

INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE ON LECTURERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN STATES UNIVERSITIES OF NORTHWEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of transformational leadership style on lecturers' job satisfaction in state universities in the Northwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey design to determine the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction among lecturers. The population comprised 4,742 academic staff across nine state universities in the region. Using the Research Advisors' (2006) sample size table, a sample of 357 lecturers was selected through simple random sampling with proportional stratification by academic rank. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from established leadership and job satisfaction scales and measured using a five-point Likert scale. The instrument demonstrated high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.879. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis at a 0.05 level of significance with the aid of SPSS. The findings revealed a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and lecturers' job satisfaction ($r = 0.61, p < .05$). Regression results further showed that transformational leadership significantly predicts job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.61, p < .001$), explaining 37.2% of the variance in lecturers' job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.372$). The study concludes that transformational leadership practices significantly enhance lecturers' job satisfaction and recommends that university administrators adopt transformational leadership behaviors to improve staff morale, commitment, and institutional effectiveness.

Keywords: Transformation, Transformational leadership, leadership styles, Job satisfaction

Introduction

In the dynamic environment of higher education, the effectiveness of university administrators is closely linked to the satisfaction and performance of academic staff. Transformational leadership, with its focus on inspiring, motivating, and developing followers, has emerged as a pivotal driver of employee engagement and institutional success. Unlike other types of leadership styles, transformational leaders cultivate innovation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support, aligning personal aspirations with organizational goals. For lecturers, job satisfaction is not only a reflection of personal well-being but also a critical determinant of teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and commitment to institutional objectives. Despite the recognized importance of leadership in educational outcomes, limited empirical evidence exists on how transformational leadership specifically affects lecturers' job satisfaction in Nigeria's Northwest universities. This study bridges this gap by exploring the relationship between transformational leadership practices and lecturers' satisfaction, providing

insights for policymakers and university administrators seeking to foster a motivated and engaged academic workforce.

Leadership is a multifaceted concept that has garnered significant attention across various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, management and education. It plays a crucial role in influencing the behavior, attitudes and performance of individuals and groups within organizations. Understanding leadership is essential for fostering effective teams, enhancing organizational culture and achieving strategic goals (Uhl Bien, 2020).

Leadership can be defined as the ability to influence others to achieve common goals (Northouse, 2019). This definition emphasizes the relational aspect of leadership, where leaders guide, inspire and motivate others through persuasion rather than coercion. Influence is the cornerstone of leadership as it shapes the actions, attitudes and behaviors of followers. Effective influence requires understanding individual and group dynamics. Leaders use a variety of strategies to influence their followers, including role modelling, communication and reward systems. For instance, a leader who consistently demonstrates ethical behavior influences their team to prioritize integrity in decision making. This form of influence builds trust and loyalty, which are critical for long term success. Leadership as influence also extends beyond formal authority. Informal leaders within organizations, such as team members who inspire others through their expertise or charisma, exemplify this concept.

Leadership is seen as a relationship between leaders and followers characterized by trust, respect and mutual goals (Graen & Uhl Bien, 2020). This definition focuses on the social and emotional connection between leaders and their teams. Effective leadership is not a one way process but a partnership that fosters collaboration and shared success. Relational leadership emphasizes the importance of building strong interpersonal connections. For instance, leaders who prioritize active listening and empathy create an environment where team members feel valued and understood. This relational approach enhances job satisfaction, commitment and performance. The relationship centered view of leadership aligns with contemporary workplace trends emphasizing inclusivity and employee well-being. Research shows that leaders who invest in building positive relationships with their teams achieve higher levels of engagement and loyalty (Liden et al., 2021). This definition underscores the human aspect of leadership, emphasizing connection over control.

Transformational Leadership

A transformational leader is a person who stimulates and inspires (transform) followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes (Robbins and Coulter, 2017). Who pays attention to the concern and developmental needs of individual followers; they change followers' awareness of issues by helping them to look at old problems in a new way; and they are able to arouse, excite and inspire followers to put out extra effort to achieve group goals. Transformational leadership is all about leadership that creates positive change in the followers whereby they take care of each other's interests and act in the interests of the group as a whole (Warrilow, 2012). The concept of transformational leadership was introduced by James Macgregor Burns in 2020 in his descriptive research on political leaders, but its usage has spread into organizational psychology and management with further modifications (Jung & Sosik, 2012). Transformational leadership focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to achieve exceptional outcomes while fostering their personal growth. This style emphasizes vision, change and the ability to energize individuals toward achieving a shared goal. Transformational

leaders build trust and enthusiasm by aligning the organization's values with those of its members, creating a sense of purpose and commitment (Bass, 2021). They are often characterized by their ability to communicate a compelling vision, challenge existing norms and encourage innovation. This leadership style is especially effective in dynamic environments where adaptability and creativity are essential.

Transformational leaders also prioritize the development of their team members by offering mentorship and creating opportunities for growth. They focus on meeting the emotional and intellectual needs of individuals, fostering loyalty and respect. Studies have shown that organizations led by transformational leaders tend to have higher employee satisfaction, improved performance and greater organizational effectiveness (Judge & Piccolo, 2020,). However, this style requires a significant emotional investment and leaders must maintain a balance between inspiring others and managing practical tasks.

In practice, transformational leadership is most effective in organizations undergoing significant change. For example, during a corporate restructuring, a transformational leader can unite employees under a renewed sense of purpose, driving motivation and cohesion. Nonetheless, critics argue that the style may overemphasize vision at the expense of immediate operational concerns (Uhl Bien, 2020). Transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. These include connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to the project and the collective identity of the organization; being a role model for followers that inspires them and makes them interested; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of followers, so the leader can align followers with tasks that enhance their performance (Gardner, 2019).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a critical aspect of organizational behavior and human resource management. It reflects the degree to which individuals feel content with their jobs and encompasses various dimensions, including emotional responses to job conditions, the nature of work tasks and relationships with colleagues and supervisors (Metle, 2011). Understanding job satisfaction is essential for organizations aiming to foster a motivated workforce, enhance productivity and reduce employee turnover.

Job satisfaction is a multivariate human attitude defined as employees' feelings about their jobs in general. Employee satisfaction is essential to the success of any business. A high rate of employee contentedness is directly related to a lower turnover and greater productivity. Job satisfaction is considered a strong predictor of overall individual wellbeing (McCann, Graves, & Cox, 2014). Employees should strive for satisfaction in their work given the amount of time devoted to work throughout their lives (Koslowsky et al, 2012). Job satisfaction and occupations can be viewed as a bi dimensional concept consisting of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction dimensions. Intrinsic sources of satisfaction depend on the individual characteristics of the person, such as, the ability to use initiative, maintain good relationships with the supervisors and team members, quality of output and personal drive. Extrinsic sources of satisfaction are situational and depend on the environment such as pay, promotion, job security, financial and other advantages of a job (Rose, 2013). Mohammad Mosadegh Rad & Yar Mohammadian (2016) identified some of the factors that might contribute to the job satisfaction that consist of: wages, benefits, accomplishment, independence, acknowledgment,

communication, working job conditions, job importance, coworkers, professionalism, organizational climate, relationships, working for a reputable agency, supervisor support, positive, job security, workplace flexibility, team environment and genetic factors. Meanwhile, Vigoda and Cohen (2013) pointed out that job satisfaction and leadership style could improve the relationship between employees and employers. Therefore, it is clearly indicated that leadership styles have influence to the job satisfaction among employees.

Statement of the Problem

Job satisfaction among lecturers in Nigerian state universities has become a growing concern, particularly in the North West geopolitical zone. In recent years, there have been persistent reports of increased complaints from academic staff, frequent industrial actions, low morale, and widespread dissatisfaction with working conditions. National Policy in Education, Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014). These challenges are often manifested through strikes organized by academic staff unions, reduced commitment to teaching and research activities, and declining enthusiasm for academic responsibilities. Scholars have argued that job satisfaction is a critical determinant of lecturers' productivity, commitment, and overall institutional effectiveness (Spector, 2019; Robbins & Judge, 2017). The persistence of dissatisfaction among lecturers therefore suggests a fundamental problem in how academic staff are managed, especially with regard to leadership approaches adopted by university administrators. This situation has motivated the need to critically examine the role of leadership styles in shaping lecturers' job satisfaction in state universities.

In order to address the challenges associated with declining job satisfaction among lecturers in state universities in the North West Geographical Zone of Nigeria, several strategic solutions can be considered. First, there is a need for improved leadership development and training for university administrators. Vice-chancellors, deans, heads of departments, and other university managers should be exposed to modern leadership training programs that emphasize transformational, democratic, and situational leadership approaches. Such training can enhance administrators' ability to motivate staff, encourage participation in decision making, and create a supportive academic environment that promotes job satisfaction and institutional effectiveness.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of transformational leadership style on lecturers' job satisfaction in states universities of northwest geopolitical zone in Nigeria. Specifically, the objective of this study was to:

1. Examine the influence of transformational leadership style on lecturers' job satisfaction in states universities of northwest geopolitical zone in Nigeria

Research Objectives

To achieve the set objective, the following research question was formulated to aid the study:

1. What is the influence of transformational leadership style on job satisfaction among lecturers in state universities of North West Geographical Zone, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated to aid the study:

1. There is no significant influence of transformational leadership style on job satisfaction among lecturers in state universities of North West Geographical Zone, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational survey design to examine the influence of transformational leadership style on lecturers' job satisfaction in state universities in the Northwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria. This design is suitable for determining relationships between variables without manipulating them. The population comprised 4,742 academic staff across nine state universities in Northwest Nigeria. Using the Research Advisors' (2006) sample size table at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error, a sample of 357 lecturers was selected. Simple random sampling with proportional stratification by academic rank was employed to ensure adequate representation of lecturers across institutions.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from established leadership and job satisfaction scales. The instrument consisted of two sections: demographic information and items measuring transformational leadership and job satisfaction using a five-point Likert scale. Content validity was ensured through expert review, while a pilot test produced a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.879, indicating high internal consistency. The questionnaires were administered directly to selected lecturers with permission from university authorities. A total of 357 copies were distributed and retrieved over a four-week period, with confidentiality assured. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequencies) and regression analysis at a 0.05 significance level using SPSS.

Results

Research Question: What is the influence of transformational leadership style on job satisfaction among lecturers in state universities of North West Geographical Zone, Nigeria?

Table 1: Shows the influence of transformational leadership styles on job What is the influence of transformational leadership style on job satisfaction among lecturers in state universities of North West Geographical Zone, Nigeria.

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Transformational Leadership	357	3.82	0.64
Job Satisfaction	357	3.67	0.71

Interpretation: The mean score of 3.82 indicates that respondents perceived a high level of transformational leadership style among university administrators. Lecturers also reported a moderately high level of job satisfaction ($M = 3.67$).

Hypothesis: There is no significant influence of transformational leadership style on job satisfaction among lecturers in state universities of North West Geographical Zone, Nigeria.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis was used to show the responses of the respondents on the influence of transformational leadership style on job satisfaction among lecturers in state universities of North West Geographical Zone, Nigeria.

Variables	Transformational Leadership	Job Satisfaction
Transformational Leadership	1	—
Job Satisfaction	0.61*	1
p < 0.05		

Interpretation: A strong positive relationship exists between transformational leadership and job satisfaction ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that higher levels of transformational leadership correspond to higher lecturers' job satisfaction.

Table 3: Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Independent Variable: Transformational Leadership

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	1.214	0.182	—	6.67	< .001
Transformational Leadership	0.642	0.051	0.61	12.59	< .001

Interpretation: Transformational leadership significantly predicts lecturers' job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < .001$). The model explains 37.2% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.372$), and the F-statistic ($F = 158.5$, $p < .001$) confirms that the regression model is statistically significant. This indicates that transformational leadership practices; such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence, substantially enhance lecturers' job satisfaction in state universities in Northwest Nigeria.

Discussion and Findings

This study examined the influence of transformational leadership on lecturers' job satisfaction in state universities in Northwest Nigeria. The findings reveal a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction ($r = 0.61$, $\beta = 0.61$, $p < .001$), indicating that leaders who demonstrate inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence substantially enhance the satisfaction of their academic staff.

These results are consistent with Judge and Piccolo (2004), whose meta-analysis showed that transformational leadership positively impacts employee outcomes, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Similarly, Yangaiya and Ali (2023) reported that transformational leadership significantly predicts lecturers' job satisfaction in Katsina State, underscoring the relevance of leadership style in the Nigerian higher education context.

International evidence also supports this finding. Muhajir, Asmony, and Hermanto (2023) found that transformational leadership improves employee satisfaction and readiness for change in academic institutions, highlighting its role in fostering motivation, engagement, and adaptability. Locally, Nuel et al. (2021) emphasized that transformational leadership dimensions positively correlate with organizational success, demonstrating its critical influence on employee morale and institutional effectiveness.

The regression results indicate that transformational leadership accounts for 37.2% of the variance in lecturers' job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.372$). While substantial, this suggests that other factors (such as institutional policies, remuneration, workload, and organizational culture) also affect job satisfaction, warranting further research.

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