

# Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance of Selected Private Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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## Abstract

This study examines the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance of selected private secondary schools in Rivers State. Research design is a cross-sectional survey. Target population includes nine private secondary schools in as published by West African Examination Council (2016). 750 employees were surveyed. Sample size is 254 using Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Method of data collection is questionnaire. Face and content validity were used. Cronbach alpha's test was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient ( $\rho$ ) was used to test the hypotheses using statistical package for social sciences (20.0). The study found that transformational leadership has a positive significant relationship with employee performance. This study concluded that transformational leadership measured in terms of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration enhances employee performance in the selected private secondary schools in Rivers State. One of the recommendations is that administrators of private secondary schools should employ transformational leadership as a strategy to enhance employee performance at the workplace.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Employee Performance, Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individual Consideration

## Introduction

The progress and sustenance of every organization are dependent on the human element that is saddle with the responsibility of implementing the objectives of the organization. This human element is the employee. Thus, an employee is an asset even though is not captured in the balance sheet of the firm remain the main vehicle through which profitability, return on investment, growth as well as innovation are achieved. In both service- and product-cantered organizations, employees' are the ones that ascertain the level of customer satisfaction. They do this through service quality dimensions that are tangibility, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman, et al., 1988). Customer retention also rests with the employees because if an employee did not display one of the above-mentioned dimensions of service quality, the result will be that the number of customers that were coming to patronize such an organization will decline tremendously and this will affect the firm negatively. Looking at employee from the angle of production organization, they play a very good role in terms of research and development that will result to product design and packaging.

Buttressing further, employee performance is the essence of organizational existence. Even in the current edge of technology where robots have been developed to do some jobs at the workplace, it is still the responsibility of employee to control the robot; otherwise, the robot will

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destroy the productivity of the organization. Therefore, employee performance remains the engine room that stimulates organizational prosperity. However, the performance of employees is dependent on the type of leadership obtainable in that organization. Leaders with theory x assumption will always focus on the job while those with theory y assumption will have the employees at heart.

Nevertheless, the successes that employees bring to the organization are being guided by organizational leaders. Leaders influence the behaviour of every member of their organization through decision-making, communication, instructions, and motivation. Leaders chose the appropriate style of leadership that can accommodate the situation at their disposal in order to influence organizational activities that is geared towards the attainment of stated goals. Griffin and Moorhead (2014) asserts that the type of leadership style adopted by a leader depends on the environment. Luthans (2011) postulates that it is better for every manager to study each of the leadership styles and find the best one that can be used to influence their followers.

Drawing from the above-mentioned postulations, one of the problems that private secondary schools are facing is leadership. The rate at which classroom teachers are quitting their jobs has been linked with the type of leadership in place (Odigbo, 2005). Dike (2016) argues that since the collapse of public schools, owners of private schools have taken advantage of the educational sector with profit maximization as their major objective. On the other hand, most performing private secondary schools in Rivers state have shown that their administrators have certain characteristics of emotional-intelligence leadership (Ekeh and Oladayo, 2011).

## **Aims/Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance of selected private secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, this study is sought to:

- determine the relationship between idealized influence and employee performance.
- determine the relationship between inspirational motivation and employee performance.

- determine the relationship between intellectual stimulation and employee performance.
- determine the relationship between individual consideration and employee performance.

## **Research Hypotheses**

Based on the specific objectives, the following research hypotheses were formulated.

HO1: There is no significant relationship between idealized influence and employee performance.

HO2: There is no significant relationship between inspirational motivation and employee performance.

HO3: There is no significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and employee performance.

HO4: There is no significant relationship between individual consideration and employee performance.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **The Concept of Leadership**

Wehrich, Cannice, and Koontz (2008) perceive leadership as the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of group goals. Leadership involves the use of non-coercive influence; whereas, as a property, leadership is the set of characteristics attributed to someone who is perceived to use influence successfully (Griffin and Moorhead, 2014). Armstrong (2012) perceives leadership as a process of inspiring people to do their best in order to achieve desired result. Jones and George (2004), in its view, perceives leadership as the process by which a person exerts influence over people and inspires, motivates, and directs their activities to help achieve group or organizational goals. Northouse (2004) accentuate that leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of people to achieve a common goal. Cole (2005) asserts that leadership is a process in which one individual or sometimes a small group of individuals influences the efforts of others towards the achievement of goals in a given set of circumstances. Eze (2010) elucidates that leadership can be understood as the possession by one the ability to get others to play along with and to say the

least, 'obey him'. Iheriohanma (2009), on the other hand, viewed leadership as the ability of a person to lead.

### Transformational Leadership

Burns (1978) developed transformational-leadership theory in the late 20th century in his analysis of political leaders. Burns postulated that transformational leaders inspire followers to accomplish more by concentrating on the follower's values and helping the follower align these values with the values of the organization (Givens, 2008). Bass (1985) refined and expanded Burns' leadership theory. Bass said that a leader is "one who motivates us to do more than we originally expected to do". Transformational leaders influence subordinates by motivating and inspiring them to achieve organizational goals (Bass and Avolio, 1995). The major premise of the transformational leadership theory is the leader's ability to motivate the follower to accomplish more than what the follower planned to accomplish (Krishnan, 2005). Transformational leaders encourage follower to do more than required (Sosik, Potosky and Jung, 2002). Transformational leadership is a type of leadership that makes subordinates aware of the importance of their jobs and performance to the organization and aware of their own needs for personal growth and that motivates subordinates to work for the good of the organization (Jones and George, 2006). Wehrich, Cannice and Koontz (2008) accentuates that transformational leaders articulate a vision, inspire and motivate followers, and create a climate favourable to organizational change. Transformational leaders are proactive and assist followers to attain unexpected goals (Antonakis, Avolio, and Sivasubramaniam, 2003). Melvyn, Nico, Barbara, and Kai (2011) contended that transformational leadership could be viewed as encouraging followers to carry out their work in a promotion-based manner, and accordingly elicit fit for those who prefer to use promotional means of self-regulation. Krishnan (2004) perceives transformational leadership as the leader's ability to motivate the subordinates for achieving more than what they have already planned to achieve. Hall, Johnson, Wysochi, and Kepner (2008) posit that transformational leadership is a system of changing and transforming people. Ali et al., (2011) viewed transformational leaders as those who develop a positive relationship with their subordinates to

strengthen the performance of the employees and thus the performance of the organization.

Avolio and Bass (2000) and Bass and Riggio (2006) have identified four dimensions of transformational leadership which include: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

*Idealized Influence:* This dimension refers to a situation where the leader creates a vision and makes it plain by sharing it with all the organizational members. In other words, the leader leads by example, influences his followers through his role models and behaviour.

*Inspirational Motivation:* This second dimension refers to a scenario where the leader displays an excitement and increases the expectation of the followers (employees) through the vision. In this, the followers develop self-confidence in the leaders' vision and follow every step to actualize the vision.

*Intellectual Stimulation:* The third dimension of transformational leadership refers to a situation where the leader encourages the followers to think outside the box by being creative. The leader tries to stimulate the followers on how to solve problems with new ideas instead the former way of doing thing in the organization.

*Individual Consideration:* This is the fourth dimension of transformational leadership that simply means the ability of a transformational leader to pay adequate attention to the need of his followers. This is in line with 'consideration' research result by Ohio State University research on leadership behavioural model. Similarly, it also corresponds with 'employee-centred' leadership findings by University of Michigan.

### Employee Performance

Christopher and Bulah, (2016) cited in Okwudili and Edeh (2017) perceives employee performance as employees achieving the results, goals, or standards as per the expectations set by the enterprise. In line with this argument, this study views employee performance as the input exerted by an employee in the course of carrying out the work that is assigned to him/her. A superior on a daily basis can also view it as the extent to which an employee

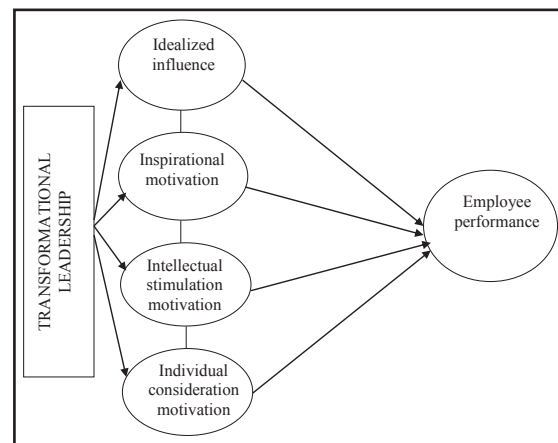
completes the assignment giving to him/her. Okwudili and Edeh (2017) contended that employee performance determines the direction and expansion of any business outfit in the universe. However, for an employee to be performing, such individual must have achieved the goals set by the enterprise with the standard required (Okwudili and Edeh, 2017).

## Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance

Transformational leadership has a strong positive effect on employee performance especially in the private secondary schools in Rivers State. This is because; the rate at which these secondary schools perform academically has proven that their leaders or administrators were people with transformational leadership attributes. Idealized influence of a leader has a great influence on the performance of their employees. When members of any organization follow the vision of the organization, it will mean that their focus will be on how that vision can be accomplish without focusing on their own vision. This is one of the arguments in Fayol's 14 principles of management where he argued that in any organization, there should be a subordination of individual interest to that of the organization in which they work for.

On the contrary, where there is no idealize influence, employees tend to focus on their own objectives rather than that of the organization, which is the ultimate. Secondly, inspirational motivation of employees enhances their capacity to be self-reliant, develop confidence of "I can do it" spirit. This dimension may have been the type exhibited by Barack Obama, the former president of the United States of America, when he started the 'Yes We Can' campaign and this triggered the American's spirit that self-confidence can enhance their performance anywhere they found themselves. Building the self-confidence of the employees is very important as they will see the leader as one who wants them to become whatever they want to be in life. Unlike other type of leaders who will not bother to encourage the employees but will rather prefer to ensure that task is giving pre-eminence over the employees. Thirdly, transformational leaders influence their followers through intellectual stimulation. The transformational leader stimulates the followers to be creative, dream big, and innovate at all times. When

transformational leaders adopt intellectual stimulation to influence their followers, the followers imbibe a new way of thinking from their leader who teaches them how to solve problems with new approaches. In support of this argument, Walumbwa and Lawler (2003) asserts that by encouraging followers to seek new ways to approach problems and challenges, and identifying with followers' needs, transformational leaders are able to motivate their followers to get more involved in their work, resulting in higher levels of organizational commitment. In addition, Kark and Shamir (2002) cited in Atika and Tripti (2008) found that transformational leadership behaviour like intellectual stimulation enhances the followers' feeling of self-worth because they transmit the message that the leader believes in the followers' integrity and ability. Lastly, transformational leaders influence their followers through consideration. In the selected private secondary for instance, one of the teachers (name withheld) assert that those that follow the footsteps of their director have been rewarded with cars over the years. In some other schools, some of the teachers assert that their rewards were based on the performance of the students in the external examinations.



Source: Researcher's conceptualization (2017)

**Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework**

## Empirical Review

Several researchers have examined the effect of transformational leadership with organizational criterion variables such as performance, job satisfaction, effectiveness, and efficiency. This study therefore presents some of these empirical studies with their respective findings. Avolio, Zhu, Koh, and Bhatia

(2004) examined transformational leadership and organizational commitment with the mediating role of psychological empowerment and moderating role of structural distance. Results of their analyses indicate that psychological empowerment mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment and; structural distance between the leader and follower moderated the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. Hukpati (2009) researched on the relationship between transformational leadership style of the heads of departments and employee job satisfaction in tertiary institutions in Ghana. Hukpati's results revealed that transformational leadership has a positive relationship with employee job satisfaction. Ojokuku, Odetayo, and Sajuyigbe (2012) examined the impact of leadership style on organizational performance in selected banks in Ibadan, Nigeria. Their findings showed that transformational and democratic leadership styles promote organizational efficiency. Udoh and Agu (2012) examined the impact of transformational and transactional leadership styles on performance of manufacturing organization in Cross River state, Nigeria. Their findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between the two leadership types and organizational performance. Amir and Zaidatol (2012) studied transformational leadership and its predictive effects on leadership effectiveness at Malaysia. Result of their study revealed that contingent reward, idealized influence (attribute), inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, laissez-faire, intellectual stimulation, and management-by-exception active are significant predictors of leadership effectiveness.

Abasilim (2013) examined the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership and organizational performance in Akwa Ibom Water Company Limited. Abasilim found that there was a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance, although there was a weak positive relationship between transactional leadership style and organizational performance. Duressa and Asfaw (2014) examined transformational leadership and its applications in the public service organizations of Ethiopia. Their findings show that the changes in Ethiopia

enabled public service organizations to create demanding society for improved services. Abasilim (2014) carried out a review on transformational leadership style and its relationship with organizational performance in Nigerian work context. Abasilim concluded that transformational leadership style has a significant positive relationship with organizational performance in Nigerian work context.

## Research Methodology

Research design adopted in this study is a cross-sectional survey. Target population includes nine private secondary schools in as published by West African Examination Council (2016). 750 employees comprising of administrative and classroom teachers were surveyed in these nine schools. Sample size is 254 using Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Questionnaire is the method of data collection. 254 copies of questionnaire were administered but 212 copies were retrieved and used for data analysis. Face and content validity were employed. Cronbach's alpha test was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) was used to test the hypotheses using statistical package for social sciences (20.0).

## Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to analyse respondent's profiles and presented on percentages as shown below while hypotheses were tested using spearman's rank order correlation coefficient (rho).

**Table 1: Gender**

<i>Gender</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Valid	M	130	61
	F	82	39
	Total	212	100

*Source: Field survey (2017)*

Table 1 above shows the gender of 212 respondents from the selected private secondary schools in Rivers state. 130 respondents representing 61% were males, while 82 respondents representing 39% were females.

**Table 2: Age-bracket**

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid 20-26	28	13
25-35	74	35
35 & above	110	52
Total	212	100

Source: Field survey (2017)

Table 2 shows the age-bracket of 212 respondents from the selected private secondary schools in Rivers state. 28 respondents representing 13% were between 20 and 26 years. 74 respondents representing 35% were between 25 and 35 years. 110 respondents representing 52% were 35 years and above.

**Table 3: Position Occupied**

Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid Classroom teacher	140	66
Admin staff	59	28
Others	13	06
Total	212	100

Source: Field survey (2017)

Table 3 shows the position held by 212 respondents' from the selected private secondary schools in Rivers state. 140 respondents representing 66% are classroom teachers.

**Table 4: Educational Qualifications**

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Valid OND/HND	32	15
B.Sc./B.A./B.Ed	162	76
M.Sc./MBA	10	05
Others	8	04
Total	212	100

Source: Field survey (2017)

Table 4 shows the educational qualifications of 212 respondents from the selected private secondary schools in Rivers state. 32 respondents representing 15% are OND/HND certificate holders. 162 respondents representing 76% hold B.Sc./B.A./B.Ed. degrees. 10 respondents representing 5% hold M.Sc./MBA degrees. 8 respondents representing 4% hold other qualifications not listed in the questionnaire.

HO1: There is no significant relationship between idealized influence and employee performance

**Correlations**

			Idealized influence	Employee performance
Spearman's rho	Idealized influence	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.801**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	212	212
	Employee performance	Correlation Coefficient	.801**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	212	212

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Result above shows the correlation between idealized influence and employee performance. The correlation coefficient (rho) is high and positive (.801) which shows there is a relationship between the two variables. Thus, there is significant relationship between idealized

influence and employee performance ( $p < 0.05$ ). Null hypothesis is hereby rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

HO2: There is no significant relationship between inspirational motivation and employee performance

**Correlations**

			Inspirational motivation	Employee performance
Spearman's rho	Inspirational motivation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.821**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	212	212
	Employee performance	Correlation Coefficient	.821**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	212	212

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above output shows the correlation between inspirational motivation and employee performance. The correlation coefficient (rho) is high and as well positive (.821) which revealed that a relationship exists between inspirational motivation and employee performance. Hence, there is significant relationship between

inspirational motivation and employee performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

*HO3: There is no significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and employee performance*

**Correlations**

			Intellectual stimulation	Employee performance
Spearman's rho	Intellectual stimulation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.761**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	212	212
	Employee performance	Correlation Coefficient	.761**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	212	212

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above result shows the correlation between intellectual stimulation and employee performance. From the result, correlation coefficient (.761\*\*) is high which indicates that there is a relationship between intellectual stimulation and employee performance. This implies

that intellectual stimulation has a positive significant relationship with employee performance. In that case, the null hypothesis will be rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

*HO4: There is no significant relationship between individual consideration and employee performance*

**Correlations**

			Individual consideration	Employee performance
Spearman's rho	Individual consideration	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.825**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	212	212
	Employee performance	Correlation Coefficient	.825**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	212	212

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above output shows the correlation between individual consideration and employee performance. From the result, it shows that individual consideration has a positive significant relationship with employee performance ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, the alternate hypothesis will be accepted and null hypothesis will be rejected.

**Findings**

Based on the above-mentioned results, the study found that transformational leadership has a positive significant relationship with employee performance. The following specific findings were drawn:

- Idealized influence has a positive significant relationship with employee performance. This implies that as administrators exhibit idealized influence, employee performance increases at the workplace.
- Inspirational motivation has a significant relationship with employee performance of selected private secondary schools. This implies that as inspirational motivation increases, employee performance also increases.
- Intellectual stimulation is positively related with employee performance of selected private secondary schools. This means that when leaders inspire

their followers, the followers will enhance their performance.

- Individual consideration has a positive significant relationship with employee performance of selected private secondary schools. This means that as leaders pay more attention to their employees, the employees will improve their performance.

## Conclusion

This study concluded that transformational leadership—measured in term of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration—enhances employee performance in the selected private secondary schools in Rivers State.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

- Administrators of private secondary schools should employ transformational leadership as a strategy to enhance employee performance at the workplace.
- Owners of private secondary schools should ascertain the leadership characteristics of their administrators before giving them appointment.
- Ministry of education should include transformational leadership in the nation educational curriculum.

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