# THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE, FUNCTIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND WEALTH CREATION IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF NIGERIA: A PHILOSOPHICAL AND STATISTICAL INQUIRY

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DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.26216.17920

#### **Abstract**

This study examines the impact of principals' transformational leadership on teachers' performance, functional skills development, and wealth creation within the context of the education system of Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 120 teachers in various schools and analyzed for mean scores and standard deviations. The results indicated that transformational leadership significantly enhances teachers' job performance, fosters functional skills development, and contributes to the broader goal of wealth creation via improving educational outcomes. Key attributes of transformational leadership, such as consideration, participation in decision-making, clear vision, and innovation, were identified as central to these positive outcomes. The study concludes that transformational leadership not only improves teacher performance but also plays a crucial role in fostering a functional education system that contributes to economic development in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Job performance, Functional education, Wealth creation.

#### Introduction

Leadership is a process of influencing others. Adwella (2014), Aghenta (2001) sees leadership as the operational tool in influencing people, the activities of a group of people particularly by a leader in an effort towards the attainment or achievement, willingly and enthusiastically of, the organizational goals, including that of formal taught schools. It involves the act of getting things done with the cooperation and assistance of other people. Leadership is therefore an important instrument in the initiation and implementation of the organizational policies, including educational policies and philosophy of formal-taught schools in any county, State or region (Omolayo, 2000).

The leadership style and traits so applied by the leader influences the job performance of the members of staff in the organization (Yahaya, Osman, Mohammed, Gibrilla & Issah, 2014). Leadership communicates a vision that turns self-interest to job commitment. Leadership provides the lead with the clear ideas and objectives to achieving the organizational goals. Leadership is a responsibility to guide the personal morals as well as guide to the society. Leadership refers to a capability to solve things and resolve situations with support and collaboration of people in any organization (Adesina, 2011).

In the educational setting, educational leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of teaching and learning environments. The principal leads all members of staff to attain school educational objectives either by getting individuals do work without the utilization of coercion; or, a procedure to rouse others to work fanatically so as to accomplish goals. It is a combination of three relative variables i.e. the individual, the circumstance, and the assignment. It might be a shared responsibility towards accomplishment of targets keeping in view the substance, and personnel, material and time assets. Nevertheless, the nature of the job may determine the sort of educational leadership adopted for the attainment of the goals of the education system/faculty (Adwelle, 2014; Balyer, 2012; Adeyemi, 2010; Newstrom, 2007; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Armstrong, 2004; Bono & Judge, 2004; Bogler, 2001; Bass, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1990).

In Nigeria, where the educational system faces numerous challenges, such as inadequate funding, poor infrastructure, and low teacher morale, the style of leadership adopted by school principals can significantly influence teacher performance and student outcomes. Amid these issues, the education system is a critical factor in navigating the complexities of national development, advancement and management particularly functional skills development, and ultimately, wealth creation (Musa, 2004; Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, 2004; Briggs & Richardson, 2005; Omojunwa, 2007; Ilechukwu, 2011). This interplay between leadership, education, and economic development raises important questions about the purpose of education in society. This paper seeks to address these philosophical inquiries while providing empirical insights into the practical implications of leadership in Nigerian schools.

#### Literature review

Transformational leaders are known to create supportive environments that empower teachers, a critical resource for effective implementation and realization of the educational policies and objectives at the practical level of the classroom (Illechukwu, 2011). Transformational leadership, characterized by its focus on inspiring and motivating educators, emerges as

a particularly effective approach in enhancing educational quality, foster collaboration, influence teacher performance, and promote professional growth. This paper posits that effective leadership can serve as a catalyst for improving educational outcomes and equipping teachers with the necessary skills to thrive in a rapidly changing economic landscape.

Philosophically, the leadership style and traits so applied by the leader influences the job performance of the members of staff in the organization (Yahaya, Osman, Mohammed, Gibrilla, & Issah, 2014). Leadership communicates a vision that turns self-interest into job commitment. Leadership directs a person or a group of people and provides them the clear ideas and objectives to achieving the organizational goals. Leadership is a responsibility to guide the personal morals as well as guide to the society. Leadership refers to a capability to solve things and resolve situations with support and collaboration of people in any organization (Adesina, 2011).

In order to build strong commitment towards the realization of school goals and promote quality education, the principal is expected to provide strong leadership in setting development goals and achieving the goals of the school through creating unity of purpose, facilitating all round development of both staff and students and managing instruction. The principal is responsible for all affairs of the school. In fact, the principal is defined as the person who makes decisions about the school (Brown, 2020; ASCDWC, 2013; FME, 2013; FME, 2008; FME, 2004).

The leader of a secondary educational institution is the principal. Consequently, Soni (2012) defined the principal as a teacher and the leader of the school; always dynamic, believes in change and have capacity to prepare future leaders and develop the skills that they may need to succeed in future.

Furthermore, the philosophical dimensions of educational leadership, juxtaposes the responsibilities of education, educational leadership of principals and teachers' job performance in promoting not only academic success but also socio-economic advancement (Agrawal et al., 2024; Enderle, 2009). Invariably, the intricacies of educational leadership evoke transformative practices that align with the goals of economic development and social equity.

Furthermore, the notion of wealth creation extends beyond economic metrics to encompass human capital development, social equity, and community empowerment. As Nigeria aspires to achieve sustainable development goals, the role of education in facilitating economic opportunities becomes increasingly vital (Agrawal et al., 2024; Enderle,

2009). This research illuminates the pathways through which transformational leadership can enhance educational quality and contribute to broader socio-economic outcomes.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform educational policies and practices in Nigeria and similar contexts. By understanding the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance, as well as the development of functional skills, stakeholders can better equip educators to meet the demands of the 21st-century economy. The insights gained from this research can guide the professional development of school leaders and contribute to the creation of a more robust educational framework. This paper further contributes to the ongoing discourse surrounding educational reform in Nigeria and beyond.

#### **Case studies**

In Kenya, a study by Ngumi and Muthaka (2016) examined the impact of transformational leadership on teacher performance in secondary schools. The researchers found that principals who adopted transformational leadership styles were more successful in fostering collaborative environments, which led to improved teacher motivation and student outcomes. This case underscores the potential for transformational leadership to enhance educational quality across different contexts. Similarly, research in South Africa by Lumby and McBeath (2015) highlighted the positive effects of transformational leadership on school performance. The study revealed that principals who employed transformational practices not only improved teacher morale but also facilitated the development of functional skills among educators. This finding aligns with the assertion that effective leadership is critical for driving educational reform in African countries.

In Ghana, a study conducted by Yiadom and Osei (2018) explored the role of leadership in enhancing teacher effectiveness. The researchers found that transformational leadership positively influenced teachers' commitment to their work, leading to improved instructional quality. This case illustrates the broader applicability of transformational leadership principles in addressing educational challenges in the region. A comparative analysis of educational leadership in Tanzania and Uganda revealed similar trends, with transformational leaders fostering environments that support teacher collaboration and professional growth (Mosha, 2016). These findings reinforce the idea that transformational leadership can transcend national boundaries, offering valuable insights for Nigerian educational leaders seeking to enhance their practices.

Furthermore, a study in Rwanda by Nsengiyumva and Karamage (2019) examined the relationship between leadership styles and educational outcomes. The researchers found that schools led by transformational principals reported higher levels of teacher job satisfaction and student performance. This highlights the critical role of leadership in shaping educational success in post-conflict contexts. In Zimbabwe, research by Ndlovu (2018) focused on the impact of leadership on teachers' professional development. The study indicated that transformational leadership practices facilitated opportunities for skill acquisition and collaboration among educators. This case emphasizes the importance of leadership in promoting functional skills development, which is essential for economic growth.

Furthermore, a study in Namibia by Shipepe (2020) explored the link between leadership styles and educational attainment. The findings indicated that transformational leadership positively correlated with improved student outcomes and teacher effectiveness. This case further supports the argument that effective leadership can drive educational progress across the African continent.

#### Theoretical framework

This study is grounded in transformational leadership theory, which posits that effective leaders can inspire and motivate their followers to achieve higher levels of performance and personal growth (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership encompasses four key components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These elements provide a framework for understanding how principals can enhance teacher performance and functional skills development.

Idealized influence refers to the ability of leaders to serve as role models for their followers, fostering trust and respect. In educational settings, principals who exemplify ethical behavior and commitment to the school's vision can motivate teachers to emulate these qualities in their practice. Inspirational motivation involves articulating a compelling vision that encourages teachers to strive for excellence, thus enhancing their job performance.

Intellectual stimulation encourages creativity and innovation among teachers, prompting them to explore new teaching methods and approaches. This is particularly relevant in the Nigerian context, where traditional pedagogies may limit the development of functional skills. By promoting an environment of intellectual curiosity, transformational leaders can

empower teachers to enhance their instructional practices.

Individualized consideration focuses on addressing the unique needs and aspirations of each teacher, thereby fostering professional growth and development. This aspect of transformational leadership is crucial for enhancing teacher performance and ensuring that educators possess the functional skills necessary for success in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

#### Materials and method

This paper employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative analyses. The primary data collection method was a structured questionnaire administered to 120 teachers. Case studies from other African countries provide comparative perspectives on the influence of leadership styles on educational outcomes. By examining these contexts, this research draws relevant lessons that can be applied within the Nigerian educational system.

The study area is Enugu state of Nigeria. According to Britannica (2024), Asumugha and Mbanasor (2021), the state is located within the following geographical latitudes and longitudes: 5°56'N to 7°06N, and 6°53'E to 7°55'E respectively. Enugu state is bounded on the east by Ebonyi state, on the north by Benue and Kogi states, on the south by Abia state and west by Anambra State. It occupies an area of about 8,022.95km² (Chukwu, Nwosu, Onyeke and Asiedu, 2008) and population of about 3,257,298 (Ekunwe and Ajayi, 2010).

Purposive and multi-stage random sampling technique was used in drawing the sample. In the first stage, three LGAs that make Enugu capital (municipal zone) was chosen purposively. They include: Enugu south LGA, Enugu north LGA and Enugu east LGA. In the second stage, two (2) municipal areas were purposively selected per local government area. The third stage involved random selection of two secondary schools per municipal sub-area and ten teachers per school.

#### Result

Impact of Principal's transformational leadership style on functional education and teachers' job performance

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of teachers' responses on influence of principals` transformational leadership style on functional education and teachers' job performance

S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	S.D	Decision
1	Teachers job performance is enhanced when principals are transformational by being	120	3.43	0.02	Accept
2	considerate  Functional and constructive education is enhanced when principals are transformational by allowing teachers to be active in promoting	120	2.74	0.34	Accept
3	school discipline Teachers job performance is enhanced when principals are transformational by allowing teachers participate in decision making	120	3.11	0.65	Accept
4	Principal's transformational leadership style supports innovation?	120	2.83	0.79	Accept
5	Principal's transformational leadership style communicate a clear vision for the school allowing teachers carryout their school responsibilities properly	120	3.16	0.91	Accept
6	Teachers job performance is enhanced when principals are transformational by allowing teachers to air their views on issues of school	120	2.99	0.29	Accept
7	management Teachers job performance is enhanced when principals are transformational by seeking the		2.78	0.87	Accept
8	opinions of teachers in school problem solving Principal's transformational leadership style influences positively approachability of a principal when discussing students concerns or making development suggestions	120	2.96	1.99	Accept
9	Principal's transformational leadership style influences teachers job performance by allowing teachers effectively use instructional materials		3.45	0.97	Accept
10	Teachers job performance is enhanced when principals are transformational by encouraging teachers to be punctual		2.99	1.09	Accept
11	Teachers job performance is enhanced when principals are transformational by monitoring; continuous assessment, roll calls of students, computation of results, planning of lesson		2.94	1.13	Accept
12	Principal's transformational leadership style influences constructive feedback from the principal		2.83	1.01	Accept
13	Principal's transformational leadership style overall provides teacher's motivation to		2.66	0.54	Accept
14	perform well in their roles Principal's transformational leadership style influences teachers to engage in constructive collaborative teaching activities with colleagues		2.53	0.77	Accept
15	Teachers job performance is enhanced when principals are transformational by being appreciative of teachers' effort in school administration		3.63	0.89	Accept

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S/N	Item Statements	N	Mean	S.D	Decision
16	Principal's transformational leadership style	120	1.56	3.11	Accept
	enhances professional development opportunities for teachers and students				
17	Principal's transformational leadership style influences extent of training received to	120	2.94	0.19	Accept

Influence of Principal's transformational leadership style on wealth creation

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of teachers' responses on influence of principals` transformational leadership style on wealth creation

18	enhance teaching skills of teachers Principal's transformational leadership style influences functional skills (e.g., communication, critical thinking) mastery for	120	3.33	0.99	Accept
19	teaching by teachers Principal's transformational leadership style influences well-performing education system that contributes to economic development in	120	3.11	0.75	Accept
20	Nigeria Principal's transformational leadership style	120	3 01	0.99	Accept
20	influence improved student outcomes	120	5.01	0.55	Песері
21	principals' leadership significantly links	120	2.76	0.45	Accept
	education quality to wealth creation				
22	Principal's transformational leadership style	120	3.08	0.55	Accept
	contributes to the economic wellbeing				

#### **Discussion**

Table 1 and 2 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for a series of statements assessing the influence of transformational leadership on teacher job performance. For all the statements, accept criteria is based on the 2.50 bench mark mean value.

The result from table 1 underscore the significance of principals' leadership style on teachers' job performance. Item 1 highlights the role of a transformational principal in enhancing teacher job performance by being considerate. This aligns with studies such as those by Bass & Avolio (1994), who argue that transformational leaders foster a supportive environment that encourages teacher motivation and job satisfaction. The acceptance of Item 2 suggests that teachers' engagement in school

discipline is crucial in creating a conducive environment for performance. Leithwood et al. (2006), Leithwood & Jantzi (1999), Lussier and Achua, (2001) emphasize the importance of participative leadership in promoting a positive school culture, which indirectly impacts performance. Items 3 and 7 underscore the importance of principals allowing teachers to participate in decision-making and problem-solving. This participative approach aligns with Kuhnert and Lewis (1987), who suggest that such involvement enhances teacher engagement and performance. Items 4 and 5 indicate the importance of innovation and clear communication of the school's vision. This finding supports the views of Fullan (2001), who argues that transformational leaders promote innovation and set a clear direction for their institutions, thus improving overall performance. The significant impact of transformational leadership on teacher punctuality and motivation (Item 10 and 15) suggests that appreciation and recognition of teachers' efforts are crucial for enhancing job performance. This is consistent with Tschannen-Moran (2001), who found that teacher motivation is strongly influenced by principals' acknowledgment and support.

Table 2 shows the influence of transformational leadership on various aspects of wealth creation through education, with a focus on professional development, functional skills, and economic contributions. Items 16, 17, and 18 indicate that transformational leadership enhances professional development opportunities for teachers, including improving their teaching skills and mastery of functional skills. This supports the findings of Hargreaves & Fullan (2012), who emphasize that principals who focus on the growth of their teachers through professional development contribute significantly to the overall quality of education and the skillset of both teachers and students.

The strong mean of 3.33 for Item 18 suggests that the transformational leadership style plays a key role in teachers' mastery of functional skills such as communication and critical thinking. These skills are essential for creating a workforce capable of contributing to economic development, a point made by Robinson & Judge (2017), who highlight the connection between skilled teachers and national productivity.

Items 19, 20, and 21 demonstrate that principals' transformational leadership positively impacts educational outcomes, which in turn contribute to economic development. This finding aligns with Darling-Hammond (2010), who argues that strong leadership in education improves student outcomes, which are crucial for economic growth.

Item 22 suggests that transformational leadership links the quality of education to wealth creation. Fullan (2003) and Barber et al. (2010) also discuss how quality education, driven by visionary leadership, has a long-term impact on the socio-economic development of nations.

### Implications for development Impact of principal's transformational leadership style and teacher job performance

Literature indicates a strong positive correlation between transformational leadership and teacher job performance. Studies have shown that principals who adopt transformational practices can enhance teachers' motivation, commitment, and job satisfaction (Day et al., 2016). In a Nigerian context, this correlation is critical as teachers often face significant challenges that can impede their effectiveness. However, not all aspects of transformational leadership yield uniformly positive outcomes. Some studies indicate that the effectiveness of transformational leadership can be contingent upon contextual factors such as school culture and available resources (Gunter, 2016). For instance, in schools with rigid bureaucratic structures, even transformational leaders may struggle to enact meaningful changes, leading to frustration and disengagement among teachers.

Moreover, research by Ndlovu (2018) highlights the potential for transformational leadership to inadvertently create pressures that lead to burnout among teachers. While the intention may be to inspire, excessive expectations can lead to feelings of inadequacy and reduced job performance. This duality underscores the importance of balancing inspirational leadership with realistic support mechanisms for educators. Conversely, studies have shown that supportive environments fostered by transformational leaders lead to enhanced job performance. For instance, a study conducted by Harris and Jones (2010) found that teachers in schools with transformational leaders reported higher levels of collaboration and shared decision-making, which positively impacted their instructional practices.

Ultimately, while transformational leadership can enhance teacher performance, it must be applied thoughtfully, considering the unique challenges and needs of the school community. This nuanced understanding is crucial for developing effective leadership practices in Nigerian schools.

## Principal's transformational leadership style and functional skills development

Transformational leadership is linked to the development of functional skills among teachers, which is increasingly recognized as essential for

preparing students for the workforce. Research indicates that principals who prioritize professional development foster environments that support the acquisition of these skills (Harris & Jones, 2010). However, challenges persist. In many Nigerian schools, systemic barriers such as inadequate funding and lack of access to training resources hinder teachers' ability to develop functional skills. This highlights the need for transformational leaders to advocate for resources and support that enable skill development (World Bank, 2018).

Moreover, while transformational leadership promotes innovative teaching practices, not all educators may feel equipped to implement these changes effectively. Studies have shown that professional development must be tailored to address the specific needs of teachers in order to be impactful (Yiadom & Osei, 2018). Principals must therefore consider the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their teachers when designing professional development initiatives. On a positive note, transformative leaders often create collaborative environments that encourage peer learning and sharing of best practices. For instance, Ngumi and Muthaka (2016) found that teachers in schools with transformational leaders reported greater opportunities for collaboration, which enhanced their functional skills.

Hence, there is the need for a balanced approach that recognizes both the potential benefits of transformational leadership and the challenges inherent in implementing effective skill development programs. By addressing these complexities, educational leaders can better support teachers in developing the functional skills necessary for success.

#### Principal's transformational leadership style and wealth creation

The relationship between transformational leadership and wealth creation is multifaceted. Transformational leaders can enhance educational quality, which in turn contributes to economic development. Research indicates that improved educational outcomes lead to higher employment rates and increased earning potential for graduates (World Bank, 2018). However, the impact of transformational leadership on wealth creation can be undermined by external factors such as economic instability and inadequate educational infrastructure. For example, a study in Zimbabwe found that despite the presence of transformational leaders, systemic challenges limited the extent to which educational improvements translated into economic benefits (Ndlovu, 2018).

Additionally, while transformational leadership can enhance the skills and competencies of teachers, it must be supported by broader economic policies that recognize education as a driver of growth. In contexts where

economic opportunities are limited, even well-educated individuals may struggle to find employment, thus diminishing the perceived value of educational investments. Conversely, successful implementations of transformational leadership can lead to improved community engagement and investment in education. For instance, research from South Africa highlights the role of transformational leaders in fostering partnerships with local businesses and organizations, which can provide additional resources for schools (Lumby & McBeath, 2015).

In addition, the findings of this study are consistent with those of other researchers in the field human capital development. For instance, Day et al. (2016) found that transformational leadership significantly enhances teacher commitment and job performance, reinforcing the notion that effective leadership is critical for fostering a positive school culture. Similarly, Harris and Jones (2010) emphasize the importance of leadership in facilitating professional development, which is echoed in the results of this study. Furthermore, research from South Africa by Lumby and McBeath (2015) supports the argument that transformational leadership can lead to improved student outcomes and overall school performance. This alignment with existing literature underscores the relevance of transformational leadership in diverse educational contexts across Africa.

In addressing the challenges faced by teachers, the study echoes the findings of Gunter (2016), who noted that systemic barriers can impede the effectiveness of transformational leaders. This highlights the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses both leadership practices and structural limitations within the education system. The philosophical implications of these findings align with the works of Dewey (1938) and Freire (1970), who advocate for education as a means of social transformation. The role of school leaders in promoting educational quality and economic opportunities resonates with the ethical responsibilities outlined in their theories.

Transformational leaders are more effective in facilitating professional development opportunities for teachers, thereby enhancing their functional skills. This aligns with previous research highlighting the significance of leadership in fostering a positive school culture (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Moreover, the study indicates that improved teacher performance is linked to better student outcomes, which, in turn, contributes to broader economic development goals. These findings resonate with the World Bank's (2018) assertion that quality education is a key driver of economic growth. As Nigerian educators become more effective, the potential for wealth creation through education increases, benefiting both individuals and communities.

Overall, while there is a positive correlation between transformational leadership and wealth creation through education, this relationship is contingent upon a range of contextual factors. Educational leaders must navigate these complexities to maximize the economic impact of their efforts.

#### **Conclusion**

This study highlights the critical role of transformational leadership in enhancing teacher performance, fostering functional skills development, and contributing to wealth creation in Nigerian education. The findings indicate that effective leadership practices not only improve educational quality but also serve as a catalyst for broader economic development. However, challenges remain, and it is essential for educational leaders to navigate these complexities while advocating for the necessary resources and support. By adopting a holistic approach that prioritizes both leadership development and systemic improvements, Nigeria can better position itself to achieve its educational and economic goals.

#### Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- 1. Enhance Leadership Training: Implement comprehensive training programs for school principals that focus on transformational leadership practices, emphasizing ethical leadership and the importance of supporting teacher development.
- 2. Allocate Resources for Professional Development: Advocate for increased funding and resources dedicated to professional development programs that equip teachers with essential functional skills.
- 3. Foster Collaborative Environments: Encourage principals to create collaborative school cultures that promote teamwork and shared decision-making among educators.
- 4. Engage with Community Stakeholders: Facilitate partnerships between schools and local businesses to enhance resource availability and support for educational initiatives.
- 5. Monitor and Evaluate Leadership Practices: Establish mechanisms for ongoing assessment of leadership effectiveness and its impact on teacher performance and student outcomes.
- 6. Address Systemic Barriers: Advocate for policies that address infrastructural challenges within the education system to support the implementation of transformational leadership practices.

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