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Perceptions of leader transformational justice and job satisfaction in public organizations

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Abstract

Purpose – Transformational leadership (TL) is one among the leadership behaviors that is important in a period of uncertainty and continuous change. The behavior affects employees' job satisfaction (JS) and performance. Nevertheless, there is an inconclusive debate over how organizational justice (OJ) can help transformational leaders to influence employees' (JS). Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the role of OJ on the relationship between TL and employees' JS.

Design/methodology/approach – The study employed a quantitative research design based on cross-sectional strategy. Structured questionnaires were distributed and data were collected from a sample of 418 middle managers of public organizations in Nigeria. Multiple regressions aided by structural equation modeling were employed to test four hypotheses.

Findings – The regression results support the mediating role of OJ, such as distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational justice between TL and JS. Equally, the relationship between TL and JS, TL and OJ, and OJ and JS are all positive and significant. Overall, the influence of TL and OJ has a strong explanatory effect on JS.

Originality/value – This study adds to the literature of human resource management and organizational behavior by empirically validating and integrating TL theory with the four dimensions of OJ theory. The study will be beneficial to the top management and middle-level employees in public organizations.

Keywords Transformational leadership, Nigeria, Job satisfaction, Organizational justice, Public organization

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Public management scholars have acknowledged that leadership is a vital factor that ensures leader-follower emotional ties, employee job satisfaction (JS), service delivery, and most significantly to grow an organization. While the presence of effective leadership has a positive effect on employees' JS, despotic leadership does the inverse. More than ever, organizations are challenged by myriads of complexities, unpredictability and uncertainty (Mehrabani and Mohamad, 2015). These complexities are unprecedented in Nigeria with about 2,272,511 employees across the federal, state and local government civil service (Abah, 2015, Nigerian Bureau of statistics, 2016). Besides the complexities, leaders in public sector organizations are operating in period of turbulence and uncertainty (Powe, 2010). As such, leaders are required to make transformational choices that will affect the behaviors of employees. One of these choices is the demonstration of justice in their behaviors.

Strong leadership becomes strategic and imperative in a dynamic environment. Although there are many models of effective leadership, transformational leadership (TL) is more likely to be effective in a period of change and uncertainty. This is because transformational leaders use charisma and affection to induce a vision-driven change in followers (Bass, 1985). The word "transform" means to change and improve something or someone. TL is defined as a "form of leadership intended to motivate and inspire followers to pursue higher-order goals through the transformation of followers' attitudes, beliefs,



values, and behaviors and to exert extraordinary effort in pursuit of organizational-relevant goals” (Bass, 1997). Leadership style can be demonstrated differently under rapid organizational change (Yaghi, 2017).

Leaders who are transformational and fair are more likely to influence followers’ optimism, confidence, loyalty, commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, and quality of work life (Gillet *et al.*, 2013; Naseer *et al.*, 2016; Top *et al.*, 2015). Whereas, leaders who are not transformational and just tend to be autocratic, egoistic, limit participation in decision making, engage not only in self-serving and fraudulent behaviors, but also in socially excluded and morally corrupt activities (Naseer *et al.*, 2016). In return, employees will question the low ethical behaviors and may reciprocate by reducing their performance, citizenship behaviors, and creativity. Therefore, it can be argued that in a fraudulent and uncertain public sector organization, employees’ JS and performance are increasingly dependent on leader’s transformational behavior.

Nigeria is in a changed era. Leaders are reverberating the need for behavioral change in personal, professional, and national life. As the echo of the “change begins with me” campaign is vibrating, some Nigerians argue that the change should begin with the leaders; many debate that the change should come from the followers; and others feel that the change is all-encompassing and should begin with both. Based on these premises, the basic assumptions of this paper are twofold. The first assumption is that change should begin with the leaders. This is because leaders are role models whose behaviors can affect and change followers’ attitudes toward higher levels of achievement. Gillet *et al.* (2013) point that leaders’ behaviors and values can influence followers to positively change their behaviors. Similarly, Singhry (2017) points that leadership is eye-catching and followers will always observe, listen, and perceive the leader’s behavior. The second assumption is that the effectiveness of transformational leaders to change followers’ behaviors, to raise their level of achievement, growth, intellectual ability and JS depends on the leaders’ fairness and justice. Tatum *et al.* (2003) supported this assumption when they revealed that leaders’ actions and decisions should be accompanied with fairness and justice.

TL behavior is crucial for the success of the public sector. However, its application in the sector is low. Bass (1997) supported this argument when he claimed that the application of TL is more effective in the private sector than the public sector. Public organizations are thought to rely predominantly on bureaucratic control mechanisms which reduce the importance of public leaders’ relationships with their followers (Bass and Avolio, 2004). However, public organizations are now operating in a fluid environment and have to shed away some of the bureaucratic structures to overcome governance constraints. Spector (2014) points that transformational leaders were needed to replace “pseudo and inauthentic leaders in order to revitalize the declining economy, address macro-economic instability, corporate and innovation crisis, and enhance employee morale in both the private and public sector. As such, studies for advancing how TL behavior can influence employees” JS in a public organization remain topical.

It is a conventional norm that employees feel happy if their efforts contribute to personal, organizational, and societal growths. However, their work career, service delivery, and JS can be negatively affected by despotic and unjust leadership behavior. For example, most civil servants have worked several months without salaries; many years without promotion; and retire without pension and gratuity in Nigeria (Singhry, 2017). Recently, the federal government of Nigeria had disbursed bailout money to state governments in order to settle the outstanding salaries of workers, yet the civil servants in more than 18 in the Nigeria’s 36 states still owe salaries of between three and four months (Chinwendu and Edet, 2017). The major reason is that the funds are being cornered for self-serving personal gain by the despotic public sector leaders.

Ineffective and despotic leadership behaviors have undesirable effects on workers' JS. In Nigeria, it is responsible for the employees' low performance and the recurring strikes in the public sector (e.g. in the academics, health sector, downstream petroleum sector, and the energy sector) (Chinwendu and Edet, 2017). Therefore, this paper argues that the leadership behavior that might influence JS in Nigeria's corrupt and uncertain public sector organizations is the TL model; and this behavior might be effective if the leaders are ethical, just, and fair.

Based on the two assumptions and the preceding arguments, this paper is motivated by four issues. First, although the importance of leadership has been widely recognized in the public sector, the empirical integration of TL and organizational justice (OJ) has been scarce (Barth-farkas and Vera, 2014). This has caused a significant knowledge gap in the management of the public organizations. Although several factors such as job insecurity (Zheng *et al.*, 2014), motivation (Stringer *et al.*, 2011), and power distance (Hauff, Franziska and Tressin, 2015; Hauff, Richter, and Richter, 2015) have been associated with JS, scholars such as Gillet *et al.* (2013) called for leadership models that will strongly influence employees' JS in an unpredictable environment.

Second, while a job is a source of pride and identity, despotic leadership and unfair treatment will deprive employees' of their sense of belonging, which over the time will reduce JS, lessen commitment, and increase turnover rate (Lok and Crawford, 2004). Nigerian civil servants have been affected by delaying salary payment, delaying promotion, insecure jobs, threats of job termination and retrenchment. Most of the problems can be attributed to despotic and inflexible leadership, which are contaminated by injustice. There are many instances where ministers, governors, and senior government officials had deliberately withheld employees' emoluments and entitlements (Chinwendu and Edet, 2017). As a result, employees are being subjected to abnormal working conditions, uncertainty and feelings of low JS.

Third, previous studies examined the direct relationship between TL and JS (Yang and Islam, 2012). The direct relationship may not be satisfactory to explain the link between TL and JS in a complex and changing environment. On top of this, the results of the direct relationship between TL and JS are contradictory. For example, while Birasnav *et al.* (2013) suggested that TL behavior influenced JS, Sidani (2014) reported that inspirational stimulation, a dimension of TL, has no influence on JS. In order to resolve the inconsistency of the previous studies and also to advance the body of knowledge on the effect of the TL on JS, this study argues for the intervening role of OJ.

Fourth, although previous studies such as Top *et al.* (2015) and Tse and Chiu (2014) suggest that TL has a significant relationship with JS in Turkey and China respectively, there is little empirical research if not unknown, about how OJ can influence the effect of TL on JS in Nigeria. Therefore, case-specific studies that model TL, OJ, and JS are needed in the context of Nigeria. In order to resolve the four issues mentioned above, this study aims to examine the mediating role of OJ in the relationship between TL and JS. This mediating effect is based on the suggested relationship between TL and JS (Birasnav *et al.*, 2013), TL and OJ (Tse and Chiu, 2014) and OJ and JS (Fuchs, 2011).

2. Literature review

2.1 JS

JS is defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or experiences" (Locke, 1983). It is also "the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs" (Spector, 1997). Furthermore, Spector (1997) classified JS as "appreciation, communication, relationship with co-workers, fringe benefits, job conditions, the nature of the work itself, the organization itself, organizational policies and procedures, pay, personal growth, promotion opportunities, recognition, security, and supervision."

The most popular dimension of JS is often the Herzberg's extrinsic and intrinsic job characteristics (Hauff, Franziska and Tressin, 2015; Hauff Richter and Richter, 2015). The intrinsic factors are called the motivators while the extrinsic factors are the hygiene aspects. Based on the various classifications, the antecedents of JS include achievement, recognition, work, responsibility, promotion and growth, pay, company policy, good relationships with co-workers, supervision, task identity, task significance, skills variety, autonomy, and feedback (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Others include opportunities for personal control, opportunity for skill use, externally generated goals, job security, career outlook, and equity. Research has shown that JS influences organizational commitment (Tse and Chiu, 2014).

2.2 TL behavior

TL is an emerging leadership theory that focuses on changing the organization and its members for better performance. The term TL was coined by Downton (1973). Burns (1978) proposed it as a theory, and Bass (1985) popularized it. Today, it remains one of the dominant leadership theories that have been extensively researched (Banks *et al.*, 2016).

Transformational leaders see things that others do not see. They focus on developing people, and their integrity inspires followers to take actions. For example, Mohandas Gandhi raised the hopes and demands of millions of his people and in the process changed himself (Yousaf, 2017). Similarly, Nelson Mandela raised the apartheid awareness and in the process was in the forefront of its campaign. Bass (1985) proposed that TL behaviors comprised of idealized (charismatic) influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation.

Idealized (charismatic) influence. Transformational leaders are role models who transmit a great sense of vision, ideology, as well as raise high moral and ethical standards among followers. In return, followers are prompted to emulate the leader, respect the leader, trust the leader, follow the leader, and adopt the leader's values and principles (Deinert *et al.*, 2015; Guay and Choi, 2015). Presidents Buhari's speech "if you don't kill corruption, corruption will kill Nigeria"; Martin Luther King Jr's famous speech "I Have a Dream"; and J.F Kennedy's appealed to Americans "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country," are classical examples of idealized influence.

Inspirational motivation. Transformational leaders set a vision for the future, raise employees' morale, and inspire followers to transcend their personal interests for collective gains (Jin *et al.*, 2016). The leader encourages the followers to do well and to work towards achieving the organization's goals. In the process, followers' become stimulated to implement novel work ideas.

Individualized consideration. Transformational leaders create opportunities for followers to grow personally and professionally (To *et al.*, 2015). To return the leader's developmental gesture, followers feel happy and devote more time and efforts to their work. This stimulates followers' commitments, energizes higher work attitudes, and increases performance.

Intellectual stimulation. Transformational leaders encourage followers to be creative, innovative as well as challenge their own beliefs and values. Both the leaders and the led are encouraged to think and reasoned in new ways, take risks, and follow alternative routes to problem solving. The leader influences the followers to challenge the status quo, question old assumptions, reformulate problems, fulfill their intellectual curiosity, and use unlimited imagination to work towards high levels of performance (Cavazotte *et al.*, 2012). Hence, followers are likely to use unconventional approaches to think about problems and generate novel ideas.

TL helps the organization to develop a new vision, work towards achieving it, and ensures that the vision will last over time (Spector, 2014). TL matters for the growth of individuals, teams, organizations, and countries (Birasnav *et al.*, 2013). The benefits of TL include greater commitment, psychological impact, creativity, productivity, greater JS, increased job performance and low employee turnover (Antonakis and House, 2014; Brandt and Laiho, 2013). Other benefits include organizational innovation, trust, and organizational citizenship behavior (Brandt and Laiho, 2013; Zhu *et al.*, 2013).

2.3 OJ

OJ is one of the most frequently researched areas in human resources management, organizational psychology and organizational behavior. OJ represents an employee's perception of justice in a workplace. It is defined as "the degree to which individuals believe that the outcomes they receive and the way in which they are treated by an organization are fair, equitable and in line with expected moral and ethical standards" (Fuchs, 2011). Perceived OJ refers to anyone's subjective perceptions of the fairness of allocations (Gelens *et al.*, 2013). OJ influences organizational commitment, organizational citizenship, JS, and performance (Colquitt, 2001).

OJ has been researched widely in relation to subjectivity (Choon and Embi, 2012), decision making (Eberlin *et al.*, 2008), emotional exhaustion (Hur *et al.*, 2014), whistle blowing (Seifert *et al.*, 2010), and cognitive outcomes (Fujimoto *et al.*, 2013). However, the effect of TL on OJ and OJ on JS is inadequately examined and therefore, vague. Fujimoto *et al.* (2013) demonstrate that the degree of perceived fairness either pulls employees together or pushes them apart by either fostering inclusion or exclusion. Employees expect just treatment from the organization and the leaders to which they devote their time and energy (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, there is need to understand the leadership factors that pull public administrators toward OJ.

The four dominant dimensions of OJ are distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001). Distributive justice refers to employees' perceived fairness about work outcomes. The performance outcomes include pay, performance rating, promotion, power sharing, prestige, and outcomes of dispute resolutions. Thus, employees experience distributive justice when they perceive that they are receiving sufficient return from social and economic resources (Fujimoto *et al.*, 2013; Rai, 2013).

Procedural justice refers to employees' perceived fairness about the authority's decision-making processes, and the HR policies and practices that subsequently affect their work outcomes (Fujimoto *et al.*, 2013; Seifert *et al.*, 2010). Procedural justice focuses on the organization's decision to impose punishments and distribute rewards such as pay raises promotion and performance appraisal ratings. Hur *et al.* (2014) found a significant relationship between procedural justice and job performance.

Interactional justice refers to "employees' perceived fairness about the quality of interpersonal treatment that employees receive from an authority" (Fujimoto *et al.*, 2013). Interactional justice is divided into interpersonal justice and informational justice. Interpersonal justice refers to "the perception of how employees are treated with politeness, dignity, respect, and care by the authorities (supervisors or managers) or third parties (e.g. human resource managers) in an organization during the implementation of procedures" (Colquitt, 2001). Previous studies such as Wang *et al.* (2010) showed that interpersonal justice enhances employees' JS and work performance. Informational justice refers to the "explanations provided to people that convey information about why certain procedures were used or why the outcomes were distributed in a certain way" (Fujimoto *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, Wang *et al.* (2010) show that informational justice enhances employees' JS and work performance. Based on the theory of TL and OJ, the research framework in Figure 1 is developed.

3. Hypotheses development

3.1 TL and JS

The role of TL in response to work outcomes has attracted the interest of organizational researchers (Gillet *et al.*, 2013). These outcomes include work satisfaction, psychological well-being, emotional happiness, JS, and quality of work life. TL's influence on group goal achievement can raise employees' JS (Yang and Islam, 2012). Equally, JS has been linked to important organizational outcomes such as employee absenteeism, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, turnover, physical health and psychological well-being (King *et al.*, 2016). Given the central role of JS in the workplace, its antecedents from a leadership perspective has not been adequately investigated in the context of Nigeria's public civil service. Relying on the premise that TL determines JS in China, a country with different level of development and norms from Nigeria but both being developing countries, it can be postulated that:

H1. TL has significant influence on JS.

3.2 TL and OJ

Workers in the Nigerian public sector have been negatively affected by unruly behaviors of senior public administrators. It is not uncommon to notice a senior civil servant living a flamboyant and extravagant life; a life that their income cannot cater. At the same time, the junior ones do not receive salary on time, but are quick to receive a threat of retrenchment or dismissal. This often reduces the commitment of the middle and junior civil servants. It is expected, therefore, that leaders should demonstrate higher levels of justice if they are to influence employees' JS (Gillet *et al.*, 2013). Despite the apparent relevance of TL for organizational outcomes, only a few investigations were conducted to understand its influence on OJ. As employees' JS becomes low, organizations need transformational leaders who could change exploitive corporate behaviors to reflect a more humane standard of moral values, fairness, and justice. In the process, employees may emerge with a stronger set of moral values and commitments (Spector, 2014). Although there is a positive relationship between TL and organizational citizenship behavior and JS, only a few studies were conducted in public organizations. Like their private sector counterparts, employees in the public sector need leaders that can influence their JS and job outcome. Based on the theory of TL and the arguments above, it is postulated that:

H2. TL will have a significant effect on OJ.

3.3 OJ and JS

OJ is one of the most researched concepts determining JS (Spector, 1985). Literature indicated that all the dimensions of OJ are significantly and positively related to JS

Figure 1.
Research framework
of transformational
leadership,
organizational justice,
and employee job
satisfaction



(Colquitt, 2001; Rai, 2013). However, there is no clear explanation of which of the dimensions has stronger effects on JS. For example, while Memarzadeh and Mahmoudi (2010) suggested that distributive justice has more influence on satisfaction than procedural justice; Lambert (2003) stressed that procedural justice has a greater influence on satisfaction than distributive justice. Distributive and informational justice have significant relationship with JS, the influence of procedural justice and interpersonal justice on JS is not supported (Rai, 2013). Distributive justice and interactional justice were found to influence the relationship between TL and nurses' quality of work life in France (Gillet *et al.*, 2013). OJ could be negatively related to negative emotional states, perceived stress, depression, and anxiety which lessen JS. Thus, there is no sufficient evidence to conclude that OJ can be positively related to JS in Nigeria. Therefore, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H3. There is a significant relationship between OJ and JS.

3.4 TL, OJ, and JS

As one of the key processes that links TL and favorable outcomes, OJ helps leaders to be fair in their everyday interactions with subordinates (Gillet *et al.*, 2013, Greenberg *et al.*, 2004). Although TL has indirect effects on interactional justice (Gelens *et al.*, 2013), research has paid less attention to the mediating role of OJ on JS. Although, OJ has been found to mediate the relationship between TL and positive outcomes in non-health care settings, the outcome is not clear among middle managers of public organizations in Nigeria. Not only is the low integration of OJ with TL and JS, the relationship between transformational justice and JS is not consistent (Eberlin *et al.*, 2008). Building upon the mixed findings and the theories postulating that transformational justice affect OJ, this paper argued that transformational leaders are likely to increase subordinates' JS if they are ethical and fair to followers. Based on these arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4. OJ is a significant mediator of the relationship between TL and JS.

4. Research methodology

4.1 Sample and data procedure

This study employs a quantitative research design through a cross-sectional survey strategy. Structured questionnaires were distributed for data collection. The sampling frame was three tiers of government in Nigeria (the local, state, and federal governments). The sampling method used in this research was the stratified random sampling. The reason for selecting this sampling technique is that the research was conducted among the three tiers of government in Nigeria and across various institutions. Head office of Ministries, Departments and Agencies of the selected local, state and federal government were targeted. Middle-level administrators in the public institutions were targeted to indicate their perceptions about the transformational behaviors of their leaders. Specifically, directors of personnel/human resources were asked to respond to the questionnaires. MBA students of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Bauchi were employed as research assistants of which some were paid and many volunteered in the questionnaire distribution and collection. 600 questionnaires were distributed, of which 486 (81 percent) were retrieved, and 418 (81 percent) were found usable.

4.2 Measurement scale

The instruments for measuring the three constructs were taken from three different researches. The responses were evaluated on a seven point Likert-type scale in an order of 1 for "strongly disagree" to 7 for "strongly agree". The 20-item TL scale developed by

Bass and Avolio (2004) was employed to assess the middle managers' level of perceptions of how their direct supervisors engage in various TL behaviors. This scale was also used in similar context by Jin *et al.* (2016) and Chen *et al.* (2016). Five items were used to measure each of the four dimensions of TL (idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation). The items measuring the dimension of OJ (distributive and procedural) were adopted from Bacha and Walker (2013) and subsequently modified to suit the context of this study. The items measuring interactional justice (interpersonal and informational justice) were taken from Gillet *et al.* (2013) and Hur *et al.* (2014). Lastly, the measurement items for JS were adopted from Bucker *et al.* (2014) and Wu *et al.* (2013), and modified in the context of this study.

4.3 Method of data analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the data collected. The descriptive statistics involved the analysis of mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's α and factor loading through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The inferential statistics involve multiple regressions with the aids of structural equation modeling through the analysis of moment structure (AMOS).

4.4 Data analysis

Table I shows the frequency and percent of the demographic data in this study.

Among the 418 respondents, 137 (52.9 percent) were middle administrators of federal government institutions, 221 (32.8 percent) were of the state government institutions, and 60 (14.4 percent) were of the local government institutions. Table I shows that males were 302 (72.2 percent) while females were 116 (27.8 percent). This depicts the composition of the Nigerian public institutions with males being dominant. The respondents spread across different age brackets and work experience (years of service). The result indicates that the Nigerian public service is dominated by energetic and youthful population (71.8 percent).

	No.	Percent
<i>Tier of government</i>		
Federal Government Institution	137	52.9
State Government Institution	221	32.8
Local Government Institution	60	14.4
Total	418	100.0
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	302	72.2
Female	116	27.8
Total	418	100.0
<i>Age</i>		
18-30 years	79	18.9
31-40 years	198	47.4
41-50years	102	24.4
51-60 years	39	9.3
Total	418	100.0
<i>Years in service</i>		
1-5 years	125	29.9
6-10 years	127	30.4
11-20 years	120	28.7
31 years and over	46	11.0
Total	418	100.0

Table I.
Descriptive analysis of
categorical data

4.5 Assessment of measurement model

The measurement items were subjected to iteration processes during the measurement analysis in SEM (AMOS). Two dimensions (intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation) were dropped from the construct of TL, while two items each from idealized influence and individualized consideration were dropped, due to high measurement errors and low factor loading. Similarly, some items of the OJ and JS were dropped due to the same reasons. This facilitated the determination of the model fits. Table II provides the model fits of the 3 constructs.

RMR should be less than 0.8. The closer it is to zero, the better (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1989). GFI and CFI should be greater than > 0.90 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). TLI should be more than 0.90 (Bentler and Bonett, 1980). RMSEA should be less than 0.6 (Hu and Bentler, 1999); PCLOSE to be > 0.05 (Kline, 2005). Lastly, χ^2/df should be < 5.0 (Awang, 2014). Overall the model fits of the three constructs are excellent.

4.6 Assessment of validity

Construct validity was assessed based on the condition suggested by Rod *et al.* (2013) who argue that correlation coefficients can be used to evaluate construct validity. As such, Pearson correlation coefficients were used to assess the constructs' validity. The output of this process produced bivariate correlations with positive coefficients between 0.40 and 0.61, which are significant at 0.001 (see Table III). There are no variables that correlated above 0.85 and therefore, multicollinearity was not a problem in this study (Awang, 2014).

Convergent validity was evaluated based on the three recommendations offered by Fornell and Larcker (1981). First, item loading should be more than 0.70 and significance. Second, composite reliability of a construct must be greater than 0.80. Third, the average variance extracted (AVE) of all construct must be greater 0.50. Results in Table III shows that item loading of all the three constructs ranges between 0.73 and 0.86 thus above the 0.70 threshold. Composite reliability of all the constructs ranges between 0.86 and 0.95, which are above the 0.80 cut-off point; AVE of all the constructs are between 0.70 and 0.81 which are above the 0.50 threshold. AVE greater than 0.50 suggests that the three constructs have variance explained of more than 50 percent. Based on the data in Table III, it can be concluded that convergent validity was achieved.

Discriminant validity was assessed based on the criterion recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The criterion states that "the square root of the AVE for each construct must

Construct	RMR	GFI	CFI	TLI	NFI	RMSEA	PCLOSE	χ^2/df
Transformational leadership	0.024	0.987	0.997	0.995	0.986	0.025	0.940	1.267
Organizational justice	0.032	0.982	0.981	0.964	0.971	0.066	0.183	2.799
Job satisfaction	0.039	0.996	0.994	0.963	0.991	0.072	0.227	3.165

Table II.
Model Fits

Variable	Mean	SD	TL	OJ	JS	R (α)	FL	CR	AVE
TL	35.75	4.45	<i>0.84</i>	0.19	0.16	0.81	0.73	0.86	0.70
OJ	51.05	7.32	<i>0.44**</i>	<i>0.90</i>	0.37	0.87	0.86	0.95	0.81
JS	16.68	3.11	<i>0.40**</i>	<i>0.61**</i>	<i>0.85</i>	0.68	0.84	0.88	0.73

Table III.
Mean, standard deviation, correlation, composite reliability, and average variance extracted

Notes: TL, transformational leadership; OJ, organizational justice; JS, job satisfaction, SD, standard deviation; R, Cronbach's α ; FL, factor loading; CR, composite reliability; AVE, average variance extracted. Italic diagonal values are the squared root of average variance extracted (AVE). Values above the diagonal are the squared correlation of variables. **Significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

be larger than its correlations with all other constructs.” In other words, “the AVE should exceed the squared correlation with any other construct” (Hair *et al.*, 2013). The bold values represented on diagonal in Table III (0.84, 0.90, and 0.85) showed that the square root of AVE for each construct is greater than all the constructs’ correlations of 0.44, 0.40, and 0.61. Furthermore, values above the bold diagonal are the squared correlations of all the constructs and are less than all correlation coefficients between the constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that evidence of discriminant validity exists and all the constructs were distinct from each other.

4.7 Assessment of structural equation model

The structural model of the study is presented in Figure 2. The figure indicates the relationship among TL, OJ, and JS. The results are subsequently organized in Table IV.

Figure 2 and Table IV showed that when TL goes up by 1, OJ goes up by 0.57. The regression weight estimate, 0.57, has a standard error of about 0.09. The probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 6.611 in absolute value is less than 0.001. In other words, the regression weight for TL in the prediction of OJ is significantly different from zero at the 0.001 level.

Similarly, when OJ goes up by 1, JS goes up by 0.75. The regression weight estimate, 0.939, has a standard error of about 0.130. The probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 7.25 in absolute value is less than 0.001. In other words, the regression weight for OJ in the prediction of JS is significantly different from zero at the 0.001 level.

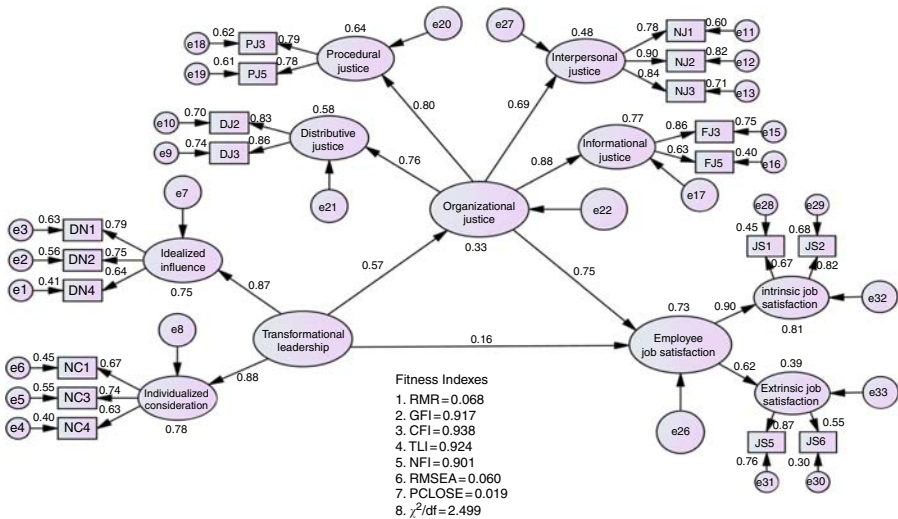


Figure 2. The structural model of the study

Table IV.

Regression estimates

Relationship	Standardized estimate (β)	SE	Critical ratio	Probability	Remark
OJ ← TL	0.57	0.09	6.61	***	Significant
JS ← OJ	0.75	0.13	7.25	***	Significant
JS ← TL	0.16	0.09	2.11	0.035	Significant

Notes: 0.035 means significant at the 0.005 level. ***Significant at the 0.001 level

Lastly, when TL goes up by 1 standard deviation, JS goes up by 0.16. The regression weight estimate, 0.16, has a standard error of about 0.098. The probability of getting a critical ratio as large as 2.11 in absolute value is 0.035. In other words, the regression weight for TL in the prediction of JS is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level.

4.8 Test of mediation

Data from Figure 2 and Table IV are used to compute the mediating effects.

Based on the analysis in Table V, a partial mediating effect of OJ on the relationship between TL and JS was suggested (β for TL \rightarrow OJ = 0.57; OJ \rightarrow JS = 0.75; and TL \rightarrow JS = 0.16). The type of mediation is a partial one.

5. Hypotheses testing

The aim of this study is to test the mediating role of OJ on the relationship between TL and JS. This objective is achieved through the test of the four formulated hypotheses. The results for *H1* show that TL has significant relationship with JS. The relationship was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.16, p < 0.05$). The result indicates that TL has positive effect on employees' JS in the Nigerian public institutions. Furthermore, the findings showed that idealized influence ($\beta = 0.87$) and individualized consideration ($\beta = 0.88$) have a strong influence on JS. This finding is consistent with Braun *et al.* (2013) who found that TL is positively related to followers' JS at the individual and team levels. Similarly, Yang and Islam (2012) found that transformational leaders' group maintenance, group goal achievement behaviors, and their complementarity enhance employees' JS.

The test of *H2* shows that TL has a significant relationship with OJ ($\beta = 0.57, p < 0.001$). This finding is similar to Bacha and Walker (2013) who found a partial relationship between transformational leaders and perception of fairness in France. Similarly, Gillet *et al.* (2013) suggested that TL influences distributive and interactional justice in the private and public hospitals in France. In the same way, Tatum *et al.* (2003) suggested a significant relationship between leadership style and OJ.

The test of *H3* shows that OJ has a significant relationship with employees' JS ($\beta = 0.75, p < 0.001$). This finding is similar to Rai (2013) who revealed that distributive justice influenced the JS of health workers in the Southern USA. Similarly, Palaiologos *et al.* (2011) suggested that procedural justice, distributive justice, and interactional justice have a positive effect on employee performance. Lastly, the test of *H4* shows a partial mediation. Since the TL \rightarrow JS; TL \rightarrow OJ; and OJ \rightarrow JS paths are positive and significant. Overall, the predictive power of the model toward explaining the employees' JS in the Nigerian public organization is 0.73. The statements testing the formulated hypotheses can be approximately correct for large samples under suitable assumptions.

Relationship	Regression estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Results
TL and OJ	0.57	< 0.001	Significant
OJ and JS	0.75	< 0.001	Significant
TL and JS	0.16	< 0.005	Significant

Notes: The indirect paths effect (standardized path estimate) = $0.57 \times 0.75 = 0.43$. The direct part (standardized path estimate) = 0.16. Both the indirect path (standardized path estimate) of TL \rightarrow OJ and OJ \rightarrow JS are positive and significant. Since the product of indirect effects ($0.57 \times 0.75 = 0.43$) is greater than direct effect (0.16), and the direct part is equally significant ($p < 0.005$), then mediation occurs. The type of mediation is partial mediation since the direct effect is still significant ($p < 0.005$) after OJ entered the model

Table V.
Mediating role of
organizational justice
in the relationship
between
transformational
leadership and job
satisfaction

6. Conclusion

Transformational leaders are needed in a period of uncertainty and change to utilize the four dimensions of OJ theory in order to improve employees' JS. The application of TL behavior is expected to be more effective if leaders display the virtues of distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice across the organization. Greenberg (1993) found that organizations that violate the norms of OJ, by not providing fair treatment, will receive negative reactions from their employees. Therefore, it makes good sense if leaders of public institutions should govern with justice. Therefore, public administrators should leverage OJ to the advantage of their organizations.

This paper has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the paper adds to the few literatures of TL and JS. Another unique contribution of this paper is the integration of OJ theory to explain the relationship between TL and JS. The findings suggest that the effect of TL on employees' intrinsic and extrinsic JS depends on leaders' fairness and moral judgments in the workplace. This statement is consistent with the human resource management and organizational behavior literatures which state that the perception of leadership and their level of fairness have implications for employee satisfaction.

Practically, the mediating effect of OJ on the relationship between TL and JS provides three implications. First, combining TL with OJ will help administrators mitigate the problem of delaying salary payment, delaying promotion, insecure jobs, and nepotism regarding promotion, termination and retrenchment in the public organizations. Second, the study will help administrators to raise employees' level of achievement, growth, intellectual ability, working life, service delivery, and JS in the Nigerian public sector. Third, the integration of TL and JS can create more transformational leaders who can influence the feelings of job pride and identity among employees. Hence, the application of this study will help to mitigate the feelings of low JS and consequently, improve service delivery in the Nigerian public organizations.

Despite the positive implications of this study, the paper has some limitations. First, there is need to investigate the intervening effect of other important variables, most especially the perception of benevolence trust. Customizing the words of Mayer *et al.* (1995), benevolence trust is "the extent to which a leader is believed to want to do good to the followers, aside from the egocentric profit motive." Second, a single respondent (middle manager) was asked to respond to the questionnaire in each organization. The responses of operating managers were not assessed. Operating managers are equally important in each organization as such their perceptions of TL, OJ, and JS should be examined. Similarly, future research should either use dyads respondents by asking a senior administrator to respond to the TL questions while middle or lower level managers to answer the OJ and JS questions, either in public or private organizations. Third, although the findings are approximately accurate for large samples under suitable assumptions, the generalizability of the findings should be interpreted with cautions. This is because the PCLOSE statistical value of the structural model is significant when the threshold value is non-significant.

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