



## **Transformational Leadership and School Effectiveness: A Comparative Study of Two Public Universities in Delta State Nigeria**

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### **Keywords**

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### **Abstract**

The study titled "Transformational Leadership and school effectiveness: A Comparative Study of two public Universities in Delta State" was conducted to examine the importance of transformational leadership on public Universities in Delta Nigeria. It also x-rayed the various leadership styles and why transformational leadership is seen as the most accepted one. The researchers also went ahead to determine the seamless operation of Government-owned Universities in Delta State. The research design applied is the survey research method. The questionnaires were properly structured and distributed to respondents. The population is 300 comprising of Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Registrars, Deputy Registrars Bursars, Librarians, Deans of Faculties, Heads of Departments, Deans of Students Affairs, and Chief Security Officers. A sample of 150 respondents was used in the study. The stratified random sampling technique was used. The Taro Yamane's formula was adopted in the study. The SPSS 23 version was used to analyze data collected. Hypotheses were also tested. Findings showed that a significant positive relationship exist between transformational leadership and key indicators of school effectiveness, such as student performance, faculty productivity and institutional reputation. The study recommends that leadership training programmes for University Administrators should be organized to promote transformational leadership procedures.

## I. Introduction

Educational institutions, mostly Universities, play a pivotal role in national development. Effective leadership is very germane to achieving academic excellence and institutional growth. Transformational leadership as proposed by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) emphasized visionary leadership. No doubt, this implies that motivation and morale fosters innovation. This research studied how transformational leadership could influence staff effectiveness in public Universities in Delta State, Nigeria, that combines leadership approaches across institutions of higher learning.

In an era of rapid Educational reforms and increasing demands for Accountability, the need for leadership in shaping school outcomes has gained significant attention. Among the varying leadership styles, transformational leadership has emerged a veritable approach that inspires innovation, fostering collective commitments and drives organizational improvements.

Transformational leaders in Education are known by their abilities to articulate a compelling vision, empowering teachers and cultivating a culture of collaboration and stimulating growth. Despite the growing body of literature on leadership in Education, there exists the need to refine how transformational leaders contribute to student offerings in many Educational contexts. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that inspires and motivates followers to achieve more than they thought possible. According to Bass and Avolio (1994), transformational leadership is composed of four main dimensions:

*Idealized Influence: Leaders act as models; earning trust and respect. They are admired, emulated, and trusted by their followers.*

*Inspirational Motivation: Leaders inspire and motivate followers with a clear vision and high expectations. They provide meaning and challenge to followers.*

*Intellectual Stimulation: Leaders encourage innovation and creativity. They promote critical thinking and problem-solving by challenging assumptions and soliciting followers' ideas.*

*Individualized Consideration: Leaders provide personal attention to followers needs for achievement and growth. They act as mentors or coaches.*

School effectiveness refers to the capacity of a school to produce desired outcomes such as academic achievement, positive student behavior, and overall development. Transformational leadership has been seen to enhance school effectiveness in several ways.

*Improved teacher motivation and performance: Transformational leaders create a supportive culture that leads to improved teacher morale and increased structural quality (Leithwood & Jantzi 2005).*

*Student achievement: Schools led by transformational leaders often see gains in students' academic performance due to improved teaching and learning environments (Sun et al. 2003).*

*Organizational learning and innovation: Intellectual stimulation encourages staff to adopt innovative procedures that contribute to a dynamic and effective school culture (Hallinger 2003).*

Transformational leadership through its dimensions such as idealized influence and individualized consideration plays a vital role in enhancing school effectiveness (Bass & Avolio 1994). By fostering shared vision and encouraging innovation, school leaders can significantly improve their performance and student outcomes.

### Relevance of the Study

The study will be relevant to Government, policy makers, school Administrators, the public, teachers, and students, supervisory bodies like NUC, NCCE, and NBTE etc. This will create room for initiation, implementation, establishment, running, managing and administering of Educational system for all and sundry.

### Aims and Objectives of the Study

*To assess the extent to which transformational leadership is practiced in public Universities in Delta State.*

*To evaluate the level of overall effectiveness in terms of academic performance, staff productivity, and institutional governance in these Universities.*

*To determine the relationship between transformational leadership and key indicators for overall effectiveness.*

*To compare the leadership styles and then one comes between Delta State University (DELSU) and Federal University of Petroleum Resources (FUPRE) effectiveness.*

### Research Questions

*To what extent is transformational leadership practiced in public Universities in Delta State?*

*How does transformational leadership influence school effectiveness in these institutions?*

*What are the differences in leadership effectiveness between DELSU and FUPRE?*

*What challenges limit the impact of transformational leadership in Nigerian Universities?*

### Hypotheses

*H1: There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership and school effectiveness in public Universities in Delta State.*

*H2: There is a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and school effectiveness in public Universities in Delta State.*

*H3: There is no significant difference in the impact of transformational leadership on school effectiveness between DELSU and FUPRE.*

*H4: There is a significant difference in the impact of transformational leadership on school effectiveness between DELSU and FUPRE.*

*H5: Idealized influence does not significantly improve academic performance.*

*H6: Idealized influence has a significant positive effect on academic performance.*

*H7: Inspirational motivation does not significantly enhance staff productivity.*

*H8: Inspirational motivation significantly enhances staff productivity.*

## II. Statement of the Problem

The Nigerian higher Education system faces significant challenges to maintain institutional effectiveness, mostly in public Universities. In Delta State, where public Universities serve as critical centers for human capital development, issues such as declining academic standards, staff motivation, and ineffective processes raise fundamental questions about leadership approaches and their impact on institutional performance. While transformational leadership has been widely studied in corporate and cultural settings globally, its application and effectiveness in Nigerian higher Education has primarily based attention on Primary and Secondary Education with little attention in higher institutions. Comparative leadership approaches across different institutions within the same state are mostly not available. The problem is compounded by many challenges faced by Nigerian Universities, including frequent strikes, inadequate

funding, and bureaucratic bottlenecks. These factors may moderate the potential for transformational leadership to positively impact institutional performance.

### **Benefits of Transformational Leadership**

There is sufficient empirical evidence that shows whether and how transformational leadership contributes to school effectiveness in this challenging environment, mostly when comparing schools with different governance structures and resource bases. The study seeks to address these gaps by investigating: To what extent does transformational leadership contribute to school effectiveness in private Universities in the United States? How do these findings compare between different models with various organizational patterns and resources? What insights and factors hinder the successful implementation of transformational leadership in these universities?

The answers to these questions are crucial for many reasons. First, they will give empirical evidence on the application of transformational leadership theory in higher Educational contexts. Second, the comparative approach will show best practices that can be shared in institutions. Third, the findings will inform leadership.

### **III. Literature Review**

Okolie (2018) highlights the impact of leadership on University rankings and accreditation results. But comparative studies on Delta State universities remain limited. Bass & Avolio (1994) asserted that idealized influence makes leaders act as role models which earn trust and respect. They added that it makes leaders to be admired, copied, attracted and trusted by their followers. Idealized influence plays an important role in the administration of positive outcomes. In addition, transformational leadership style inspires and motivates followers to meet more than expected.

Yanzheng, L. (2019) stressed that transformational leadership that was introduced in China and in the wine. He examined 233 transformational leaders in Chinese language. L added that leadership styles of school principals are of considerable interest. It was stated by him that before now, principals mainly dwelt on the nature of the position and wine. But with years passing by the role of school heads shifted on school improvement.

Anantha, R.A. (2017) conducted a study to determine the level of transformational leadership. He stated that school culture functions as a moderator in the relationship between transformational leadership style of school principals and organizational well-being; He added that organizational leadership and school culture has a direct control in school seamless operation.

Ardin, S (2015) in this study, it was stated that transformational leadership plays a key role in the effectiveness of school management. The study went further to stress that transformational leadership has significantly improved school performance through motivation of teams, collective development, building culture in teaching, learning and increased staff dedication. Trust, collegial support and school climate often mediate these effects, the study added.

### **IV. Methodology**

A mixed-methods approach was used, combining quantitative survey and qualitative interviews.

### Population and Sampling

The study targeted academic staff, non-academic staff, and students from Delta State University and Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun FUPRE. A stratified random sampling technique was employed with 300 respondents (150 from each University).

### Data Collection and Analysis

*Quantitative a structured questionnaire based on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) assessed leadership styles.*

*Qualitative Semi-structured interviews with 10 senior administrators were conducted.*

### Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using SPSS (descriptive and inferential statistics) and thematic analysis for qualitative responses.

### Findings and Discussion

*Delta State University exhibited higher levels of idealized influence and inspirational motivation.*

*Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun FUPRE displayed strong intellectual stimulation but has a weaker consideration.*

### Impact on School Effectiveness

*Both Universities reported have moderate average effectiveness with Delta State University having higher number of personnel, motivation and research-based features.*

*Transformational leadership positively correlated with institutional reputation and image ( $r=0.62$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).*

### Comparative Analysis

Delta State University leadership showed that consistent transformational leadership contributed to effective accreditation results when compared with that of Federal University of Petroleum Resources Effurun FUPRE.

## V. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study showed that transformational leadership improves school effectiveness in public Universities. However, various differences play out between institutions of higher learning based on administrative structures and leadership methods used.

### Recommendations

*University leaders should endeavor to be in leadership training programmes to strengthen and promote transformational standards and application in their Universities.*

*Policy makers should encourage performance-centered leadership in public Universities in Delta State and elsewhere.*

*Upcoming researchers should make needs analysis on the effects of leadership on students' academic performance and eventual achievements in the Universities.*

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