

Transformational Leadership Cultures as Correlates of Public University Goals' Achievement in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated transformational leadership cultures as correlates of public university goals achievement in Cross River State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A total of 141 institutional administrators were used for the study through census approach. An instrument titled “Transformational Leadership Cultures and University Goals Achievement Survey” (TLCUGAS) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the University of Calabar. A trial test was carried out using 30 respondents. Cronbach alpha reliability was employed to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The result of the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate gave a reliability coefficient of 0.88. Data obtained was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics. Findings revealed that individualized consideration and idealized influence significantly correlated with public university's goals achievement. The researchers concluded that transformational leadership cultures are correlates of public university's goals achievement. It was recommended that the institutional administrators should sustain charismatic role modelling, individualized consideration and idealized influence in order to inspire staff, students and the public to work towards the achievement of university education goals in Cross River State of Nigeria.

Keywords: Transformational, leadership, school, goals, achievement

Introduction

In an attempt to achieve their goals and contribute to sustainable national development through high level manpower training, many universities around the world are facing a lot of setbacks. Some universities are still grappling with the uncanny uncertainties of pandemic outbreak, kidnapping, poor admission policies, meager salary, obsolete

facilities and fraudulent scholarship schemes. This leads to corrupt practices, incessant industrial actions, delayed promotions and lots more. In the light of these, Ofoegbu and Alonge (2017) strongly argued that the inability of universities to achieve their goals is a function of leadership ineffectiveness. The purpose of this paper therefore is to project transformational leadership culture as a panacea to achieving the goals of university education in Nigeria generally and Cross River State in particular.

A goal is a futuristic idea or a desired result envisioned, planned and committed to be achieved by a person or a group of people. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2014), in section 5 sub-sections 80-85 of the National Policy on Education (NPE), specifies that the goals of tertiary education among others shall be to contribute to national development through high level manpower training. Transformational leadership culture is needed to achieve university goals through quality student intake; quality teaching and learning; research and development; quality facilities, services and resources, among others (Bass, 2015).

Globally, academics are saddled with the obligations to be discharged to the communities or rather audiences they serve (i.e. themselves, academic community – students and the likes, dwelling communities and government at the larger spectrum). It is beholding of academics to strive to uphold these onerous tasks. In line with proliferation of literature in this sphere, academics are meant and known to carry out multifunctional activities ranging from teaching, research, supervision, scholarship, publications to community services. Uzoigwe (2020) found that research support services, if effectively managed, enable school managers to give out entitlements to research staff and student researchers as well as sourcing for research grants for collaborative research, publishing in reputable journals, attending conferences, writing book chapters, among others. Bako, Donwa, Payne and Siow (2016) observed that there are poor teaching and weak innovations in the University environment owing to the fact that some administrators could not assist lecturers to access internal and external grants for research publications. Similarly, over the years, it is observed that Cross River State public universities have frequently witnessed goals achievement issues in terms of poor teaching delivery, research production and community services in the institutions. The researchers observed that teaching delivery in the universities has not reached sustainable levels which negatively affect the culture and programmes of the institutions. It is observed also that some lecturers do not effectively structure their lecture contents with clear objectives to arouse the desire to learn from students. It is observed that some of them lack adequate statistical knowledge for engaging in collaborative research. Some lecturers cannot establish a positive classroom environment with disciplinary measures needed for effective teaching and learning. They lack the required expertise for carrying out community services.

This situation is disturbing and has been a source of worry to researchers, policy makers, educational planners and institutional administrators. Notably, this suggests that there might be transformational leadership failure in the institutions because these formidable tasks of the academic staff are not unconnected with the leadership and knowledge sharing activities carried out by members of the university. Ukpai and Ere (2016) submitted that most serious challenges on university campuses have turned out to constitute outright crises considering their timing, intensity, and consequences. In the same vein, Ofoegbu and Alonge (2017) found that Vice Chancellors from Southern Nigerian universities were ineffective in their leadership roles and that the level of academic excellence in Southern Nigerian universities was generally low. This suggests that leadership of a university plays invaluable roles in achieving academic excellence in dissemination and acquisition of universal knowledge, values; functional, technical and scientific skills and competencies critical to global growth and development. On the contrary, poor leadership in Cross River State public universities, among others, results in delayed graduation. This situation is disturbing and has been a source of worry to researchers. One may however wonder if the rate of graduate unemployability and the inability of university system to achieve predetermined goals and objectives may be attributed to poor leadership practices of the institutional administrators in the universities.

Accordingly, leadership is conceived as a process of regulating human relations in a bid to organizing its efforts aimed at accomplishing given goals. It entails the process of providing directions, guidance and management that engender transformation (change). Transformational leaders have been described in prior literatures as highly interactive, passionate, empowering, visionary, and creative (Hackman & Johnson, 2014). However, Bass (2015) further expanded Burn's theory by conceptualizing transformational leadership behaviours into four categories: idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation.

One of the tenets of transformational leadership is individualized consideration. It is the degree to which the leader attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to the follower's concerns and needs. This means that an administrator with the ideology of individualized consideration can give empathy and support, keeps communication open and places the interests of the followers before his. Such administrator can support the lecturers in designing the course outline for effective teaching delivery, set the pace for collaborative research publications and organize the academic staff for community service. John (2018) found that some administrators scored lowest in individualized consideration and could not achieve their school goals. This implies that teachers' inputs as a team is inevitable for the attainment of school goals and the school administrators play key roles in the

enhancement of teachers' inputs especially through challenging teachers by their actions.

Stanley, Wilson and Linus (2019a) submitted that individualized consideration enhances employee performance through recognition for better productivity, teaching and coaching. Furthermore, supervisors respect and celebrate individual contribution and provide opportunities for identification of needs and capabilities of others. Ogola, Sikiliel and Linge's (2017) findings showed that individualized consideration leadership behaviour and employee performance in SMEs in Kenya had a strong positive and significant correlation and a positive and significant relationship. Mohammed, Othman and Mahazan (2018) found that all the dimensions of transformational leadership have a positive influence on the teachers' performance. Hukpati's (2019) findings showed a positive correlation between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction.

Evidently, transformational leaders provide distinct attention to every single employee's needs for attainment and development by assuming the responsibility of a coach or a mentor. The staff are made to progressively achieve higher levels of potential. Individualized consideration is implemented after newly discovered opportunities are crafted alongside a supportive climate (Mohammed, Othman & Mahazan, 2018). Individualized attention occurs in the university when a Vice Chancellor pays attention to the differences among academic and non-academic staff and discovers what motivates each individual. This suggests that individualized attention allows leaders to become familiar with followers, enhances communication and improves information exchange. Theorists have begun to shift the focus of individualized attention from a means to promote familiarity with followers to a means to provide support. The actions by the leaders will demonstrate consensus on the virtue of taking into account individual differences between various followers in terms of needs and desires. While some lecturers will be accorded extra motivation, others will receive extra autonomy while some others will require firmer standards. Some other aspects of individualized communication include an inspired two-way communication and a practice of management by working around workspaces. It is a practice by the leadership to spend time coaching and teaching the staff.

Idealized influence is another dimension of transformational leadership which provides a role model for high ethical behaviour, instills pride, gains respect and trust for followers. Idealized transformational leaders demonstrate behaviours that allow them to serve as role models for their followers. In addition to admiring, respecting, and trusting them, followers tend to identify with the leaders and want to emulate them. Staff and students view their school leaders as having extraordinary capabilities, persistence, and determination (Stanley, Wilson & Linus, 2019b). Stanley, Wilson and

Linus (2019b) found that in a school system where idealized influence is practiced, school leaders tend to motivate teachers to high productivity through creativity and innovation and ensure that there is clear conveyance of messages across the school organization for goals achievement. They articulate a compelling vision for the future and talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished. Further, the study revealed that the leaders provided continual improvement, inspired confidence and showed determination to accomplish what they set out to do. The finding equally indicated that regarding the impact of idealized influence on employee performance, employees were proud to be associated with the supervisors, and performance requirements are designed according to the school organization's needs. The study also revealed that supervisors were also regarded as good role models in influencing high quality of service among employees and employees' participation in decision making is encouraged. Arokiasamya, Abdullah, Ahmad and Ismail (2016) found that the practice of idealized influence by school principals in the district of Kinta Selatan, Perak was moderate and the job satisfaction of primary school teachers was moderately satisfactory with a significant relationship between the level of transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Osagie and Momoh (2018) discovered that idealized influence is an important element of school improvement. Money's (2017) study revealed that both principals and teachers were aware of idealized influence but that it was doubtful if the practical aspect of transforming the followers and students was realized. Buenvinida and Ramos (2019) conducted a study on the impact of idealized influence on school goals achievement and found that the schools' drop-out rate and cohort survival rate with an average of 2.49% and 84.82% respectively were interpreted as very satisfactory; and completion rate of 94.5% as outstanding.

Purpose of the study

The study investigated transformational leadership cultures as correlates of public university goals' achievement in Cross River State of Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out the relationship between:

- 1) Individualized consideration and public university goals' achievement.
- 2) Idealized influence and public university goals' achievement.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- 1) How does individualized consideration relate to public university goals' achievement?
- 2) To what extent does idealized influence relate to public university goals' achievement?

Hypotheses

These hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho1: Individualized consideration does not significantly relate to public university goals' achievement.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between idealized influence and public university goals' achievement.

Methodology

This research was carried out in Cross River State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study was survey design; this was because the study involved the use of a representative sample from a population, and the drawing of inferences based on analysis of available data. The population of the study comprised 141 heads of departments drawn through census approach from the two public universities in Cross River State. This approach was used because the studied population was not large. An instrument titled “Transformational Leadership Cultures and Universities’ Goals Achievement Survey” (TLCUGAS) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation, in the University of Calabar. In order to determine the reliability of the research instrument, a trial test was carried out. The instrument was administered using online questionnaire software on 30 institutional administrators who were not part of the study sample. Cronbach alpha reliability estimate of the test instrument was done in order to determine its internal consistency. The result of the Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate gave a reliability coefficient of 0.88. This value was high enough to be considered good for the research instrument. The instrument was a 4-point modified Likert scale. The sub-variables of transformational leadership cultures were individualized consideration and idealized influence. University goals had three sub-variables namely teaching delivery, research productivity and community service. Each of these sub-variables was measured using 6 items which gave a total of 30 items. Each item had four response options ranging from Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE) to Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The items in the instrument were scored as follows: Very High Extent (VHE) = 4points; High Extent (HE) =3points; Low Extent (LE) =2points and Very Low Extent (VLE) =1points, for all positively worded items. A reversed score was assigned to all the negatively worded items. The respondents were required to tick one of the four response options against each item to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the item. The copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researchers with the help of three trained research assistants. At the end of the exercise, out of one hundred and forty one (141) copies of questionnaire administered, one hundred and ten (110) were successfully completed, retrieved and analysed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics.

Presentation of results

Ho1: Individualized consideration does not significantly relate to public university goals' achievement.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is individualized consideration while the dependent variable is university goals' achievement assessed from three perspectives which are teaching delivery, research productivity and community service. The variables were measured continuously. To this hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used and the result showed that for individualized consideration and teaching delivery, $r = .489^*$ and $p < .05$; for individualized consideration and research productivity, $r = .403^*$ and $p < .05$; and for individualized consideration and community service, $r = .289^*$ and $p < .05$. A cursory look at the p-values shows that $p(.000)$ is less than .05 for the three dimensions considered in the study. This implies that there is a significant relationship between individualized consideration and public university goals' achievement for the three dimensions assessed. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between individualized consideration and public university goals' achievement (N=110)

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | df | r | p |
|----------------------------------|-----|-------|------|-----|------------|---|
| Individualized consideration (X) | 110 | 13.69 | 2.30 | | | |
| Teaching delivery (Y_1) | 110 | 12.00 | 2.49 | 108 | .489* .000 | |
| Research productivity (Y_2) | 110 | 12.24 | 2.74 | 108 | .403* .000 | |
| Community service (Y_3) | 110 | 11.63 | 3.68 | 108 | .289* .000 | |

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between idealized influence and public university goals' achievement.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is idealized influence while the dependent variable is public university goals' achievement assessed from three perspectives which are teaching delivery, research productivity and community service. The variables were measured continuously. To this hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used and the result showed that for idealized influence and teaching delivery, $r = .411^*$ and $p < .05$; for idealized influence and research productivity, $r = .373^*$ and $p < .05$; and for idealized influence and community service, $r = .171^*$ and $p < .05$. A cursory look at the p-values shows that $p(.000)$ is less than .05 for the three dimensions considered in the study. This implies that there is a significant relationship between idealized influence and public university goals' achievement for the three

dimensions assessed. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between idealized influence and public university goals' achievement (N=110)

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | df | r | p |
|---|-----|-------|------|-----|------|------|
| Idealized influence (X) | 110 | 12.13 | 2.57 | | | |
| Teaching delivery (Y ₁) | 110 | 12.00 | 2.49 | 108 | .411 | .000 |
| Research productivity (Y ₂) | 110 | 12.24 | 2.74 | 108 | .373 | .000 |
| Community service (Y ₃) | 110 | 11.63 | 3.68 | 108 | .171 | .004 |

Discussion of findings

One of the findings of this study revealed that individualized consideration significantly correlates with public university goals' achievement in terms of teaching delivery, research productivity and community service. The positive nature of these correlation coefficients indicates that individualized consideration is the degree to which the leader attends to each follower's necessities, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to the follower's concerns and needs. The implication of this finding is that an increase in the application of individualized consideration also promotes heightened university goals' achievement and vice versa. The present finding corroborates those of Ogola, Sikiliel and Linge (2017), Mohammed, Othman and Mahazan (2018), Hukpati (2019) and Stanley, Wilson and Linus (2019a) who found that individualized consideration exerts positive influence on employee performance, hence there is recognition of employees for better productivity, teaching and coaching of staff. Furthermore, supervisors under individualized consideration respect and celebrate individual contribution and provide opportunities for identification of needs and capabilities of others. This finding may be due to the fact that the significance of individualized consideration in the university environment depends largely on the ability of the leaders to stimulate and direct followers in order to achieve desired outcomes. They have to discuss and empathize with the needs of individual employees.

Another finding of this study revealed that idealized influence significantly correlates with university goals' attainment. This suggests that idealized influence provides a role model for high ethical behaviour, instills pride, gains respect and trust for the followers. The implication of this finding is that an increase in the application of idealized influence encourages university goals' achievement and vice versa. The

finding of this study is in consonant with Arokiasamya, Abdullahb, Ahmad and Ismailb (2016), Money (2017) and Osagie and Momoh (2018) who asserted that idealized influence is an important element of school improvement. They also found that the practice of idealized influence by school principals in the district of Kinta Selatan, Perak was moderate and the job satisfaction of primary school teachers was moderately satisfactory with a significant relationship between the level of transformational leadership and job satisfaction. The reason for this finding could be that with transformational leadership cultures, school administrators act as role models for their followers, they are admired, respected and trusted. Followers tend to identify with the leaders and want to emulate them for the achievement of university goals.

Conclusion

Premised on the findings of this study, it was concluded that transformational leadership cultures significantly correlated with public university goals achievement in Cross River State of Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

- 1) Institutional administrators should encourage free flow of communication using individualized consideration approach, so that followers may feel free to share ideas on their teaching delivery, research productivity and community service experience.
- 2) The administrators should provide conducive environment for effective teaching/learning through idealized influence. They have to show respect for staff by treating them as professionals and must be willing to be part of the ‘new positive change’.

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