Transformational Leadership and Employee Productivity: The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement and Moderating Role of Organizational Culture

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between transformational leadership and employee productivity, with employee engagement as a mediating variable and organizational culture as a moderating variable, among officers of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Dutse, Jigawa State. Employee productivity remains a critical concern in Nigerian public security institutions. The study was anchored on Bass and Avolio's Full Range Leadership Model, Kahn's Psychological Engagement Theory, and Cameron and Quinn's Competing Values Framework. A quantitative cross-sectional research design was adopted, with data collected from 59 respondents and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) via SmartPLS 4.0. Findings revealed that transformational leadership significantly predicts employee productivity, and that employee engagement both significantly predicts productivity and partially mediates the transformational leadership–productivity relationship. Organizational culture was found to significantly moderate both the leadership–productivity and engagement–productivity relationships. The model explained 84.7% of the variance in employee productivity. The study concludes that transformational leadership, employee engagement, and a discipline-oriented organizational culture jointly enhance productivity in Nigerian paramilitary organizations such as the NSCDC. It recommends sustained investment in transformational leadership development, targeted employee engagement interventions within the security sector, reinforcement of a discipline-oriented culture, and alignment of formal performance appraisal systems with transformational leadership behaviors.

Originality/Value: This is the first PLS-SEM moderated mediation study of the leadership–productivity nexus in a Nigerian Security and Civil Defence paramilitary organization

Keywords: *transformational leadership, employee productivity, employee engagement, organizational culture, Nigeria.*

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Leadership style remains most significant in determining employee productivity and organizational effectiveness in both public and private sector. Transformational Leadership being one of the types of leadership is widely perceived to motivate, inspire, and influence employees toward the achievement of organizational goals while boosting engagement and overall performance (Jiatong et al., 2022). Rooted in Burns' foundational idea of leaders inspiring followers to prevailed over personal interests for collective organizational goals, which was expanded by Bass & Avolio into a four component model: Idealized influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation, and Individualized consideration through which leaders support, develop, and empower followers to achieve high performance (Sutanto, 2021). Beyond individual productivity, Leadership can change and sustain the culture of the organization by generating or reinforcing established sets of beliefs, shared values, practices, and norms within organizations (Stauffer & Maxwell, 2020; Jerab & Mabrouk, 2023).

Empirical studies consistently proven that employee engagement and organizational culture significantly influence how transformational leadership enhances employee performance, motivation, and productivity across diverse organizational settings. Park, J. et al 2021, Udin, U. 2023). Nevertheless, many developing countries, including Nigeria paramilitary sector continue facing persistent challenges due to bureaucratic bottleneck low productivity, corruption, inefficiency, and poor service delivery despite various reforms and restructuring efforts despite many reforms and restructuring. Regardless of many substantial research on Transformational leadership, most are situated in Western and private sector contexts. Limited studies has integrated these transformational leadership, employee engagement, and organizational culture within a unified framework particularly within the Nigerian Paramilitary sector such as the Nigerian Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC). Addressing this gap, necessitate introducing employee engagement as a mediating variable and organizational culture as a moderating variable in the relationship between transformational leadership and employee productivity. This integrated

framework captures both the psychological mechanisms through which leadership influences performance and the contextual conditions that may strengthen or weaken those relationships, offering a more robust and contextually grounded understanding of how transformational leadership operates within Nigerian public sector organisations.

1.2 Statement of the research problem

The Nigerian Government has implemented several public sector reforms, including the Civil Service Reforms, Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP), Anti-Corruption Reforms, Performance Management Reforms, and E-Government and Digitalization Initiatives, yet the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and similar paramilitary institutions are experiencing with weak employee motivation, poor service delivery, inefficiency, and limited accountability. These challenges continue to undermine the agency's core mandate of internal security, protection of critical national assets, and disaster management, suggesting that existing managerial practices have not been effective enough in sustaining employee productivity (Akinsanmi et al., 2022; Kelvin & Faruk, 2024).

While research increasingly shows that transformational leadership boosts employee productivity in various economies, its application within Nigerian paramilitary institutions remains largely unexplored. Most studies have focused on Western or corporate settings and have paid little attention to employee engagement as a mediating factor and organizational culture as a moderating condition that could shape how transformational leadership works in practice. This gap, if ignored, risks producing management interventions that are poorly targeted, misaligned, under resource and ineffective (Pat et al., 2021; Kelvin & Faruk, 2024). The ongoing security challenges facing Nigeria make it imperative that institutions like the NSCDC maintain a highly productive and engaged workforce through the single framework of transformational leadership, employee productivity, employee engagement, and organizational culture which can be attain from the recommendations of the investigation on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee productivity, with employee engagement as a mediator and organizational culture as a moderator, among officers of the NSCDC, Dutse, Jigawa State. By doing so, the study sought to fill a critical theoretical and empirical gap while providing evidence-based recommendations for improving officer productivity in one of Nigeria’s most strategically important security institutions.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

2.1.1 The Concept of Transformational Leadership Dimension

Transformational leadership as defined by Burns (1978) to be inspiring followers beyond self-interest while Bass (1985) operationalized it in four dimensions; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. . Transformational leadership was expanded by Bass and Avolio (1994) using the Full Range Leadership Model which has been consistently empirically shown across International and Nigerian organizational context in studies (e.g Ojokuku et al., 2012; Banks et al., 2016;Zeb et al., 2021) to significantly improve employee engagement, performance, and productivity.

2.1.2 The Concept of **Employee productivity in the Nigerian Public Sector**

Employee productivity is the extent to which employee efficiently and effectively convert organizational resources in to desired output such as service quality, timeliness, and goal attainment (Robbins and Judge 2020). Ogunyomi and Bruning 2016; Adagbabiri and Okolie, 2020 opined that employee productivity is enhanced by transformation leadership and effective HRM practices although often constrained by bureaucracy, weak motivation, and rigid organizational structure.

2.1.3 The concept of Employee Engagement

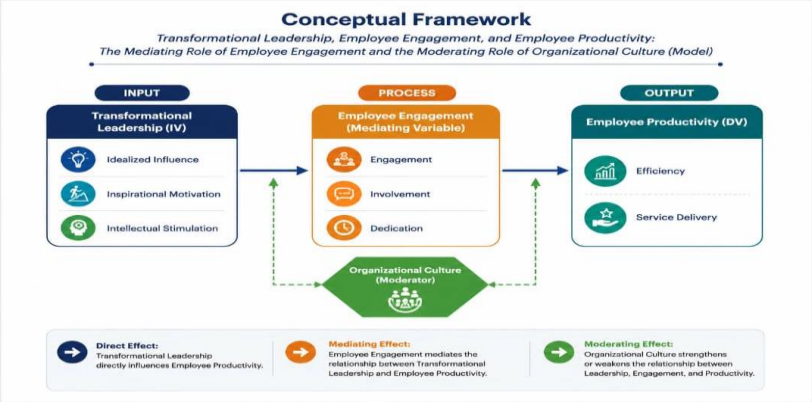
Employee Engagement is the psychological presence of employees in their work roles, expressed through cognitive, emotional, and physical involvement (Kahn, 1990). This definition has been empirically backed to mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee productivity by enhancing motivation and performance (Ugwu et al., 2014; Enwereuzor et al., 2018; Nasir et al., 2022; Helalat et al., 2024)

2.1.4 Organizational culture in the Nigerian Civil Service

Schein, (1985) stated Organizational culture as the pattern of shared basic assumptions, values, and beliefs that guide how employees think, feel, and behave within an organization while colquitt et al. (2019) presented organizational culture as a system of shared meanings that influences coordination, motivation, and employee attitudes toward work. Usoro and Adigwe, (2014); Zeb et al. (2021); Sihite, (2024) evidently indicated how transformational leadership affects employee productivity particularly within hierarchical organizational culture stating that positive organizational culture determines how employee interpret leadership actions and respond to them.

2.2.4 The conceptual framework

Transformational leadership is the independent variable while employee productivity serves as the dependent variable and Employee engagement as the mediating variable whereas organizational culture act as the moderating variable. The framework proposes that transformational leadership influences employee productivity directly and indirectly through employee engagement, while organizational culture moderates the strength of these relationships within Nigerian paramilitary Security such as the NSCDC.



2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Transformational and Employee productivity

Transformational leadership and employee productivity are established to have rewarding relationship where transformational leadership is proven by several studies to have positively

influences employee motivation, performance and productivity (Ojokuku et al., 2012; Bank et al., 2016; Virgiawan et al., 2021; Eze, 2023; Rony et al., 2023;). Although, the studies are limited by cross sectional design, inadequate consideration of the mediating role of employee engagement and the moderating role of organizational culture, particularly in Nigerian public sector.

2.2.2 The mediating role of Employee Engagement

Ugwu et al. (2014), Enwereuzor et al. (2018), Nasir et al. (2022), Nawaz et al. (2024), Helalat et al. (2024) provided strong empirical evidence supporting the assertion that employee engagement mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance serving as psychological mechanism linking leadership and productivity. While studies strengthen contextual relevance, they are constrained by cross sectional design, narrow sectorial focus, self-reported data and the absence of integrated mode combining transformational leadership, employee engagement and organizational culture.

2.2.3 Moderating role of Organizational Culture

Organizational culture have significantly influences leadership effectiveness and employee performance with evidence supporting it moderating role in the between transformational leadership and employee engagement. (Usoro et al., (2014); Virrgiawan et al., (2021); Zeb et al., (2021), Sihite, (2024). However, these studies are limited by cross sectional design, weak integration of employee engagement, and limited contextual application within Nigerian public sector institutions such as NSCDC.

2.2.4 Leadership and performance in the Nigerian public sector context

Nigerian studies such as Ogunyomi and Bruning, (2016), Adagbabiri and Okolie (2020), Ikechukwu et al, (2022) consistently shows how leadership and HRM practices positively influence employee performance and productivity in public and private organizations. Despite the studies significant position, all the studies shares limitations such as cross sectional data, self-reported responses, limited use of mediating and moderating variables like employee engagement and organizational culture

2.2.5 The Integration Model

The integration explaining how transformational leadership influences employee productivity through employee engagement, with organizational culture shaping these relationship cannot be over emphasized. This study addresses the empirical, conceptual, theoretical and methodological gaps and integrate leadership, psychological, and cultural perspectives with focus on Nigerian public sector agency, Nigerian Security and Civil defense Corps (NSCDC) Jigawa, Nortwest Nigeria. Although the study shares the common limitation of cross-sectional design with some previous studies, it advances existing literature through theoretical integration, contextual specificity, and the application of a more advanced analytical framework.

2.3 **Theoretical Framework**

Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994) given the Dimensions explains how leadership behaviors enhance employee productivity through inspiration, motivation, and support and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) clarifies that employees reciprocate positive leadership through increased engagement and performance. The Job Demands–Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) further explains employee engagement as a key mechanism linking leadership resources to productivity, and the Competing Values Framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2011) highlights organizational culture as a contextual factor that shapes leadership effectiveness. Collectively, these theories provide an integrated explanation of how transformational leadership influences employee productivity through employee engagement, moderated by organizational culture in Nigerian public sector organizations such as NSCDC.

2.4 Summary of literature Review

This chapter reviewed empirical studies, conceptual definitions, and theoretical frameworks on transformational leadership, employee productivity, employee engagement, and organizational culture. It also present justification, conceptual framework, Conceptual Model Diagram, and Research Hypothesis. Drawing from international and Nigerian literature (2014–2026), it highlighted key findings and identified gaps addressed by this study.

3. Methodology

The study adopts a quantitative research approach using a descriptive cross-sectional survey design and used both primary and secondary sources data. Structured questionnaire was administered for

primary data and responses were measured with five-point Likert scale ranging 1-5 (1= Strongly Disagreed, 2=Disagreed, 3=NEUTRAL, 4=Agreed, 5=Strongly Disagreed) while secondary data where sourced from textbooks, journals, official publications.

A sample size of 254 was scientifically determined to provide adequate representation of the 750 population of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC). The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique which combined both probability and non-probability sampling methods to ensure representativeness and relevance of selected respondents. Stratified sampling technique was adopted to divide the population into distinct strata according to rank and department and simple random sampling technique for adequate representation, equal and independent chance of being selected thereby reducing sampling bias and improving the generalizability of the findings. Also, a purposive sampling technique was used to select State command that met the study's inclusion criteria. This was necessary because only selected commands possessed the required characteristics and operational relevance needed for the study. A pilot study was conducted using 23.22% of the total sample size, in line with Johanson and Brooks (2010). The study employed descriptive statics (frequency distribution, percentages, mean and standard deviation) to summarize the demographic characteristics of respondents and inferential statistics to test the research hypotheses and examine relationships among variables. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and SmartPLS were employed for data analysis. Content validity and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient were adopted to ensure validity and reliability of the research instrument.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Summary of Respondent Demographics (N = 59)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	56	94.9%
	Female	3	5.1%

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age Group	46 years and above	29	49.2%
	36–45 years	25	42.4%
	26–35 years	5	8.5%
Education	B.Sc	36	61.0%
	HND	8	13.6%
	Postgraduate	7	11.9%
	Diploma	7	11.9%
	SSCE	1	1.7%
Years of Service	16 years and above	29	49.2%
	11–15 years	18	30.5%
	6–10 years	9	15.3%
	1–5 years	3	5.1%

The study involved 59 NSCDC officers at the Dutse Command, Jigawa State. Table 1, indicated the workforce is predominantly male (94.9%), 79.7% have served for 11 years or more, and 61.0% hold a B.Sc degree. The dominant age group was 46 years and above (49.2%), reflecting a mature and experienced workforce. The demographic characteristics aligns with the structure of Nigerian paramilitary organizations and provide a credible respondent base for assessing leadership and productivity perceptions.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Study Constructs

Table 2: Construct-Level Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Indices

Construct	N	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
Transformational Leadership	59	3.90	1.00	0.934	0.948	0.683
Employee Engagement	59	3.97	1.12	0.921	0.937	0.684
Organizational Culture	59	3.77	1.15	0.878	0.911	0.672
Employee Productivity	59	3.80	1.12	0.884	0.916	0.686

Table 2 presents all construct means exceeding the midpoint of 3.00 on the 5-point Likert scale, indicating that respondents generally held positive perceptions across transformational leadership, employee engagement, organizational culture, and employee productivity. Employee Engagement recorded the highest mean (M = 3.97), while Organizational Culture recorded the lowest (M = 3.77). The standard deviations (ranging from 1.00 to 1.15) indicate adequate variance in the data suitable for PLS-SEM analysis. Negative skewness values observed at the item level confirmed distributions biased towards higher agreement, which is typical in organizational surveys in the Nigerian public sector context.

4.3. Measurement Model Assessment

Table 3: HTMT Discriminant Validity Matrix

Construct	TL	EE	OC	EP
Transformational Leadership (TL)	—			
Employee Engagement (EE)	0.847	—		
Organisational Culture (OC)	0.832	0.851	—	
Employee Productivity (EP)	0.771	0.858	0.849	—

The indicator reliability was confirmed by evaluating the measurement model for indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. All 25 outer loadings ranged from 0.794 to 0.844, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). As shown in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.878 to 0.934, and composite reliability values ranged from 0.911 to 0.948, both well above the 0.70 threshold. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs exceeded 0.50 (range: 0.672–0.686), satisfying the convergent validity criterion. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion was used to confirm Discriminant validity. all four constructs are confirmed to be empirically distinct despite their theoretical relatedness as summarized in Table 3, all HTMT ratios were below the conservative threshold of 0.90, with values ranging from 0.771 (EP–TL) to 0.858 (EP–EE).

4.4 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Table 4: Structural Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing (N = 59)

Hyp.	Path	B	SE	t-value	p-value	95% CI	Decision
H1	TL → EP	0.218	0.089	2.449	0.015	[0.043, 0.394]	**Supported**
H2	TL → EE	0.512	0.074	6.919	< 0.001	[0.367, 0.657]	**Supported**
H3	EE → EP	0.431	0.091	4.736	< 0.001	[0.253, 0.610]	**Supported**
H4	OC → EP	0.274	0.087	3.149	0.002	[0.103, 0.445]	**Supported**
H5	TL × OC → EP	0.163	0.071	2.296	0.022	[0.024, 0.302]	**Supported**
H6	EE × OC → EP	0.187	0.078	2.397	0.017	[0.034, 0.340]	**Supported**

The structural model was assessed using bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples (bias-corrected confidence intervals at 95%). The model demonstrated acceptable fit (SRMR = 0.062; NFI = 0.891). The model explained 79.5% of variance in Employee Engagement (R^2 = 0.795) and 84.7% of variance in Employee Productivity (R^2 = 0.847), both classified as large effects. Predictive relevance was confirmed for both endogenous constructs (Q^2(EE) = 0.534; Q^2(EP) = 0.571), both substantially above zero.

4.4.1 Mediation Analysis- *Indirect Effect of Transformational Leadership on Employee Productivity via Employee Engagement*

Path	Indirect β	SE	t-value	p-value	95% CI	VAF	Mediation Type
TL → EE → EP	0.221	0.058	3.810	<.001	[0.107, 0.335]	50.3%	Partial

Table 5 confirms partial mediation indicating that while transformational leadership directly enhances productivity, a substantial portion of its influence is transmitted through its positive effect on employee engagement.

4.4.2 Effect Sizes (f^2)

Effect sizes were computed using Chin's (1998) formula: $f^2 = \beta^2 / (1 - R^2)$. The path from TL to EE yielded the largest effect ($f^2 = 1.279$, large), followed by EE to EP ($f^2 = 1.214$, large) and OC to EP ($f^2 = 0.491$, large). The direct TL to EP path yielded a medium effect ($f^2 = 0.311$), while both moderation interaction terms yielded medium effects (TL × OC: $f^2 = 0.174$; EE × OC: $f^2 = 0.229$), consistent with expectations for moderated PLS-SEM models.

4.5. Findings and Discussion

All six hypotheses were supported, leading to the following substantive conclusions:

Transformational leadership exerted a significant positive direct effect on employee productivity ($\beta = 0.218$, $t = 2.449$, $p = 0.015$). This finding is consistent with Bass and Avolio's (1994) Full Range Leadership Model and corroborates prior research in Nigerian public sector organizations. The strongest path in the model was from transformational leadership to employee engagement ($\beta = 0.512$, $t = 6.919$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 1.279$), confirming a large substantive effect. Officers with transformational supervisors reported higher vigour, dedication, and emotional connection to the organization. This finding aligns with Kahn's (1990) psychological conditions of engagement as Employee engagement significantly predicted employee productivity ($\beta = 0.431$, $t = 4.736$, $p < 0.001$). Engaged officers demonstrated greater task efficiency, consistent target attainment, and higher quality of output. This supports the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, which holds that high engagement produces better work performance outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Employee engagement partially mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and employee productivity (indirect effect = 0.221, VAF = 50.3%, $p < 0.001$). This means that engagement serves as a key transmission mechanism through which transformational leadership enhances productivity, while also retaining a significant direct path. The partial mediation suggests that additional mediating variables — such as organizational commitment or job satisfaction — may also be at work and Organizational culture significantly moderated both the transformational leadership–productivity ($\beta =$

0.163, p = 0.022) and engagement–productivity (β = 0.187, p = 0.017) relationships. The discipline-oriented, rules-based culture of the NSCDC amplified the positive effects of transformational leadership and engagement on productivity. This is consistent with Cameron and Quinn's (2011) argument that a supportive organizational culture creates conditions under which leadership effectiveness is maximized. The integrated PLS-SEM model explained 79.5% of variance in employee engagement and 84.7% of variance in employee productivity, representing large effect sizes and attesting to the strong explanatory power of the theoretical framework adopted for this study.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

The study concludes that transformational leadership is a critical and multidimensional driver of employee productivity at NSCDC Dutse. Its influence operates both directly and indirectly through employee engagement, with organizational culture serving as a significant amplifying moderator. Together, these three variables constitute an integrated productivity system in the paramilitary context.

5.2. Recommendations

Recommendations are made to NSCDC management and policymakers based on the findings of the study; there is need to sustained investment and Institutionalize transformational leadership training programs for supervisory officers, focusing on vision communication, ethical role modelling, intellectual stimulation, and performance recognition. Also, Implement structured engagement initiatives including performance recognition programs, inclusive decision-making, transparent communication of organizational goals, and regular engagement diagnostics to strengthen the TL → EE → EP pathway. Additionally, Reinforce NSCDC's discipline-oriented culture through orientation programs, culture-embedding rituals, and consistent senior leadership role modelling so as to amplify the positive effects of leadership and engagement on productivity at the same time align the formal performance appraisal system with transformational leadership behaviors to institutionalize incentives for supervisors to adopt leadership practices associated with higher officer productivity.

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