

Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Performance of Selected Public Sector organization in FCT Abuja

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of transformational leadership on employee performance at the Federal Capital Territory Internal Revenue Service (FCT-IRS) in Abuja, Nigeria. It specifically emphasizes two important dimensions of transformational leadership, namely, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, and examines their influence on employees' quality of work. A quantitative research approach was used and data were collected from 273 employees selected through stratified random sampling from different departments and staff levels through a survey. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and validated measures of work quality. Descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression were employed for analysis. The results indicate a significant and positive relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and employees' quality of work. Inspirational motivation was positively related to work quality ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$), and intellectual stimulation was even more strongly related ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$). The leadership dimensions collectively explained a significant amount of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.61$) indicating that leadership style plays a major role in influencing the performance of employees in the organisation. The study finds that transformational leadership has a significant effect on the improvement of employees' quality of work in public revenue institutions. It therefore recommends that FCT-IRS should enhance leadership development initiatives by implementing focused training programs and supportive organizational policies. This study adds relevant empirical insight to the existing literature on leadership and performance with focus on specific leadership behaviours and their link to work quality particularly in the Nigerian public sector.*

Keywords: Transformational leadership, employee performance, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, quality of work, FCT-IRS.

INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership that inspires followers, motivates them to think creatively and pays attention to their individual needs has been consistently associated with better employee attitudes and

improved work outcomes across different sectors and countries (Khan et al., 2020). In the last few years, some of the features of this leadership style have been more closely examined, especially inspirational motivation, where leaders provide a clear and compelling vision, and intellectual stimulation, where employees are challenged to think differently and solve problems in new ways. These behaviours are known to enhance employees' motivation, engagement and overall performance. At the same time, there has continued to be a focus on the importance of work quality as one of the key means of evaluating employee performance, particularly in organisations where precision and standards are critical, such as in the public sector.

Public sector organisations in Nigeria are under increasing pressure to improve the quality of their services and to become more efficient. This is especially true for revenue-raising agencies where performance directly impacts government capacity and service delivery. Transformational leadership has been found to positively influence employee performance in Nigeria, especially in the banking industry (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Leaders who motivate, support and intellectually engage their employees tend to get better results in terms of output and quality of work. But the majority of these studies look at transformational leadership as a whole, not its separate parts. Furthermore, many of them are centered on private sector organisations, creating a gap in the understanding of how specific leadership behaviours operate in public sector institutions such as the Federal Capital Territory Internal Revenue Service (FCT-IRS).

This gap is important, because work in public revenue agencies is of a special character. Tasks often require a high level of accuracy, accountability and following procedures. Hence, the effect of leadership on performance, especially on the quality of work, may differ from that of other sectors. While there is a general consensus that transformational leadership has positive effects on employee outcomes, recent studies indicate that the effects are not always uniform. The results may vary depending on the context, and the way performance is measured also plays a role in shaping findings (Bakker et al., 2023; Vuong & Nguyen, 2022). However, there is still a lack of research that clearly demonstrates which specific aspects of transformational leadership are most effective in enhancing the quality of work in public sector settings. It is on this background that this study focuses on the Federal Capital Territory Internal Revenue Service (FCT-IRS) Abuja. The research is focused on two key dimensions -- inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation -- and their effects on the quality of employees' work, rather than looking at the general concept of transformational leadership. By so doing, the study aims to offer clearer and more practical insights into the effect of leadership behaviours on performance in a public revenue organisation. The present study also draws on existing measurement tools such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), and recent studies examining the relationship between leadership behaviours and employee performance outcomes.

In accordance with the focus, the study aims to answer three key questions. First, what is the influence of inspirational motivation on the quality of work of employees of FCT-IRS, Abuja? Secondly, what is the influence of intellectual stimulation on quality of work of employees? Third, what if both leadership behaviours are incorporated in the model – do they have a more powerful combined effect on work quality? The study seeks to provide useful, evidence-based insights that can inform leadership development and performance improvement initiatives within FCT-IRS and other public sector organisations by answering these questions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual clarification

Transformational leadership is a leadership style where leaders inspire their employees, encourage them to think differently, and push them to perform higher (Northouse, 2021). It is mostly described by four main dimensions developed by Bass and Avolio (1994) which are idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. These dimensions are more concerned with motivation, vision and the development of employees, and less with strict supervision, rewards or punishments. Therefore, transformational leadership is often associated with positive outcomes such as higher commitment, better performance and higher creativity among employees (Khan et al., 2020). This is especially useful in understanding leadership in public sector organisations.

Inspirational motivation is one of the important aspects of the transformational leadership. Leaders communicate goals clearly, express confidence in the future, and encourage employees to stay motivated (Avolio et al., 2021). When leaders do this well, they can create a sense of purpose to their staff, which can improve employee commitment to work and performance. Research has shown that when employees feel inspired, they are more likely to put in effort and improve the quality of their work (Buil et al., 2022).

Another big thing is intellectual stimulation. This involves allowing employees the chance to think for themselves, challenge existing practices and come up with new ideas (Khalili, 2021). Leaders who do this allow employees to be more creative and take the initiative in solving problems. Thus, employees are more likely to produce careful, well-thought-out, high-quality work (Bakker et al., 2023).

Employee performance is generally the extent to which employees perform their duties. Different things it can be measured by . How fast work is done . How much is produced . But this study is looking at the quality of work, meaning how accurate, reliable, and professional the work is (Vuong & Nguyen, 2022). The quality of work is very important in organisations like the FCT-IRS as it affects correct tax calculations, effective service delivery, public trust and so on.

Conceptual Framework

The framework of this research shows how the main variables relate to each other. Transformational leadership has two key parts: inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. These serve as the independent variables. The dependent variable is work quality, which measures how well employees perform their jobs.

The framework outlines three main connections:

- I. Inspirational motivation is expected to improve employees' work.
- II. Intellectual stimulation is also believed to enhance employees' work.
- III. When both factors are combined, they will likely have an even greater impact on employees' job performance.

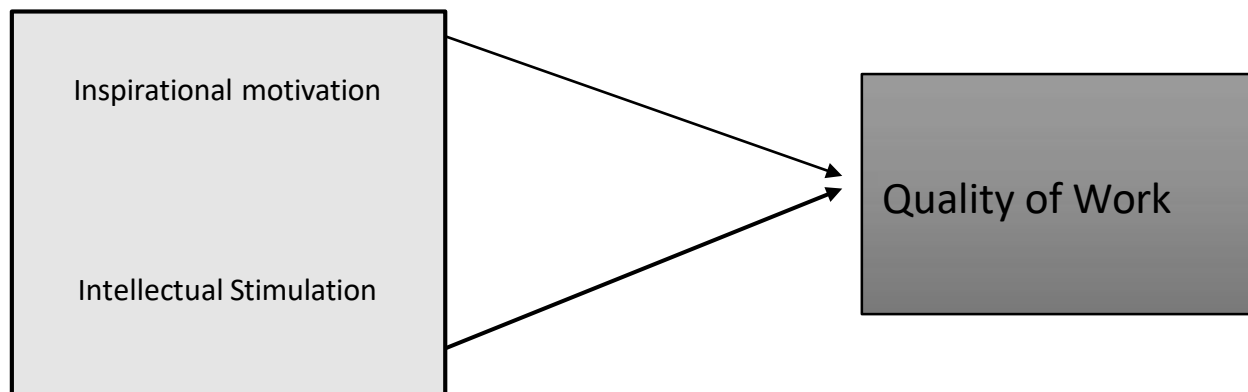
The main idea behind this framework is that when employees feel motivated and are encouraged to think independently, they tend to produce better work (Notarnicola et al., 2024).

Independent variable.

Dependent variable

Transformational Leadership

Employee Performance



Source: Author's Conceptualization.

Theoretical Review

Transformational Leadership Theory

Burns first developed Transformational Leadership Theory, and Bass later expanded on it. The theory explains how leaders can improve employee motivation, commitment, and performance through inspiration and support. Bass identifies four key elements of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Northouse, 2021). This study focuses on inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. When employees feel inspired, they work towards a common goal and experience a sense of purpose. In contrast, intellectual stimulation encourages employees to think creatively, seek solutions, and generate new ideas. These two behaviors are crucial for enhancing workplace effectiveness.

Path–Goal Theory

Path-Goal Theory says that leaders can help their employees do better by making goals clear, removing obstacles, and giving them the right support (Evans, 2021). Leaders tell employees what to do and help them do well. This theory is very similar to this study. Inspirational motivation is part of a leader's job to guide and encourage employees, while intellectual stimulation is part of participative leadership, where employees help solve problems. This shows that how leaders act can have a direct effect on how well their employees do their jobs.

Theoretical Framework

The main theory behind this study is Transformational Leadership Theory, which clearly shows how leaders' actions affect how well their employees do their jobs. It shows that when leaders motivate their workers and encourage them to think outside the box, the workers are more likely to do better work. Path–Goal Theory also supports this idea by showing that leaders can change how employees

act and do their jobs by giving them help and direction. These theories work together to explain how motivating employees and giving them intellectual challenges can make their work better.

Empirical review

Research has indicated that transformational leadership leads to improved employee performance. However, the extent of this impact often varies based on the organization type, specific leadership behaviors, and the methods used to assess performance. For example, Khan et al. (2020) found that transformational leadership notably boosts employee performance within service-oriented organizations. They noted that intellectual stimulation plays a crucial role in enabling employees to produce creative and high-quality work, as it encourages critical thinking. In another study, Buil, Martínez, and Matute (2022) revealed that inspiration can enhance employee engagement and motivate them to exceed expectations. When employees feel inspired, they are likely to approach their tasks with greater care, which results in improved work quality.

Furthermore, Ibrahim et al. (2021) conducted research in Nigeria, focusing on employees within deposit money banks. They discovered that both inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation contribute to improved performance. The findings indicated that motivated employees are more likely to meet work standards, while those who are intellectually challenged excel in effective problem-solving. Additionally, Bakker et al. (2023) further showed that even typical leadership behaviours can effect change. Their research indicated that when leaders consistently display transformational behaviours, employees become more engaged and deliver higher standards of work quality. However, Notarnicola et al. (2024), in a study of healthcare organisations, similarly found that transformational leadership enhances employee satisfaction and the quality of task performance. They said that stimulating employees' minds helps them follow better and more accurate ways of doing their jobs.

Also, Mensah (2020) found that transformational leadership enhances performance in the public sector, particularly in roles requiring careful thought and accuracy. Al-Yafi and Al-Harbi (2021) also said that inspirational motivation helps workers stay committed to doing good work. These results are backed up by other studies in different fields. Likewise, Le and Lei (2022) discovered that inspirational motivation enhanced the quality of teaching in educational institutions. Zhang and Xie (2021) demonstrated that intellectual stimulation fosters innovation and reduces errors within the technology sector. Moreover, Olagunju and Adebayo (2023) discovered that transformational leadership enhances the performance of civil servants in Nigeria. They said that motivation gives workers direction and that intellectual stimulation helps them think critically, which are both important for providing good service. Finally, Chen and Wu (2023) found that employees with transformational leaders are more likely to produce accurate and professional work. Vuong and Nguyen (2022) confirmed that the quality of work is one of the most important ways to measure performance, especially in public organizations. These studies show that transformational leadership, especially through inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, can improve employee performance, particularly regarding work quality. However, the results can vary based on the organization and context, which makes further research necessary.

Literature Gap

From the studies reviewed, a few important gaps can be identified. First, many studies focus on private organizations or sectors like healthcare and education. There is limited research on public-sector revenue organizations such as FCT-IRS. Second, most studies look at transformational leadership as

a whole, using all four dimensions. Very few studies focus specifically on inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation to see how each one affects performance. Third, many researchers measure performance in a general way, such as productivity or output. Fewer studies focus specifically on quality of work, which is crucial in public revenue organizations where accuracy and consistency matter. Lastly, there is limited research on transformational leadership within the Nigerian tax administration system. This creates a gap that this study aims to fill. By addressing these gaps, this study provides a clearer understanding of how specific leadership behaviors influence the quality of work among employees at FCT-IRS, Abuja.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach in order to examine the effect of transformational leadership particularly involving inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation on employee performance (quality of work) in the Federal Capital Territory Internal Revenue Service (FCT-IRS), Abuja. The design of the survey was selected because it allows data to be collected in an organised way and it is easier to analyse the relationships between leadership behaviours and employee performance. The study population is formed by around 850 employees of FCT-IRS in different departments like Tax Assessment, Audit, Enforcement, Human Resources and Administration. From this population, the population size of 273 respondents was determined using Yamane (1967) formula at 5% margin of error. Stratified random sampling was used to make sure proper representation of all staff categories. This approach gave senior, middle, and junior staff a fair chance of being included in the study.

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The questions about transformational leadership were adapted from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), while the items related to employee performance were taken from established and validated measures of work quality. Experts reviewed the questionnaire to confirm it was clear and relevant. It was also pre-tested on 30 employees who were not part of the main study. The pre-test results showed good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70. To make it easy for the participants to take part, the questionnaires were given out in person and online. All the participants were briefed about the purpose of the study and guaranteed confidentiality of their responses. Participation was voluntary. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics like mean, frequency and standard deviation to summarise the responses and describe the characteristics of the respondents and key variables.

To assess the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, the study employed a multiple linear regression model adopted from Akey-Torku & Dai (2020). functional:

$$QW_i = f(IM_i, IS_i)$$

Where: Y = Quality of Work (Employee Performance Proxy); IM = Inspirational Motivation (Transformational Leadership Proxy); IS = Intellectual Stimulation (Transformational Leadership Proxy)

The econometric form of the model is thus expressed as:

$$QW_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IM_i + \beta_2 IS_i + E_i$$

Where: QW_i = Quality of Work for employee i (dependent variable); IM_i = Inspirational Motivation (independent variable); IS_i = Intellectual Stimulation (independent variable); β_0 = Intercept term (constant); β_1, β_2 = Coefficients measuring the effect of IM and IS; E_i = Error term

The model tests the ideas that inspirational motivation (β_1) and intellectual stimulation (β_2) positively

affect the quality of employees' work.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis looked at the relationship between inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and work quality among employees of FCT-IRS. It used descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses. The results showed positive and significant relationships among the variables.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Inspirational Motivation	4.12	0.68
Intellectual Stimulation	4.05	0.72
Quality of Work	4.18	0.64

Source: Field Survey Result, 2026

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variables	IM	IS	QW
IM	1	0.62**	0.69**
IS	0.62**	1	0.71**
QW	0.69**	0.71**	1

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 level Source:

Field Survey Result, 2026

Table 3: Multiple Regression Results

Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig.
Inspirational Motivation	0.41	5.82	0.000
Intellectual Stimulation	0.46	6.11	0.000

$R^2 = 0.61$, $F = 112.4$, $p < 0.05$

Source: Field Source Result, 2026

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis uncovered strong and significant correlations between the evaluated leadership styles, particularly inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, and the quality of work among employees at the Federal Capital Territory Internal Revenue Service in Abuja. Descriptive statistics indicated that individuals assigned elevated average scores across all variables. For instance, the score for intellectual stimulation was 4.05, the score for quality of work was 4.18, and the score for inspirational motivation was 4.12. These high scores show that employees think their leaders are smart and inspiring, which probably makes them think their work is good. This pattern shows that FCT-IRS is a good place to work because it already has leadership practices in place that improve the quality of work. The results of the correlation analysis show that there is a strong link between how leaders act and how well their workers do their jobs. Leaders who motivate their workers and get them thinking tend to get better work from them.

The regression results back up this connection. The coefficient is 0.41, the t-value is 5.82, and the p-value is less than 0.001. This means that inspirational motivation has a positive and significant effect on the quality of work. This shows that when leaders motivate and inspire their employees, they do better work. Intellectual stimulation also had a big and good effect, with a coefficient of 0.46, a t-value of 6.11, and a p-value of less than 0.001. This means that at FCT-IRS, getting workers to think critically, solve problems, and be creative in their work has an even bigger effect on how well they do their jobs.

In conclusion, the model worked well. The R^2 value of 0.61 means that these two leadership factors can explain about 61% of the differences in how well employees do their jobs. The model was also statistically significant, with a p-value of less than 0.05 and an F-value of 112.4. This means that the model fits the data well and that the results are reliable. In short, the results show that: Giving employees inspiration makes their work better. Getting employees' brains going makes their work better. Together, both types of leadership behaviour do a good job of explaining why workers do better or worse at their jobs, especially when it comes to the quality of their work.

The results of this study support the primary foundation of Transformational Leadership Theory. This theory claims that leaders improve employee performance by shaping their thoughts, emotions, and comprehension of their work. The strong effect of inspirational motivation shows that when leaders share a clear vision, show optimism, and give employees a sense of purpose, they tend to take their jobs more seriously and work harder to produce better work. For FCT-IRS, this helps explain why workers who feel more motivated also say they do better work. Inspiration does more than make employees feel good; it also helps them understand how important their work is. Employees are more likely to be careful, accurate, and responsible when they know how their job helps the company make money and serve the public. This is very important for a company like FCT-IRS, where mistakes can cause problems with money, the law, and public trust. In this kind of setting, having a shared goal naturally leads to more careful and disciplined work.

The results also show that stimulating the mind has an even bigger effect on the quality of work. This means that when workers are told to think critically, question how things are done, and look for better ways to do things, they do even better. In a technical setting like FCT-IRS, where tax assessments, audits, and enforcement all need careful thought and attention to detail, this makes sense. Employees who are encouraged to think critically about their work are less likely to make mistakes and more likely to follow the rules. This finding implies that high-quality work depends not only on motivation but also on the level of employee engagement in their tasks. Leaders help employees think, which makes it easier for them to solve problems, make decisions, and do their jobs correctly. These abilities are necessary for providing dependable public service.

The effect is actually stronger when intellectual stimulation and inspiration come together. Intellectual stimulation teaches employees how to do their jobs well, while motivation pushes them to do their best. Together, they make the workplace a place where workers want to do their best work. This is why the model has a high explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.61$), which means that leadership has a big effect on the quality of work in FCT-IRS. These findings interestingly challenge the prevalent notion that public sector performance is mainly influenced by rules, systems, or policies. Instead, they show that how leaders act has a big effect on how well employees do their jobs. This shows that leadership ought

not to be viewed mainly as administrative but as a key component in improving performance within public organisations.

Finally, the results fit well with Path-Goal Theory. According to this theory, leaders improve performance by directing workers, making goals clearer, and helping them with their work. In this case, inspirational motivation helps workers understand their goals and stay motivated, while intellectual stimulation makes them think more deeply and solve problems. Both theories explain how these leadership behaviours help FCT-IRS employees do their jobs better.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From a practical perspective, the study suggests that improving performance in FCT-IRS will require more than reforms, technology or new regulations. Leadership development deserves serious attention and equal importance. In particular, leaders should be trained to: Communicate a clear vision and purpose that motivates employees, Foster critical thinking in employees and find better ways to do their work, Foster an environment where employees feel comfortable asking questions, sharing ideas, and learning from mistakes.

From a practical perspective, the study suggests that improving performance in FCT-IRS will require more than reforms, technology or new regulations. Leadership development deserves serious attention and equal importance. In particular, leaders should be trained to: Communicate a clear vision and purpose that motivates employees, Foster critical thinking in employees and find better ways to do their work, Foster an environment where employees feel comfortable asking questions, sharing ideas, and learning from mistakes. This study improves existing knowledge from a research standpoint in three major ways. First, it looks at specific parts of transformational leadership instead of seeing it as a whole idea. Second, it focuses on the quality of work, which is a better way to measure how well public service organisations are doing. Third, it presents evidence from a Nigerian public revenue agency, a domain that has not been thoroughly looked at in leadership research. The study concludes that transformational leadership is necessary for improving professionalism, accuracy, and overall service quality in public revenue administration. For groups like FCT-IRS, investing in leadership development should be seen as an important step toward improving performance, earning the public's trust, and making sure the business is successful in the long run.

Suggestions for Further Studies

This study has shed light on the impact of transformational leadership on employee performance in specific public sector organisations within the Federal Capital Territory; however, many opportunities for further research remain to be investigated. First, this study only looked at public sector organisations, specifically the FCT-IRS. Subsequent research may expand the focus to encompass additional sectors such as education, healthcare, banking, or private enterprises. This would enable comparisons to determine if identical leadership behaviours produce analogous outcomes across diverse work environments. Second, this study focused on transformational leadership. Following studies could look at alternative leadership styles, including transactional leadership, servant leadership, or laissez-faire leadership. This would further clarify the influence of diverse leadership styles on employee performance.

Third, this study employed a cross-sectional design, gathering data at a single point in time. Further studies may adopt a longitudinal methodology, gathering data over an extended timeframe. This would show how the performance of leaders and employees changes over time rather than capturing just a single moment. Fourth, this study mainly looked at how well employees did their jobs by looking at the quality of their work. Following studies could improve this by adding additional performance metrics, including productivity, efficiency, innovation, job satisfaction, or collaboration. This would give a more complete picture of how well employees are doing. Lastly, this study basically made use of quantitative methods, which included questionnaires and statistical analysis. Future research could use a mixed-method approach by combining surveys with interviews or focus group discussions. This would help researchers learn more about how employees feel about leadership at work.

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