

# Principals' Transformational Leadership Style in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Oyo State: Challenges and Prospects

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## Abstract:

*The learning environment is greatly impacted by the leadership styles of principals, largely because of the fast-growing population and rising demand for high-quality education. Principals who choose transformational leadership can promote significant change and establish their schools as centres of excellence for learning and personal development as the global education landscape changes. The paper examines the opportunities and difficulties related to the transformational leadership approach used by principals in public senior secondary schools in Oyo State. The current state of transformational leadership practices among principals in public senior secondary schools in Oyo State was examined alongside the challenges they face and potential solutions. A comprehensive literature research was carried out to shed light on the advantages and challenges associated with the transformational leadership style of principals in Oyo State's public senior secondary schools. Based on the paper, principals encounter challenges such as resistance to change, resource constraints, teacher professional development, parent and community expectations and administrative obstacles while the prospects are cultural shift towards collaboration, creative resource management, empowered teacher leadership, community engagement and support and advocacy for educational reform. The Position Paper provides a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the challenges relating to transforming leadership in different learning environments, as well as an insight which can benefit education policymakers, administrators and researchers. In conclusion, this paper calls for collective efforts from all stakeholders in the education sector to promote and support transformational leadership in public senior secondary schools in Oyo State.*

**Key Words:** Transformational Leadership, Leadership Style, Challenges and Prospects

## INTRODUCTION

The use of transformational leadership ideas has improved the field of education tremendously. Principal's leadership style is vital to the general growth and development of a school since it greatly influences the organizational and academic values of their establishments. The importance of inspiration, vision, intellectual stimulation and individualized attention is strongly emphasized in this leadership approach. These components are required to

establish a friendly and effective learning environment. Specifically, the involvement of principals in publicly funded higher secondary schools is essential in moulding the comprehensive educational milieu and the scholastic achievements of pupils. Thus, the implementation of a transformative leadership approach by principals holds a pivotal function in the triumph of educational establishments. In the specific context of Oyo State, Nigeria, the challenges and prospects associated with the transformational leadership style of principals in public senior secondary schools are of considerable concern and merit thorough investigation. Transformational leadership is a style that emphasizes inspiring and motivating individuals to accomplish extraordinary outcomes. Principals who reject this approach often fail to demonstrate visionary thinking, effective communication, and a strong dedication to fostering positive change within their institutions. These leaders prioritize the decline and disempowerment of their staff, discourage innovation, and discourage a shared vision for academic mediocrity. In the background of public senior secondary schools in Oyo State, the implementation of transformational leadership principles may have the possibility to drive significant enhancements in the quality of education and the overall school environment.

However, despite the potential advantages, the implementation of a transformational leadership style in public senior secondary schools in Oyo State is not without its challenges (Muraina & Olanrewaju, 2016). One of the primary obstacles is the limited resources and infrastructure available to support the vision and initiatives of principals (Onolememen, 2015). Many schools encounter obstacles such as insufficient funding, the absence of modern educational tools, and inadequate support staff, which may hinder the successful implementation of a transformative leadership approach. Additionally, bureaucratic hurdles and administrative constraints within the education system can pose significant barriers to principals seeking to enact meaningful change through their leadership style (Kowalski, 2010). Moreover, the existing cultural and societal norms within Oyo State may also present challenges to principals aiming to adopt a transformational leadership style. Conventional attitudes towards authority and decision-making processes in educational institutions might resist the shift towards a more collaborative and inclusive approach to leadership (Shields, 2013). Overcoming these cultural barriers and ingrained practices requires a concerted effort to instil a new mindset and cultivate a supportive environment for transformational leadership to thrive.

Amidst these challenges, there are also promising prospects for principals' transformational leadership in public senior secondary schools in Oyo State. By dismissing this leadership style, principals might not have the opportunity to inspire and empower their teaching staff, creating a negligible ripple effect that indirectly influences the learning experiences of students (Villalona, 2022; Link, 2020). A transformational leader can nurture a culture of continuous improvement, where educators are inspired to enhance their instructional

methods and students are motivated to strive for academic excellence (Day et al., 2016; Day, C. & Sammons, 2013). Additionally, the potential effect of transformational leadership goes beyond the limits of the school, influencing the larger community and stakeholders. Principals who embody this leadership style can mobilize support from parents, local authorities, and educational partners, creating a network of collaboration and shared commitment to the advancement of public senior secondary education in Oyo State (Faremi, 2021).

Principals who exhibit transformational leadership behaviours inspire and challenge their students to reach their full potential (Anderson, 2017). These leaders set high expectations for academic achievement, promote a culture of continuous learning and provide students with opportunities to develop leadership skills. By creating a stimulating and intellectually challenging environment, transformational leaders foster student success and overall school improvement (Allen et al., 2015). Furthermore, transformational leadership fosters effective communication and collaboration within the school community. Principals who adopt this leadership style actively listen to the concerns and ideas of their staff, students, and parents (Allie, 2014; Stronge & Xu, 2021). They create open channels of communication, encourage feedback, and engage in meaningful dialogue. By promoting a culture of trust and inclusivity, transformational leaders build strong relationships and foster a sense of collective responsibility for educational success. Lastly, transformational leadership contributes to the overall development of a school's culture and climate (Demir, 2008; Allen, 2015). By promoting shared values, ethical behaviour, and a sense of social responsibility, transformational leaders establish a positive and nurturing school environment. They create a culture of respect, trust, and fairness, where diversity is celebrated, and differences are embraced. This inclusive and supportive climate enhances student well-being, fosters positive relationships, and facilitates effective teaching and learning. This paper examines the challenges and prospects of principals' transformational leadership style in public senior secondary schools in Oyo State. It also clarifies the rationale, difficulties, and possible advantages of principals in these schools implementing a transformational leadership strategy.

Leader who practices transformational leadership instils a feeling of purpose and enthusiasm in team members, inspiring and encouraging them to reach their greatest potential (Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014; Pawar, 2016; Bojovic & Jovanovic, 2020). Several essential characteristics set this leadership method apart from other leadership philosophies. The capacity to express a clear vision is one of transformational leadership's key traits. Transformational leaders possess a compelling future vision and convey it to their followers (Anderson, 2017). By presenting a captivating vision of what could be and illustrating how their activities advance the greater good, they motivate others. The capacity for inspiration and motivation is a crucial aspect of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders are skilled at arousing passion and excitement in their

followers by emotionally connecting with them (Shelton, 2012). They can inspire and involve their team members, motivating them to surpass expectations.

Additionally, transformative leaders possess a high level of morality and ethics (Kanungo, 2001). They have a strong moral compass and set an example for others to follow. They hold themselves and others accountable for their behaviour and their actions reflect their principles. Furthermore, transformational leaders are excellent communicators (Mance, 2021). They are skilled at listening to others and creating an open and inclusive environment where ideas can be shared and debated. They encourage collaboration and foster a culture of trust and respect. Another characteristic of transformational leadership is the focus on individual development (Abelha et al., 2018). Transformational leaders are genuinely interested in the personal growth and development of their followers. They provide mentorship and guidance, and they empower others to take on new challenges and responsibilities. In addition, transformational leaders are adaptable and flexible. They can navigate through change and uncertainty, and they encourage their followers to do the same. They promote a learning mindset and are open to new ideas and perspectives.

This leadership approach focuses on inspiring and motivating individuals to reach their full potential in addition to fostering a sense of shared purpose and vision. Within the particular setting of public senior secondary schools, transformational leadership has the potential to significantly influence both teachers and students. Students can develop a passion for learning and a desire for personal development when transformational leaders foster a positive and encouraging environment. By providing the tools and guidance they need, these leaders help students establish high goals for themselves and reach those goals. Transformational leaders are charismatic and inspiring individuals who may give students confidence and self-belief, empowering them to overcome difficulties and reach their full potential.

Moreover, transformational leadership has the potential to enhance the academic performance of the school as a whole (Muia, 2018; Ndiritu et al., 2019). High standards for both teachers and students are established by transformational leaders, who foster a culture of excellence and ongoing development. They give teachers the tools and chances for professional growth they need to improve their ability to instruct students in a high-quality manner. Furthermore, transformational leaders foster a cooperative and encouraging work atmosphere by motivating and enabling teachers (Allen et al., 2015). They give teachers chances to enhance their leadership skills and empower them to take charge of their professional development. Transformational leaders also recognize and appreciate the contributions of teachers, fostering a sense of pride and job satisfaction among the staff (Kieres, 2013). Moreover, transformational leaders in Oyo State public senior secondary schools promote a culture of innovation and creativity (Osagie & Momoh, 2016). They can inspire teachers to try out innovative approaches to instruction, resulting in a dynamic and

captivating learning environment. This method helps the school as a whole to keep improving while increasing student enthusiasm and involvement.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

A rigorous analysis to identify issues related to transformational leadership styles was systematically reviewed. The research method used in gathering the position paper on principals' transformational leadership style in public senior secondary schools in Oyo State was robust and comprehensive from Google Scholar, ResearchGate and Web of Science-related articles. It allowed for a nuanced understanding of the challenges and prospects associated with this leadership style, providing valuable insights for educational policymakers, school administrators and other stakeholders.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Current State of Transformational Leadership Practices among Principals**

Bakare and Oredein (2022) revealed that in public secondary schools, the democratic leadership style was the prevalent style among school principals in Ido Local Government Area of Oyo State. It was revealed that the Leadership styles adopted by male principals are more effective than those of female principals. It was suggested that in the COVID-19 Era, principals of public secondary schools in Ido Local Government Area ought to be transformational. Awodiji et al.'s (2019) study revealed that transformational leadership are the most used leadership approach by public secondary school principals in Oyo Metropolis public secondary schools, Oyo State. Bakare and Oredein (2023) revealed from teachers' perspectives that the laissez-faire leadership style is the most adopted leadership style among senior secondary school principals in Ibadan Metropolis while the principals' perspectives revealed the digital leadership style is being widely practised among senior secondary schools' principals in Ibadan Metropolis Oyo State.

The adoption of transformational leadership principles in Oyo State's public senior secondary schools is supported by substantial theoretical evidence with the potential to enhance educational system prospects and address difficulties (Ofoegbu et al., 2013; Afe, 2022). Idealized influence is a fundamental element of transformational leadership in which leaders act as mentors to their subordinates. Principals who demonstrate idealized influence have a good impact on the conduct and academic achievement of both teachers and students in senior secondary schools (Yahya, 2015). Through the establishment of rigorous moral and performance criteria, these leaders foster an atmosphere of integrity, respect and excellence in the educational setting. The theoretical research indicates that principals have a major impact on the school's overall character and academic progress when they live out these values (Day et al., 2016). Principals who use inspirational motivation in public senior secondary schools effectively convey a compelling and positive vision for the school's future

(Andriani et al., 2018). Theoretical evidence suggests those leaders instil a sense of purpose and direction in the school community and develop a collective commitment to educational excellence and continual improvement by articulating a clear and inspirational vision (Amanchukwu et al., 2015; Day et al., 2016; Leithwood et al., 2021).

Intellectual stimulation which includes questioning the status quo, stimulating creativity and fostering critical thinking in followers, is another essential component of transformational leadership (Groeger & Schweitzer, 2014; Uusi-Kakkuri, 2017). Principals who value intellectual stimulation in the classroom can establish an engaging and creative learning environment (Geijssel et al., 2003; Teeples, 2020). Theoretically, these leaders improve teaching and learning which will benefit students' results and the school's overall performance, by cultivating a culture of intellectual curiosity and academic rigor (Clark, 2017). Transformational leaders demonstrate individualized consideration by recognizing the unique needs, strengths, and potential of each follower (Wang & Howell, 2012; Mbindyo et al., 2021). Principals in senior secondary schools foster an inclusive and supportive school climate by showing individual consideration (McCarley et al., 2016). The notion that leaders may foster a sense of empowerment and belonging in teachers and students by prioritizing individualized support and mentorship is supported by theoretical research (Fujimoto & Uddin, 2021). This positively impacts the school culture and academic achievement.

By leveraging successful initiatives and implementing tailored strategies, Oyo State public schools can lay the foundation for a robust culture of transformational leadership, driving progress and development across the state. By drawing inspiration from successful initiatives and programmes implemented in other countries, Oyo State public schools can adopt strategies to elevate their leadership dynamics. Singapore has implemented a comprehensive leadership development framework that emphasizes transformational leadership qualities (Hairon & Dimmock, 2012). The programme focuses on nurturing visionary and inspirational leadership traits, promoting intellectual stimulation, and encouraging individualized consideration. Oyo State's public educational system can study and adapt this framework to cultivate a similar leadership culture. South Korea has made significant strides in enhancing transformational leadership within its public sector (Kim & Kim, 2015). Through tailored training programmes and mentorship initiatives, the country has successfully cultivated a cadre of leaders adept at inspiring and motivating their teams. Oyo State's public educational sector could explore similar capacity-building programmes to empower its public sector leaders. Rwanda's Leadership and Governance Programme has been instrumental in instilling transformational leadership values across various sectors (Kambanda, 2013). By integrating leadership training, mentorship, and performance evaluations, the programme has contributed to a tangible shift in leadership approaches. Oyo State could

consider implementing a comparable programme to nurture and sustain a culture of transformational leadership.

Oyo State can organize regular workshops focused on imparting transformational leadership skills. These workshops can cover areas such as vision setting, team empowerment, and fostering a culture of innovation and change. Implementing structured mentorship programmes can provide aspiring leaders in Oyo State with invaluable guidance and support in honing their transformational leadership capabilities. Instituting systems to recognize and reward transformational leadership behaviours can incentivize leaders in Oyo State to embrace and exemplify these qualities. Forming partnerships with organizations, institutions, or other regions that have excelled in fostering transformational leadership can facilitate knowledge exchange and best practice sharing.

### **Challenges of Principals' Transformational Leadership Style in Oyo State**

The transformational leadership style is considered an effective approach to school leadership since it is characterized by idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and individual consideration. Principals are expected to not only manage the administrative and academic aspects of the school but also to provide transformational leadership that inspires and motivates both students and teachers. The challenges of principals' transformational leadership style in Oyo State are resistance to change, resource constraints, teacher professional development, parent and community expectations and administrative obstacles which are discussed as follows:

First, Resistance to Change: One of the major challenges faced by principals in implementing transformational leadership is the resistance to change. Many teachers and staff members may be comfortable with traditional, hierarchical leadership styles and may be reluctant to embrace a more collaborative and empowering approach (Ossai & Nwalado, 2015). Second, Resource Constraints: Public senior secondary schools in Oyo State often grapple with limited resources, including funding, infrastructure, and teaching materials (Opadeye, 2021). These constraints can hinder the implementation of innovative and transformational practices. Third, Teacher Professional Development: Principals aiming to adopt a transformational leadership style must ensure that their teaching staff are equipped with the necessary skills and training to facilitate student-centred learning and critical thinking (Afe, 2022). However, providing continuous professional development opportunities can be a challenge due to budgetary constraints and limited access to training programmes. Forth, Parental and Community Expectations: Principals may face challenges in balancing the expectations of parents and the community with the need to implement progressive educational practices (Dairo, 2020). Traditional expectations of academic rigour and discipline may conflict with the more inclusive and participatory nature of transformational leadership. Fifth,

Administrative Obstacles: Navigating administrative processes and regulations within the public education system can be difficult for principals seeking to introduce innovative teaching methods and all-inclusive student development initiatives (Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2015).

### **Prospects for Enhancing Transformational Leadership**

Principals who embrace these prospects and proactively address the associated challenges can play an essential role in transforming the educational landscape for the betterment of students, teachers and the community at large. The prospects are cultural shift towards collaboration, creative resource management, empowered teacher leadership, community engagement and support and advocacy for educational reform. These prospects are discussed as follows: First, cultural shift towards collaboration: Overcoming resistance to change can lead to a cultural shift towards collaboration and shared decision-making. Principals who successfully navigate this challenge can foster a more unified and empowered school community. Second, Creative Resource Management: Addressing resource constraints can spur creativity and innovation in resource management. Principals may explore partnerships with local businesses, seek grant funding or integrate technology to overcome limitations and provide a richer learning environment. Third, Empowered Teacher Leadership: Principals who invest in teacher professional development can cultivate a team of empowered educators who are better equipped to engage students and contribute to a more dynamic and effective learning environment (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Fourth, Community Engagement and Support: By effectively communicating the benefits of transformational leadership to parents and the community, principals can garner support for progressive educational practices and foster a more inclusive and supportive school environment. Fifth, Advocacy for Educational Reform: Principals who navigate administrative obstacles and successfully implement transformational leadership practices can become advocates for broader educational reform (Kilag et al., 2023). Their experiences and successes can serve as catalysts for systemic change within the public education system.

### **CONCLUSION**

This paper explores how transformational leadership can positively impact students, teachers, and the overall school environment. It emphasizes the need for principals to possess key qualities like vision, motivation, and effective communication skills. The paper also identifies the obstacles faced by principals in implementing transformational leadership and suggests strategies for overcoming these challenges. The paper highlights the importance of a transformational leadership style in public senior secondary schools in Oyo State. It further emphasizes that this leadership style can bring about positive changes



and improve the quality of education. It also discusses the prospects and benefits of transformational leadership.

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