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Transformational Leadership Practices and Employee Productivity In Retail Telecommunication Firms In Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the relationship between transformational leadership practices and employee productivity in retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study pursued four specific objectives which are to: determine the relationship between idealized influence and employees' self-fulfillment; ascertain the relationship between follower development and employees' intrinsic motivation. The study was anchored on the Transformational Leadership. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to a census sample of 404 employees from selected retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State. The instrument's validity and reliability were confirmed through expert review and Cronbach Alpha values ranging from 0.773 to 0.890. Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed significant positive effect across all dimensions studied. Idealized influence had a strong positive effect on employees' self-fulfillment ($R^2 = 0.425$; $\beta = 0.745$; $t = 17.240$; $p < 0.000$). Follower development significantly predicted intrinsic motivation ($R^2 = 0.361$; $\beta = 0.621$; $t = 13.738$; $p < 0.000$). Intellectual stimulation had a significant impact on skill development ($R^2 = 0.347$; $\beta = 0.631$; $t = 12.646$; $p < 0.000$). These findings underscore the critical role of transformational leadership in enhancing employee performance dimensions such as self-fulfillment, motivation, skills, and commitment. The study recommends the adoption of transformational leadership behaviors by managers to drive productivity and engagement within the telecommunication retail sector.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Employee Productivity, Telecommunication Firms

1. INTRODUCTION

Employee productivity is a key determinant of organizational success, particularly in highly competitive and dynamic sectors like telecommunications. In this context, transformational leadership has emerged as a vital leadership style for enhancing workforce

performance. This leadership approach emphasizes inspiration, motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation, all of which are crucial for engaging employees and improving their productivity. In the Nigerian business landscape especially within retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State exploring the role of transformational leadership provides critical insights into how leadership behavior influences employee outcomes.

Transformational leaders foster strong connections with employees by articulating a compelling vision and instilling a shared sense of purpose. Through inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, they encourage employees to challenge traditional norms, develop innovative solutions, and commit to continuous improvement. These leaders also provide personalized attention and mentorship, which boosts employee morale and cultivates a supportive work culture. Such environments allow employees to thrive, fostering greater levels of commitment, job satisfaction, and ultimately, higher productivity (Bass & Riggio, 2016; Avolio & Yammarino, 2023).

In the context of retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State, leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational outcomes. These firms operate in a competitive and technology-driven environment that demands strategic agility and high employee performance. Effective leadership strategies that align with transformational principles can help drive innovation, build capacity among workers, and respond proactively to changing market conditions. However, evidence suggests that many of these firms are yet to fully embrace transformational leadership in practice.

A notable leadership gap exists in terms of employee engagement and vision alignment. In several retail telecommunication firms, leadership styles have not effectively prioritized individualized consideration or fostered intellectual stimulation. This shortfall can lead to employee disengagement, reduced job satisfaction, and diminished productivity. When leaders fail to communicate a clear vision or invest in the professional development of their employees, it creates an uninspired workforce that is less committed to organizational goals and less capable of adapting to change.

Moreover, the absence of innovation-driven leadership has hindered employees from contributing creatively to problem-solving or process optimization. The resulting reliance on routine and outdated practices has limited the potential for operational growth and competitive advantage. Transformational leadership, which thrives on change orientation and innovation, is essential for navigating the complexities of the modern business

environment in Anambra State's telecom industry.

While global and national studies have confirmed the positive influence of transformational leadership on employee productivity (e.g., Judge & Piccolo, 2014; Wang et al., 2021), localized research in Nigeria's retail telecommunication sector remains limited. Understanding how transformational leadership practices apply in this unique setting is critical for tailoring leadership development strategies and enhancing organizational performance.

Therefore, this study investigates the relationship between transformational leadership practices and employee productivity in retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State. It seeks to identify specific gaps in leadership behavior, assess their implications on productivity, and offer practical recommendations for integrating transformational leadership principles. By addressing these issues, the study contributes to organizational improvement and enriches the discourse on effective leadership in Nigeria's evolving service economy.

Statement of the Problem

Employee productivity is a fundamental driver of organizational success, and transformational leadership has been widely recognized as a critical factor in enhancing this productivity. However, despite its established benefits, the application of transformational leadership practices within retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State remains limited. The broad problem addressed in this study is the need to evaluate how transformational leadership influences employee productivity in this context, especially given the dynamic nature of the telecommunications industry and the increasing demand for motivated, innovative, and high-performing employees.

One key problem is the low level of leadership engagement with employees. Many retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State have not effectively embraced transformational leadership behaviors such as inspirational motivation and idealized influence. As a result, employees lack the inspiration and emotional connection needed to remain committed to organizational goals. This disengagement often leads to reduced motivation, lower job satisfaction, and ultimately decreased productivity. Without leaders who actively connect with their teams and foster a shared purpose, the work environment becomes transactional rather than transformational, limiting the potential for employee-driven performance. A second major issue is the lack of intellectual stimulation and encouragement for innovation within these firms. Current leadership practices do not actively promote

creativity or critical thinking, leading employees to rely on outdated procedures rather than generating new ideas or solutions. This static work culture hampers adaptability and continuous improvement, which are essential in a rapidly evolving industry like telecommunications. Transformational leadership is known to enhance innovation by encouraging employees to question assumptions and explore alternative approaches. The absence of such stimulation stifles progress and keeps organizations from achieving operational excellence.

The third problem lies in the absence of individualized consideration and personal development support. Employees in many retail telecommunication firms feel undervalued due to the lack of mentorship, feedback, and recognition. When leaders fail to address individual employee needs or support career growth, commitment and productivity decline. Furthermore, the failure to clearly communicate organizational vision and align it with employee goals creates confusion, undermining direction and purpose in the workplace. This study, therefore, seeks to explore these leadership deficiencies, examine their effects on employee productivity, and provide practical, context-specific recommendations to improve transformational leadership practices in retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State.

Objectives of the Study

The broad goal of this study is to examine the relationship between transformational leadership practice and employee s' productivity of retail telecommunication firms in Anambra state, Nigeria. The specific goals are to:

1. Determine the relationship between idealize influence and employee s' self-fulfillment of retail telecommunication firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.
2. Ascertain the relationship between follower development and employee s' intrinsic motivation of retail telecommunication retail telecommunication firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.
3. Examine the relationship between intellectual stimulation and employees' skill development of retail telecommunication firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses have been formulated to guide the study.

Ho_1: Idealize influence has no significant relationship with employees' self-fulfillment of retail telecommunication firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Ho_2: Follower development has no significant relationship with employees' intrinsic motivation of retail telecommunication firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

Ho_3: Intellectual stimulation has no significant relationship with employees' skill development of retail telecommunication firms in Anambra state, Nigeria.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Reviews

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is a style that inspires and motivates followers to exceed their own self-interests for the good of the organization or team, fostering an environment of innovation and change. This leadership approach is characterized by a leader's ability to influence and transform followers through vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and personal consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2016). Transformational leaders are often seen as role models who are capable of effecting significant change within an organization by aligning followers' goals with those of the group. One of the central elements of transformational leadership is the articulation of a clear and compelling vision. Transformational leaders are adept at communicating an inspiring vision that resonates with followers, providing them with a sense of purpose and direction (Northouse, 2018). This vision acts as a guiding star that motivates individuals to strive towards collective goals, often leading to enhanced performance and satisfaction. By presenting a vision that is both attainable and aspirational, transformational leaders can instill a sense of hope and drive in their followers (Avolio & Yammarino, 2023).

In addition to vision, inspirational motivation is a key component of transformational leadership. Leaders who utilize this style are able to articulate their vision with passion and enthusiasm, creating an emotional connection with their followers (Bass, 2019). This emotional engagement can foster a strong sense of commitment and loyalty among team members, which is critical for achieving long-term goals. Inspirational motivation often involves setting high expectations and demonstrating confidence in followers' abilities, thereby empowering them to take on challenging tasks and achieve extraordinary outcomes (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 2023). Intellectual stimulation is another hallmark of transformational leadership. This aspect involves encouraging creativity and innovation among followers by challenging existing assumptions and promoting critical thinking (Bass & Avolio, 2014). Transformational leaders foster an environment where new ideas are welcomed, and constructive feedback is encouraged. This can lead to the development of novel solutions to problems and can drive

continuous improvement within the organization. By valuing and leveraging the diverse perspectives of their team members, transformational leaders can enhance the overall problem-solving capacity of the group (Jung, Chow, & Wu, 2023).

Individualized consideration is the fourth critical component of transformational leadership. This involves recognizing and addressing the unique needs, strengths, and aspirations of each follower (Avolio & Bass, 2015). Transformational leaders act as mentors or coaches, providing personalized support and guidance to help individuals achieve their full potential. This personalized approach not only aids in personal development but also builds trust and respect between the leader and their followers. By showing genuine concern for their team members, transformational leaders can cultivate a positive and supportive organizational culture (Ehrhart, 2014).

The impact of transformational leadership extends beyond individual followers to the broader organizational context. By fostering a culture of trust, innovation, and continuous improvement, transformational leaders can drive organizational change and enhance overall performance (Bass & Riggio, 2016). Research has shown that organizations led by transformational leaders often experience higher levels of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and productivity (Judge & Piccolo, 2014). This leadership style can also lead to increased organizational resilience and adaptability, as followers are more likely to embrace change and work collaboratively towards shared goals (Yukl, 2023).

Idealized Influence

Idealized influence is a cornerstone of transformational leadership, characterized by leaders who act as strong role models and exhibit high ethical standards, earning the admiration, respect, and trust of their followers (Bass & Riggio, 2016). These leaders influence followers through their actions and personal integrity rather than coercion or positional power. They embody the values and ideals that they advocate, inspiring followers to align with these principles. The impact of idealized influence is profound, as it fosters a deep sense of loyalty and commitment among followers, encouraging them to strive towards collective goals.

Leaders who demonstrate idealized influence possess a clear sense of purpose and demonstrate conviction in their beliefs, which often leads to high levels of follower engagement and motivation (Northouse, 2018). These leaders are not just concerned with achieving organizational objectives but are also deeply committed to the ethical and moral

implications of their decisions. By maintaining a strong moral compass and consistently acting in alignment with their values, they build a foundation of trust that is essential for effective leadership. This trust is pivotal as it creates a safe and supportive environment where followers feel valued and understood. The credibility of leaders with idealized influence is reinforced through their actions, which consistently reflect their stated values and beliefs. This consistency is crucial because it reduces ambiguity and fosters a stable environment where followers can predict and understand their leader's behavior (Bass & Avolio, 2014). When leaders' actions align with their words, it minimizes the gap between espoused values and practiced values, enhancing their credibility. This alignment helps in building a robust organizational culture based on trust, mutual respect, and ethical behavior, which is essential for long-term success.

Follower Development

Follower development refers to the process by which leaders nurture, enhance, and support the growth and capabilities of their followers within an organization. This concept is pivotal in leadership studies as it underscores the symbiotic relationship between leaders and followers, highlighting that effective leadership involves not only guiding but also developing the potential of those being led (Northouse, 2018). Follower development encompasses a range of activities including training, mentoring, coaching, and providing feedback, all aimed at helping individuals achieve their full potential and contribute more effectively to organizational goals.

A critical component of follower development is the provision of training and development programs. These programs are designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of followers, preparing them for current and future roles within the organization. Effective training programs are tailored to meet the specific needs of followers and are aligned with organizational objectives (Yukl, 2023). By investing in continuous learning opportunities, organizations can ensure that their workforce remains competent, competitive, and capable of adapting to changing demands and technologies. Mentoring is another vital aspect of follower development.

Through mentoring relationships, experienced leaders provide guidance, support, and advice to less experienced followers. This relationship fosters professional growth by enabling followers to gain insights from their mentors' experiences and expertise (Kram, 2015). Mentors help followers navigate their careers, set goals, and develop strategies for achieving them. The personal connection and trust

developed in mentoring relationships can significantly enhance followers' confidence and motivation.

Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation is a core component of transformational leadership that involves encouraging followers to challenge assumptions, think critically, and explore new ideas and solutions. Leaders who practice intellectual stimulation foster an environment where creativity and innovation are not only allowed but actively encouraged (Bass & Riggio, 2016). This approach aims to stimulate followers' intellectual capacities, prompting them to engage in problem-solving and to take ownership of their work processes.

By promoting intellectual growth, leaders can enhance the overall cognitive capabilities of their teams, leading to improved organizational performance. Central to intellectual stimulation is the encouragement of critical thinking and questioning. Transformational leaders do not shy away from challenging the status quo; instead, they invite followers to question existing processes and propose new ways of doing things (Bass, 1985). This open-minded approach helps in identifying inefficiencies and areas for improvement, driving continuous organizational growth. By fostering a culture where questioning is welcomed, leaders can ensure that their teams remain adaptable and responsive to changes in the external environment (Yukl, 2023).

Another important aspect of intellectual stimulation is the promotion of creativity and innovation. Leaders who engage in intellectual stimulation create opportunities for followers to experiment with new ideas and approaches without the fear of failure (Amabile, 1998). This environment of psychological safety is crucial for innovation, as it encourages followers to take risks and think outside the box. By valuing and leveraging the diverse perspectives and ideas of their team members, leaders can spur significant advancements and breakthroughs within their organizations. Intellectual stimulation also involves providing followers with challenging tasks that stretch their cognitive abilities. Transformational leaders set high expectations and offer tasks that require followers to apply their skills and knowledge in new and complex ways (Avolio & Bass, 1995). This not only enhances followers' problem-solving abilities but also increases their confidence and competence. By continuously challenging their teams, leaders help ensure that followers are constantly learning and developing, which is essential for maintaining a competitive edge.

Employee Productivity

Employee productivity refers to the efficiency with which employees perform their tasks and

the effectiveness in achieving their goals within an organization. It encompasses the amount and quality of output generated relative to the inputs used, such as time and resources. Productivity is crucial for organizational success as it directly impacts profitability, competitiveness, and sustainability. Understanding the factors that influence employee productivity is essential for managers and leaders aiming to optimize performance.

Employee job satisfaction is a critical variable influencing productivity. Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which employees feel content with their jobs, which includes aspects like work environment, job role, compensation, and relationships with colleagues and supervisors (Locke, 1976). High job satisfaction typically leads to increased motivation, lower absenteeism, and higher retention rates, all of which contribute to enhanced productivity. Conversely, dissatisfaction can result in disengagement, high turnover, and reduced output (Spector, 1997).

Employee motivation is another significant determinant of productivity. Motivation encompasses the internal and external factors that stimulate employees to take action towards achieving goals. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, employees are motivated by fulfilling needs ranging from basic (e.g., salary and job security) to higher-level needs (e.g., recognition and self-actualization) (Maslow, 1943). Motivated employees are more likely to exhibit higher levels of effort, creativity, and persistence, directly impacting their productivity (Herzberg, 1968). Skills development is crucial for maintaining and enhancing employee productivity. It involves continuous learning and development activities that enhance employees' knowledge, skills, and competencies. Organizations that invest in training and professional development programs enable employees to keep up with technological advancements and industry trends, thereby improving their performance and productivity. Skills development also boosts employee morale and job satisfaction, further driving productivity.

Employees' Self-fulfillment

Self-fulfillment in the workplace is a critical aspect of human resource management that aligns personal growth with organizational goals. It is derived from the idea that individuals seek to realize their potential and find meaning in their work. Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, particularly the self-actualization stage, provides a theoretical foundation for understanding self-fulfillment. According to Maslow, self-fulfillment involves realizing one's abilities and seeking personal growth, peak experiences, and the pursuit of meaningful goals (Maslow, 1943). This pursuit

is not only beneficial for employees but also for organizations that aim to harness the full potential of their workforce.

One significant factor influencing employee self-fulfillment is job design. Well-structured jobs that offer variety, autonomy, and opportunities for skill use are more likely to lead to self-fulfillment. Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model (JCM) emphasizes the importance of job enrichment and how it enhances intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Jobs that are perceived as meaningful and that provide a sense of responsibility and knowledge of results are crucial in fostering self-fulfillment among employees.

Employees' Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal drive to perform a task for its own sake, deriving satisfaction from the activity itself rather than from external rewards or pressures. This concept is pivotal in understanding how employees engage with their work and maintain long-term productivity. According to Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation is fueled by the fundamental psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When these needs are satisfied, employees experience higher levels of intrinsic motivation, leading to enhanced performance and well-being.

Autonomy, the first pillar of SDT, involves having control over one's work and the freedom to make decisions. Studies show that employees who feel autonomous are more likely to be intrinsically motivated. This autonomy supports creativity, innovation, and a sense of ownership over tasks (Deci et al., 1999). When employees have the liberty to choose how to approach their work, they are more engaged and likely to go beyond basic job requirements, fostering a proactive and committed workforce.

Employees' skill development

Employee skill development refers to the process through which individuals acquire new knowledge, abilities, and competencies to increase their effectiveness and productivity in the workplace (Noe, 2010). This process is essential for both individual growth and organizational success, as it enables employees to adapt to changing job requirements, enhance their performance, and contribute to overall business objectives. Employees who continually develop their skills are better equipped to meet the demands of their roles and remain competitive in today's dynamic work environment. One of the key theories that underpin employee skill development is the concept of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). According to this theory,

individuals are motivated to develop their skills when they have autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their work environment. Providing employees with opportunities to choose their learning goals, offering challenging tasks that match their abilities, and fostering supportive relationships can enhance their motivation to engage in skill development activities.

Theoretical frame work

This study was anchored on the Transformational Leadership Theory propounded by James MacGregor Burns (1978). The transformational theory also known as relationship theory focuses on the connections formed between leaders and followers. This theory is premised on a leadership style that inspires followers to improved performance by focusing on the wants and needs of the organization as well as the personal concerns of its members (Munir & Aboidullah, 2018).

Leadership effectiveness under this theory is dependent on individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealized influence (Bass, 2000 cited in Ewell, 2018 and Getachew & Erhua, 2018). According to several researchers (Ewell, 2018; Getachew & Erhua, 2018), “Idealized influence refers when transformational leaders act as a role model to their subordinates such that the followers identify themselves to a high level of morale and enthusiasm to fulfill the demands of leader whom they respect, admire and trust (Bass, 2000). Inspirational motivation highlights leaders' motivation and inspiration of followers by giving self-worth for their contribution and setting challenges to their followers (Bass & Avolio, 2000). Intellectual stimulation is encouraging followers to do tasks distinctly by being innovative and creative. Individualized consideration refers to giving special attention to the needs of every individual follower for their achievement and personal growth (Bass, 2000:34)”. Leaders using this approach can motivate others, "to want to change, to improve, and to be led" (Hall, 2002 cited in Ewell, 2018) and possess high ethical and moral standards.

Theoretical Exposition

Idealized Influence and Employees' Self Fulfillment

Idealized influence, a core component of transformational leadership, involves leaders serving as role models and instilling high ethical standards and a sense of vision and purpose among their followers. This leadership style is characterized by behaviors that engender admiration, respect, and trust from employees (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Leaders exhibiting idealized influence inspire

employees to align their personal values and goals with those of the organization, fostering a deep sense of purpose and meaning in their work. This alignment is crucial for employees' self-fulfillment, as it helps them feel that their work is not only personally meaningful but also contributes to a larger mission.

One of the ways idealized influence enhances self-fulfillment is through the creation of a shared vision. Leaders who articulate a compelling and clear vision for the future can help employees see the broader impact of their work (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). When employees understand how their roles contribute to the organization's long-term goals, they are more likely to experience a sense of fulfillment. This shared vision provides a framework within which employees can find personal significance and pride in their contributions, leading to increased motivation and satisfaction.

Follower Development and Employees' Intrinsic Motivation

Follower development, a core aspect of transformational leadership, plays a crucial role in enhancing employees' intrinsic motivation. Transformational leaders focus on developing their followers by providing support, encouragement, and opportunities for growth (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This developmental focus helps employees feel more competent and confident in their abilities, which directly contributes to their intrinsic motivation. When employees perceive that their leaders are genuinely interested in their personal and professional growth, they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to perform well and engage deeply with their work.

One key mechanism through which follower development enhances intrinsic motivation is by satisfying employees' psychological need for competence. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation is driven by the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Developmental opportunities such as training programs, mentoring, and challenging assignments help employees build their skills and gain mastery over their tasks. This sense of competence boosts their intrinsic motivation, as employees feel capable and effective in their roles, leading to greater engagement and satisfaction.

Intellectual stimulation and Employees' Skill Development.

Intellectual stimulation, a component of transformational leadership, plays a pivotal role in fostering employee skill development. Leaders who employ intellectual stimulation encourage their employees to think critically, challenge assumptions, and approach problems from innovative perspectives. This stimulation

not only promotes creative problem-solving but also cultivates a learning environment where employees feel empowered to develop new skills. Research by Bass and Riggio (2016) emphasizes that transformational leaders who engage in intellectual stimulation inspire their followers to embrace continuous learning and skill enhancement.

One of the key ways intellectual stimulation contributes to skill development is by fostering a culture of curiosity and inquiry. Leaders who encourage intellectual stimulation prompt employees to ask questions and seek out new knowledge. This inquisitive mindset drives employees to explore areas beyond their current expertise, thereby expanding their skill sets. As employees encounter and solve complex problems, they develop critical thinking and analytical skills. According to Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, and Strange (2022), leaders who challenge conventional thinking and stimulate intellectual engagement enhance their employees' cognitive and problem-solving abilities.

Intellectual stimulation also promotes skill development by encouraging employees to experiment and take calculated risks. When leaders create an environment where experimentation is valued, employees are more likely to try new approaches and learn from their experiences. This trial-and-error process is essential for developing practical skills and gaining hands-on experience. A study by Amabile (2016) found that a work environment that supports intellectual stimulation and creativity leads to higher levels of skill development and innovation among employees. By fostering a safe space for experimentation, leaders enable employees to refine their skills through practice and learning from mistakes.

Empirical Reviews

Adegboyega & Olawumi (2021) examine the effect of leadership style on employee productivity in the Nigerian oil and gas industry using Chevron Nigeria Limited as a case study. The study used a five-point Likert scale questionnaire consisting of forty questions covering autocratic, democratic, bureaucratic, laissezfaire, transactional, charismatic leadership styles and employee productivity variables. The questionnaire was deployed to one hundred and twenty-five respondents (125) and received ninety-three (93) valid responses. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze respondent responses. Demographic analysis, normality test, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, reliability test (Cronbach's Alpha) were presented; results affirm the validity and reliability of research findings. The results of the descriptive and regression analysis indicate that the autocratic leadership style is the most

predominant leadership style in the Nigerian Oil and Gas followed by laissez-faire, bureaucratic, transactional, democratic and charismatic leadership styles. The study concludes that leadership styles significantly influence employee productivity albeit different leadership styles have varying effects on employee productivity and varying leadership styles can co-exist within the same organization. The study highlighted various policy implications and recommendations. This study adds to the existing literature on leadership practice and is intended to be a reference point to scholars and researchers for further studies on leadership practices in the oil and gas industry.

Ojokuku, Odetayo,. & Sajuyigbe, (2022).conducted a research on the Impact of leadership Style on Organizational Productivity: A Case Study of Nigeria Bank in Nigeria. The sample size used by the researchers is 60. The study contained twenty of random picked banks in Ibadan, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the heads of accountants, heads of operations, and branch managers on face-to-face basis. Inferential statistical tool was used and one hypothesis was formulated to analyse data. Regression analysis was used to study the dimensions of significant effect of leadership style on followers and productivity. The findings showed that there was positive and negative correlation between productivity and leadership style. There was 23 percent variance of productivity found in leadership style jointly predict organizational productivity. This study concluded that transformational and democratic leadership styles have positive effect on both productivity and followers, and are highly recommended to banks especially in this global competitive environment.

Obiwuru (2011) research evaluates leadership styles' impact on organizational performance in a small-scale firm. The analysis from the study indicates that there exist traits of intellectual stimulation, Charisma, and individual consideration on the transformational leadership style, and it exerts positively but has an insignificant effect on employee's performance. The traits of transactional leadership considered for their study like contingent/constructive rewards, management by exception, all have a significant positive effect on employee performance and explain why there is a high proportion variation in performance. This study is of the conclusion that the transactional leadership style is highly appropriate in inducing workers' performance in small scale companies than the transformational leadership style. The study recommends that all small-scale companies and enterprises adopt transactional leadership but

should strategize on how to transit to transformational leadership style as the company grows and develops.

Orazi (2013) argued that effective leadership practices could not be overstressed when it comes to financial bank stability. They stated that banks should integrate an optimum leadership style, adopting more of a transformational leadership style by bank leaders and occasionally taking into account some aspects of transactional leadership approaches like advocating for rewards as an incentive for employees to perform well in any given task.

Raja (2015) greatly contributed to the existing empirical literature on the effect of leadership style on employee performance, research on the effect of leadership style on employee's performance in public and private sectors in India. Adapting a 95% confidence interval, the research established a negative correlation between liassez-faire leadership style and employee performance. He posited that employees under a laissez-faire leader perform poorly, and the organization did not attain their organizational goal.

Ojokuku (2012) research on the impact of leadership style on organizational performance used a sample of 60 employees from the randomly selected bank in Ibadan, Nigeria. The research emphasized the importance of leadership style; the research regression analysis showed about 23% variation in employee performance. He posited that bank leaders should adopt democratic and transformational leadership style to stand the existing competitive tussles in the banking sector.

Mohamed (2018) in their research entailed "effect of leadership styles on employee performance in the somali national civil service commission" assessed the effect of transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership and servant leadership on employee performance in the Somali National Civil Service Commission. Their study adopted a descriptive research design with target population of 50 respondents and a sample size of 44 respondents. They employed both primary and secondary data collection methods with stratified and random sampling techniques.

The data collection instruments they used were closed questionnaires and the collected data analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and presented in form of tables, frequencies, means and standard deviations using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Data was presented in tables and analyzed using mean scores, standard deviation,

frequencies and percentages. From the study data analysis and interpretations, the following summary, conclusions and recommendations were drawn; transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership and servant leadership were found to play a big role in effect of leadership styles on employee performance in the Somali National Civil Service Commission. Thus the Somalia National Civil Service Commission should encourage the use of transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership and servant leadership in employee performance in the Somali National Civil Service Commission so as to enable quality service delivery.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive survey research design, which is suitable for analyzing attitudes and behaviours and determining the frequency of occurrences or the relationship between variables. The choice of a descriptive survey was particularly appropriate for this research as it allowed the researcher to describe and examine the connection between transformational leadership practices and employee productivity among retail telecommunication firms.

The research was carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria, a southeastern state, comprises 21 local government areas and is home to major cities such as Awka (the capital), Onitsha, Nnewi, and Ekwulobia. These areas are known for their thriving commercial activities, especially in the retail and telecommunications sectors. The selected firms operate in these cities, which are among the most active business hubs in the state. Data for the study were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were gathered directly from respondents through the administration of structured questionnaires. These questionnaires were specifically designed to address the research objectives, ensuring the relevance and accuracy of the responses. The researcher prioritized the use of primary data because it provided current, specific, and directly applicable insights into the research problem. To ensure data validity and minimize errors such as Type I and Type II, the researcher implemented strategies like clear, unbiased question framing, a pilot test to refine the instrument, and random sampling to achieve a representative sample. Confidentiality was assured to encourage honesty among respondents. Secondary data were sourced from journals, textbooks, strategic periodicals, and online resources to supplement and support the findings.

The population for this study consisted of 404 employees working in selected retail telecommunication firms across Awka, Onitsha,

Nnewi, and Ekwulobia. These firms were selected based on criteria such as their status as major dealers for leading telecommunication brands (e.g., Samsung, Techno, Infinix, iPhone), the presence of brand representation in-store, and their strategic location in high-traffic commercial centers. A census approach was adopted for sampling, thereby using the entire population of 404 as the sample size. This method ensured that the findings were both comprehensive and representative of the broader population.

Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire divided into two sections. Section A captured demographic data such as age, gender, and education level, while Section B focused on transformational leadership practices and employee productivity. Closed-ended questions based on a 5-point Likert scale were used to measure the respondents' level of agreement with various statements, ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The structured format of the questionnaire allowed for ease of analysis and consistency in interpretation.

To ensure the validity of the research instrument, experts in the field, including the research supervisor, reviewed the questionnaire for both face and content validity. These experts assessed the appropriateness and representativeness of the items in relation to the research objectives and theoretical constructs. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using the test-retest method. The instrument was administered twice to 20 employees outside the study sample within a two-week interval. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients ranged from 0.773 to 0.890, indicating a high level of internal consistency and reliability.

Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as percentages and mean scores were used to answer the research questions, while inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation and linear regression, were employed to test the hypotheses. All tests were conducted at a 0.05 level of significance to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between transformational leadership practices and employee productivity.

Test of hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H_{01}: Idealized influence has no significant relationship on employees' self-fulfillment of retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
0.652	0.425	0.423	0.583

The **R value** of 0.652 indicates a moderately strong positive correlation between idealized influence and employees' self-fulfillment. The R Square value of 0.425 shows that 42.5% of the variability in employees' self-fulfillment is explained by idealized influence. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.423 confirms the model's adequacy, taking into account the number of predictors. The standard error of 0.583 provides an estimate of the average distance the observed values fall from the regression line, with a lower value indicating better model fit.

ANOVA Table

Source	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1	120.564	120.564	297.08	0.000
Residual	402	162.879	0.405		
Total	403	283.443			

The F-value of 297.08 is a measure of the overall significance of the model, and with a p-value of 0.000**,** it indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. This means that idealized influence has a significant relationship with employees' self-fulfillment. The Sum of Squares for regression (120.564) and residuals (162.879) shows the total variability in the dependent variable (employees' self-fulfillment) and how much of that variability is explained by the independent variable (idealized influence). The Mean Square for regression (120.564) is substantially larger than the Mean Square for residuals (0.405), further suggesting the model's statistical significance.

Coefficients Table

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	1.238	0.126		9.825	0.000
Idealized Influence	0.745	0.043	0.652	17.240	0.000

The coefficient for idealized influence (B = 0.745) indicates that for every one-unit increase in idealized influence, employees' self-fulfillment increases by 0.745 units, suggesting a strong positive relationship between idealized influence and self-fulfillment. The Beta value of 0.652 represents the standardized effect size, showing a moderate to strong effect. The t-value of 17.240 with a p-value of 0.000 is highly significant, confirming that idealized influence is a strong predictor of employees' self-fulfillment.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02}: Follower development has no significant relationship on employees' intrinsic motivation.

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
0.604	0.365	0.362	0.612

The R value of 0.604 suggests a moderate positive correlation between follower development and employees' intrinsic motivation. The R Square value of 0.365 implies that 36.5% of the variation in intrinsic motivation is explained by follower development. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.362 indicates that the model is an appropriate fit for the data, adjusting for the number of predictors. The standard error of 0.612 gives us

an idea of how much the observed values deviate from the predicted values on average.

ANOVA Table

Source	**df**	**Sum of Squares**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	1	108.367	108.367	232.43	0.000
Residual	402	187.210	0.466		
Total	403	295.577			

The **F-value** of 232.43, with a p-value of 0.000**,** shows that the model is highly significant, meaning that follower development has a significant relationship with employees' intrinsic motivation. The Sum of Squares for regression (108.367) indicates the proportion of variability in intrinsic motivation explained by follower development, while the Sum of Squares for residuals (187.210) shows the unexplained variability. The Mean Square for regression (108.367) is substantially larger than the Mean Square for residuals (0.466)**,** supporting the statistical significance of the model.

Coefficients Table

Predictor	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**T**	**Sig.**
(Constant)	1.498	0.138		10.86	0.000
Follower Development	0.681	0.045	0.604	15.24	0.000

The coefficient for follower development (B = 0.681) means that for every unit increase in follower development, employees' intrinsic motivation increases by 0.681 units. This

demonstrates a positive relationship. The Beta value of 0.604 indicates a moderate strength of the effect. The t-value of 15.24 with a p-value of 0.000 indicates that the relationship is statistically significant.

Hypothesis 3

H_{03}: Intellectual stimulation has no significant relationship with employees' skill development.

Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
0.568	0.323	0.320	0.632

The **R value** of 0.568 indicates a moderate positive correlation between intellectual stimulation and employees' skill development. The R Square value of 0.323 reveals that 32.3% of the variation in skill development can be explained by intellectual stimulation. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.320 suggests that the model appropriately fits the data, considering the number of predictors. The standard error of 0.632 shows how much the data points deviate from the regression line.

ANOVA Table

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1	98.987	98.987	192.91	0.000
Residual	402	206.345	0.513		
Total	403	305.332			

The **F-value** of 192.91, with a p-value of 0.000, shows that the regression model is statistically significant. This indicates that intellectual stimulation is significantly related to skill development. The Sum of Squares for regression (98.987) and Sum of Squares for residuals (206.345) highlight the proportion of variance explained and the unexplained variance, respectively. The Mean Square for regression (98.987) is much larger than the

Mean Square for residuals (0.513), confirming the significance of the model.

Coefficients Table

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.742	0.144		12.10	0.000
Intellectual Stimulation	0.594	0.043	0.568	13.89	0.000

The coefficient for intellectual stimulation (B = 0.594) suggests that a one-unit increase in intellectual stimulation leads to a 0.594 unit increase in skill development. The Beta value of 0.568 indicates a moderate strength of this relationship. The t-value of 13.89 with a p-value of 0.000 confirms that intellectual stimulation has a statistically significant relationship with skill development.

Discussion of findings

Idealized Influence and Employees' Self-Fulfillment

The results indicate that idealized influence significantly affects employees' self-fulfillment in retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State, Nigeria. This is in line with findings from Dirar Tha'er, Malek and Tamara (2021), which emphasized that leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership behaviors like idealized influence, can greatly impact employee satisfaction and commitment in public organizations. In the study, the high statistical significance (p-value = 0.000) of the relationship between idealized influence and self-fulfillment confirms the positive role of leadership in fostering an environment where employees feel motivated and empowered. The findings of this study support the conclusions of Larry Jude Martin and Ibenwo (2021), which reported that leadership styles, particularly inspirational and idealized influence, are associated with higher employee satisfaction and performance. In the context of Nigerian universities, leadership practices that embody

idealized influence were found to enhance job performance and satisfaction. The findings here suggest that in telecommunication firms as well, idealized influence is a critical factor in ensuring employees' self-fulfillment, which leads to overall enhanced job satisfaction and performance.

Follower Development and Employees' Intrinsic Motivation

Follower development, as measured in this study, also showed a statistically significant relationship with employees' intrinsic motivation. The positive relationship between these variables suggests that leadership practices focused on the development of followers play an important role in motivating employees intrinsically. This resonates with the findings of Befekadu and Peter (2021), who noted that transformational leadership, which includes follower development, is positively related to job satisfaction, specifically in academic settings. The present study's results further support this by showing that enhancing follower development positively affects intrinsic motivation among employees in retail telecommunication firms. The high significance of this relationship is consistent with Sarika S. (2016), who highlighted that leadership styles that promote employee development can lead to higher motivation and, consequently, improved organizational performance. This is particularly relevant for leadership in environments like telecommunication firms, where intrinsic motivation can drive employee engagement and productivity.

Intellectual Stimulation and Employees' Skill Development

The analysis shows a moderate but significant relationship between intellectual stimulation and employees' skill development. This aligns with the findings of Jember (2020), who noted that intellectual stimulation, a key component of transformational leadership, has a positive effect on employee performance. While the effect in this study was moderately strong, the results clearly indicate that intellectual stimulation helps employees in retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State improve their skills, which in turn enhances overall job performance. This also resonates with the conclusions drawn by Tan and Theresa (2019), who found that transformational leadership, including the component of intellectual stimulation, significantly influences employees' job performance and productivity. The findings in this study suggest that intellectual stimulation should be a focal point for leadership in these firms, encouraging an environment where employees are motivated to continuously improve their skills and capabilities.

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed significant relationships between each transformational leadership behavior and the employee outcomes under investigation.

i. The results indicated a strong, positive relationship between idealized influence and employees' self-fulfillment. The regression analysis showed that idealized influence significantly explained 42.5% of the variation in employees' self-fulfillment ($r = 0.641$, $R^2 = 0.425$, $p < 0.000$). The coefficient for idealized influence ($\beta = 0.745$) suggested that for every unit increase in idealized influence, self-fulfillment increases by 0.745 units. The t-value of 17.240 with a p-value of 0.000 further confirmed the strength of this relationship.

ii. Follower development was found to have a significant positive effect on employees' intrinsic motivation, explaining 36.5% of the variance in motivation ($r = 0.597$, $R^2 = 0.365$, $p < 0.000$). The coefficient ($\beta = 0.681$) revealed that for each unit increase in follower development, intrinsic motivation increases by 0.681 units. The t-value of 15.24 and p-value of 0.000 confirmed the statistical significance of this relationship.

iii. Intellectual stimulation had a moderate positive impact on employees' skill development, accounting for 32.3% of the variation in skill development ($r = 0.678$, $R^2 = 0.323$, $p < 0.000$). The coefficient ($\beta = 0.594$) showed that an increase in intellectual stimulation results in a 0.594 unit increase in skill development. The t-value of 13.89 with a p-value of 0.000 indicated a significant relationship between the two variables.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study confirms that transformational leadership behaviors, namely idealized influence, follower development, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation, have significant positive relationships with employees' self-fulfillment, intrinsic motivation, skill development, and job satisfaction. These findings highlight the critical role that leadership behaviors play in enhancing various aspects of employee performance and well-being in retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

i. Retail telecommunication firms should focus on enhancing transformational leadership qualities, particularly idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and follower development. Leadership training programs that emphasize these dimensions can foster a positive work environment and improve employee outcomes.

ii. Retail telecommunication firms should integrate intellectual stimulation into their management practices to encourage continuous learning and skill development. This can enhance employees' problem-solving abilities and creativity, contributing to improved performance and job satisfaction.

iii. Retail telecommunication firms should promote a work culture that values intrinsic motivation and self-fulfillment. By aligning organizational goals with employees' personal values and motivations, firms can increase job satisfaction and retention.

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