



## Transformational Leadership Style and Organizational Performance the Moderating Role of Communication

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### Abstract

The study examines the Transformational leadership style on organizational leadership the moderating. Role of communication. However, the methodology of the study is based on the previous studies, hence inclusive criteria is used; therefore, the paper is conceptual in nature. Moreover, the study found that there is a significant positive effect of transformational leadership style on organizational leadership. The implication of the result is therefore positive on organizational performance the more organizations implement transformational leadership style the more their development and vice vasa. the study concluded the positive relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance. Based on the findings the study recommends that organization should introduce transformational leadership for a betterment of creating a very conducive environment for employee to work.

**Keywords:** Transformational, Leadership, Communication, Organizational And Performance.

## 1.1 Introduction

In this rapidly changing and competitive environment of higher education, organizational performance is becoming a matter of great concern among academic researchers, stakeholders, and governments worldwide. It is a complex concept that covers various dimensions such as academic excellence, research output, student satisfaction, and institutional reputation (Khoshtaria et al., 2020). Higher educational institutions worldwide are striving to enhance their performance through innovative teaching methods, research, and robust partnerships with industry and government (Zaleniene & Pereira, 2021). Universities in developed countries are at the forefront of innovation, driving advancements in science, technology, and the humanities. They attract the best students from around the world, fostering a diverse and intellectually stimulating environment that fuels academic excellence (Pee & Vululleh, 2020). These institutions contribute significantly to the global knowledge economy through leading-edge research and the development of new technologies (Shaturaev, 2023).

In Nigeria, the performance of higher institutions of learning, especially universities, is critical due to the country's large and youthful population (Ogunode, 2020). These institutions are places where human minds are trained and knowledge development is facilitated. They are invaluable in developing human capital and indispensable for achieving national economic development, playing an integral role in shaping and developing students' intellectual potential and preparing them to face the challenges of the professional world (Iyoha & Igbinedion, 2022). With an emphasis on academic learning, skill development, and character formation, university education becomes a center for the formation and transformation of students (Mohzana, 2024).

As the giant of Africa, Nigeria's public universities are expected to be among the best in Africa and the world (Ogunode, 2020). However, in the global ranking of universities, Nigerian universities are not progressing admirably and have not been prominent as they used to be in yester years (Abari et al., 2021; Ogunode, 2020). None of the 170 public and private universities in Nigeria were among the best 1,000 universities globally, despite making some breakthroughs and receiving research grants. Nigerian public universities lag behind those in other African countries (Ogunode et al., 2022). For instance, Mba (2019) conducted a comparative analysis and found that Nigerian universities produce only 44% of the scholarly output of South African universities and 32% of Egyptian universities. This discrepancy is striking, considering that Nigeria has nearly four times more universities than Egypt and over six times more than South Africa. Similarly, Iyedun et al. (2021) noted that in 2018, Nigeria had just a single university in the top 1,000 universities worldwide compared to nine from South state Africa and 11 from Egypt.

## 1.2 Problem statement

In recent years, the performance of universities, especially in developing countries, has been a subject of discussion. In the context of Nigeria, universities are expected to be centers of academic excellence, innovation, and societal development (Pee & Vululleh, 2020). However, many Nigerian universities struggle to meet these expectations, often ranking poorly in global and regional assessments (Bamiro, 2024). This underperformance has significant implications for the country's socio-economic development, as universities play a crucial role in producing the skilled workforce and research needed for national progress (Enemi, 2023; Ndayebom, & Aregbesola, 2023; Ogunode, et al., 2023). One critical factor contributing to this underperformance is the leadership style practiced within these institutions (Ajayi & Omisakin, 2024; Ogunode, et al., 2023).

Although there is no general consensus on the determinants of organizational performance of tertiary institution, several factors that have been studied in relation to organizational performance include quality assurance (Rohman et al., 2023), knowledge management processes (Sahibzada et al., 2023), digital transformation (Purwanto et al., 2023), organizational learning (Inthavong et al., 2023), artificial intelligence (Mikalef et al., 2023), accreditation policy (Ngoc et al., 2023), and talent management practices (Al-Aina & Atan, 2020) among others. This indicate that only few studies have linked leadership styles with organizational performance in academic settings. Despite the aforementioned empirical studies organizational performance, literatures indicate that there is paucity of studies that have looked at leadership styles in relation to organizational performance (Fischer & Sitkin, 2023), and very handful studies examined the effects of leadership styles on organizational performance.

Of the few handful studies (e.g., Aghahowa, 2021; Andrej, et al., 2023; Akparep, et al., 2019; Febrian, et al., 2023; Jamali, et al., 2022; Kubai, 2023; Kubai, et al., 2022; Le, et al., 2023; Mohammed & AL-Abrow, 2023; Nderitu & Bula, 2022; Nwankwo, et al., 2024; Ogunode, et al., 2023; Piwower-Sulej, & Iqbal, 2023) that have studied leadership styles and organizational performance. Most of these studies looked at leadership from uni-dimensional point of view and situate on manufacturing, health, banking and hotel contexts. However, what is apparent is that leaders in most contexts adopt various types of leadership styles in their effort to enhance organizational performance (Kubai, 2023; Le, et al., 2023). Thus, the present study addresses this gap in the literature by examining a various style of lead leadership on organizational performance in tertiary institutions.

Previous studies have looked at the various leadership styles on organizational performance. For example, (Ingsih et al., 2021; Kubai, 2023; Mohammed & AL-Abrow, 2023; Patwary, 2020; Saad, 2021; Top, et al., 2020; Wang, 2022) have viewed transformational leadership style as an approach by which leaders inspire followers to perform beyond expectations (Buil et al., 2019) and found that transformational leadership style is positively related to organizational performance. In negation to their findings, Khan, et al., 2020; Ferdinan, & Lindawati, 2021; Purwanto, 2021; have found insignificant relationship between transformational leadership style and organizational performance.

Despite the efforts of previous researchers on leadership styles and organizational performance, their findings are inconsistent and inconclusive. Therefore, suggestions in the literature have indicated a need to study what moderates the relationship between leadership styles and organizational performance (Aborampah, & Darkwa, 2020; Pizzolitto, et at., 2023). Studies (e.g., Sedrine, et al., 2021) have suggested that communication interacts with leadership styles in predicting organizational performance. Communication is documented to enhances leaders' ability to positively influence organizational performance across all leadership styles (Mohd & Valliappan, 2019). Leaders' effective communication enhances organizational performace.

## 1.3 Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to examines the moderating effect of communication on the relationship between transformational and organizational performance at Yobe State University.

## 2.1 Literature review

This section discusses the concept of transformational leadership style and organizational performance. Therefore, the study discussed the conceptual review and empirical review below.

### 2.1.1 Organizational performance

Organizational performance is also defined as an organization's ability to survive and profit, and it is measured in both manufacturing and services. Customers' satisfaction is the yardstick by which a service organization's success and performance are judged, and a good connection is valued over profit. According to Farlex (2012), it is the actual output/results of an organization obtained when measured against its intended outputs (goals and objectives). Organizational performance assesses how an organization is able to meet its stated objectives over time. Organizational performance relates to how efficient, effective, relevant and viable an organization is Dahir and Paul, (2019) states that organizational performance involves recurring activities that establish organizational performance, monitors progress towards goals and makes adjustments to achieve the goals more effectively and efficiently. Effectiveness is the measure of the degree to which the institution's service offered meet the customer's expectations. Efficiency is the utilization of the resources within appropriate cost structures; relevance is the ability to adapt to changing environments to satisfy the stakeholders' current needs, while viability is the ability to maintain sustainable operational base for meeting obligations as they fall.

### 2.1.2 Transformational leadership

Recent research has focused on the idea that transformative leaders can increase their supporter involvement by transforming them. According to Filimonau et al. (2020), transformational leaders boost followers' self-esteem by treating them as individuals and valuing their work. Transition leaders increase their confidence and self-efficacy by making positive (encouraging) appeals (Khan & Khan, 2020). Based on the idea that transformative leaders can increase worker engagement with their supporters by transforming them, several scholars believe that transformative leaders boost followers' self-esteem by treating them as individuals and elevating their work (Hawkes et al., 2021). Transition leaders boost followers' morale and self-efficacy by creating positive (encouraging) appeals and communicating goals leadership positively predicts expressiveness, preciseness, and questionings; and negatively predicts verbal aggressiveness, emotionality, and impression manipulateness as communication styles. Furthermore, transactional leadership predicts high levels of expressiveness, questionings, emotionality, and preciseness; and lower levels of verbal aggressiveness as leadership communication styles (Pacleb & Bocanea, 2016). Transformational leaders move followers to transcend their self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or country (Crews et al., 2019). The transformational leadership style is defined by four dimensions:

- a) **Idealised influence (charisma)** – leaders demonstrate conviction, emphasize trust, and respond affirmatively to difficult issues;
- b) **Inspirational motivation** – leaders communicate an appealing vision of the future, challenge followers to achieve high standards, and talk optimistically with enthusiasm to instil encouragement and meaning;
- c) **Intellectual stimulation** – leaders question set assumptions, traditions, and beliefs, leaders encourage others to implement and utilize new perspectives, and leaders encourage the expression of ideas and reasons to be more innovate and entrepreneurial; and
- d) **Individualized consideration** – leaders interact with others as individuals by considering their needs, abilities, and aspirations; listening attentively and communicating clearly; and further their development (Bass & Avolio, 2020).

## 2.2 Theoretical review

### Fiedler's Contingency Model

The basic proposition of Fiedler's Contingency Model is that leadership effectiveness depends on the leader's ability to work with subordinates to identify needed changes, create a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and execute the change in collaboration with committed employees to achieve effective organizational performance (Fiedler, 1964). Fiedler (1964) identified three key dimensions of leader-employee interaction: leader-follower relations, task structure, and position power.

1. **Leader-Follower Relations:** This dimension reflects the support, loyalty, and trust that leaders have from their workgroup. Fiedler suggested this was the most critical dimension for organizational executives to consider. Employees who experience favorable relations are motivated to perform high-quality services to achieve the leader's goals and organizational objectives.
2. **Task Structure:** This refers to the extent to which tasks are described and guided by the organization. Managers working within highly structured tasks (e.g., clear objectives, procedures, volumes, schedules, and instructions) have more control over the group and can effectively influence organizational performance.
3. **Position Power:** This dimension implies that the leader has the formal power to reward or punish employees. Managers in certain systems can secure compliance from employees through this power, enabling effective leadership and control.

To support this theory, Fiedler (1964) developed the Least Preferred Co-Worker (LPC) scale to assess the situation faced by leaders and identify the appropriate leadership style for the situation. Although the validity of the LPC scale has been questioned, Fiedler's Contingency Model has received strong support from subsequent research. This suggests that management effectiveness can be achieved through a transformative and transactional leadership style that aligns with existing situations (Oc, 2018).

The relevance of this theory to the present study lies in its contribution to understanding how leaders engage teaching and non-teaching staff through transactional, transformational and *laissez-faire* leadership styles. It highlights the importance of making decisions that consider the interests of both teaching and non-teaching staff, which is a critical pillar for university performance.

## 2.3 Empirical review

### 2.3.1 Transformational leadership style and Organizational Performance

Transformational leadership, according to Hina and Siddiqui (2023), involves leaders who change the beliefs and attitudes of their followers and inspire them to align their interests with the betterment of the organization. Ince (2023) highlights that there are several distinctions within this leadership style. For instance, while charisma is a quality of a transformational leader, it is not the sole element. Transformational leadership also considers the impact of situational favorableness or uncertainty, de-emphasizes charisma, and acknowledges the potential self-centeredness and negative effects associated with charismatic leadership (Afolabi, 2022). Additionally, Saad Alessa (2021) notes that transformational leadership is more commonly observed at higher levels of management than at lower levels. Begum et al. (2022) suggest that transformational leadership behaviors can act as "creativity-enhancing forces." Specifically, intellectual stimulation encourages followers to question critical assumptions underlying established frameworks and routines, leading them to view old problems and situations in new ways (Steinmann et al., 2018). Furthermore, when leaders provide individualized consideration, they model empathy, support for individual concerns, and openness to new suggestions and approaches (Becker et al., 2022).

Ma and Jiang (2018) examined the extent of employee creativity in entrepreneurial companies in the context of transformational and transactional leadership. They determined that to maximize effectiveness, leaders should exhibit both transformational and transactional behaviors rather than relying on one in isolation. However, their study focused on Chinese entrepreneurial firms, whereas the present study focuses on a public university.

Para-González (2018) examined the mediating effect of human resource management, learning, and innovation on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance. Data collected from 200 Spanish industrial companies were analyzed using partial least squares. The study revealed that the adoption of transformational leadership styles improves performance when specific HRM practices, learning, and innovation systems are developed in an organization. However, unlike the present study, this research focused on Spanish industrial companies, whereas the present study focuses on a state university.

Rojak et al. (2024) examined the impact of transformational leadership and organizational culture on employee performance. The sample included 120 staff from three universities. Data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26). The study showed that transformational leadership positively affects staff performance, indicating that this leadership style enhances staff's ability to achieve organizational goals. Additionally, organizational culture significantly affects staff performance positively, showing that the values, norms, and practices within organizational culture play a crucial role in shaping staff performance. However, the study was limited by its small sample size, lack of a robust data analysis technique, and examination of only direct relationships between variables. The current study intends to examine indirect relationships and utilize a more robust data analysis technique, such as partial least squares.

Vipraprastha (2018) examined the influence of transformational leadership and organizational commitment on employee performance, with organizational citizenship behavior as an intervening variable. The study's population consisted of employees of PT. Sarana Arga Gemeh Amerta (SAGA) in Denpasar, with a sample size of 88 respondents. Proportional random sampling was adopted, and Partial Least Square (PLS) with SmartPLS v3.0 software was used for data analysis. The results show that transformational leadership has a negative effect on employee and organizational performance. However, the study is limited by its small sample size, which might affect the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study focused only on staff of a private company, while the present study focuses on both academic and non-academic staff of a university.

Manzoor et al. (2019) investigated the impact of transformational leadership on job performance and the mediating mechanism of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Primary data were collected from employees using a cross-sectional design method, with a total of 300 questionnaires administered. Data analysis was carried out using regression analysis. The results reveal that transformational leadership positively and significantly predicts job performance, with CSR

significantly mediating this effect. However, the study only focused on employee performance and did not consider organizational performance.

Arif and Akram (2019) investigated the impact of transformational leadership on organizational performance and the mediating role of organizational innovation. The study revealed that organizational innovation significantly impacts organizational performance and that transformational leadership has a strong relationship with organizational performance. This research suggests that managers should foster such leadership styles to create an environment where employees are motivated and encouraged to be more creative and effective in leading successful organizations, particularly in the Pakistani context.

Akdere and Egan (2020) investigated the effect of transformational leadership on organizational performance in the United States healthcare sector. The study population comprised 3,474 employees and 1,875 customers from 69 healthcare locations. Data analysis using partial least squares revealed that transformational leadership positively and significantly affects organizational performance. The study also found that transformational leadership positively impacts performance through leader support of employee learning. Additionally, organizational HRD culture was found to align with key positive employee and customer-reported performance outcomes.

Ibrahim and Daniel (2019) investigated the impact of leadership on the organizational performance of Coca-Cola Company in Abuja, the Federal Capital City of Nigeria. The study discovered that the style of leadership a manager adopts has a direct effect on the organizational performance of employees. Among other findings, it was discovered that participatory leadership and delegation of duties enhance employee performance and the attainment of corporate goals and objectives. The study concludes that the achievement of organizational goals and objectives depends significantly on the leadership style an organization adopts.

### 3.0 Methodology

The method of this study is based on the result of previous studies so as to ensure the existence of literature in the field. However, the study adopted inclusive criteria by employing or reviewing all studies in related fields it is also qualitative method for data analysis since the study is part of ongoing MSc. Work by the author. Therefore, the study drives its findings base on the results of the majority analyzed the results though identifying such studies that reveals a positive effect and negative effect and recommend on that.

### 4.1 Result

The study investigates on transformational leadership style and organizational performance the moderating role of communication however, the study after reviewing relevant studies, shows that transformative leadership style has significant effect on organizational performance. This indicate that the higher the implementation of transformative leadership style in an organization the higher the increase in the performance of organizational also failure to implement transformative leadership style may lead to less growth and development in an organization. this assertion is similar with the studies (Rohman et al., 2023), (Sahibzada et al., 2023), (Purwanto et al., 2023), (Inthavong et al., 2023), (Mikalef et al., 2023), (Ngoc et al., 2023), (Al-Aina & Atan, 2020), (Fischer & Sitkin, 2023), Aghahowa, 2021; Andrej, et al., 2023; Akparep, et al., 2019; Febrian, et al., 2023; Jamali, et al., 2022; Kubai, 2023; Kubai. The implication of the results is therefore, positive on organizational performance the more organizations use effective communication, the higher the development and growth and vice vasa.

### 4.2 Conclusion

Majority of the results shows that transformative leadership style has significant positive effect on organizational performance. Therefore, the study concludes that there is significant positive effect of transformative leadership style on organizational performance. However, the study proves the existence of literature in the field or related topics of the study and the field can accommodate a M.Sc. work since the study is part of MSc work currently in progress by the researcher.

### 4.3 Recommendations

Organizations should introduce the use of transformative leadership style. transformative leaders can increase worker engagement with their supporters by treating them as individuals and elevating their work.

### 4.4 Suggestions for further research

For further research in this field, researchers can look at transactional leadership style, laissez-faire leadership among others. Also, future researchers can develop different methodology of data collection and analysis.



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