

Transformational Leadership and Organizational Adaptability: Integrated Human Resource Management Model

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Abstract: *The qualitative exploratory research design was employed to examine the relationship between transformational leadership behavior and organizational adaptability. Transformational leadership is characterized by main elements such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration that promote psychological empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior. These behaviors are linked to organizational strength and flexibility necessary to drive organizational change, transformation and adaptability. Organizational adaptability is almost always about creating wealth in the organization and this also rests squarely on transformational leadership as the big ladder towards the achievement of sustainable competitive advantage. For example, organizational adaptability also results to organizational congruence. This would suggest that the organization has human resource management practices where there is a higher coincidence of interest among organizational leadership, shareholders and organizational people that enhance the capacity of the organization to become adaptive to changes in its operating environment. The result of this investigation conducted in Nigeria showed a significant positive correlation between transformation leadership and organizational adaptability. The study was not however, exhaustive due to lack of research funding and current relevant literature. Further study could examine the relationship between followership and organizational performance as a step in improving performance in Nigerian organizations. The study recommends that organizations should focus on training leaders who can demonstrate the capacity for empowering others to carry out the responsibility of organizational change, innovation and adaptability.*

JEL: M10, M12.

Keywords: Strategic leadership, Organizational leadership, Organizational citizenship behaviours, Organizational commitment, Transactional leadership, Followership, Organizational change, Traditional leadership theorists, Heroic leadership, Psychological empowerment.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of leadership has a very long history of thousands of years. There are such stories of heroic leadership associated with Moses leading his people out of Egyptian bondage and Alexander the Great building a great empire. There is also the history of contemporary leaders like late John F. Kennedy and Nelson Mandela, who provided great leadership in their respective countries. The stories give the indication that certain leaders were able to inspire, motivate and mobilize so many people to achieve their objectives. The many assumptions about leadership and leadership styles suggest that it requires the uncommon ability to do many things right, and this also means knowing what to do at any time. The distinction between a leader and a non-leader is that while the latter waits for instructions, the former knows what to do to influence his followers. A leader attempts to influence his or her followers to establish and accomplish a goal. In order to accomplish the goal, the leader exercises his or her power to influence people. Such power is exercised sometimes in earlier

stages by motivating followers to get things done and in later stages by rewards or punishing those who do or do not perform to the level of expectation. Thus, leadership is a continuous process with the accomplishment of one goal becoming the beginning of a new goal. Another vital role of leadership is to represent the organization and link it to the external world in order to obtain vital resources to carry out its mission. When necessary, leadership has to defend the organization's integrity. Leadership is a process of social exchange between a leader and his or her follower. This nominal social exchange process is known as *transactional leadership*. In contrast, a transformational leader places a higher level of trust in his or her followers and demands a much higher level of loyalty and performance beyond normal expectation (Avolio, et al, 2001, Levy, et al, 2002, Willemyns, et al, 2003, Zhang, et al, 2010). Transformational leadership is thus linked to effective human resource management which is imperative towards organizational adaptability. Human resource management as a concept is particularly concerned with the management of people in organizations and distinct from personnel management. Used in

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this manner, human resource management signifies more than an updating of personnel records, it also suggests a distinctive philosophy towards carrying out people-oriented organizational activities to serve the modern organization, and frequently consistent with organizational adaptability. Human beings remain the key driver of organizational objectives. The word organization describes an entity, a place where people work, a particular business enterprise like First Bank of Nigeria Ltd, or a general term to describe undertakings. This description underscores the triangular relationship among transformational leadership, human resource management and organizational adaptability. Transformational leadership promotes trust and employee motivation which are among the major facilitators of commitment and organizational adaptability. Transformational leadership in combination with quality human resource management practices often has positive impact in organizations, ensuring and enhancing the competence of people at work by tapping their motivation and commitment to encourage their fullest contribution to the organization (Guest, 2000, Zhang, and Bartol, 2010, Zhu, et al, 2004). Transformational leadership is also associated with adaptability and higher organizational performance, and effective transformational leader processes social and emotional intelligence. These elements are considered imperative to inspire people and to build strong relationships in organizations. Such leaders rely on their personal attributes instead of their official position to manage followers. In many organizations, there is a great demand for leaders who can practice transformational leadership by converting their dreams into reality, and by inspiring followers to perform above and beyond the call of duty. Bass (1990), a champion of transformational leadership suggests that leaders can be both transformational and transactional, but organizations today lean more of a tendency towards transformational leadership than transactional leadership. He opines that transformational leadership behavior adds to the effects of transactional leadership but exceptional transactional leadership cannot substitute for transformational leadership which is a requirement for adaptability (Alimo-Metcalfe, and Alimo-Metcalfe, 2001, Yukl, 1989). Adaptability involves the ability to easily respond to changing situations and essential for organizational success. Adaptability is about generating new ideas, seeking out fresh ideas for goal achievement and organizational sustainability. Adaptability connotes openness to change that ties this competence to another that is increasingly important, and known as *involvement*. This also relates to an emotional strength; the ability to stay comfortable with ambiguity and to remain calm in the face of the *unexpected*, being self-confident, and being able to manage organizational change (Devos, et al, 2007, De Berry, 2010, Boga, and Ensari, 2009, Ugoani, 2013, 2015, 2020).

1.1 Research Problem

Without transformational leadership the possibility is high that most organizational people will remain highly demotivated that can result to lack of commitment and organizational adaptability. Organization as an open system depends on the environment and the power of leadership and the people to survive. Leadership as a process of influence is also the catalyst for making people respond willingly to the desired directions necessary for organizational change, adaptability and sustainability. People who lack adaptability are often ruled by fear, anxiety, and a deep personal discomfort with change, as they hold old habits of authority. Effective leaders are products of effective human resource management practices, especially through recruitment, selection,

and training and development. These important processes provide the skills and knowledge for successful organizational leadership and adaptability. For example, leaders with the skills of adaptability are open to new information and can easily move away from old assumptions and adapt to new and emerging trends that are consistent with realities. Transformational leadership provides the psychological empowerment, feedback seeking behavior and the flexibility to take into account multiple perspectives on personal and organizational problems to achieve a win-win balance and success (Sigler, and Pearson, 2000, Spreitzer, 1995, Ugoani, 2019^a, 2021^b).

1.2 Research Objective

This study was designed to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational adaptability.

1.3 Research Significance

The result of this study will add value to human knowledge in the areas of transformational leadership and organizational adaptability.

1.4 Hypothesis

This study hypothesizes that transformational leadership has significant positive relationship with organizational adaptability.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

Transformational leadership describes a social exchange role influence embedded in effective human resource management practices that provide necessary motivation for both individual and organizational adaptability. This is based on its central dimensions of idealized, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Transformational leadership is inexorably interlinked with human resource management practices such as training and development that provide the opportunity for building both individual and organizational adaptability. Adaptability is characterized by high commitment, high competence, and others that are critical requirement, organizational change and adaptability. Stories of successful events are frequently tied to stories of successful leaders who have made dramatic changes through their actions. It is always a tale of transformation, vision, honesty and integrity, purpose, humility and justice, that contribute in equipping people for positive adjustment and adaptability. A conceptual framework is a structure of the study and shows the relationships between the major variables and the problem of the study. The conceptual framework as stated in table 1 suggests that transformational leadership and human resource management practices are foundational approaches for organizational adaptability. The concept of adaptability often relates to innovation and ultimate organizational productivity which is also a function of effective human resource management practices and transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a pragmatic approach towards effective management of people and other organizational resources, fostering collaboration between labour and management as well as open communication and co-operation. Leadership is about inspiration that promotes mutuality and reciprocity, motivates, and a measure to build positive experiences for enhancing both job satisfaction, high commitment and congruence (Woolfe, 2002, Kaydo, 1998, Ugoani, 2018^b).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational leadership is closely interlinked with human resource management practices due to some factors like training people, emphasizing the collective mission, and motivating people through challenging tasks. Through these measures, transformational leaders elicit core values and beliefs to the followers which creates a climate in which organizational people become willing to improve commitment, and to work beyond the required levels that transcend their own interest and for the overall interest of the organizations. Traditional leadership theorists like Bass (1985) suggest that successful leadership is frequently characterized by an effective transformational style necessary to gain the confidence of followers. The four major components of transformational leadership including idealized influence and others contribute to cognitive trust, strengthening affect-based trust, especially leader fairness. Leader fairness is generally seen as a key dimension in terms of ethical leadership style. Fairness implies being trustworthy, and honest in dealing with followers. Leaders who are fair or seen to be fair, treat others with respect, without favouritism, and consciously aim to choose the appropriate response at a given situation. Transformational leadership in form of a comprehensive approach provides followers with a voice, creating a listening opportunity, and allowing them to share in decision-making on issues that affect them and their tasks. This is also about power sharing as such leaders work transparently, communicating openly so that followers understand what is desired and expected of them, thereby promoting genuine concern for followers and emphasizing individualized consideration. Individualized consideration embodies the most visible way in which a leader can create a relational connection with the followers. This is a central leadership behavior that enhances socio-emotional support for followers and involves the recognition of their individual differences and concerns. Research upholds that leaders who individually express their genuine concern regarding their followers' issues, entrust them with various opportunities and care for their welfare. Thus, the followers feel obliged to respond to these gestures in a similar manner, thereby expanding a social exchange, and reinforcing the foundations of affective trust, because such leaders are caring and build upon social exchange and norms of reciprocity. Also, intellectual stimulation is a function of effective human resource management practices including employee motivation to promote organizational adaptability and organizational performance (Tichy, and De Vanna, 1986, Ayman, et al, 2009).

2.1 Organizational Performance

Organizational performance relates to total output including employee contribution and organizational adaptability. Transformational leadership and organizational adaptability are interrelated because, to a large extent, transformational leadership style is often associated with organizational innovation, intrinsic motivation, creativity, learning-orientation, group identification and organizational performance. Transformational leadership style correlates significantly positively with organizational adaptability to the extent that it enhances conscientiousness and performance through its influence at both individual and organizational levels, by enhancing psychological empowerment and creative performance of both employees and managers, that reflect the capacity for adaptability. Adaptability refers to an organization's ability to adapt to changes in the environment in which it operates. This adaptability can be measured based on three interrelated

indicators. One is the organization's age. In most cases, old organizations have had to learn how to adapt to environmental changes to survive and they can use such adaptive knowledge to cope with present and future changes and challenges. The age implication is a major reason for older organizations to tend to be more adaptable. A second indicator of an organization's adaptability is what is called the *generational age*. This concept primarily refers to the generation of *leaders in power*, this indicator reflects an organization's ability to *transfer power* from one generation to another, and for the more the organization is adaptable. The third indicator gauges the extent of organizational adaptability. This term is used to indicate an organization's ability to find and perform new functions, once the objectives that the organization was originally created to achieve have been achieved. In other words, the organization either finds some new functions to perform or disappears. In this respect, an organization that has adapted itself to changes in the environment and has survived one or more changes in its principal functions is more highly institutionalized than the one that has not. Overall, the level of institutionalization of an organization increases with the organization's age, with generation changes in the organization's leadership, and with the organization's ability to always find new functions to *perform*. The adaptability of an organization reflects the organization's age, generational age, and flexibility to adapt to changes in the environment in which it operates. When an organization finds new activities and functions to perform or when it identifies new objectives to achieve, the organization is said to have organizational adaptability. Often the transformational leader is seen as the individual who demonstrates a better understanding of the relationship between human capital, human resource management practices and the need for competitive advantage associated with organizational adaptability. This leadership behavior also recognizes that all human resources in the organization must be viewed as the pool of capital. It may be possible in the short-term to substitute human resource, with others like information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the long-term, the human resource is different as it controls other resources. This underlines the importance of *people* as intangible asset capable of generating capability through intellectual capital for organizational adaptability (Wright, et al, 1994, Rowe, 2001, Wayne, and Sparrowe, 2001, Podsokoff, et al, 1990, Ugoani, 2023^a).

2.2 Organizational Commitment

Transformational leadership is a catalyst for positive reinforcement motivation and a mechanism for growth, adjustment, innovation, creativity, survival, organizational commitment and adaptability. It reflects fundamental flexibility and principles for promoting trust between leaders and followers (Hirchhorn, 1990, Yammarino, et al, 2001). While the transactional leader influences by negotiations, the transformational leader inspires by getting the followers to appreciate the importance of their contribution to the organization, thereby increasing their levels of organizational commitment. Thus, transformational leadership is a multidimensional phenomenon which enhances organizational commitment towards organizational adaptability. Organizational commitment involves people, psychological bond, loyalty, and dedication to their organization with its goals, a desire to remain a member and a willingness to exert effort for its success, extending beyond mere job satisfaction to include emotional attachment and a sense of obligation. Organizational commitment reflects the strength of an individual's identification with an organization, which is central at

three levels, including affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. For example, affective commitment encompasses loyalty, and reflects also a deep concern for the organization’s welfare and adaptability. Transformational leadership is akin to organizational adaptability because leadership is a key to influencing organizational behavior and achieving organizational effectiveness (Griffin, and Bateman, 1986). Even though there appears to be no single best style of leadership, transformational leadership is believed to be much closer to what is regarded as *servant leadership*. This involves more connectedness between leaders and followers, and more vulnerability on the part of the leader. This suggests that the transformational leader is also a participative and considerate leader who demonstrates a concern for people so to enhance the health and well-being of followers in the work environment. This does not however, imply at all, that the leader must ignore the team’s work tasks, but suggests that the team must be motivated and empowered in different ways to enhance organizational transformation and adaptability. For instance, the concepts of inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation and others would mean that leaders cannot assume that they understand all followers needs. They should instead recognize the variety of needs that motivate followers behaviours and ask them to better understand their needs. This is important because individual followers differ in their needs, in which case leaders should be sensitive to ethnic, gender, culture and age differences in this regard. As a matter of simplistic analysis, followers with high need for power, must be given opportunities to exercise influence, and those with high need for achievement, must be allowed to excel at work. This is true because the traditional view casts followers as passive, but a more contemporary view of leadership casts the follower role as an active one with the potential for

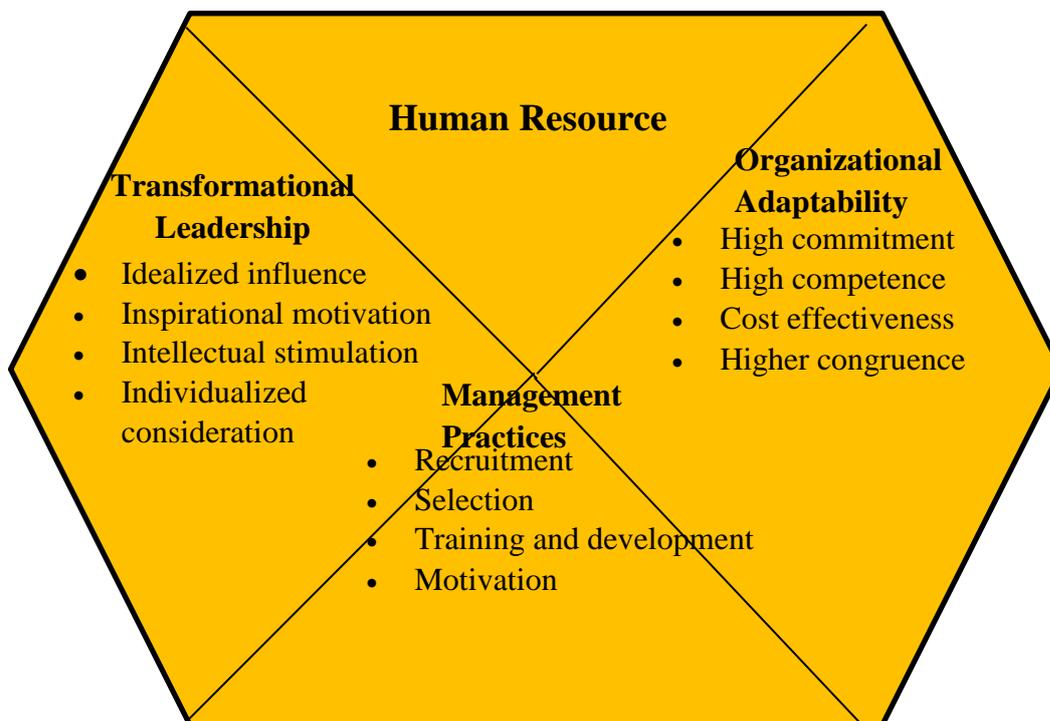
leadership. Individualized consideration for example, is likely to enhance job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment are linked to organizational citizenship behavior, improved organizational productivity, profitability and adaptability (Ugoani, 2018, Northouse, 1997). Leadership role is central towards employee work motivation and participation, because supervisory commitment is a catalyst for organizational growth. Organizational growth is a major characteristic of effective organizations and which may include profitability, return on investment, market share, adaptability and innovation, change management and perhaps the ultimate objectives of survival and sustainability. Transformational leadership largely drives innovation, goal commitment and organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is a prerequisite for growth which is central to adaptability. growth and adaptability are closely linked to high-profitability prospects of any organization in changing times. Organizational commitment is a strong belief in the organization’s goals and values, motivation, and a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to remain a member of the organization (Katzell, and Thompson, 1990, Hosmer, 1995, Ugoani, 2023^b).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative exploratory research design was adopted for this investigation. The objective of this type of design is to provide insights and understanding of the nature of the research problem. The research process is flexible, unstructured and samples are small. Data analysis can be qualitative or quantitative (Creswell, 2009). The result of this investigation is presented in table 1.

4. PRESENTATION OF RESULT

Table 1: Transformational Leadership Organizational Adaptability Integrated Model



4.1 Discussion

The model of this investigation demonstrates that transformational leadership has implications for human resource management practices, especially, motivation, and ultimate organizational adaptability in terms of high commitment and competence, among others. Transformational leadership and organizational commitment often play a mediating role in employees' motivation and psychological empowerment necessary for innovation and organizational growth. Transformational leadership is also a catalyst for improving trust among the leader and organizational members, thus, linking leadership with employees' creativity, through intrinsic motivation. Organizational adaptability is about creating wealth in the organization and this rests squarely on strategic human resource management and transformational leadership as the ladder towards the achievement of cost-effectiveness, congruence and sustainable competitive advantage. While transactional leadership approach may not be less important, transformational leadership pattern has the advantage of increasing the opportunity to share the organizational vision, and at the same time improving job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviours that are critical for organizational performance, change and adaptability. Transformational leadership behaviours foster effective human resource management practices that boost high levels of commitment and competence required for organizational flexibility and adaptability. For example, high competence means that organizational people will have the versatility in skills and the perspective to take on new roles and tasks as required for effective organizational transformation or adaptability. No organization can ever adapt in its environment without organizational leadership characterized by cost-effectiveness. In this context, cost-effectiveness means that the organization's human resource costs and other costs are kept less than those of competitors and more capable of responding to change and innovation. This can be the basis of organizational adaptability and higher organizational congruence. A state of higher congruence than competitors suggests that the organization has human resource or work practices where there is a higher coincidence of interest among organizational leadership, shareholders and organizational people that enhance the capacity of the organization to become adaptive to changes in its business, social, cultural, economic and governance environments. The qualitative exploratory research design was adopted for this study and it was found that transformational leadership as an independent variable composed of factors as idealized influence and others together with co-variables in terms of human resource management practices has significant positive correlation with organizational adaptability. This is the interest of the study.

4.2 Recommendations

- i. Organizations should focus on training leaders who can demonstrate capacity for empowering others to carry out responsibility of organizational innovation and adaptability.
- ii. Motivating employees should not be seen as a favour but a foundational approach for producing future organizational leaders.
- iii. Conducive work environment is essential to promote job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviours necessary for organizational change and adaptability.

- iv. Managing in the 21st century and beyond requires ethical leadership approach to boost psychological empowerment and sustainable work outcomes.
- v. Evaluation should be a regular feature in organizational leadership so as to improve feedback mechanisms to promote organizational adaptability.

4.3 Scope for Further Study

There is no leadership without followership. To enhance effective organizational leadership in Nigeria, further study should examine the relationship between followership and organizational performance in Nigeria.

5. CONCLUSION

The different assumptions about leadership suggest that it requires the uncommon ability to do many things right, and this also means knowing what to do at any time to achieve result. The distinction between a leader and a non-leader is that while the latter waits for direction, the former knows what to do to influence his or her followers to establish and accomplish a goal. In order to accomplish the goal, the leader exercises the right behaviours in terms of power to motivate and influence people. Leadership is a process of social influence, building trust and motivating others towards the achievement of organizational goals. Transformational leadership places a higher level of trust on followers and demands a much higher level of loyalty and performance beyond normal expectations. In other words, transformational leadership is linked to effective human resource management approach which is imperative towards organizational adaptability. Organization as an open system depends on the environment and the motivational power of leadership to survive. Leadership as a process of influence is also the catalyst for making people respond willingly to the desired directions necessary for organizational change and adaptability. Organizational adaptability reflects the flexibility of an organization to respond quickly to change within the environment. Transformational leadership and organizational adaptability are interrelated because, to a large extent transformational leadership style is often associated with organizational innovation, intrinsic motivation, creativity, learning-orientation, group identification and organizational performance. Transformational leadership style also correlates significantly positively with organizational adaptability to the extent that it enhances conscientiousness and performance through its influence at both individual and organizational levels, by promoting psychological empowerment and organizational growth. The exploratory qualitative research design was adopted for this study and the result showed significant positive correlation between transformational leadership and organizational adaptability.

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Originality

Transformational leadership is closely interrelated with organizational adaptability through motivational leadership. This pattern of leadership is the catalyst for organizational change and performance. Despite the importance of these relationships in

organizational transformation this is the newest work in Nigeria to emphasize the attributes of these variables in organizational leadership today.

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Authors Contribution

Professor John Nkeobuna Nnah Ugoani, and Favour Ngozi Richard are responsible for the collection of data, and analysis thereto in respect of this study. They are solely responsible for any errors or omissions arising from this report.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests whatsoever as regards the authorship and publication of this paper.

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Biography



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