



Role of Transformational Leadership on Employee Motivation and Satisfaction of Non-Academic Staff of a Selected Nigerian Public University

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Abstract

Background: Over time, the public sector has widely recognised the role of leadership as a crucial element of successful management. The public sector, including educational institutions, encounters difficulties in enhancing employee motivation and satisfaction due to the absence of an established and efficient leadership style. Studies indicate that the leadership style demonstrated by a manager has a crucial role in positively impacting the motivation and satisfaction of employees. **Purpose/Aim:** The study investigated the impact of transformational leadership on staff motivation and job satisfaction at the University of Ibadan. **Method:** A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted, and data was gathered from 231 non-academic and administrative staff at the University of Ibadan. Standardised scales of measurements on transformational leadership, motivation, and employee satisfaction were adapted in the study. More than 43.3% of the respondents were between 31 and 40 years old. **Results:** Findings revealed that there exists a significant relationship between job satisfaction and transformational leadership ($r = 0.56$; $p < 0.01$). Also, there exists a significant relationship between motivation and transformational leadership ($r = 0.56$; $p < 0.01$). **Conclusions:** Based on the findings, it was concluded that transformational leadership is vital to the overall satisfaction and motivation of non-academic staff. It was therefore recommended that university management make it a point of duty to organise leadership training for their executive and administrative heads. The emphasis should be laid on developing skills that align with being a transformational leader.

Subject Areas

Psychology

Keywords

Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Employee Motivation, Employee Satisfaction, Non-Academic Staff

1. Introduction

Public institutions are established to offer services to the general public. They have a crucial function in providing public services. They must efficiently address the rise in demand in order to deliver high-quality services to the public. Public sector leaders have the challenge of enhancing service delivery while dealing with limited budgetary resources. The significance of proficient leadership is not a recent occurrence. Studies have indicated that experts in the field of public administration have acknowledged the significance of leadership in enhancing the functioning of public institutions [1]-[3]. Leadership is an essential element in achieving the objectives of an organisation. Studies indicate that the most suitable leadership theory should be implemented in accordance with the prevailing culture [4].

Leadership theories have undergone changes over time, and experts in the field have reached a consensus that there is no universally accepted definition for leadership [5]. Sun and Henderson [6] argue that successful leadership is associated with enhanced efficiency, superior quality goods, and improved public sector services. Studies have demonstrated that leadership style and motivation exert a significant impact on fostering beneficial outcomes inside organisations [7]. Nevertheless, leaders in the public sector still have difficulties implementing the most efficient leadership style and finding ways to inspire their workforce. The definition of leadership in the public sector is not well delineated due to its reliance on a specific political system and diverse management practices [8].

Research indicates that good leadership has a positive impact on staff engagement and happiness, leading to improved performance outcomes. According to Jensen [3], leadership is seen as a crucial element in public institutions for fostering happiness and motivation in order to collaboratively accomplish the organisation's mission, vision, and goals. Understanding how public administration leadership may effectively enhance overall organisational outcomes and meet stakeholders' expectations is of utmost importance. Nevertheless, the existing body of research is insufficient to definitively recommend a certain leadership style that can enhance performance or guarantee high-quality education. In order to fill this need, the University of Ibadan, the leading university in Nigeria, conducted a study to examine the impact of a specific leadership style (transformational leadership) on the motivation and satisfaction levels of non-academic staff members at the University of Ibadan.

All organisations, including public universities, exist to achieve a set vision,

mission, or objective. Without employees, there is a greater tendency that the essence of the organisation is defeated. It is important to state that organisations do not just need employees; they also need employees who are happy, motivated, and satisfied to discharge their duties [9]. In order for organisations to report a high level of productivity, it is important that they keep their employees motivated and satisfied.

As a definition, employee job satisfaction refers to the contentment an employee fills on the job [10] [11]. Job satisfaction further refers to the feeling of fulfilment that an employee experiences in connection with their job [12]. In fact, Hauff *et al.* [13] indicated in their study that job satisfaction remains one of the most important and crucial factors in human resources, as it stands out as a major employee force that drives an organisation to success or otherwise. It was affirmed that a happy and satisfied employee would give their best to the organisation, display some level of sense of belonging, and result in an increase in overall performance [14]. Some researchers refer to employee job satisfaction as a subjective feeling that an employee experiences [15].

Motivation, on the other hand, serves as the impetus that invigorates and directs an individual's endeavours in pursuit of a specific objective [16]. Motivation is recognised among scholars as the psychological process that drives the arousal, direction, intensity, and persistence of behaviour [17] [18]. Hence, motivation emerges as a pivotal concern that exerts a substantial influence on job performance and plays a fundamental role in directing personnel towards essential objectives [16].

A series of factors have been investigated as potential predictors of employee job satisfaction and motivation in organizations. For instance, Cheng *et al.* [19] examined how transformational leadership affects the motivational levels of employees in selected private organisations in China. The study adopted a quantitative research method and gathered data from 415 employees across six (6) organisations. It was discovered that transformational leadership had a positive influence on employee motivation. Also, Vinh *et al.* [20] unravelled the relationship between transformational leadership and motivation among employees in the tourism industry. Through the quantitative method as well, a positive correlation was found between transformational leadership and employee motivation. This was also corroborated by Kim *et al.* [21] and Karimi *et al.* [22], where a positive link was discovered between transformational leadership and employee motivation.

As regards job satisfaction, a similar trend was observed. For instance, Chen *et al.* [23] investigated the role of transformational leadership in employee job satisfaction in selected organisations in China. It was discovered that there exists a positive relationship between transformational leadership and motivation. The direction of the relationship shows that the more employees perceive that their leaders exhibit transformational leadership traits, the higher their level of satisfaction. Also, Abolnasser *et al.* [24] reported in their study that transformational

leadership had a positive influence on the job satisfaction of employees in the hotel industry. In addition, Kilic and Uludag [25] and Panagopoulos *et al.* [26] reported that the higher the perceived transformational leadership traits in supervisors, the higher the satisfaction of the employees.

Theoretically, previous studies have been carried out to understand the application of Herzberg's two-factor theory to employee job satisfaction and motivation. According to Herzberg *et al.* [27], it is propounded that every employee has triggers that make them happy and willing to exert their effort at work. This was categorised into motivators and hygiene factors. Motivator factors, according to Herzberg [28], refer to factors that are internally driven and make employees satisfied. This could mean a sense of achievement, responsibility, career advancement, and opportunities, among others. Majorly, motivator factors are internally driven. However, the hygiene factors are those conditions that are external to the employee. This cuts across pay, salary, and benefits, among others. A study by Singh [29] on the application of the two-factor theory affirmed that motivating factors contribute more to employee job satisfaction. On the other hand, Dobre *et al.* [30] reported that hygiene factors such as pay and benefits have more influence on employee satisfaction.

The bottom line of the Herzberg two-factor theory remains that there are factors that contribute to employee satisfaction and motivation. While there is loads of research on predictors of employee satisfaction and motivation, this study identified a gap in knowledge regarding the impact of transformational leadership style on employee job satisfaction and motivation, especially among University of Ibadan employees.

Based on this, the following hypotheses will be tested in this study:

- 1) Transformational leadership style will have a significant and positive relationship with employee job satisfaction.
- 2) Transformational leadership style will have a significant and positive relationship with employee motivation.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The variables investigated were transformational leadership style (an independent variable), job satisfaction (a dependent variable), and motivation (a dependent variable). Other variables were demographic factors: age, gender, level of education, years in employment, and average monthly income.

2.2. Population

The target population for the study was University of Ibadan employees. This includes executive administrative staff and core administrative staff. There are a total of five hundred and seventy (570) administrative staff (499 executive administrative staff and 71 core administrative staff) (See **Table 1**).

Table 1. Population of study.

Departments	Executive Administrative staff	Core administrative staff
137	499	74

Source: Computer Room, Human Resource and Development/Non-Academic, U.I. 2019.

2.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select administrative staff at the University of Ibadan, Oyo State. At the first stage, the purposive sampling technique was used to select eight faculties with the highest number of administrative staff. At the second stage, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 40% of all administrative staff in the eight faculties. In the third stage, the purposive sampling technique was used to select a total of 234 administrative staff at the University of Ibadan. The inclusion criteria for selection in the study include the display of a valid identity card, having been working as non-academic staff at the university for a minimum of 2 years, and giving their consent to participate in the study.

2.4. Instruments

A single paper and pencil questionnaire was adopted for data collection in this study. The structured questionnaire will be divided into four sections, which are as follows:

Section A: Demographic Variable

This is the first section of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of the following demographic information: age, gender, educational qualification, and work experience.

Section B: Job Satisfaction Scale

This section comprises the job satisfaction scale developed by Nanjundeswaraswamy [31]. The scale measures the extent to which employees are satisfied with their job in the following domains: satisfaction with working conditions, work environment, and co-workers. Specific dimensions in the scale are as follows: organisational culture, job clarity, participative management, job security, work-life balance, teamwork, work stress, career advancement opportunities, training and development, communication, relations and cooperation at work, leadership styles, benefits, welfare facilities, and training and development. This study did not consider these dimensions; however, it adapted 15 items to suit the purpose of the study. Response format to the scale items ranged as follows: SD: strongly disagree (1), D: disagree (2), U: undecided (3), A: agree (4), and SA: strongly agree (5). The scale developer reported an internal consistency that ranged between 0.773 and 0.986.

Section C: Employee Motivation Scale

This section measures motivation using a scale developed by Nawab *et al.* [32]. Related items will be selected to measure motivation (7 items). Response to the items ranged between SD (strongly disagree), SLD (slightly disagree), D

(disagree), A (agree), SLA (slightly agree), and SA (strongly agree). The scale developers reported an internal consistency of ($\alpha = 0.70$).

Section D: Transformational Leadership Scale

This section is comprised of a 26-item scale developed by Chaoping and Kan [33]. The scale was developed to measure the extent to which employees perceive that a transformational leadership style is utilised. Response to the items ranged between SD (strongly disagree), SLD (slightly disagree), D (disagree), A (agree), SLA (slightly agree), and SA (strongly agree). The scale developers reported an internal consistency of 0.834.

2.5. Procedure

The researcher sought permission to conduct the study by writing a letter to the school registrar. An ethical approval was obtained from the Oyo State Ministry of Health ethics committee, with reference number AD/13/479/466B. Prior to the administration of questionnaire copies, the respondents were informed of the exercise and the main objectives of the study. Participants were selected for the research using the cross-sectional survey research design. An author sampling technique was adopted to recruit participants for the study. About two hundred and seventy (270) questionnaires were administered; at each administration, the consent of the respondent was informed, coupled with proper information, and the purpose of the study and their queries were addressed. However, only 231 were recovered and utilised for data analysis, yielding a response index of 86%. The names and personal details of the respondents were not included in the questionnaire in an attempt to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. Each section of the questionnaire was in Likert point format, except for a few questions among demographic variables (some of which will be the open end). The filled questionnaires were retrieved at their completion for analysis.

2.6. Statistical Analysis

The gathered data were subjected to analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 24.0. Based on the stated hypotheses, hypotheses were tested using Pearson r correlation.

3. Result

This chapter presents results based on gathered data from two hundred and thirty-one (231) University of Ibadan administrative staff. This includes contract, casual, and permanent staff. Although two hundred and seventy (270) questionnaires were distributed, only two hundred and thirty-one (231) were retrieved and utilised for data analysis.

3.1. Socio-Demographic Information of Respondents

This section consists of data analysis as regards the demographic distribution of

sampled University of Ibadan employees. Demographic factors analysed include; age, sex, marital status, educational qualification, religion, occupational status, years spent on the job, training type and frequency of undergoing training.

Table 2 presents results on the demographic distribution of respondents. It is shown that more of the respondents 100 (43.3%) were between 31 and 40 years old, 54 (23.4%) were between 20 and 30 years old, 53 (22.9%) were between 41 and 50 years old, while the other 24 (10.4%) were 50 years old and above. As regards sex distribution, more of the respondents 116 (50.2%) were females, while the other 115 (49.8%) were males. According to educational qualification, more of the respondents 106 (45.9%) indicated to be first degree holders, 65 (28.1%) were HND certificate holders, 23 (10%) were NCE holders, 16 (6.9%) were ND certificate holders, 14 (6.1%) were postgraduate certificate holders, while the other 7 (3%) were O'level certificate holders.

Table 2. Demographic distribution of respondents.

SN	Variables	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	20 - 30 years	54	23.4
		31 - 40 years	100	43.3
		41 - 50 years	53	22.9
		50 years above	24	10.4
2	Sex	Male	115	49.8
		Female	116	50.2
4	Educational qualification	O'level	7	3
		ND	16	6.9
		NCE	23	10
		HND	65	28.1
		First degree	106	45.9
		Postgraduate	14	6.1
4	Years already spent on the job	0 - 5 years	52	22.5
		6 - 10 years	98	42.4
		11 - 15 years	41	17.7
		16 - 20 years	18	7.8
		21 years above	22	9.5
Total			231	100

According to years spent on the job, more of the respondents 98 (42.4%) have between 6 and 10 years of work experience, 52 (22.5%) have between 0 and 5 years of work experience, 41 (17.7%) were between 11-15 years of work experience, 18 (7.8%) have between 16 and 20 years of work experience, while the other 22 (9.5%) have 21 years and above work experience.

Table 3 presents results on the descriptive distribution of respondents on

their level of job satisfaction and motivation. With a mean score of 51.77 (SD = 8.41), more of the non-academic staff (58%) reported a high level of satisfaction. Also, with a mean score of 26.31 (SD = 2.66), more of the non-academic staff (67.5%) reported a high level of motivation.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on employee motivation and job satisfaction.

Variable	Levels	Frequency (n = 231)	%	Mean	SD
Job satisfaction	Low	97	42	51.77	8.41
	High	134	58		
Employee motivation	Low	75	32.5	26.31	2.66
	High	156	67.5		

3.2. Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis one stated that there will be significant and positive relationship between transformational leadership style and employee job satisfaction. This was tested using Pearson r correlation and the result is presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Pearson r correlation summary table showing results on the relationship between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction.

Variable	Mean	SD	r	df	p
Job satisfaction	41.23	13.32	0.56	230	<0.01
Transformational leadership	68.42	16.98			

Table 4 presents results on the relationship between job satisfaction and transformational leadership style among University of Ibadan non-academic staff. It is shown that there exists significant relationship between job satisfaction and transformational leadership ($r = 0.56$; $p < 0.01$). The direction of the relationship is positive, hence, means that the higher the perceived transformational leadership in the University, the higher the job satisfaction reported by the employees. This confirms the stated hypothesis, hence was retained in this study.

Hypothesis two stated that there will be significant and positive relationship between transformational leadership style and employee motivation. This was tested using Pearson r correlation and the result is presented in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Pearson r correlation summary table showing results on the relationship between transformational leadership style and motivation.

Variable	Mean	SD	r	df	p
Motivation	19.87	5.87	.38	230	< .01
Transformational leadership	68.42	16.98			

Table 5 presents results on the relationship between motivation and transformational leadership style among University of Ibadan non-academic staff. It is shown that there exists significant relationship between motivation and transformational leadership ($r = 0.56$; $p < 0.01$). The direction of the relationship is positive, hence, means that the higher the perceived transformational leadership in the University, the higher the motivation reported by the employees. This confirms the stated hypothesis, hence was retained in this study.

4. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

The study investigated the influence of transformational leadership on job satisfaction and motivation among non-academic staff at the University of Ibadan. It was discovered that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction. The direction was positive, which means that the higher the perceived transformational leadership style, the higher the job satisfaction reported by the non-academic staff. Similarly, Chen *et al.* [23] examined the relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction among frontline workers. Through the survey research method, data was gathered from 211 frontline workers, and it was discovered that there exists a significant and positive relationship between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction. Also, Choi *et al.* [34] reported in their study that transformational leadership style has a significant influence on job satisfaction.

Further, it was discovered that there exists a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and employee motivation. The direction was positive, which means that the higher the perceived transformational leadership style, the higher the motivation reported by the non-academic staff. In relation to the findings, Xu *et al.* [35] carried out a study on the relationship between transformational leadership and motivation among family doctors in China. Through survey research design, it was discovered that there exists a significant and positive relationship between transformational leadership and motivation. Also, Meirinhos *et al.* [16] examined the link between leadership styles and motivation among employees in Portugal. It was discovered that there exists a significant and positive relationship between leadership style and motivation. Tian *et al.* [36] also confirmed that transformational leadership has a significant influence on employee motivation.

Based on the findings, it was concluded from this study that transformational leadership is germane to employee motivation and overall satisfaction, especially among non-academic and administrative staff of the University of Ibadan.

The following recommendations were made:

- 1) Firstly, it is recommended that university management make it a point of duty to organise leadership training for their executive and administrative heads. The emphasis should be laid on developing skills that align with being a transformational leader. This will in no small amount contribute to the overall performance and elicitation of satisfaction and motivation in their subordinates.

2) Also, it is recommended that the university management conduct intermittent screening for their non-academic staff in order to identify their level of satisfaction and motivation. This will further help to identify the exact needs of employees in order to provide for them and subsequently motivate them to perform.

3) Further, it is recommended that more studies be carried out on other factors that could contribute to the job satisfaction and motivation of non-academic staff at the University of Ibadan. This will help to make more practical recommendations for the overall productivity of the organisation.

While the study has been able to offer recommendations to improve the motivation and satisfaction of non-academic staff, a series of limitations have been identified. First are the sample size and the scope of the study. The study gathered data only from University of Ibadan staff. While the findings can be generalised to other non-academic staff within the university, it may be difficult to generalise to other public universities in Nigeria. Also, the study could have benefited from supporting the quantitative data with qualitative findings. Therefore, future studies should cover a wider scope and more educational institutions.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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