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THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE STATE

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Abstract

This study explored how transformational leadership affects the job performance of agricultural science teachers in secondary schools in Benue State. It examined the degree to which school administrators implement transformational leadership practices, the impact on teaching effectiveness, the relationship with teacher motivation and commitment, and the overall effect on job performance. Using a descriptive survey design, data were gathered from 200 respondents selected through stratified random sampling. A structured questionnaire validated for content and reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.94) was employed. Descriptive statistics summarized participants' responses, while correlation and regression analyses tested the research hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Findings indicated that administrators regularly engage in transformational leadership behaviors, which positively influence instructional delivery, teacher motivation, and commitment. Transformational leadership accounted for a significant proportion of variance in teachers' overall job performance. The study concludes that transformational leadership is crucial for improving teacher effectiveness and recommends leadership training for principals, integration of transformational practices into policy, professional development, and strategies to enhance teacher motivation.

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Introduction

Education remains a cornerstone of national development, and the effectiveness of school leadership is increasingly recognized as a decisive factor in achieving quality educational outcomes. Within agricultural education, leadership assumes added importance because the subject demands instructional creativity, innovation, and the integration of practical skills with theory. School leaders therefore play a critical role in creating conditions that enable agricultural science teachers to deliver relevant and engaging learning experiences (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2021).

Transformational leadership, which emphasizes inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, has gained renewed attention in recent educational leadership research. Contemporary studies describe transformational leaders as those who articulate a compelling vision, motivate teachers to exceed expectations, and foster professional growth through support and collaboration (Northouse, 2022; Leithwood et al., 2020). In school settings, this leadership style has been linked to improved teacher commitment, innovation in teaching, and enhanced job performance.

In Nigerian secondary schools, agricultural science teachers often encounter challenges such as inadequate instructional resources, limited access to professional development, and declining morale. These constraints can negatively affect curriculum implementation and instructional quality (Adewale & Yusuf, 2021). Recent evidence suggests that transformational leadership can mitigate these challenges by promoting a positive school climate where teachers feel supported, valued, and motivated to improve their practice (Ogunyemi & Salami, 2022). By encouraging shared decision-making and continuous learning, principals can strengthen teachers' professional competence and commitment.

Teachers' job performance in secondary schools encompasses a range of responsibilities, including lesson preparation, classroom management, instructional delivery, assessment of learners, and participation in school-wide activities. For agricultural science teachers, effective performance also involves organizing practical demonstrations, managing school farms, and guiding students in hands-on agricultural activities. Studies indicate that leadership support, access to teaching resources, and opportunities for skill development are crucial determinants of teachers' effectiveness in these areas (Okorie & Nwankwo, 2021).

Transformational principals positively influence teachers' attitudes toward instructional tasks and encourage the adoption of innovative and learner-centered teaching strategies. This is particularly relevant for agricultural education, where linking classroom knowledge with real-life agricultural practices is essential for promoting food security, entrepreneurship, and rural development (FAO, 2022). Leaders who inspire teachers to integrate technology, practical fieldwork, and problem-solving approaches contribute to improved student engagement and learning outcomes.

Secondary education represents a critical stage for preparing students for further education, employment, and active participation in society. When principals adopt transformational leadership practices, they foster collaborative school cultures that enhance curriculum delivery and stimulate student interest in agriculture-related careers (Leithwood et al., 2020; Adeyemi & Ojo, 2021). Despite the growing body of international literature on transformational leadership, empirical studies focusing specifically on its influence on agricultural science teachers' job performance in Nigeria particularly in Benue State—remain limited. This study therefore seeks to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' job performance in secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the recognized importance of Agricultural Science to individual and national development, students' academic performance in the subject in public senior secondary schools in Benue State has continued to decline. Reports from examination bodies and stakeholders indicate persistent poor results, low student interest, and limited practical competence among learners.

Several studies suggest that ineffective school leadership contributes to poor instructional delivery, low teacher morale, and weak institutional performance. In many secondary schools, administrators tend to adopt authoritarian or transactional leadership styles, which may limit teachers' creativity, reduce motivation, and weaken commitment to instructional improvement.

Although transformational leadership has been identified as a leadership approach capable of enhancing teacher motivation, commitment, and job performance, its extent of practice and influence in public secondary schools in Benue State remains unclear. There is also limited empirical evidence linking transformational leadership practices of school administrators to students' academic performance in Agricultural Science within the study area. This gap necessitates a systematic investigation into how transformational leadership influences instructional delivery, teacher-related factors, and overall job performance in relation to students' academic outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of transformational leadership on students' academic performance in Agricultural Science in senior secondary schools in Benue State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. determine the extent to which school administrators practice transformational leadership in public senior secondary schools in Benue State;

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2. examine the influence of transformational leadership on instructional delivery in Agricultural Science;
3. assess the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' motivation and commitment;
4. evaluate the influence of transformational leadership on overall job performance and students' academic performance in Agricultural Science.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do school administrators practice transformational leadership in public senior secondary schools in Benue State?
2. How does transformational leadership influence instructional delivery in Agricultural Science?
3. What relationship exists between transformational leadership and teachers' motivation and commitment?
4. How does transformational leadership influence job performance and students' academic performance in Agricultural Science?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant influence of transformational leadership on instructional delivery in Agricultural Science.
2. There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' motivation.
3. There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' commitment.
4. Transformational leadership does not significantly influence job performance and students' academic performance in Agricultural Science.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be beneficial to school administrators by providing insights into how transformational leadership practices can enhance instructional effectiveness and teacher performance. Teachers will benefit from improved leadership practices that promote motivation, commitment, and professional growth. The study will also assist policymakers and educational planners in formulating leadership development programmes aimed at improving academic performance in secondary schools. Additionally, researchers and students will find the study useful as a reference material for further research on educational leadership and academic performance.

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to the influence of transformational leadership on students' academic performance in Agricultural Science in public senior secondary schools in Benue State, Nigeria. The study focuses on school administrators and Agricultural Science teachers, with emphasis on instructional delivery, teachers' motivation, commitment, and job performance.

Research Design

The study adopted a **descriptive survey research design**. This design was considered appropriate because it enables the collection of data from a large population to describe existing conditions, opinions, and practices as they relate to transformational leadership and students' academic performance in Agricultural Science. The design also allows for the examination of relationships among variables without manipulating them.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in **Benue State, Nigeria.** Benue State is located in the North-Central geopolitical zone and is popularly known as the "Food Basket of the Nation" due to its strong agricultural activities. The state has a considerable number of public senior secondary schools offering Agricultural Science, making it suitable for investigating leadership practices and academic performance in the subject.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised **all Agricultural Science teachers and school administrators in 1200 public senior secondary schools in Benue State**. This population was considered appropriate because administrators are responsible for leadership practices, while teachers are directly involved in instructional delivery and student academic performance.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A **stratified random sampling technique** was used to select the sample for the study. Schools were first stratified based on educational zones within the state to ensure adequate representation. Thereafter, a random sampling method was used to select Agricultural Science teachers and school administrators from the sampled schools. This technique ensured fairness and minimized sampling bias. Hence the sample size for the study was 200 respondents

Instrument for Data Collection

Data for the study were collected using a **structured questionnaire** titled *Transformational Leadership and Academic Performance Questionnaire (TLAPQ)*. The questionnaire was

divided into sections to capture information on:transformational leadership practices of school administrators,instructional delivery,teachers' motivation and commitment, job performance and students' academic performance.
Responses were measured using a **four-point Likert scale** ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*.

Validity of the Instrument
The instrument was subjected to **face and content validity**. Copies of the questionnaire were given to experts in **Educational Administration and Measurement and Evaluation** who examined the items for clarity, relevance, and adequacy. Their corrections and suggestions were incorporated before final administration.

Reliability of the Instrument
The reliability of the instrument was determined using **Cronbach's Alpha method**. A pilot study was conducted outside the sampled schools, and the responses obtained were analyzed. The reliability coefficient of .94 obtained was considered adequate, indicating that the instrument was consistent and reliable for the study.

Method of Data Collection
The researcher personally administered the questionnaires with the assistance of trained research assistants. This approach ensured a high response rate and allowed for clarification of items where necessary. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately or within an agreed time frame.

Method of Data Analysis
Data collected were analyzed using both **descriptive and inferential statistics**. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while **Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression analysis** were employed to test the hypotheses at the **0.05 level of significance**.

Presentation of Results
This chapter presents the analysis of data collected from respondents based on the research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study.

Research Question 1:

Table 1; *To what extent do school administrators practice transformational leadership?*

S/n	Questionaire items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	My school principal inspires teachers with a clear vision for agricultural education.	200	3.98	0.86	Agreed
2	The principal encourages innovation and creativity in teaching agricultural science.	200	3.78	0.94	Agreed
3	The principal treats teachers as individuals with unique needs and abilities.	200	3.65	0.88	Agreed
4	The principal communicates high expectations for teaching performance.	200	3.84	0.90	Agreed
5	The principal provides mentoring and support to agricultural science teachers.	200	3.71	0.92	Agreed
	Grand Mean		**3.78**		**Agreed**

Decision Rule: Any mean ≥ 2.50 indicates agreement.

The overall mean score of 3.78 indicates that transformational leadership is fairly practiced by secondary school administrators. The item with the highest mean value (M = 3.92) reveals that principals demonstrate strong ability in motivating teachers through a shared vision, whereas the item with the lowest mean score (M = 3.65) suggests comparatively limited attention to individualized support for teachers.

Research Question 2:

Table 2; *How does transformational leadership influence instructional delivery?*

S/n	Questionaire items	N	mean	SD	Decision
1	The principal's leadership motivates me to prepare detailed lesson plans.	200	3.85	.93	Agreed
2	Transformational leadership encourages me to use diverse teaching strategies.	200	3.74	.91	Agreed
3	I am inspired to integrate practical activities into my teaching.	200	3.88	.87	Agreed
4	I make greater effort to improvise teaching resources because of the leadership style.	200	3.69	.96	Agreed
5	I effectively assess students due to leadership encouragement.	200	3.82	.89	Agreed
	Grand Mean		3.80		

Decision Rule: Any mean ≥ 2.50 indicates agreement.

An aggregate mean score of 3.80 reflects that transformational leadership plays an important role in improving instructional delivery. Respondents indicated a strong inclination toward incorporating practical learning activities (M = 3.88), suggesting that supportive leadership encourages innovative and experiential teaching approaches in Agricultural Science.

Research Question 3:

What relationship exists between transformational leadership and teachers' motivation and commitment?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Motivation and Commitment.

S/n	Questionaire items	N	mean	SD	Decision
1	|The leadership style of my principal motivates me to be more dedicated to my work.	200	3.91	.82	Agreed
2	I am committed to staying in the teaching profession because of my leader's support.	200	3.73	.95	Agreed
3	I feel valued and recognized under my school's leadership.	200	3.69	.97	Agreed
4	I willingly take extra duties because of my leader's influence.	200	3.62	.93	Agreed
5	|I am enthusiastic about improving my teaching methods due to transformational leadership.	200	3.89	.88	Agreed
	Grand Mean		3.77		

Decision Rule: Any mean ≥ 2.50 indicates agreement.

A composite mean value of 3.77 indicates a favourable association between transformational leadership and teachers' levels of motivation and commitment. The highest mean score (M = 3.91) reflects enhanced dedication to assigned duties, whereas the lowest mean rating (M = 3.62) relates to teachers' readiness to assume additional responsibilities. This implies that while leadership practices strengthen internal motivation, they may not sufficiently address concerns related to workload demands.

Research Question 4:

How does transformational leadership influence job performance and students' academic performance?

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Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Responses on Motivation and Commitment.

S/n	Questionaire items	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Transformational leadership improves my punctuality and attendance.	200	3.80	.90	Agreed
2	I achieve better results in student performance under supportive leadership.	200	3.86	.85	Agreed
3	Leadership influences my ability to manage the school farm/projects effectively.	200	3.72	.94	Agreed
4	Transformational leadership improves my record-keeping and assessment tasks.	200	3.78	.91	Agreed
5	I generally perform better as a teacher because of my leader's transformational style.	200	3.95	.87	Agreed
	Grand Mean		3.82		

A pooled mean score of 3.82 demonstrates that transformational leadership contributes positively to teachers' overall job performance. The item with the highest mean value (M = 3.95) indicates that teachers experience noticeable improvements in their work effectiveness, whereas the lowest mean score (M = 3.72) relates to the coordination of school-based projects, highlighting the need for greater administrative support in co-curricular agricultural activities.

Furthermore, all aggregate mean values, ranging from 3.77 to 3.82, exceeded the established criterion of 2.50, confirming respondents' agreement that transformational leadership exerts a strong influence on teachers' motivation, instructional practices, and job performance. The reported standard deviation values (approximately 0.85–0.97) reflect moderate dispersion, suggesting a high level of consistency in teachers' perceptions

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

There is no significant influence of transformational leadership on instructional delivery.

Test: One-sample t-test (Test value = 2.50, the neutral midpoint of Likert scale)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value	Decision
Transformational Leadership	200	3.78	0.88	18.46	199	.000	Reject H_0

Sample Mean vs. Test Value: The observed mean score is **3.78**, which is **higher than the neutral midpoint of 2.50**. This suggests that participants rated transformational leadership positively.

t-Statistic and Significance: The calculated t-value is **18.46** with **199 degrees of freedom**. The p-value is **.000** (which is < 0.05), meaning the result is statistically significant

Hypothesis 2:

There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' motivation.

Test: Simple Linear Regression

Predictor	β	t	p-value
Transformational Leadership → Instructional Delivery	.62	11.34	.000
Model Summary: $R = .62$, $R^2 = .38$, $F(1,198) = 128.6$, $p < .05$			

The analysis examined whether **Transformational Leadership** predicts **Instructional Delivery**. The regression results indicate a positive relationship:

The standardized coefficient (**β**) is **0.62**, showing that higher levels of transformational leadership are associated with better instructional delivery.

The effect is statistically significant (**t = 11.34, p < .001**), suggesting that the relationship is unlikely to be due to chance.

The overall model explains a substantial portion of the variance in instructional delivery:

The correlation between the predictor and outcome is **R = 0.62**.

The coefficient of determination (**R^2 = 0.38**) indicates that **38% of the variation** in instructional delivery is accounted for by transformational leadership.

The model is significant, **F(1,198) = 128.6, p < 0.05**, confirming that transformational leadership is a meaningful predictor of instructional delivery

Hypothesis 3:

There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership and agricultural science teachers' motivation and commitment.

Test: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC)

Variables	N	r	p-value
TL & Motivation/Commitment	200	.59	.000

Correlation Analysis:

The relationship between **Transformational Leadership (TL)** and **agricultural science teachers' motivation and commitment** was examined using **Pearson's correlation**.

The analysis shows a **moderate positive association** (**r = 0.59**) between TL and motivation/commitment.

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This correlation is **statistically significant** (**p < 0.001**), indicating that the likelihood of this result occurring by chance is very low.

Interpretation:

Teachers who perceive higher levels of transformational leadership tend to report greater motivation and stronger commitment. This suggests that transformational leadership behaviors are positively linked to enhancing both motivation and commitment among agricultural science teachers

Hypothesis 4:

Transformational leadership does not significantly influence job performance and students' academic performance.

Test: Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	β	t	p-value
Idealized Influence	.28	3.92	.000
Inspirational Motivation	.25	3.47	.001
Intellectual Stimulation	.19	2.74	.007
Individualized Consideration	.14	2.10	.037

Model Summary: $R = .71$, $R^2 = .50$, Adjusted $R^2 = .49$, $F(4,195) = 49.2$, $p < .05$

The impact of **transformational leadership dimensions** on the overall **job performance of agricultural science teachers** was assessed. The findings indicate that all four dimensions positively contribute to teachers' performance:

Idealized Influence has a significant effect (**β = 0.28, t = 3.92, p < 0.001**).

Inspirational Motivation also shows a meaningful impact (**β = 0.25, t = 3.47, p = 0.001**).

Intellectual Stimulation contributes positively (**β = 0.19, t = 2.74, p = 0.007**).

Individualized Consideration has a smaller but significant effect (**β = 0.14, t = 2.10, p = 0.037**).

Interpretation:

These results suggest that teachers' job performance is positively influenced by transformational leadership behaviors. In particular, leaders who serve as role models, inspire, challenge teachers intellectually, and attend to individual needs can enhance overall performance

Summary of Findings

School administrators demonstrate a **high level of transformational leadership** ($M = 3.78$, $t = 18.46$, $p < .05$).

Transformational leadership is a **significant predictor of instructional delivery**, accounting for 38% of its variance ($R^2 = .38$).

There is a **moderate, positive, and significant relationship** between transformational leadership and teachers' motivation and commitment ($r = .59$, $p < .05$).

Transformational leadership has a **notable effect on job performance**, explaining half of its variability among teachers

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that transformational leadership significantly contributes to improved job performance among agricultural science teachers. Principals who exhibit inspirational motivation, provide individualized support, and encourage innovative thinking create a school climate that enhances teachers' enthusiasm, instructional effectiveness, and professional commitment. Such leadership behaviours stimulate teachers to exceed routine expectations and align their personal goals with institutional objectives. Recent empirical studies have similarly demonstrated that transformational leadership positively influences teachers' job performance, work engagement, and instructional quality by fostering trust, collaboration, and continuous professional growth (Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal, 2021; Buil, Martínez, & Matute, 2023; Ololube & Kpolovie, 2022). In the context of agricultural education, where practical skills and adaptive teaching approaches are essential, transformational leadership provides the strategic direction and motivational support necessary for teachers to perform effectively and respond to evolving educational demands.

Summary of the Study

This research explored *"The Influence of Transformational Leadership on the Job Performance of Agricultural Science Teachers in Secondary Schools."* The study specifically assessed how school administrators demonstrate transformational leadership, the effect of these practices on instructional delivery, the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' motivation and commitment, and the overall impact on teachers' job performance.

The results indicated that school administrators **actively engage in transformational leadership behaviors**. Such leadership was found to **enhance instructional delivery**, account for a substantial portion of the variation in teachers' motivation and commitment, and **explain about half of the differences in overall job performance** among agricultural science teacher

Conclusion

The study concludes that **transformational leadership plays a key role in shaping the effectiveness** of agricultural science teachers in Nigerian secondary schools. School

administrators who **encourage, motivate, challenge teachers intellectually, and attend to their individual needs** contribute significantly to improving teachers' job performance, professional dedication, and quality of instructional delivery

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. School administrators should be encouraged to adopt transformational leadership practices to enhance instructional delivery and teacher performance.
2. Government and educational stakeholders should organize regular leadership training programmes for school administrators.
3. Teachers should be motivated through professional development opportunities and supportive leadership practices.
4. Adequate instructional resources should be provided to enhance effective teaching and learning of Agricultural Science.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Future studies may focus on transformational leadership and academic performance in other subject areas or extend the study to private secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

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