
EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC STAFF JOB EFFECTIVENESS IN UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study explored the relationship between transformational leadership and academic staff job effectiveness in Universities in South-West Nigeria. Specifically, it examined the relationship between intellectual stimulation, idealized influence and academic staff job effectiveness. Guided by two null hypotheses, the study adopted a correlational design. The research was conducted across the five federal universities located in the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. From a total population of 4,430 academic staff, 303 academic staff members was drawn as sample through accidental sampling technique. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Transformational Leadership and Academic Staff Job Effectiveness Questionnaire (TLASJEQ). The instrument was validated by experts and trial-tested for reliability, yielding Cronbach Alpha coefficients of .79 and .83. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r). The result revealed a significant positive relationship between intellectual stimulation, idealized influence and academic staff job effectiveness. The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West Nigeria. It recommends that leaders in higher education institutions should exhibit idealized

influence by serving as role models through integrity, commitment, and shared vision, as these traits have been shown to positively impact the job effectiveness of academic staff.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Intellectual Stimulation, Idealized Influence, Academic Staff, Job Effectiveness, South-West.

Introduction

Education in Nigeria as contained in the National Policy on Education, an official document of the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2014), is structured into primary education, secondary education, tertiary education. Another vital level of education in the country is the Adult and Non-formal Education (Iyaji et al., 2024). This study focuses on the university which is a branch of tertiary education. A university system serves as a center for intellectual development, critical thinking, innovation, and societal advancement (Olofinkua et al., 2025). Public universities, in particular, are government-established and funded institutions designed to provide accessible and affordable education to the general population, thereby playing a key role in producing highly capable graduates and researchers (Obona, 2024; Ayomide et al., as cited in Obona et al., 2023). They also offer quality education that promotes intellectual development, critical thinking, innovation, and the training of skilled manpower through advanced teaching (Ozopelide et al., 2024; Obona et al., 2024; Odoh et al., 2025).

One of the major global challenges today is rising unemployment Ngene et al. (2025). Therefore, the university is expected to prepare individuals for professional careers,

contribute to national development, and equip graduates with the knowledge and skills needed for self-reliance, community sustainability, and economic advancement (Iyaji et al., 2024; Obona et al., 2020; Madukwe et al., 2024; Obona et al., 2023). Similarly, Etor et al. (2019), Nwannunu et al. (2025); Obona et al. (2024) suggests that by the time students graduate, they should possess the competencies and values necessary for personal growth, responsible citizenship, gainful employment, and meeting the nation's manpower needs. This means that universities have a great responsibility towards the student, society and wider nation.

However, these goals to be attained, universities need to work with competent lecturers who will empower these graduates adequately for the survival and national development. University teaching staff are personnel directly engaged in teaching (Ngene et al., 2025). They are critical to the success of any university system because they are the key drivers of teaching, research, and community service. Also, they help the students acquire practical skills necessary for personal development, employability, and active participation in societal growth (Uzu et al., 2025). Ogunode et al., as cited in Obona et al. (2024) stress that the place of the

academic staff is irreplaceable. There without the job effectiveness of academic staff, goals attainment of the its stated goals may be impossible.

In the context of this study, academic staff job effectiveness can be described as the success of university teachers in carryout their assigned duties. According to Edim et al. (2024), it refers to the ability to carry out tasks in relation to the accomplishment of the major task area of school. Olofinkua et al. (2025) perceives it as the ability of academic staff to achieve desired outcomes through competent instruction, scholarly productivity, and meaningful societal engagement. Tremblay (2017) mention traits such as engagement, commitment, low intent to leave, and teamwork as signs of academic staff job effectiveness. The job effectiveness of university teachers can be measured through the dimension of teaching, research, and community service. According to Bassey and Bassey (2024) effective performance includes teaching, research, innovation, and service. Pare and Teaching effectiveness involves the delivery of instructional content to the students. It also involves evaluating their progress and offering necessary support and feedback. Research focuses on careful and systematic inquiry with the aim of solving problems, producing new knowledge through published scholarly work, and academic discussions. Community service as an indication of job effectiveness has to do with the contribution of academic staff to societal projects and supporting development initiatives to enhance smooth school-community relationship.

Giving its importance in goals attainment in every organization, the job effectiveness of teachers has been a subject of investigation by researchers over the years. Adeolu et al. (2022) noted that the effectiveness of lecturers has become a major concern among stakeholders. Madukwe et al. (2024) complain about the tendency of some academic staff who frequently miss work for insignificant reasons. Tadese et al. (2022) laments that despite the substantial financial investment by the government in the education sector, a significant number of students still do not perform satisfactorily as expected. Furthermore, Ekundayo and Oluyeye (2020) remarks that some academic staff display poor teaching and lesson delivery, habitually report late to work, and frequently stay away from doing their job. Research proves that the rate of graduation is not keeping pace with the growing enrollment figures in schools (Golovina et al., 2021; Phumphongkhochasorn et al., 2022). Ozopelide et al. (2024) mention that Federal Universities have faced significant challenges, including issues with teaching effectiveness, graduate employability, research productivity, and institutional rankings.

The situation reflects what is happening in many public universities across South-West Nigeria. Many of the students complain about how some lecturers often cancel earlier scheduled lectures, or rush through topics thereby leaving them confused not poorly prepared for exams. Majority of the students lack essential research skills become those given to supervise them most often than not

know little or nothing about research, are too busy, or just not interested in guiding them through research their projects. That explains why majority of the lecturers from interaction and observation depend on their colleagues for paper publication just to get promoted to the next rank. In terms of community service, some lecturers do not make any contribution towards community project. These issues affect student graduation time and the attainment of school goals, hence the need for a thorough examination of the factors affecting academic staff job effectiveness. One of these factors could be transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that empowers others to take responsibility, enhance their competencies for greater productivity. Transformational leadership has gained great attention in recent years due to its focus on driving meaningful change within organizations (Ejo-Orusa & Egobueze, as cited in Ozopelide et al., 2024). It emphasizes the growth and development of both individuals and institutional processes to foster sustainable improvement (Ozopelide et al., 2024). Abubakar and Ahmed (2021) mention that the main goals of transformational leadership is to cultivate a work environment that promotes productivity, job satisfaction, among others. Okonkwo (2020) maintains that it involves inspiring and guiding individuals or teams to bring about positive transformation within their institutions. In this study two major branches of transformational leadership namely, intellectual stimulation and idealized influence is examined.

Literature review

Intellectual stimulation is a leadership style that promotes creativity and critical thinking in an employee within an organization. Lee and Chen (2020) perceives that leaders who practice this style of leadership often motivate employees to pursue continuous learning and improvement. This approach includes offering avenues for professional growth through training, development programs, and personalized support such as mentoring and coaching (Bontis in Ozopelide et al., 2024). By prioritizing employee development, leaders help build a workplace culture centered on ongoing learning and innovation (Lee & Chen, 2020). This leadership study also fosters an environment that encourages inquiry, sets challenging goals, supports open dialogue, and creates opportunities for learning. Uzu et al. (2025) in their study on the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. found a significant positive relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teacher satisfaction.

In another study, Gaganmale et al. (2023) found a strong positive correlation which revealed that intellectually stimulating leadership, which challenges employees and fosters learning, significantly boosts job satisfaction. Similarly, Ogola, Sikalieh, and Linge (2017) examined the influence of intellectual stimulation on employee performance in selected Small and Medium

Enterprises in Kenya. Using a correlational research design and stratified proportionate random sampling, they selected 226 managers from a population of 553. Data were gathered through the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and analyzed using Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and chi-square tests. The study showed a positive relationship between intellectual stimulation and employee performance. Akinnubi and Adeoye (2024) concluded that intellectual stimulation fosters motivation, professional commitment, and a positive work environment, thus promoting school effectiveness.

Idealized influence is a component of transformational leadership where leaders serve as ethical role models, gaining the respect, trust, and admiration of their followers. It enhances teachers' job effectiveness by inspiring commitment, fostering professional integrity, and motivating teachers to exceed expectations in their instructional and administrative duties. In a study, Badar (2023) conducted a cross-sectional quantitative study involving 67 madrasah teachers to examine how transformational leadership components—including idealized influence—affect pedagogical competence. The analysis revealed that idealized influence significantly enhanced teachers' competence. Similarly, Lin et al. (2023) explored how charismatic leadership traits like idealized influence impact university teachers' work engagement in China, using a sample of 381 teachers. Structural Equation Modeling confirmed that idealized influence had a significant positive

effect on work engagement, which was further strengthened through the mediating role of trust in leaders.

In another study, Suryati et al. (2022) used explanatory correlational research in Indonesian elementary schools with 64 teachers to assess the impact of transformational leadership dimensions on teacher performance. Findings showed that idealized influence had a strong and statistically significant effect on teacher effectiveness across pedagogical, professional, and interpersonal domains. Also, De la Cruz (2020) employed a descriptive correlational design with 50 Peruvian teacher trainees to assess the role of transformational leadership traits, including idealized influence, on teaching performance. The results demonstrated a significant positive relationship between idealized influence and enhanced teaching performance.

Rosas (2020) investigated 110 Peruvian college students' perceptions of their principals' leadership behaviors and their relationship to teacher effectiveness. The study found a strong positive correlation between principals' idealized influence and teachers' instructional effectiveness. Casas (2019) assessed the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance among 44 teachers and 280 students in Lima, Peru. Using Pearson correlation, the study confirmed that higher levels of idealized influence were significantly associated with increased teaching effectiveness.

From the foregoing, it is evident that considerable research has been conducted on the dimensions of transformational leadership, particularly intellectual stimulation and idealized influence, which form the focus of this study. However, a substantial portion of these studies has been undertaken in foreign contexts, where educational systems, cultural dynamics, and institutional structures differ significantly from those in Nigeria. As a result, the applicability of their findings to the Nigerian higher education environment remains limited. In light of this, the present study seeks to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and academic staff job effectiveness in universities in South-West Nigeria, thereby addressing a notable gap in the existing literature.

Statement of the Problem

Academic staff are at the heart of university education, and their effectiveness is often measured by how well they teach, how regularly they attend classes, how promptly they grade assessments, how actively they supervise student projects, and how involved they are in research, and academic and community life. These responsibilities are vital to achieving academic excellence and maintaining the reputation of the institution. In federal universities across the South-West region of Nigeria, meeting these expectations is especially important for producing students who are skilled, knowledgeable, and ready to contribute meaningfully to the nation's development.

However, from the researchers' own observations, many students appear to be struggling due to recurring issues such as lecturers missing classes, delays in project supervision and the release of results, as well as a general lack of mentorship and support. These problems have led to growing frustration among students, delays in graduation, and in some cases, producing graduates who are not fully prepared for the demands of the workforce especially when it comes to critical thinking skills.

In an effort to address these concerns, university authorities and the federal government have introduced several measures, including staff development programs, payment of salary and allowances, and regular performance reviews. While these efforts have shown some promise, they have not fully solved the problem. This has led the researcher to consider whether a different approach, specifically, transformational leadership, could make a real difference. As such, this study aims to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The study is aimed at exploring the relationship between transformational leadership and academic staff job effectiveness in Universities in South-West Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the relationship between intellectual stimulation and academic staff job effectiveness in universities in South-West, Nigeria.

2. Ascertain the relationship between idealized influence and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Hypotheses (H₀)

The following hypotheses directed the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between idealized influence and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework for the study is represented in fig. 1.

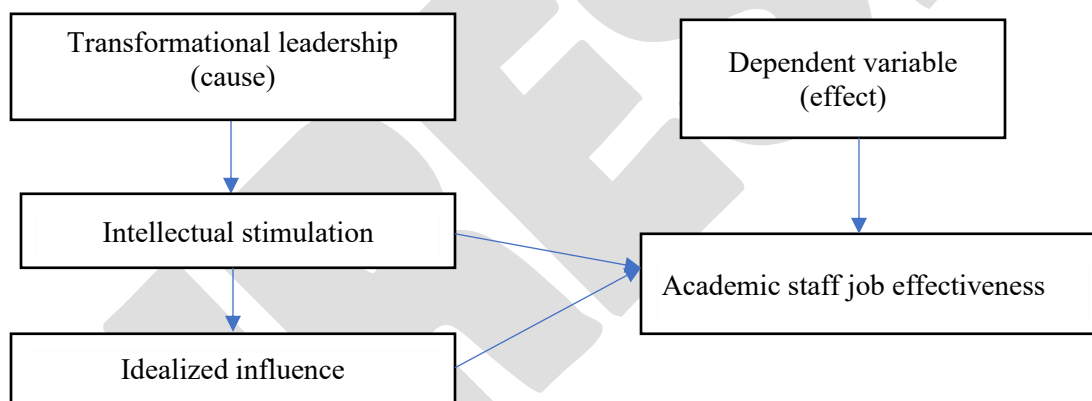


Figure 1: Conceptual model for transformational leadership and academic staff job effectiveness Source: Researchers' conceptualization (2025)

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. The research was carried out in the federal universities within the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The population of this study comprised 4,430 Academic Staff members from five federal universities in South-West, Nigeria, namely: University of Ibadan (UI), University of Lagos (UNILAG),

Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Federal University of Technology Akure (FUTA), Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB). A sample size of 303 was determined using the accidental sampling technique. Data were collected using a self-developed instrument titled "Transformational Leadership and Academic Staff Job Effectiveness Questionnaire

(TLASJEQ)", comprising 24 items. The questionnaire was structured into three sections: Section A focused on the demographic variables of the respondents. Section B contained 16 items measuring the two sub variables of the study independent variable. While section C measures the dependent variable of the study with 8 items. Three experts from Measurement and Evaluation at the University of Calabar validated the instrument. The response format was based on a 4-point Likert scale: *Strongly Agree* (4), *Agree* (3), *Disagree* (2), and *Strongly Disagree* (1). The instrument's reliability was determined using a trial test with 40 senior lecturers not involved in the main study. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients obtained were .79 and .83, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

The researchers, with the assistance of 10 trained research assistants, administered the questionnaires directly to participants at each institution. Participants were briefed on the

purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. After data collection, the instruments were sorted to ensure completeness. All copies of the questionnaires were correctly completed and returned. The responses were organized into a person-by-item matrix using Microsoft Excel. For positively worded items, scores were assigned as follows: *Strongly Agree* = 4, *Agree* = 3, *Disagree* = 2, *Strongly Disagree* = 1. For negatively worded items, the scoring was reversed. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to analyze the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. In taking decisions on the null hypotheses, if the p-value is equal to or greater than significant value of 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected but if p-value is less than significant value of 0.05, the null hypotheses was rejected. All data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27. The interpretation of the correlation coefficients followed the guideline recommended by Alsagr (2021).

Coefficient	Interpretation
.00 - .19	Weak Negative Relationship
.20 - .39	Fair Negative Relationship
.40 - .69	Moderate Positive Relationship
.70 - .89	Strong Positive Relationship
.90 - .99	Very Strong Positive Relationship
1	Perfect Relationship

Result

Research hypotheses

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. The two variables in this hypothesis are intellectual stimulation and academic staff job effectiveness. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis and the result of the analysis is

presented in Table 1. Table 1 showed the correlation coefficient between intellectual stimulation and academic staff job effectiveness. The correlation coefficient is statistically significant for academic staff job effectiveness ($r = .80$, $p < .05$). Since $p(.000)$ is less than $p(.05)$, hypothesis one is rejected. The result of the analysis implied that there is a statistically positive significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 1: Summary of correlation between intellectual stimulation and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria (N=303)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	R	Sig.
Intellectual stimulation	18.17	4.33		
Academic staff job effectiveness	19.11	4.42	.80*	.000

*Significant at $p < .05$ $df=301$

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between idealized influence and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. The two variables in this hypothesis are idealized influence and academic staff job effectiveness. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypothesis and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 2. Table 2 showed the correlation coefficient between idealized influence and academic staff job effectiveness. The correlation coefficient is statistically significant for academic staff job effectiveness ($r = .77$, $p < .05$). Since $p(.000)$ is less than $p(.05)$, hypothesis one is rejected. The result of the analysis implied that there is a statistically positive significant relationship between idealized influence and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria.

Table 2: Summary of correlation between idealized influence and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria (N=303)

Variables	$\bar{X}$	S.D	R	Sig.
Idealized influence	18.67	3.90		
Academic staff job effectiveness	19.11	4.42	.77*	.000

*Significant at $p < .05$ $df=301$

Discussion of findings

The result of the analysis of hypothesis one revealed a significant positive relationship between intellectual stimulation and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South- West, Nigeria ($r = .80$, $p < .05$). The result is not surprising because in this region, where universities wants to meet global best practices, administrators possibly encourage the staff to explore new methods of discharging their duties to boost their job effectiveness. The finding is in tandem with that of Uzu et al. (2025) who examined the relationship between principals' emotional intelligence and teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools within the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Statistical analysis using regression, ANOVA, and t-tests revealed a significant positive association between principals' emotional intelligence and teacher satisfaction. The finding is also supported by those of Akinnubi and Adeoye (2024) that teachers who perceived their principals as intellectually stimulating reported higher levels of job satisfaction. The study concluded that intellectual stimulation fosters

motivation, professional commitment, and a positive work environment, thus promoting school effectiveness.

The result of the analysis of hypothesis two revealed that there is a significant relationship between idealized influence and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West, Nigeria. This result is not surprising because it suggests that university administrators enhance the job effectiveness of academic staff by inspiring commitment, fostering professional integrity, and motivating them to exceed expectations in their instructional and administrative duties.

The finding is supported by that of Badar (2023) who conducted a cross-sectional quantitative study involving 67 madrasah teachers to examine how transformational leadership components—including idealized influence—affect pedagogical competence. The analysis revealed that idealized influence significantly enhanced teachers' competence. Similarly, Lin et al. (2023) explored how charismatic leadership traits like idealized influence impact university teachers' work engagement in China, using a sample of 381

teachers. Structural Equation Modeling confirmed that idealized influence had a significant positive effect on work engagement, which was further strengthened through the mediating role of trust in leaders. In another study, Suryati et al. (2022) used explanatory correlational research in Indonesian elementary schools with 64 teachers to assess the impact of transformational leadership dimensions on teacher performance. Findings showed that idealized influence had a strong and statistically significant effect on teacher effectiveness across pedagogical, professional, and interpersonal domains.

Conclusion

The study explored the relationship between transformational leadership and academic staff job effectiveness in Universities in South-West Nigeria. The result revealed a significant positive relationship between intellectual stimulation, idealized influence and academic staff job effectiveness. The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and academic staff job effectiveness in federal universities in South-West Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. University administrators should promote leadership practices that emphasize intellectual stimulation, encouraging academic staff to engage in critical thinking, creativity, and innovative problem-solving, which in turn enhances job effectiveness.
2. Leaders in higher education institutions should exhibit idealized influence by serving as role models through integrity, commitment, and shared vision, as these traits have been shown to positively impact the job effectiveness of academic staff.

Study limitation

One major limitation of this study is its focus on federal universities in South-West Nigeria, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or types of universities (e.g., state or private institutions).

Suggestion for future studies

Future studies should consider expanding the scope to include state and private universities across other geopolitical zones in Nigeria to allow for broader generalizations.

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