THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS IN NIGERIA: A REVIEW

[1]Nasamu ,I , [2]Adejoh, E, [3]Tukura, T.P, [4]Yahaya, E.S, [5]Okpanachi, A.U, [6]Edah, F.J

[1]School of Management, Walden University. Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States of America

[2]Registry Department, Salem University, Lokoja, Nigeria

[3]First Bank PLC, Lokoja, Nigeria

[4] Department of Public Administration, University of Nigeria, Nsukka,, Nigeria

[5]Department of Public Administration, Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, Nigeria

[6]Department of Public Administration, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

(Nasamu, I ; nasamuibrahim@yahoo.com)

ABSTRACT

This review work examines the linkage between transformational leadership and improved organizational efficiency, literature that evaluates the impact of transformational leadership in public sector organizations. Are scanty . Most researchers have carried out only quantitative studies thereby creating a gap in how transformational leadership is treated in qualitative studies. The four dimension of Bass' Leadership Theory are analyzed in line with service delivery. When public sector organizations in Nigeria begin to adopt transformational leadership by providing job resources and inspire employee motivation, the employees will be happier and willing to deliver on the organizational goals.. The review concludes that transformational leadership is crucial in building and enhancing knowledge sharing among team members. It also found that transformational leadership has a significant and positive impact on service delivery, and employee motivation moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and service delivery . It was recommended that there is a need for future researchers to carry out more qualitative case studies on transformational leadership and its effects on organizational functioning. The future study can adopt the following approaches: in-depth interview, focus groups, case study research, content analysis, and ethnographic research. This is important because transformational leadership is rarely discussed in terms of how effective and efficient it has been.
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1.0   **INTRODUCTION**

To achieve superior service delivery, organizational leaders must be compete and sustain their competitive advantage. To achieve and further sustain superior service quality, organizations must ensure that their employees and customers' expectations are met and even surpassed as it is the case for many private firms. However, the situation is not same for public sector organizations in Nigeia.

Okonjo-Iweala (2012) pointed out that the Nigerian public sector is a failed public institution plagued with inadequate service delivery and mismanagement of resources because of ineffective leadership. According to the author, the Nigerian public sector has ranked low in terms of effective leadership when compared with other African countries. Okonjo-Iweala (2012) and Bronkhorst, Steijn, & Vermeeren (2015) have opined that public sector inefficiency arising from leadership ineffectiveness is responsible for the underdevelopment in Nigeria. As such, there is no doubt that the Public sector productivity and service delivery have continued to be abysmal in Nigeria.

According to several researchers, the failure of the Nigerian Public Sector to be transformative is attributed to the ineffective and inefficient leadership in many public sectors. Buick, *et al.,* (2015) have argued that for society to function optimally, the public

sector is critical and must be transformative. . Ocheja *et al* (2025) called for a wholistic restructuring and reformation of the civil/ public service for better efficiency , service delivery thus leading to greater national development, but unfortunately Ejigbo *et al* (2023)reported that the many civil/public service reforms over the years have failed to yield positive results , this was corroborated by Ocheja *et al* (2023)

At the moment, a gap exists for scholars and leading practitioners in understanding how transformational leadership can positively impact public sector organizations in Nigeria particularly in the area of service delivery. Felix et al., (2015) stated that many public sector organizations in Nigeria are now going digital and trying to be transformative in their thoughts and ideas. This is coming after the Federal Government mandated all public organizations to digitalize their processes and deliver quality services to citizens in line with the national scheme called SERVICOM (an acronym for Service Compact).Many organizations in the Nigerian public sector have not delivered effective and efficient service delivery; while others have remained redundant over the past few years. To buttress this point, former Finance Minister, Okonjo-Iweala (2012) has

pointed out that the Nigerian public sector is a failed public institution plagued with inadequate service delivery and mismanagement of resources because of ineffective leadership.

Many organizations have had cause to have transformational leaders, but there have been scanty studies to show that transformational leadership has impacted service delivery in Nigeria. In the contemporary world of the Nigerian public sector, leadership failure is usually attributed to a lack of transformational leadership which also impacts how service is delivered (Felix et al., 2016). Transformational leadership behaviors play a significant role in influencing employee job Satisfaction, which positively impacts service delivery (Hetland et al., 2011). Despite the advantages of transformational leadership, many leaders still face the enormous new challenge of adjusting to a new norm completely different from those of traditional interactions. Indeed, voluminous research on the transformational leadership (Hetland et al., 2011; Moradi & Shahbazi, 2016; Sacavem et al., 2017) focused on inspiration and creativity, exerting commitment and benefits.

The specific problem statement is that public sector administrators in Nigeria lack the strategies for leading their organizations through transformational leadership models (Chikelu, *et al*2016).

This review is important to public administration because it will help to build a deep understanding and knowledge of how leaders behaviors and attitudes are perceived as positively impacting performance. This review is focused on the effects of Transformational Leadership in the Public Sector in Nigeria and is, therefore, evaluation oriented because it pushes for public administrators to adopt transformational leadership styles and

strategies. This study has several positive social change implications which address the problem statement in my capstone. The Nigerian public sector is a failed public institution plagued with inadequate service delivery and mismanagement of resources because of ineffective leadership. As a consequence, leaders are left with the task of dealing with recurring problems with little or no time to proactively lead the organization. Leaders who use the "react and fix" method of leadership will benefit from this study by learning how transformational leadership can improve organizational functioning.

In addition to this, public sector managers in Nigeria using transformational behaviors will have a better understanding of how to make the work environment more pleasant, and increase employee engagement. The positive social change is apparent when employees become happier at the workplace, customers are enjoying a better quality of service, and the overall organizational

capabilities are strengthened. These changes are significant for public administration, public policy, and/or nonprofit management because creativity has become a tool adopted by public sector leaders to demonstrate, teach, coach, and educate their followers whenever they are dealing with difficult situations. These transformational leaders must be innovative in their quest to undertake new challenges and new projects.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this research is Burns' (1978) theory of transformational leadership. The framework is ideal for this study because it approaches the problem statement earlier identified in the study. Burns' theory of transformational leadership is propounded on the rationale that to transform leadership, both the leaders and followers must help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation. In today's fast-evolving world, change is a common theme across all businesses regardless of location, size, and industry. Organizations are increasingly adapting and adjusting to the competition and are developing tools to sustain their competitive advantage.

Studies on leadership have offered conceptual understandings of how leadership can influence followers. Transforming leaders are idealized in the sense that they are an example of working towards the benefit of the team, and community (Burns, 1978). There exists limited research on the role of transformational leadership and service delivery among the organizations in the Nigerian public sector (Felix *et al* 2015).

Recently, more organizations are increasingly moving toward cost-saving strategies while delivering on efficiency and effectiveness. This is because unplanned changes may change the course of an industry or organization. According to Banutu-Gomez (2011), organizations that are prepared and motivated will remain successful in the business world. Indeed, more research is required to study the relationship between transformational leadership and service delivery.
Since Burns conceptualized the theory of transformational leadership, several theories have since evolved prominently among Bennis and Nanus (1985), Sashkin (1988). However, Bass' theory of transformational leadership (Yukl, 1999) remains the most viable and adopted theory when transformational leadership is discussed.

According to Burns (1999), transformational leadership consists of four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized

consideration. Researchers have stated that the role of every manager in the organization is to be a leader than a manager (Hall *et al.,* 2015). Nigerian employees prefer leaders who exhibit the traits of transformational leadership particularly idealized consideration (Daniel, 2019).

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework
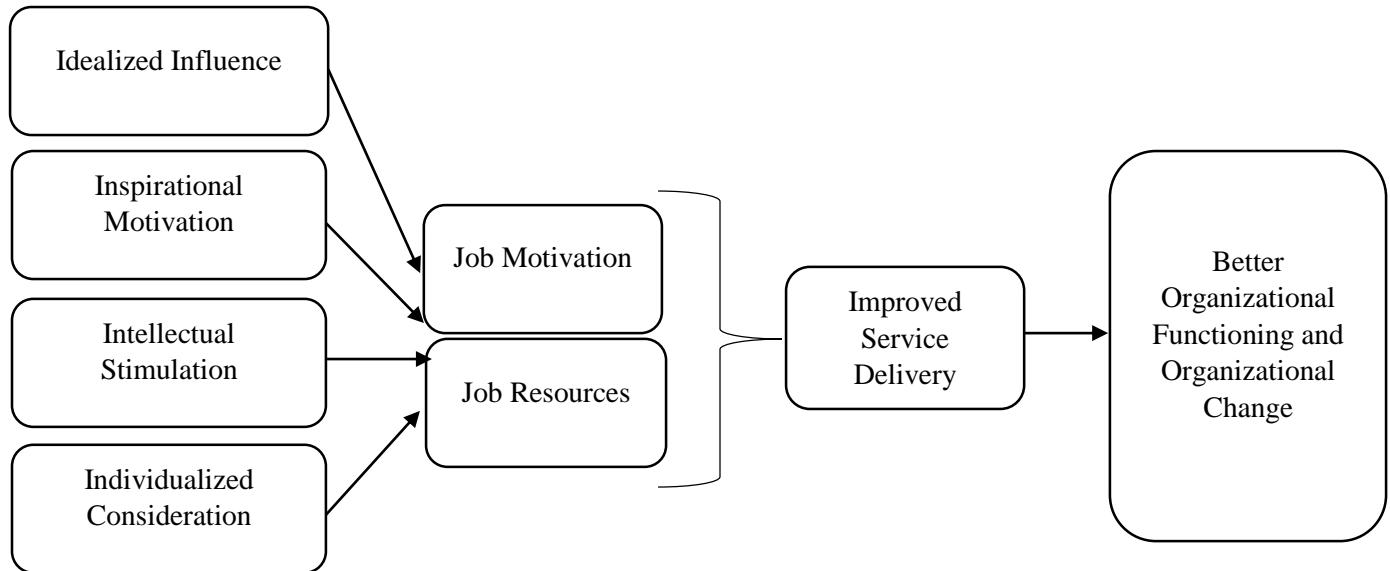
2.1.1 Idealized Influence

This refers to the manner and way that a leader act as a role model to their followers due to their extraordinary skills and capabilities. The leader delivers a clear vision for their company, and in turn, earns a higher level of respect and trust from their followers or subordinates (Lai, Tang, & Lu, 2020). Felix *et al* (2016) also found idealized influence to be essential in the relationship between organizational leaders and their followers in their drive to transform the organization.

2.1.2 Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational motivation is the second component involving a leader's ability to motivate followers or subordinates in such a way that they can perform beyond the expectation (Jain, 2015). In Dust *et al* (2014), psychological empowerment was found to mediate the relationships between transformational leadership and employee job- related behaviors. Bass's Transformational Leadership theory is useful in helping to motivate employees to invest more of their time and resources towards becoming fully engaged in their current tasks.

2.1.3 Intellectual Stimulation

Bass further made an argument for transformational leaders to stimulate their subordinates' efforts in being innovative and creative. This is achieved by questioning their expectations and reframing those difficult and imminent new ideas. They must be able to stimulate their intellect to do better at every point in time (Korejan & Shabazi, 2016). Intellectual stimulation involves the leader's ability to stimulate the followers in thinking through issues and problems, and developing their abilities (Levene & Higgs, 2018).

2.1.4 Individualized Consideration

Transformational leaders must be capable of giving special attention to each need if they must grow and achieve their goals. They must also act as a coach or mentor (Adda *et al*., 2019; Stouten & Rousseau, 2018). According to the authors, an engaged employee is more likely to invest his or her full cognitive, and emotional energies in accomplishing a goal because a leader has paid attention to their capacity (Adda *et al*., 2019).

2.1 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is an important component of any organization because it leads to profitability and success in the workplace. The adoption of a transformational leadership style will allow companies to be competitive for longer periods in highly results-driven industries. Leaders in the various sectors of an economy must be versatile and dynamic in dealing with issues that concern the organization. The public sector is in dire need of transformational leaders (Daniel, 2019). For example, leaders in the fast-food industry have continued to adopt leadership characteristics that are consistent with their business model – one lacking in vision and unrealistic expectations (Ng & Kelloff, 2013). This style of leadership is problematic and ineffective because leaders are responding reactively and not in a proactive manner. Arif & Akram (2018) found that the only leadership style that might be successful in combating the shallow-thinking and unrealistic leadership mentality in different sectors is transformational leadership. Recently, researchers have extended the study of transformational leadership to the public sector (Moey, 2016; Islami, & Muletti, 2020). In Nigeria, foremost studies on transformational leadership in the public sector come from researchers such as Daniel (2019) and Felix *et al.,* (2016).

2.1.2 Transformational Leadership in Business

Mahdikhani & Yazdani (2019) researched transformational leadership and service quality in businesses with the introduction of a mediating role of trust and team performance. The results of the research showed that transformational leadership has a positive impact on service quality and is a key driver in improving team performance. The effect of transformational leadership on interpersonal trust and the trust on team performance was found to be significant and positive. Using the structural equation modeling and partial least square techniques to analyze the 384 questionnaires, the study concluded that improved performance positively correlated with service quality (Mahdikhani & Yazdani, 2019). While the research concludes that transformational leadership can influence service delivery by motivating and building trust among team members, the study is limited in the scope of the measure. The questionnaires measured the attitudes of individuals but failed to measure the facts as they are. It is difficult to measure the attitudes of individuals on paper especially when it involves personal judgments and prejudices. The study applies to both public policy and management science as it recognizes the role of transformational leaders, team trust, and service delivery. Finally, the transformational leadership style has impacted effective service delivery through motivation and team trust.

Although the extant literature has revealed several leadership styles, transformational leadership is mostly used by organizations seeking to re-strategize and re-organize their operations. As rightly stated by Bass (1985), transformational leadership is one of the best leadership methods used to enhance both the individual's and group's performance. Bass's observation stems out of the fact that by adopting a transformational leadership style, leaders can motivate their followers, exert and explore their existing potentials.

Arif & Akram (2018) did a quantitative study on transformational leadership in the manufacturing sector of Pakistan. The researchers made an argument for the importance of the manufacturing industry as being the major source of contribution in the economic growth, employment, and wealth generation of Pakistan. The study focused on the need to create a model for Pakistan's manufacturing and import industry, such that it can create an enabling environment for the improvement and development of the relationship between the multiple determinants of performance. The results found evidence to support the hypothesized model and further suggested that transformational leadership has a huge impact on organizational performance through the mediating role of organizational innovation (Arif & Akram, 2018). Organizations are now using

organizational innovation to augment their performance of the organizations. According to Ashforth (2017), multinational enterprises are encouraging the open adoption of innovation to gain a competitive advantage but having transformational leaders is the first step to achieving this goal.

In another study by Xenikou (2017), transformational leadership was found to be a key factor in leading subordinates to perceive the culture as more innovative when compared to the transactional contingent reward. The study went ahead to conclude that organizations using transactional leadership made the employees perceive the culture as more of a goal than innovation. The main aim of the study was to explore the combined effect of leadership behavior patterns and organizational culture value on the two different facets of organizational identification which are cognitive and affective. Xenikou found transformational leadership to significantly and positively correlate with innovation value orientation (r = 0.33), goal value orientation (r = 0.43), cognitive (r = 0.35) and affective (r = 0.34) identification. This study further reaffirmed what is known about the adoption of transformational leadership. However, Xenikou's study is relevant as it took a multi-disciplinary approach. The participants for the research came from both the private and public sectors including schools, the army, and banks. The findings provided support for the validity of transformational leadership as a predictor of employees' bonding, particularly for the organization they are working for. This has a positive impact on the service delivery of the organizations involved in the research.

According to Felix *et al* (2016), the Nigerian civil service connotes a permanent body of officials that are responsible for the planning and execution of programs and policies of the government. Therefore, they must be effective and efficient in managing resources and also be accountable. To this end, they. made a case for transformational leadership following the recent merger of some government agencies in Nigeria. Using participants from four public sector organizations, 79% found that transformational leadership and initiatives have impacted the organizational mindset as they are now focused on quality service delivery. The authors also stated that while these findings are predictive, as transformational leaders motivate and mentor their subordinates for self and organizational benefits, there is a need to further examine how idealized influence attracts respect and admiration of organizational members.

2.1.3 Transformational Leadership and Nigeria Public Sector

Transformational leadership style encourages subordinates to rise above their self-interest if they must achieve the organizational goals. This is usually done by ways of alteration of their existing

perceptions, behavior, morals, and ideas (Bass, 1985). In Abasilim *et a*l (2019), the researchers studied the demographic variables and how they influence the relationship between leadership styles and employees' commitment. The public sector organization used is the Lagos State Civil Service Commission of Nigeria. The results revealed a significant positive relationship between the variable transformational leadership style and employees' commitment. It was found that transactional leadership style is an insignificant small negative relationship with employees' commitment (Abasilim *et al.,* 2019). It is important to note that the nexus between leadership styles and employees' commitment has continued to receive considerable scholarly attention. However, one is left wondering if the findings of the existing literature done outside Nigeria can influence the results. It is based on this that this study emanated. This study is significant because it provides a valuable and useful information on the current relationship between different leadership styles and employees' commitment in Lagos State Civil Service Commission of Nigeria. Intellectual stimulation is defined as how much a leader challenges the existing stereotypes, and how well they are responsive to new thoughts from the followers without criticism. Finally, the most important lesson from this research is the exposure of the influence of the demographic variables on the relationship between leadership styles and employees' commitment. Public sector organizations in Nigeria can now make a case for the adoption of transformational leadership. They can review the organizational policies and strategies for optimal employees' commitment thereby resulting in enhanced organizational performance as a result of adopting the appropriate leadership style. These findings are consistent with Dariush *et al.* (2016) and Abasilim (2014).

2.1.4 **Transformational Leadership and Service Delivery**

Continuous changes in the external environment that are arising from either a legislative or technological need, have put pressure on both corporate and public service organizations (Ledimo, 2014). The Nigerian government has been heavily criticized by both opposition parties, public analysts, and the media for running an inefficient public sector scheme. Daniel (2019) and Felix *et al*., (2016) have noted that these societal demands, if not well managed, can lead to ineffectiveness in fulfilling its mandate. Against this backdrop, the Nigerian government in 2015, charged revenue generating agencies to step up in their service delivery and be proactive in dealing with citizens (Nwekeaku & Obiorah, 2019). To this end, organizational leaders began to adopt a transformational leadership style to initiate projects and schemes that will deliver on the expected service mandate. Indeed, the former head of the Nigerian civil service, Mr. Stephen Oronsaye

rightly stated that the bridge between the government and the governed is the public sector, stressing that an inefficient public service will inhibit progress (Oronsaye, 2010).

Given the significance of an effective public service delivery, the need for effective service delivery cannot be over-stressed (Daniel, 2019; Svensson *et al*., 2019). This is why public service delivery should also be high in quality, assessable, and effectively delivered. To a large extent, effective service delivery is dependent on strategies adopted by transformational leaders.

The Nigerian public service of any country performs certain distinct and crucial functions ranging from revenue generation, provision of social amenities, to the creation of public utilities. It is therefore in the light of the crucial role of the public service that an organization such as the Federal Inland Revenue Service has deployed five different transformational projects with the view of ensuring that taxpayers are happy to pay their taxes. Researchers such as Felix *et al* (2016) and Daniel (2019) observed that the key public service sectors that tend to positively impact the lives of people are always receiving less allocation compared to less critical areas that have enjoyed juicy allocation. One organization that falls under this category is the Federal Inland Revenue Service, the apex tax authority in Nigeria responsible for generating and collecting over 90% of government revenues. that do not directly affect the well-being of the people.

According to Nwekeaku & Obiorah (2019), the Nigerian government has not been able to deliver on its public service mandate based on its development plan across all sectors. The authors argued that there is a glaring gap between the desires of the people and what the government is delivering. However, the study concluded that transformational leadership has impacted positively on service delivery. However, this finding is peculiar to only organizations that have deployed transformational strategies or taken a decision to do away with the old structure and patterns of doing things.

2.1.5 Employee Motivation

Among the different types of leadership styles, transformational leadership has gained more momentum and attention than others, and this is due to its supportive, innovative, and productive nature (Aunjum, Abbas & Sajid, 2017; Steinmann et al., 2018). Using Bass's theory of transformational leadership, Aunjum, *et al.,* (2017) found that motivation played a vital role in repositioning employees of two banks to focus on effective and efficient service delivery. The study also found that for employees to be motivated, there was a need for a transformational leadership style.

Hassan (2019) and Buick, *et al*., (2015) stated that when all the dimensions of transformational leadership are adopted by management, it will lead to higher employee motivation and a desire to deliver on the targeted goals. Hassan (2019) would go on to argue that employee motivation strongly correlates with all the dimensions of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is comprised of the following factors: idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation. Transformational leaders can link a persuasive vision that is capable of stimulating motivation, strong feelings, and higher productivity (Levene & Higgs, 2018). This will further raise the followers' perception about the goals and inspire them to surpass their aspirations (Susilo, 2018).

2.1.6 Organizational Change

Adda, Natsir & Rossanty (2019) defined change as the manner and way in which groups and organizations respond to the dynamic internal and external factors. Using the same approach, the authors defined organizational change as the act of optimizing the performance standards of an organization. Organizations must always respond to change (Kuipers, Higg, & Kickert, 2014), or they face extinction. This is where leadership comes to play by serving as a catalyst. In Daniel (2019), change is inevitable and managers transcend from transactional leadership to transformational leadership in their bid to increase a firm's performance.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The literature search strategy involved using leadership in public sector organizations by analyzing the natural relationship between transformational leadership and other predictor variables: employee job satisfaction, and effective service delivery , though a thorough investigation of the literature including books, peer-reviewed articles, and related conference documentation. Research databases such as Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, and Google Scholar were also used.

4.0 DISCUSSION

Although existing studies have already shown that transformational leadership is crucial in building and enhancing knowledge sharing among team members, the understanding of the underlying mechanism is largely limited. After a careful review, the non-availability of qualitative research on transformational leadership means that existing literature minimally supported the rationale for transformational leadership and service delivery. It is discovered that most studies on transformational leadership are quantitative in nature. Specifically, studies on transformational

leadership carried out by leading Nigerian researchers such as Felix *et al.,* (2015), Nwekeaku & Obiorah (2019), Daniel (2019), and Hassan (2019) were all quantitative studies. The absence of qualitative studies on transformational leadership has made it difficult but not impossible to obtain evaluative information.

Another finding is that transformational leadership has a significant and positive impact on service delivery. In the context of service delivery, leaders' efforts to maintain and enhance employees' service quality are seen as vital assets to organizational performance. Few studies have explored the relationship between transformational leadership and employees' service quality across different organizational levels. However, the studies by Felix *et al* (2016) and Daniel (2019) found a strong relationship between transformational leadership and quality service delivery. In their research, they found that key public service sectors positively impact the lives of people who are always receiving less allocation compared to less critical areas that have enjoyed juicy allocation. In another study by Arif & Akram (2018) on transformational leadership in the manufacturing sector of Pakistan, the researchers established a positive correlation between transformational leadership and employees' motivation to deliver on service quality. The correlation was further attributed as the leading cause of economic growth, employment, and wealth generation in Pakistan.

Finally, it is discovered that employee motivation moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and service delivery. According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the extent to which an employee is willing to engage in a task is determined by one's behavioral intentions. The three factors that predict one's behavioral intentions are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

The findings from this review will help equip leaders with a new dimension to work from when dealing with their subordinates such that they can create real change, generate better ideas that are capable of solving problems. As most public sector organizations are service-oriented, commitment to work for the good of their employees and the people at large has the potentiality to lead to positive social change. The social changes are significant for transformational leadership as they become a basis for effectively working together, building stronger teams without damaging the existing relationships and strategies that differentiate them from others

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The review concluded that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and service delivery as evident from the literature review. The implication for future research is that researchers can now engage in more qualitative studies that are specific and evaluative in nature.

5.2 Recommendations

In line with the observation that there is hardly an evaluative study on transformational leadership, there is a need for future researchers to carry out more qualitative case studies on transformational leadership and its effects on organizational functioning. The future study can adopt the following approaches: in-depth interview, focus groups, case study research, content analysis, and ethnographic research. This is important because transformational leadership is rarely discussed in terms of how effective and efficient it has been.

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