Employees' Perceptions of Transformational Leadership and its Relationship with Employee Productivity in Organisations

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Abstract: Transformational leadership has become an important leadership approach in contemporary organisations because of its capacity to stimulate, empower and develop employees. This study explored employees' perceptions of four transformational leadership behaviours, namely inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealised influence and individualised consideration, and their perceived relevance to employee performance and productivity. A quantitative approach was adopted and a structured questionnaire was administered to 101 respondents, comprising 21 managers and 80 employees, selected purposively from the study setting. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale and analysed using descriptive statistics. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency, while the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure and Bartlett's test were considered in assessing the suitability of the items for factor analysis. The four transformational leadership items recorded an overall mean of 4.08, with respondents generally agreeing that the behaviours were present and relevant to performance. Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 indicated good internal consistency and the KMO value of 0.78 indicated acceptable sampling adequacy. The ANOVA reported in the study showed no statistically significant difference among the mean scores of the four leadership items ($F(3,400)=0.68$, $p>0.05$); it should therefore be interpreted as a comparison of item ratings rather than evidence that transformational leadership caused changes in productivity. The findings provide descriptive evidence of positive employee perceptions of transformational leadership, but do not establish a causal effect on employee productivity. The study recommends leadership development that strengthens transformational leadership behaviours, while future research should use an independent productivity measure and relational or predictive statistical analysis to test the leadership-productivity relationship directly.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Productivity, Employee motivation, Organisational performance, Leadership effectiveness

1. Introduction

This research study is significant as it explores how employees perceive transformational leadership behaviours and their relevance to motivation, performance and productivity in organisations. In particular, the study considers idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. Given the cross-sectional questionnaire design and the measures reported in this paper, the analysis is primarily descriptive and does not seek to establish a causal effect of transformational leadership on employee productivity.

2. Background

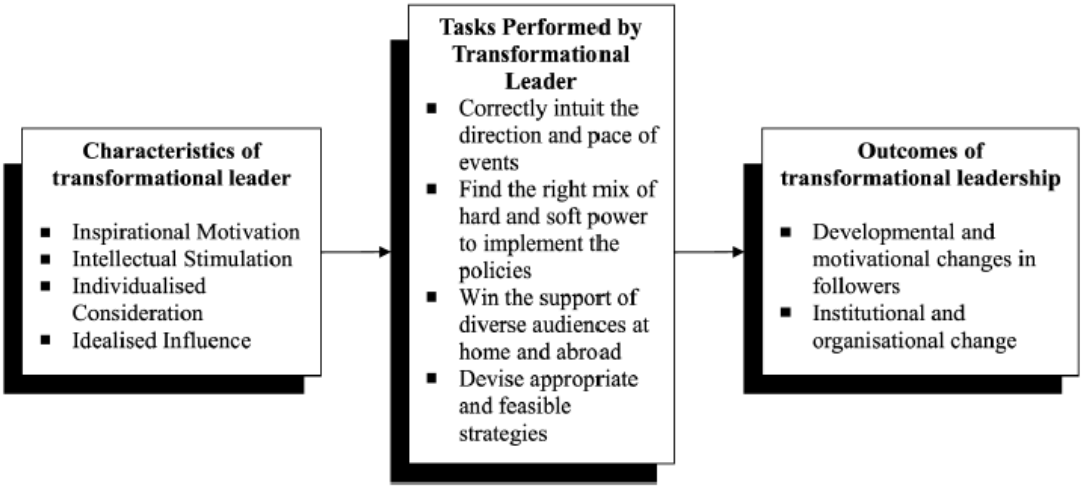
The notion of transformational leadership was introduced by James MacGregor Burns in his 1978 study of leadership. He illustrated this notion as a continuing process where leaders and employees elevate each other morally through motivation (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership is defined as a management style where leaders lead with vision, encourage and persuade employees to achieve shared goals (Sengendo and Eduan, 2024). Engelsberger (2025) adds by saying that transformational leadership stimulates and empowers employees to contribute to the organisation's vision and success. The focal point for transformational leadership is to encourage employees through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Kaur Bagga, Gera and Haque, 2023). In many organisations, transformational leaders encourage employees to develop their skills, to think creatively, and actively participate in decision-making processes. Leaders who adopt this leadership style aim to build strong relationships with employees and foster a positive organisational culture that enhances commitment and job satisfaction (Reinhardt, Leon and Summers, 2022). Transformational Leadership fits into higher levels, as it requires a high level of self-esteem and self-actualisation to successfully be an authentic transformational leader. Transformational leaders possess a peculiar character which is honesty. Honesty means leading the people in an ethical way (Layek and Koodamara, 2024). Leaders conduct themselves in the way to show example to other employees reflecting honesty and ethical behavior as key value in the organisation which employees will follow and consider the leaders as "an example". In the organisation, good transformational leaders have the duties to prioritise relationships, communicate their values, and at the same time pay suitable importance to processes (Lu, Swaab and Galinsky, 2022). Leaders have steps to become a transformational leader. These are illustrated in table 1

Table 1: Steps to become a transformational leader:

Leaders consistently communicate the vision.
Leaders lead by example by demonstrating integrity and trust.
Leaders empower employees through guidance and professional development.

Source: Mayberry (2024).

According to Hakim and Maunah (2023) good leaders shape future leaders by building stable organisation with credibility through the creation of clear vision that they will lay as a foundation for future leaders. Good leaders ensure that high performance is achieved by integrating the given vision in the practical activities of employees in the organisations. Furthermore, good leaders ensure that the rewarding practices are applied for the best performance of employees. The effects of transformational leadership are illustrated in the figure 1.



Source: The effects of transformational leadership (Source: Author's own construction)

Figure 1: The effects of transformational leadership

The above figure presents different characteristics of transformational leaders. With the inspirational motivation, leaders communicate clear visions and expectation by encouraging and motivating employees to exceed normal performance. This dimension is very crucial in order align the employees with the vision and the objectives set for the organisation (Fisher, 2021). With intellectual stimulation, leaders encourage employees to be more innovative and creative. By being innovative and creative, employees will become critical thinkers and will be able to generate new ideas which will allow them to solve problems in their organisation (Fishbach and Woolley, 2022). With the individualised consideration, leaders will act as mentors by providing personal attention, professional development and support to each employee by recognising their needs and strengths. This will promote growth and satisfaction in the performance of the employees (Njaramba, 2024). Lastly with the idealised influence, leaders present themselves as role model that employees can admire, respect and trust. This dimension builds a strong credibility and connection between the leaders and employees by inspiring loyalty and respect (Afshari, 2022). Transformational leaders do not focus only on the tasks but also on the people by motivating and encouraging them through innovation and trust which will lead to high performance and productivity (Urhahne and Wijnia, 2023). Employee productivity is a significant aspect for the development and sustainability of the organisation. High levels of productivity allow organisations to stay competitive in the market, advance effectiveness, and accomplish long-term objectives (Kassa and Worku, 2025). When Leaders take action to support and empower employees in the organisation, they will be happy and will demonstrate great commitment which will lead to increased productivity

3. Conceptual Link Between Transformational Leadership And Employee Performance

The four dimensions of transformational leadership provide a useful basis for explaining why employees may associate leadership behaviour with improved performance. Idealised influence concerns the extent to which

leaders model credible and ethical behaviour that employees are willing to emulate. Inspirational motivation concerns the communication of an attractive and meaningful vision that gives direction to employees' effort. Intellectual stimulation encourages employees to question routines, solve problems and generate new approaches to their work, while individualised consideration focuses on coaching, support and attention to employee development. Taken together, these behaviours provide motivational, relational and developmental mechanisms through which leadership can shape how employees approach their work (Afshari, 2022; Kaur Bagga, Gera and Haque, 2023; Njaramba, 2024). These mechanisms are relevant to productivity but should not be treated as productivity itself. Employee productivity normally concerns work outputs relative to the resources, time or effort used, whereas the items analysed in the present study capture respondents' perceptions of leadership behaviours. Motivation, commitment, engagement, innovation and adaptability may therefore be regarded as plausible pathways through which transformational leadership could ultimately contribute to employee or organisational performance. Recent evidence also indicates that leadership is positively related to adaptive performance and that motivational and relational processes are important in that relationship. The present study consequently treats favourable ratings of transformational leadership as evidence of perceived leadership practice, not as a direct measurement of productivity (Bonini et al., 2024). This distinction strengthens the interpretation of the study. The findings can identify which transformational behaviours are most strongly recognised by respondents and can show whether the four dimensions receive similarly favourable ratings. They cannot, on their own, show that a change in leadership produced a corresponding change in output. Establishing such a relationship would require a separately measured productivity variable and an analytical design capable of estimating the association between leadership and productivity. This conceptual boundary is maintained throughout the revised paper.

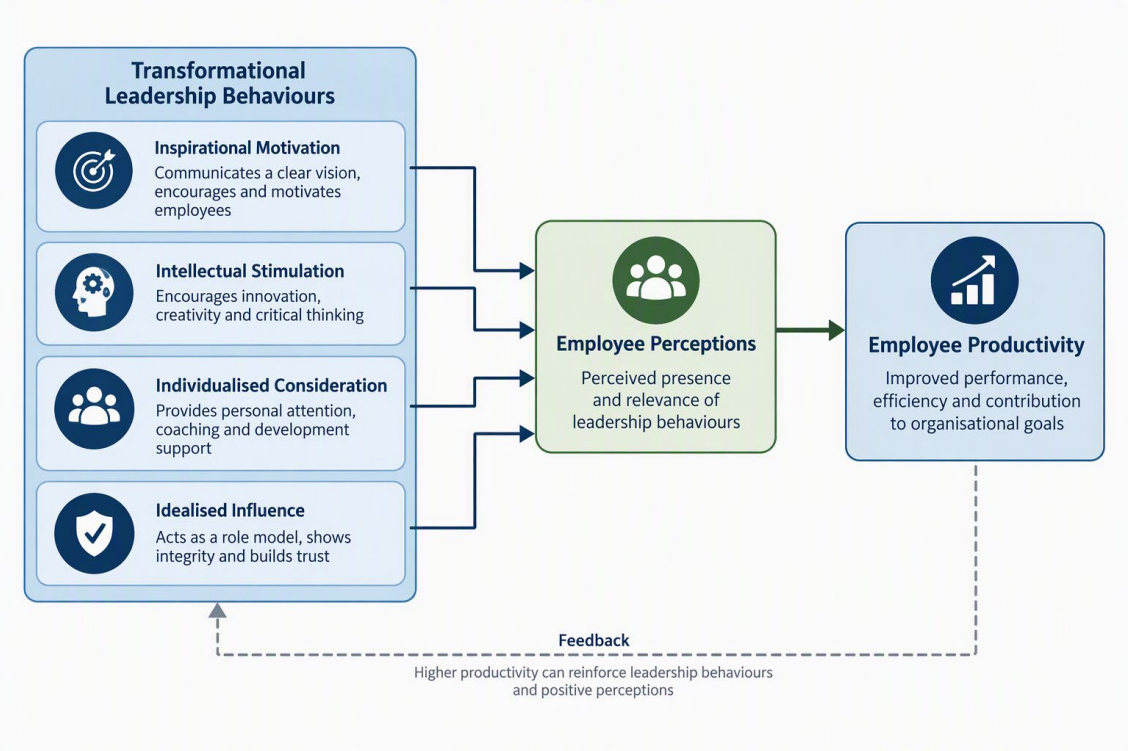


Figure 2: Conceptual framework linking transformational leadership behaviours, employee perceptions and employee productivity (Source: Author's construction)

Figure 2 summarises the conceptual logic of the study. The four transformational leadership behaviours are examined through employees' perceptions of their presence and relevance. The proposed link to employee productivity is conceptual rather than a tested causal pathway in the present analysis because productivity was not independently measured.

4. Research gap and Research Question

Although transformational leadership is widely associated with desirable employee and organisational outcomes, the literature reviewed above does not by itself establish how employees in the present study setting

perceive the four core transformational leadership behaviours and their relevance to work performance. Much of the cited literature addresses leadership, motivation, innovation or organisational performance in different contexts. This creates a contextual need to examine how the four behaviours are perceived by managers and employees in the organisation studied. Accordingly, the paper addresses the following research question: How do respondents perceive idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration, and their relevance to employee performance and productivity?

5. Research Approach

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research approach. A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument to obtain standardised responses. Purposive sampling was adopted so that participants with relevant organisational experience could contribute to the study. A total of 101 respondents participated, comprising 21 managers and 80 employees. The questionnaire included items relating to four dimensions of transformational leadership: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. Responses to the items reported in this paper were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The analysis therefore reflects respondents' perceptions of these leadership behaviours and their perceived relevance to work performance; an independent objective measure of employee productivity was not reported in the dataset used for this paper. Descriptive statistics, including percentages, means, standard deviations and coefficients of variation, were used to summarise response patterns. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test were used to assess whether the inter-item correlation structure was suitable for factor analysis; however, because factor-loading results are not reported in the available analysis, no factor-analytic claims are made in this paper. The reported ANOVA compares the mean ratings of the four leadership items. It does not test whether transformational leadership predicts or causes employee productivity and is interpreted only as a comparison among item ratings. The cross-sectional design, purposive sampling and self-reported measures limit causal inference and generalisability.

6. Measurement and Analytical Interpretation

The descriptive analysis was designed to establish the pattern and consistency of respondents' ratings across the four transformational leadership dimensions. Means above the midpoint of the five-point scale indicate generally favourable perceptions, while the standard deviations and coefficients of variation show the extent to which respondents differed in their ratings. Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 provides evidence that the reported leadership items have good internal consistency. The KMO statistic of 0.78 indicates that the correlation structure has an acceptable level of sampling adequacy for factor-oriented assessment. Because the full factor-loading matrix and the exact Bartlett statistic are not available in the supplied statistical output, the study does not make claims about a confirmed latent-factor structure. The ANOVA result is interpreted narrowly. A non-significant F statistic indicates that the mean scores assigned to the four reported leadership items are not statistically distinguishable at the conventional significance level. It does not test whether transformational leadership predicts employee productivity. This is important because an analysis of differences among leadership-item means addresses a different statistical question from a regression or correlation analysis involving a separate productivity outcome. The results are therefore presented as a profile of respondents' perceptions rather than as a causal test of the effect of leadership on productivity.

7. Results

7.1 The Idealised Influence

The results show clearly that 44% strongly agreed that the leader acts as a role model and 32% agreed that a the leader acts as a role model which both represent the majority of the respondents agreeing to the idea. 12% of the respondents decided to remained neutral. 10% of respondents disagreed and 3% of respondents strongly disagreed of the idea that leader acts as role model by showing high ethical standard and better performance through motivation.

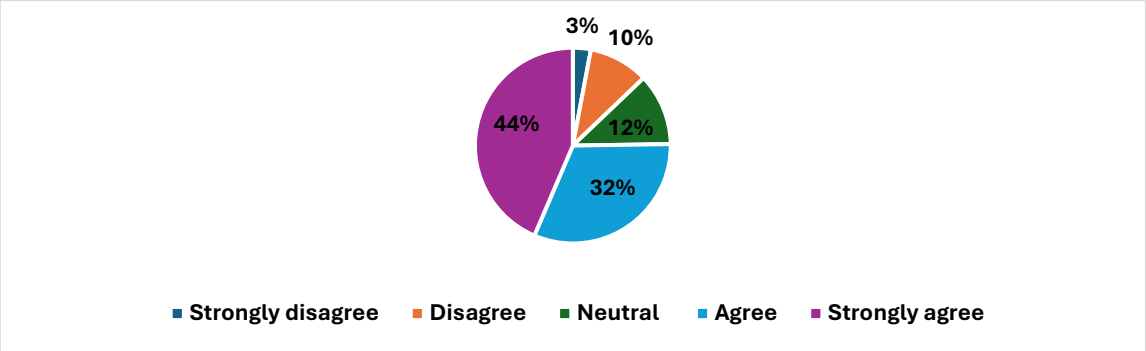


Figure 3: Leader acts as a role model (Source: Author's construction)

From the graph, the results show the mean of 4.03 with moderate spread around, a standard deviation of 1.11 and a coefficient of variance 27.5% showing that the variance is low and the responses are reasonably consistent.

7.2 The Inspirational Motivation

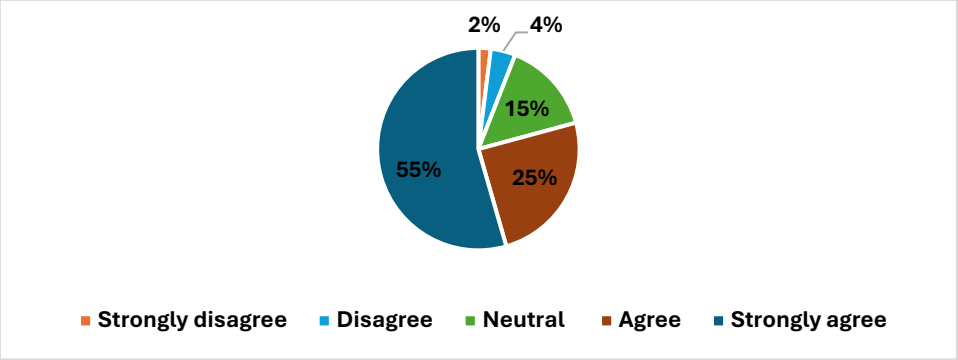


Figure 4: Leader clearly communicates vision (Source: Author's construction)

The majority of respondents agree that leaders communicate a vision to employees that empower them to increase productivity. 25% of respondents and 55% of respondents respectively agreed and strongly agreed that leaders communicate vision that stimulate the increase of productivity. 15 % remained neutral. A total of 6% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The study shows also the mean of 4.26 with a standard deviation of 0.96 and the coefficient variance of 22.5%.

7.3 The Intellectual Stimulation

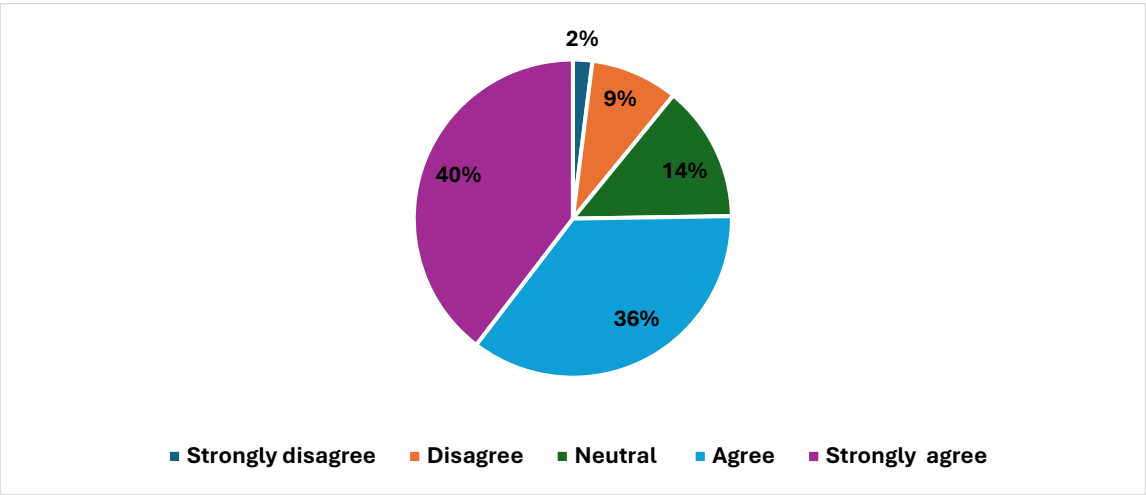


Figure 5: Leader encourages creative thinking and innovation (Source: Author's construction)

The results demonstrate that 40% of the respondents strongly agree and 36% agree that transformational leaders encourage employees to think creatively and innovate regarding the work-related matters. 14% of the responses remained neutral. 9% of respondents disagree and only 2% strongly disagree that leaders encourage the employees to innovate and to think creatively. The study shows also the mean of 4.02 with a standard deviation of 1.02 and the coefficient variance of 25.4%.

7.4 The individualised consideration

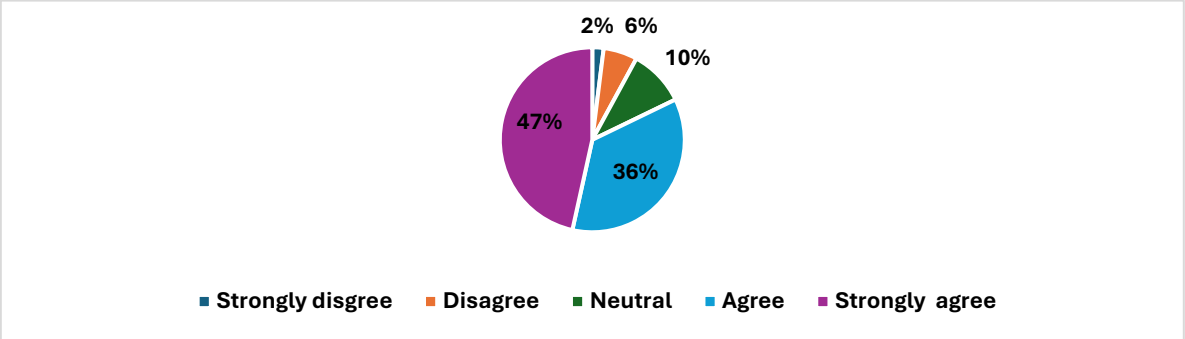


Figure 6: Leader provides personal support (Source: Author's construction)

The outcome of the study shows that a total of 83% of respondents are in the agreement that leaders are entitled to provide personal support and improve the work performance of employees in order to complete tasks efficiently and effectively. 10 % of respondents decided to remain neutral. 6% of respondents disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed.

8. Descriptive Statistics For Transformational Leadership Items

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics For Transformational Leadership Items

Item	Mean	Std Dev	CV
Q1	4.03	1.11	27.5%
Q2	4.26	0.96	22.5%
Q3	4.02	1.02	25.4%
Q4	4.01	1.12	27.9%
Average	4.08	1.05	25.8%

Cronbach's alpha was 0.87, indicating good internal consistency of the reported items. The KMO value was 0.78, indicating acceptable sampling adequacy for examining the correlation structure. Bartlett's test was conducted as part of the assessment of factorability; however, the exact chi-square statistic, degrees of freedom and p-value are not available in the results reported here and should be added from the original statistical output before final publication. No factor-loading results are reported, so no factor-analytic conclusion is drawn.

9. Summary of Findings

The findings show generally favourable perceptions of the four transformational leadership behaviours. For idealised influence, 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that leaders act as role models. For inspirational motivation, 80% agreed or strongly agreed that leaders clearly communicate a vision. For intellectual stimulation, 76% agreed or strongly agreed that leaders encourage creative thinking and innovation. For individualised consideration, 83% agreed or strongly agreed that leaders provide personal support. The overall mean across the four items was 4.08. These findings indicate positive perceptions of transformational leadership behaviours among the respondents. They should not, however, be interpreted as demonstrating that transformational leadership caused higher employee productivity because an independent productivity outcome was not analysed in the reported dataset. The ANOVA result, $F(3,400)=0.68$, $p>0.05$, only indicates that mean ratings did not differ significantly across the four leadership items.

10. Discussion

The descriptive findings are consistent with the literature reviewed in this paper, which associates transformational leadership with motivation, innovation, support and positive employee outcomes. Respondents rated inspirational motivation most highly (M=4.26), suggesting that communicating a clear vision was especially visible in the study setting. Idealised influence (M=4.03), intellectual stimulation (M=4.02) and individualised consideration (M=4.01) were also rated favourably. These patterns are broadly consistent with work emphasising vision, creativity, mentoring and role modelling as important dimensions of transformational leadership (Afshari, 2022; Kaur Bagga, Gera and Haque, 2023; Njaramba, 2024). The findings nevertheless need to be interpreted within the limits of the research design. The questionnaire responses demonstrate perceptions of transformational leadership behaviours, but the reported analysis does not contain a separate productivity measure that can be statistically related to those behaviours. Consequently, the study cannot establish causal impact or quantify the strength of a leadership-productivity relationship. In addition, purposive sampling and the cross-sectional design restrict generalisability. Future studies should employ validated multi-item measures for each transformational leadership dimension and a separate employee productivity outcome, and should use correlation, regression or structural modelling, as appropriate, to test the proposed relationship directly.

11. Practical Implications

The results provide useful practical direction for managers even though they do not establish causality. Inspirational motivation recorded the highest mean score, suggesting that communicating a clear vision is a particularly visible feature of leadership in the study setting. Managers can build on this strength by translating organisational goals into clear team priorities, explaining how individual tasks contribute to those priorities, and providing regular feedback on progress. Vision is more likely to influence day-to-day work when employees can connect broad organisational objectives with concrete responsibilities. The favourable ratings for idealised influence, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration also suggest areas for continued leadership development. Leaders can reinforce idealised influence by modelling ethical, consistent and accountable behaviour. Intellectual stimulation can be supported by inviting employees to propose improvements, question inefficient routines and participate in problem solving. Individualised consideration can be strengthened through coaching, development conversations and opportunities that respond to different employee capabilities. These practices are consistent with the broader literature linking transformational leadership with commitment, innovation, motivation and adaptive performance (Afshari, 2022; Njaramba, 2024). For organisational decision-making, leadership development should be accompanied by performance measurement. If the organisation wishes to determine whether transformational leadership improves productivity, future monitoring could combine a validated multi-item transformational leadership instrument with objective or independently rated indicators such as output volume, service turnaround time, quality, error rates or achievement of agreed performance targets. Analysing leadership and performance as separate constructs would allow management to identify whether stronger leadership perceptions are associated with stronger performance and whether particular transformational dimensions have greater practical relevance.

12. Limitations and Future Research

The study has several limitations that define the scope of its conclusions. First, the sample of 101 respondents was purposively selected, which supports access to relevant organisational participants but limits statistical generalisation beyond the study setting. Second, the study is cross-sectional and captures perceptions at one point in time. It therefore cannot demonstrate temporal precedence or establish that leadership behaviour preceded changes in employee performance. This cautious interpretation of cross-sectional evidence is consistent with Spector (2019). Third, the principal measures are self-reported perceptions. Survey research in which important constructs are obtained through the same response method may be vulnerable to common-method effects, and this reinforces the need for cautious interpretation of associations and perceived outcomes (Kaltsonoudi, Tsigilis and Karteroliotis, 2022). Fourth, the analysis reported in this paper does not include a separately operationalised productivity construct. This is the most important limitation in relation to the original framing of the study. Future research should distinguish transformational leadership clearly from employee productivity and should measure each with appropriate indicators. Longitudinal designs could examine whether changes in leadership perceptions are followed by changes in performance, while multi-source designs could combine employee perceptions of leadership with supervisor ratings, administrative records or objective operational measures. Where a sufficiently developed measurement model is available, correlation, multiple regression or structural equation modelling could then test the strength and direction of the proposed relationships. Future studies could also examine whether employee motivation, engagement, psychological

capital or innovative behaviour explains part of the relationship between transformational leadership and performance. Comparative research across organisational units or sectors would help establish whether the relative importance of the four transformational dimensions varies by work context. Such extensions would move the research from a descriptive assessment of leadership perceptions toward a more rigorous explanatory model of when and how transformational leadership contributes to productive employee behaviour.

13. Conclusion

This study explored respondents' perceptions of transformational leadership behaviours and their relevance to employee motivation, performance and productivity in the organisation. The results show strong agreement with behaviours associated with idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. The findings therefore support the practical value of cultivating leadership behaviours that communicate vision, encourage creativity, provide individual support and model desired organisational values. However, the evidence presented is perceptual and descriptive and does not establish that transformational leadership causes increased employee productivity. Organisations may therefore consider leadership development programmes that strengthen these behaviours, while further research should directly measure employee productivity and test its statistical relationship with transformational leadership. Such analysis would provide a stronger basis for conclusions about organisational productivity and long-term performance.

Ethical Declaration: The paper is derived from a master's research at a local University. The Ethical Committee from the University issued a certificate of clearance granting permission for the research to be undertaken.

AI Declaration: Grammarly was used to assist with editing the paper's language. Besides that, there was no other use of AI in the paper.

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