analytical treatment of the construct and integrating the diverse approaches to the subject found in psychology and management literature. They believe that empowerment can be seen in two ways: (a) as a motivational construct, and (b) as a relational construct. It is proposed that empowerment should

be viewed as a motivational construct. In conceptualizing empowerment in these terms, Bandura's self-efficacy notion (1986) is used. Empowerment, therefore, represent the process whereby an individual's belief in their self-efficacy is heightened. Empowerment as an enabling process affects both the initiation and persistence of subordinates' task behavior. Sources of self-efficacy information include: (a) enactive attainment, (b) vicarious experience, (c) verbal persuasion, and (d) emotional arousal.

The scale items that emerge from this concept are as follow:

- My organization have ways powerlessness is diagnosed.
- My organization have an empowerment strategy in place.
- I feel empowered by my organization.
- My organization provide me with efficacy information.
- My organization helps enhance my self-worth.
- behavioral effects of empowerment are evident in me.
- Because of organizational empowerment, I can initiate task.
- Because of organizational empowerment, I have persistence at work.
- Because of organizational empowerment, I am emotionally aroused.
- Because of organizational empowerment, I have remote experience.
- I get verbal persuasion from my organization.
- My organization make me feel motivated to deliver on assigned goals.
- My organization encourage me to relate well to organizational superiors.
- My organization encourage me to relate well with organizational subordinates.
- My organization encourage me to relate well with my teammates.
- My organization encourages my accomplishments.
- My organization enables me to grow in my career.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND FOLLOWERSHIP SKILLS

Akhilele et al. (2021) examined organizational support for followership skills development in Nigeria with a phenomenological study. The study revealed the impact of organizational support for followership skills development in Nigeria. The study determined how organizational efforts or behavior supported followership skills development. The study's significance was in the organization's ability to develop capabilities that will help them function as followers. Nguyen and Seung-Wan's (2018) findings of organizational support for followership behavior were the theoretical foundation for the study. Their study revealed that perceived organizational support is critical to influencing followers' behaviors in organizations. Alanazi, Wiechula, and Foley (2024) noted that leaders habitually lack a deep understanding of their team's roles, skills and limitations, which can lead to mismanagement and mistakes. One can say that leaders represent core organizational support.

The study involved the use of an in-depth interview method for data collection. The purposeful sampling research required 12 HR heads who worked in the 12 selected federal agencies. The experiences obtained from this research conformed to theories of in-depth phenomenological studies (Patton, 2015). The study results proved that followers do not receive the necessary support for followership skills development from the selected federal agencies in Nigeria. The study also discovered 20 new followership skills. The participants with 25 responses believed in the existence of a followership skills concept. Also, participants with 27 responses identified different followership skillsets. The skills identified from the study as follower skills include (a) humility skills, (b) analytical skills, (c) skills to study one's boss, (d) skill to understand the leader, (e) followers' listening skills, (f) followers' inquisitive skills, (g) skills for speed, (h) trust building, (i) understanding of work culture, (j) emotional intelligence skills, (k) communication skills, (l) integrity skills, (m) skills to study rules, (n) teachability skills, (o) courage following skill, (p) accuracy skills, (q) report-writing skills, (r) loyalty skills, (s) good relationship skills, (t) commitment skills, (u) followers' discipline skills, (v) work ethics, (w) followers' patience skills, (x) skills to manage your leader, (y) skills to help in vision, (z) skills to help in mission, and (aa) skills to be on the same page.

Some followership skills such as good relationship skills, trust-building skills, loyalty skills, courage following skills, and integrity skills supports Latour and Rast's (2004) empowerment for followers. They claimed that followers display loyalty, functioning well in teams, integrity, courageously communicating and building trust. The study results also showed that report-writing skills and communication skills corroborate Stephen and Lynne (1990) claimed that interpersonal communication and information-gathering skills empower followers to function correctly in organizations.

Twenty new followership skills that emerged from the study include (a) humility skills, (b) analytical skills, (c) skills to study one's boss, (d) skills to understand the leader, (e) followers' listening skills, (f) followers' inquisitive skills, (g) skills for speed, (h) understanding of work culture, (i) emotional intelligence skills, (j) skills to study rules, (k) teachability skills, (l) accuracy skills, (m) commitment skills, (n) followers' discipline skills, (o) work ethics, (p) followers' patience skills, (q) skills to manage the leader, (r) skills to help in vision, (s) skills to help in mission, and (t) skills to be on the same page. The participants believed these followership skills could help followers follow properly and perform their assigned tasks.

The scale items that emerge from this concept are as follow:

- My organization trains followers with humility skills.
- My organization trains followers with analytical skills.
- My organization trains followers with skills to study one's boss.
- My organization trains followers with skills to understand the leader.
- My organization trains followers with listening skills.
- My organization train followers with inquisitive skills.
- My organization trains followers with skills for speed.
- My organization trains followers with trust-building skills.
- My organization trains followers with understanding of work culture.

- My organization trains followers with emotional intelligence skills.
- My organization trains employees (followers) with communication skills.
- My organization trains followers with integrity skills.
- My organization trains followers with skills to study rules.
- My organization trains followers with teachability skills.
- My organization trains followers with courage skills.
- My organization trains followers with accuracy skills.
- My organization trains followers with report-writing skills.
- My organization trains followers with loyalty skills.
- My organization trains followers with good relationship skills.
- My organization train follower with commitment skills.
- My organization train follower with discipline skills.
- My organization trains followers with work ethics.
- My organization trains followers with patience skills.
- My organization train follower with skills to manage your leader.
- My organization trains followers with skills to help in vision.
- My organization trains followers with skills to help in mission.

My organization trains followers with skills to be on the same page as a leader.

SELF REPORTS

Grimmond, Brown, and Hawkins (2025) claimed that self-reports are used universally to probe people's thoughts, moods, and behaviors. It is frequently criticized for its vulnerability to social desirability bias. Respondents' bias must be seen as a threat (Padgett, 2017). It implies that the truthfulness and sincerity of respondents are questionable. It means that respondents may withhold information or lie to protect their privacy. Also, some respondents may want to be helpful and provide answers they think the researcher would like to hear or have a faulty recall. One may try to deal with all these issues by asking the respondents to state their biases and let them know the negative effect of this type of response on the study.

METHOD

DeVellis (2017) suggested eight steps for scale development: (a) determine clearly what it is you want to measure, (b) generate an item pool, (c) determine the format for measurement, (d) have initial item pool reviewed by experts, (e) consider inclusion of validation items, (f) administer items to a development sample, (g) evaluate the samples, and (h) optimize scale length.

Determine Clearly What You Want to Measure

In this empirical work, the organizational support and followership skills instrument was developed to measure organizational support and followership skills. Since at the time of this study there is no known empirically validated tools to identify measure organizational support and followership skills in organizations. So, this instrument that was constructed is considered new and unique.

Generate an Item Pool

We identified 44 items associated with the organizational support and followership skills instrument that emerged from studies in the literature reviews. These items are summarized in the literature review section. There were some redundancies in the item list, but DeVellis (2017) indicated that redundancy is not necessarily bad: At this stage of the scale development process, it was better to be more inclusive, all other things being equal. Redundancy is not a bad thing when working a scale. The truth is that the theoretical models that directs scale development efforts are based on redundancy (DeVellis, 2017).

Determine the Format for Measurement

We developed a Self-report questionnaire and deployed to collect responses from participants. Self-report is a commonly used measurement method. Scales, which are composed of items that can be graded on a continuum, are highly compatible with a theoretical model that the study seeks to address (DeVellis (2017). The people who participated in this study were asked to indicate if their organizations provided the itemized support and if their organizations support the training of the itemized skills sets. The ranking was built on a continuum from 1 (never) to 7 (always). Examples of a scale item are provided as follows:

My organization has ways powerlessness is diagnosed.

Never— 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 —always

My organization trains followers on humility skills.

Never— 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 —always

Expert Panel Review

The 44 scale items identified in the literature review were sent to experts on the study subject to determine which of these items needs to be eliminated as redundant, ambiguous, or requiring context for understanding to be included in the test instrument for further analysis. The

panel of experts, who published literature on followership and organizational studies, were contacted and they agreed to participate.

An online survey was created using SurveyMonkey™ that listed the 44 items that describe organizational support and followership skills. In a manner consistent with Reid's (2012) understanding, the experts were requested to rate each of the items as either highly relevant, somewhat relevant, or not at all relevant. Additionally, a comment box was made available for each item so that the expert could comment on the rating when an item is ambiguous, redundant, confusing, or required context for understanding. Still following Reid's approach, the results were quantified by assigning a score of 3 to a *highly relevant* item, 2 to *somewhat relevant*, and 1 to *not at all relevant*. To understand the experts' belief, whether the item has relevance for measuring organizational support and followership skills and needs to be retained, an average score of at least 2 on an item was considered as an indication to that belief. Accordingly, the initial 44 items that were reviewed by the expert panel were reduced to 33.

The 33 items were sent to the sample via an online survey service. We received 175 responses. Please see table 1 for the sample demographics. We conducted a Pearson-r correlation and noted the high number of correlations above 0.50, so we used direct oblimin rotation as suggested by Brown (2009, p.21). We also used SPSS to determine the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The results, shown in table 2 indicated that the data was a good candidate for data reduction, per Hair et al. (2010) recommendation of KMO above .60 and Bartlett's test of sphericity $p\text{-value} < .05$. If KMO is above .9 and Bartlett's $p\text{-value} < .05$, the data can benefit from factor analysis.

		Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Gender		3.4	3.4
	Male	40.6	40.6
	Female	100.0	100.0
	Total		
Age	21-30	29.1	29.1
	31-40	74.9	74.9
	41-50	98.3	98.3
	51-60	100.0	100.0
	Total		

Table 2 KMO and Bartlett's Test for Factor 1

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.961
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	8777.448
	Df	496
	Sig.	.000

The first factor analysis showed two factors with eigenvalues above 1.0. Factor 1 had an eigenvalue of 23.83 and explained 74.4 percent of the variance. Factor 2 had an eigenvalue of

1.92 and explained 6.2 percent of the variance. There were four items that cross-loaded on the two factors. We removed the items and conducted another factor analysis that produced two factors. Factor 1 included 15 items, had an eigenvalue of 20.07, and explained 74.3 percent of the variance. Factor 2 had 12 items, had an eigenvalue of 1.81 and explained 6.7 percent of the variance.

We conducted scale reliability analysis for the two scales and found that the 15-item scale-1 had Cronbach's α of .983 and the 12-item scale-2 had Cronbach's α of .948. DeVellis (2017) method calls for scale optimization when Cronbach's α is high.

We chose the five highest loading items for each of the two scales. Factor 1 (loading ranged from .901 – 1.00) has a Cronbach α of .948 and includes the following items:

- Q9_4 My organization trains followers with patience skills.
- Q9_3 My organization trains followers with work ethics.
- Q8_5 My organization train followers on commitment skills.
- Q7_5 My organization trains followers on integrity skills.
- Q9_1 My organization train follower on discipline skills.

We named Factor 1 'Training Support for Followership Skills'.

Factor 2 (loading ranged from .855 – .945) has a Cronbach α of .945 and includes the following items:

- Q2_4 Because of organizational empowerment, I am emotionally stimulated.
- Q2_2 I feel empowered by my organization.
- Q2_1 My organization have an empowerment strategy in place.
- Q2_5 Because of organizational empowerment, I have experience.
- Q5_1 My organization makes me feel motivated to deliver on assigned goals

We named Factor 2 'Organizational Empowerment.'

We conducted a Pearson- r correlation test of the two variables and found that the two variables are highly correlated with $r = .706$. We ran a t-test for each variable with gender as the grouping variable and found no significant differences for either variable by gender. We ran ANOVA on the two variables, each with the grouping variable of age and we found no significant differences for either variable by age. Descriptives for the two factors showed the five-item organizational support variable for our study showed a mean of 7.77 and a standard deviation of 2.05. The five-item empowerment variable for our study showed a mean of 6.92. A skewness and kurtosis analysis showed that both variables could be treated as normal data because both tests were within -3.0 and +3/0.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to create a valid and reliable instrument to measure organizational support and followership skills. In this study, the concept organizational support and followership skills is therefore operationalized and a statistically validated instrument, as

Organizational Support and Followership Skills Questionnaire (OSFSQ), is created to measure both constructs. Before this study, there was no instrument to measure organizational support and followership skills. Though Latour and Rast's (2004), Nguyen and Seung-Wan's (2018), and Allen et al. (2007) studies gave evidence of POS's positive relationship with follower skills development and continuance, there have been no studies to develop a single instrument that measures organizational support and followership skills.

IMPLICATIONS OF RESEARCH

The OSFSQ enables researchers to measure organizational support and followership skills - an approach that brings about studies of various organizational behaviors as it relates with wide range of followership skills. Thus, the development of such an instrument opens more doors for empirical research on organizational support and followership studies. The OSFSQ is significant to the practitioner as well. First, the study could be used to solve the problem of not been able to generalized certain findings because limited respondents were employed (Padgett, 2017). Now, with OSFSQ as instrument, large samples can be studied and results can be generalized. Secondly, the study contributes to organizational leadership development of followers and leaders, by deepening the conversation on the leader- followership relations (Akhilele et al., 2021). Thirdly, organizations can employ this study to know how much support followers gets, what exactly their challenges are, and the training they can receive (Alanazi, Wiechula, and Foley, 2024; Stephen & Lynne, 1990). Fourthly, mentors or trainers in organizations will now know skills sets to emphasis in their trainings or contact sessions. Finally, this simple 10-item Questionnaire can be included in the study of organizational support and followership skill studies.

CONCLUSION

From 40 branches of a financial institution in a private sector in Nigeria, 175 participants submitted responses via an online survey service. 165 responses were found usable. We conducted a Pearson-r correlation test of the two variables and found that the two variables are highly correlated with $r = .706$. We chose the five highest loading items for each of the two scales. Factor 1 (loading ranged from .901 – 1.00) has a Cronbach a of .948 and includes the following items: labelled, my organization trains followers with patience skills, my organization trains followers with work ethics, my organization train followers on commitment skills, my organization trains followers on integrity skills, and my organization train follower on discipline skills. They are named Factor 1 'Training Support for Followership Skills'. Factor 2 (loading ranged from .855 – .945) has a Cronbach a of .945 and includes the following items: labelled because of organizational empowerment, I am emotionally stimulated, I feel empowered by my organization, my organization have an empowerment strategy in place, because of organizational empowerment, I have experience, and my organization makes me feel motivated to deliver on assigned goals. They are named Factor 2 'Organizational Empowerment.'

The two five-item factors comprise the Organizational Support and Followership Skills Questionnaire (OSFSQ). The OSFSQ provides scholars and researchers with a valid and reliable instrument for future research related to organizational support and followership skills research or studies; while encouraging practitioners for personal development, followership development, coaching and mentoring of organizational members for valuing and practicing followership skills development within organizations and beyond. Further research is recommended to develop and further the construct of followership skills development in public and nonprofit organizations.

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