

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Service Quality in Public Institutions of the Amhara Region, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The study examined the effects of transformational leadership on service quality. It used a mixed-methods research approach of an explanatory sequential design. Data were collected from 124 and 8 individuals for quantitative and qualitative strands, respectively. Closed-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data. In the quantitative analysis, one-sample T-test, Pearson correlation and stepwise regression were used. Thematic analysis was used for the qualitative strand. Hence, the computed mean values showed 'poor' practices for the variables of transformational leadership and service quality. Pearson's Correlation result indicated statistically significant and strong positive relationships between transformational leadership components and service quality. The coefficient of determination result showed a statistically significant explaining power of transformational leadership on the variance of service quality. Therefore, theoretically, the study implies that all transformational leadership dimensions have significant relationships with service quality. Practically, the outputs of this research can be utilized as a guide by organizational leaders to enhance the effectiveness of their leadership practice. To become effective in practice and to act as a role model, leaders in public organizations are recommended to utilize transformational leadership. This is to equip them with the intended knowledge and skills of such leadership philosophy and to enforce practices of service quality.

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Introduction

This study aims to investigate the practices and relationships between transformational leadership and service quality in public institutions. To examine the relationships among these variables, the study focused on the practice of leadership and service quality in public institutions of Amhara Region, Ethiopia. Thus, with the advent of flat organizations and new public management that embrace the notion of a buy-and-sell organization (Wolmesjö, 2005), social service organizations have changed drastically over the previous few decades. Managerialism, or new public management, is part of a wave of new ideas that infiltrated its way into the public sector (Aladwan, 2016). The intention was to introduce business concepts into the public sector to make it more market-oriented, with the goal of improving efficiency and control (Edwards, 1998). Despite the fact that the major objective of public institutions is to provide quality service to the customers, service provision among employees has decreased and customer demands have increased (Wolmesjö, 2005). New expectations have been placed on people in leadership roles as a result of these changes, and the need for expertise about how to manage these transformed institutions has grown (Daniel & Lalise, 2024). With even greater disruption expected in the future as a result of shifting legal, social, technical, and competitive situations, effective leadership is considered critical to retaining people and managing the rapid speed of change in today's public sectors (Lawler, 2007).

Thus, according to Muindi (2011), the position of leadership is significant among the numerous factors affecting service quality. Leadership can affect followers' loyalty and, as a result, improve the organization's efficiency (Tafvelin, 2013). The concept stated by Northouse (2010) noted, "Leadership is the process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal", presents a vivid picture of how leaders might persuade their supporters to attain their objectives.

Transformational leadership (TFL) is one of the leadership styles that appear promising in terms of managing continuous change in public organizations, and it is the concern of this study. TFL style is distinguished from other styles of leadership by its five fundamental dimensions of focus: idealized influence (attribute), idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Avolio et al., 1995). Moreover, transformational leaders use a variety of approaches and methods to inspire and improve the performance of their members, including motivating them, communicating a mission with them, leading by example, and empowering them to collaborate with communities to accomplish the desired outcomes (Ismail et al., 2009). The capacity of transformational leaders to

establish organizational unity by providing a stable and consistent direction for their followers is their most distinguishing characteristic. Transformational leaders also strive to improve employee and staff efficiency by providing resources for personal and professional development (Northouse, 2010).

Furthermore, another emphasis of this paper is service quality. It has also been conceived by a number of authors. According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), service quality refers to consumers' attitude towards the perceived overall superiority and excellence of the delivered service. Grönroos (1984) also defined it as a global judgment by consumers regarding their expectations for a certain service with respect to their perceptions of the actual service performance. To describe and offer a precise explanation of service quality, the characteristics of the service must be understood. With respect to this, Cronin and Taylor (1992) identified five dimensions of it. The aspects explained were tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The capacity to provide the promised service consistently and precisely is referred to as reliability. On the other hand, workers' expertise and civility, as well as their capacity to communicate with trust and confidence is assurance. While, the appearance of physical buildings, equipment, employees, and communication materials are all tangibles. The other trait of service quality is empathy, which is described as giving clients sympathetic and personalized attention. The final aspect of service quality is responsiveness. It refers to the institution's readiness to assist clients and to deliver prompt service (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Therefore, to measure these dimensions of service quality from the perspective of employees, SERVPERF that developed by (Cronin & Taylor, 1992) was used. Again, academics have looked at the relationship between transformational leadership and service quality (Avolio et al., 2004; Atmojo, 2012; Omar & Hussein, 2013; Stander & Rothmann, 2008). To this, a finding investigated by Atmojo (2012), demonstrated the effects of transformational leadership on organizational engagement, and academic service quality, as well as the impact of organizational commitment on staff performance. Atmojo (2012) used 146 participants to the study. The finding showed that TFL dimensions have a significant influence on service quality. Avolio, et al. (2004), also found a positive association between transformational leadership and organizational engagement in a sample of staff nurses employed in a big Singapore hospital.

Specifically, Tesfaye (2009) has addressed the role of leadership effectiveness in leading transformation, as well as the difficulties faced by Ethiopian leaders at various levels in aligning organizational strategy with success criteria. The writer claimed that nowadays Ethiopian public service leaders at all stages of institutional structure promote transformational agenda in order to accomplish growth and transformation plan goals. However, according

to Zerihun and Tesfaye (2014), Ethiopian public service organizations have encountered several implementation pitfalls that undermine service effectiveness, efficiency, and leadership practice, thereby limiting organizational performance and reform outcomes.

Alghamdi (2016) also claimed that experts call for further empirical research on transformational leadership in the public sector to better understand how the context may interfere with service quality practices. This showed that a comprehensive study on the relationships between transformational leadership and service quality in public institutions has received less attention. Therefore, the theoretical gap identified in relation to these variables was lack of a comprehensive understanding of possible relationships among transformational leadership and service quality dimensions. Empirically, the causal association between these variables in the public institutions is inadequately explored. Again, as transformational leadership is a relatively new idea elsewhere and in Ethiopia as well, less consideration has been paid to the application of all of its components in research activities, except for certain attempts to define it. Furthermore, today's Ethiopian public service organizations pursue leaders who are inspiring, motivating, and considerate to their followers and customers. However, as to Zerihun and Melese (2014) the success of reform execution and institutional service quality provision is determined by leaders' engagement.

Hence, against these drawbacks, the current study exerts an effort to assess the levels of the practices of transformational leadership and service quality by examining all facets of them. The paper also utilizes an effort to evaluate the relationship between transformational leadership and public institution service quality in ANRS. Hence, the purpose of this study is to identify the relationship that exist among transformational leadership components such as (idealized influence [attributes], idealized influence [behaviors], inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration) and public institution service quality. Therefore, to achieve this aim, the study was guided by the research questions outlined below.

- 1) What is the extent of transformational leadership practice in selected public institutions of the study area?
- 2) What is the degree of service quality practice in selected public institutions of the study area?
- 3) Is there a statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership and service quality in practice public institutions of the study area?
- 4) What is the effect of transformational leadership dimensions on service quality in public institutions of the study site?

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of the study that indicates the predicted relationships between the variables under investigation: transformational leadership and service quality. This is to gain detailed understanding of the nature of the link between the variables under consideration (Figure 1). Thus, Lassar et al. (2000) have found clear and optimistic associations between transformational leadership and academic service quality in their study, although the association between the variables remains at the forefront of the contemporary research efforts. Writers such as Barnett et al. (2001) also found that transformational leadership is essential for instilling confidence in followers' for transformation, improvement, and success. Similarly, Bloemer et al. (1998) observed that except for charisma and tangibles, service quality has a positive relationship with all dimensions of transformational leadership with significance value at.01.

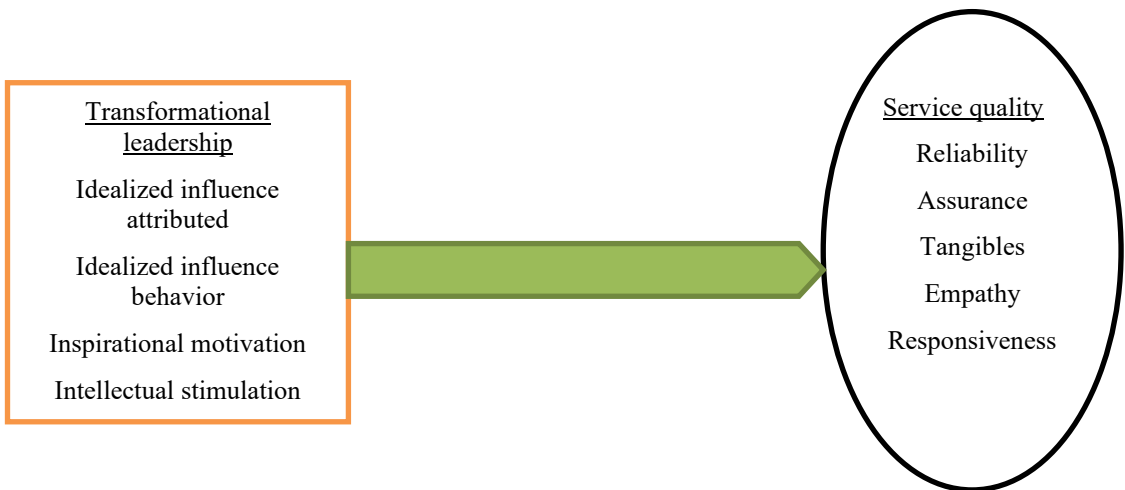


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Relevant empirical studies

The relationship between transformational leadership and service quality

Based on a sample of 150 customer service operators in an Australian call center, Bartram and Casimir (2007) investigated how transformational leadership components affect employees' performance and satisfaction. According to the study result, the ability of leaders to effectively integrate intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration has enhanced employees' empowerment in executing their duties. Consequently, it could result in improved service quality. Furthermore, Klidas et al. (2007) polled 356

frontline staff from 16 premium hotels in 16 European countries about the role of transformational leadership on empowerment. According to the findings, appropriately executed intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration boosted the empowerment of followers in offering services. As a result, it's possible to conclude that the effective implementation of transformational leadership could improve the institution's service quality. Moreover, research by Liao and Chuang (2007) illustrated, transformational leadership has been demonstrated to improve service quality by increasing employees' passion and initiative. Transformational leaders inspire excellent performance from their teams by building an appealing and exciting vision, setting hard but attainable goals, being confident and optimistic, and stressing team spirit and shared values (Grant, 2012). Again, employees who work with transformational leaders are more likely to value their work, be more devoted, and feel emotionally empowered (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). On the contrary, other writers claimed that TFL has uneven impacts on employee performance and attitudes regarding their work (Bono & Judge, 2003; Li & Yuan, 2017). Employees may not be able to link their leader's vision and aspirations to their current situation (Grant, 2012). A captivating vision presented by a leader, on the other hand, may be seen by employees as unrealistic or too tough to achieve. Rather employees may view a leader's goal as being more relevant and feasible if they are obliged to engage with service clients on a regular basis (Bono & Judge, 2003).

Materials and methods

Research design

The pragmatic model was employed as the study's ontological and epistemological base. It employed mixed methods research approach (QUANT→qual) of explanatory sequential design (Creswell, 2014). This design used quantitative data collection and analyses followed by qualitative data collection and analyses. The purpose to use mixed methods research approach is to enhance understanding about the underlying phenomena better than a single data source. Further rationale for using a mixed approach is that it helps to compensate for system shortcomings, build on method strengths, and mitigate for method biases that are inevitable (Greene, 2007).

Sample and sampling procedures for survey data

The population of this study involved public institution leaders and employees in Amhara Region of Tach –Gayint Woreda. Therefore, to make the inquiry more scientific, manageable, and representative enough, the public institutions of the Woreda were grouped into four homogenous clusters based on their pool service, and named as administrative, agriculture, communication and civil service. As indicated in Table 1 below, from each pool two institutions and a total of eight sectors were selected as the sample frame of the study by using simple random sampling. Therefore, the sample unit for this study consisted of public service leaders and employees in selected public institutions of study site. The procedures followed to determine the sample size from the sample frame were:

- First dividing public institutions in to four clusters based on their pool service.
- Select two public institutions from each cluster using simple random sampling technique
- elect sample employees and leaders from the source lists of the selected public institution by using lottery method simple random sampling.

Moreover, sample size is an important aspect of any empirical study in which the aim is to make deductions about a population from a sample (Bell, 2015). To infer the result, the sample must be a genuine representative of the population (Walliman, 2005). This means to reach at a conclusion, the sample should not be too large or too small but it should be representative enough about the population in which the sample is drawn from. Thus, if the total populations are equal to or less than 200 the researcher is recommended to use census sampling whereas if the population is above 200, the researcher is required to use a standardized formula to obtain sample size from the population (Israel, 1992). Hence, as the total target population of the study is 241, the study used Yemane's (1967) sample size determination formula or equation. Finally, the sample size of the study for survey data and its proportional allocation are indicated in Table 1 below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where, n= is the sample size,

N= is the population size,

l = probability of event occur,

e = is the level of precision 5 % (0.05) with 95% confidence level;

Therefore, the sample size can be computed in the following manner:

$$n = \frac{241}{1+241(0.05)^2} = 150.39 \approx 150.$$

Hence, 150 is the sample size of the study.

Then, the proportion of sample (n) can be adjusted the following way.

Table 1

Total sample size and sampling design profile

No	Pool service	Organization	Population	Proportional allocation of Sample size to each organization	No. of interviewee
1	Administration	Administration	35	22	1
2	Agriculture	House of speaker	9	5	1
		Agriculture development	47	29	1
3	Civil Service	Land administration and environmental protection	19	12	1
		Civil service	30	19	1
4	Communication	Education	27	17	1
		Finance and economic development	53	33	1
		Women, children and youth affairs	21	13	1
	Total		241	150	8

Qualitative sampling technique

In respect to this, semi-structured interviews were utilized. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with purposefully selected leaders, as these groups of people were considered knowledgeable and helped to elicit information about the issue. These groups of individuals were also provided with information about their experience regarding leadership practice and service quality practice in their own setting. Hence, one respondent for each sector and a total of 8 interviewees were involved in the semi structured interview using a data saturation technique. This was done to gain information that supports or substantiates findings extracted from quantitative data collection instruments.

Reliability of instruments

The reliabilities of MLQ and SERVPERF were tested many times in different places. Regarding this, Bass and Riggio (2006) claimed that the MLQ scales have exhibited high to outstanding internal consistency, with alpha coefficients above the 0.80 threshold for all MLQ scales. Again, the SERVPERF scale’s reliability was found to be between 0.884 and 0.964 (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Besides, piloting the instrument was carried out in Tach-Gayint Woreda with 61 respondents. Then, in order to determine the reliability of the questionnaires, the Cronbach alpha value of 0.70 is considered the threshold value (Sürücü & Maslakçi, 2020). As a result, Table 2 below displays the pilot results of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each variable. The outcome indicated that the variables' values found between the range of 0.767 and 0.922, which are above the acceptable threshold value. Moreover, data triangulation, respondent validation, and reflexivity were applied to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the qualitative data.

Table 2
Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the variables (pilot test)

Measurement scale	Dimension	N of items	Cronbach's Alpha
SERVPREF	Tangibles	4	0.856
	Reliability	6	0.847
	Responsiveness	3	0.888
	Assurance	4	0.852
	Empathy	5	0.827
	Overall	22	0.922
MLQ	Idealized influence (attribute)	4	0.777
	Idealized influence(behavior)	4	0.876
	Inspirational motivation	4	0.855
	Intellectual stimulation	4	0.907
	Individualized consideration	4	0.767
	Overall transformational	20	0.816

Data analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean values, standard deviations, and one sample t-test result were used to examine the extent of the implementation of the issues under investigation in public institutions. For inferential statistics, Pearson correlation and Hierarchical linear regression analyses were employed using

SPSS version 23 and was tested using a level of significance of 0.05. Both Pearson correlation and hierarchical linear regression helped to explain the nature of relationships that may exist between the variables (Creswell, 2014). Hierarchical linear regression analysis was performed to test the relationship between the five types of transformational leadership dimensions and service quality. The rationale to use this model is because it helps to see the relative contribution of each block of variable. That means it help to determine whether a particular predictor variable is still able to predict when the effects of another variable are controlled for (Cohen et al., 2003). Here, although F-statistics was used to test the significance of the regression model, the statistical significance of the relationships between the variables was tested by observing the p-value, standardized beta coefficients and the coefficient of determination. Change in the coefficient of determination (R²) was utilized to test the additional change in the variation of service quality. In addition, the qualitative data obtained through interviews was analyzed thematically.

Ethical considerations

Concerning of this issue, focuses were given to the following points. Firstly, to undertake the research, awareness was created by the researchers to participants to have high confidentiality that the information obtained from them would not be disclosed to third parties. Consequently, the respondents' right to privacy, confidentiality and secrecy were retained exclusively. Moreover, the researchers were careful not to use the findings of others without acknowledging writers.

Results and Discussions

A total of 150 participants received survey questionnaires. The rate of return of questionnaires was 135 (90%) of which 11(8.2%) were partially filled and rejected. Thus, the remaining 124 (82.7%) were properly filled in and used for the analysis purpose. In addition, interviews were also conducted with 8 individuals who were in leadership position.

Assumption test

Before conducting one sample T-test, Pearson correlation coefficient and hierarchical linear regression analyses assumptions of normality, outliers, linearity, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity were checked in the following subsections.

Normality assumption test

Figure 2 and 3 below represents normal probability plots for service quality and transformational leadership style. Most researchers use Q-Q plots to test the assumption of normality. In this method, observed value and expected value are plotted on a graph. If the plotted values vary more from a straight line, then the data is not normally distributed. Otherwise data will be normally distributed. Thus, as shown in the figures below, the data agree with the normality assumption since all the points fall reasonably close to the line.

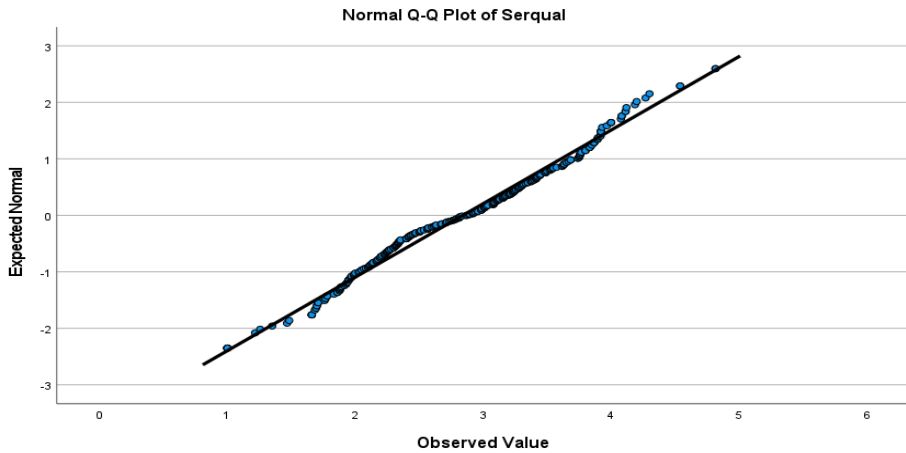


Figure 2. Q-Q plot of service quality

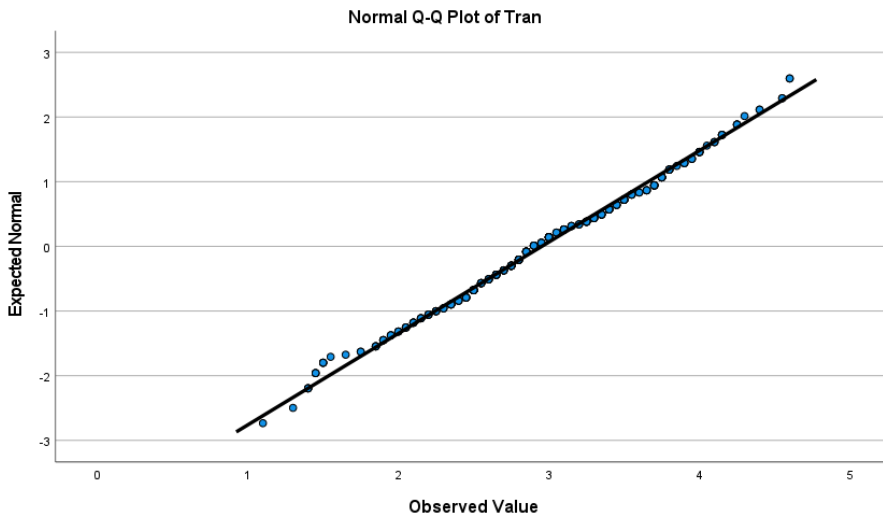


Figure 3. Q-Q plot of transformational leadership styles

A goodness-of-fit test such as the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests are also used to accompany the normal probability plot to assess the normality assumption. The null hypothesis associated with these tests is that the residuals are normally distributed. The alternative hypothesis is that the residuals are not normally distributed. A small p-value of the Wilk’s test, therefore, provides evidence in favor of the alternative hypothesis, that the model residuals are not normally distributed. Hence, the results in Table 3 below indicated that the model residuals are normally distributed as the Wilk’s test values are greater than p-0.05.

Table 3

Test of normality based on Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk

Tests of Normality							
	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk			
	S	f	ig.	St	Df	ig.	S
	tatic			tatic			
Service quality	.710	23	.053	.85	123	.01	.6
Transformational	.554	23	.053	.92	123	.88	.0
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction							

Outlier assumption test

An outlier is an extreme or unusual observation. One or more outliers can be problematic in fitting a model and may distort the analysis. Box plots help you see the center and spread of data. You can also use them as a visual tool to check for normality or to identify points that may be outliers. Box plots help you identify interesting data points, or outliers. Outlier values are plotted as data points and fall beyond the whiskers. Figure 4 and 5 below shows box plots of service quality and transformational leadership style with no outlier points.

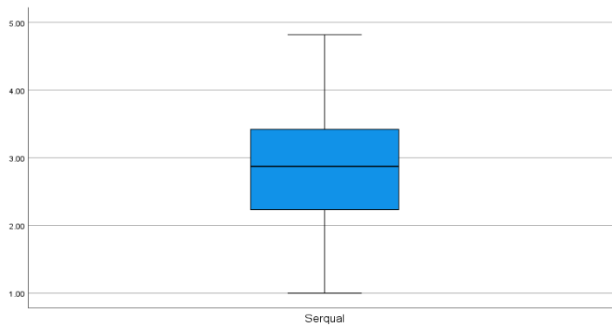


Figure 4. Outlier assumption test of service quality

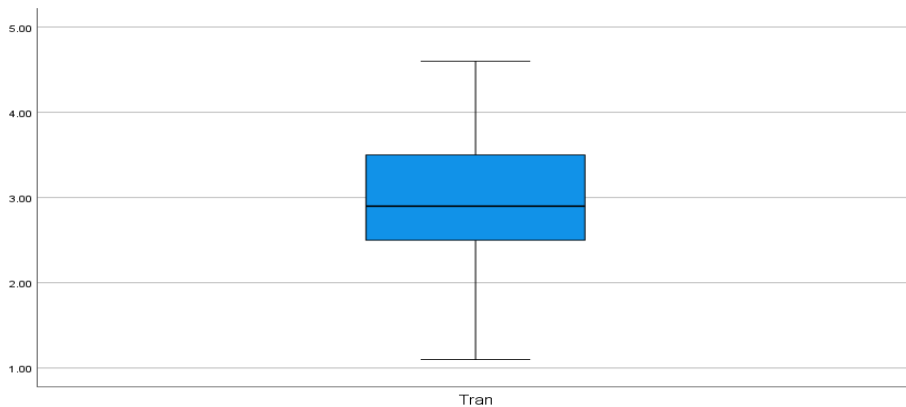


Figure 5. Outlier assumption test of transformational leadership

Linearity assumption test

Another assumption tested in this study is linearity. In this case, if the assumption holds and the model is a good fit to the data, the residuals should be normally distributed with a mean of 0. A histogram or dot plot of the residuals can provide a visual check on the shape and symmetry of the residuals around 0. Hence, Figure 6 below showed a histogram of residuals, illustrating the distribution of the data. As seen in the histogram, the data is approximately normal.

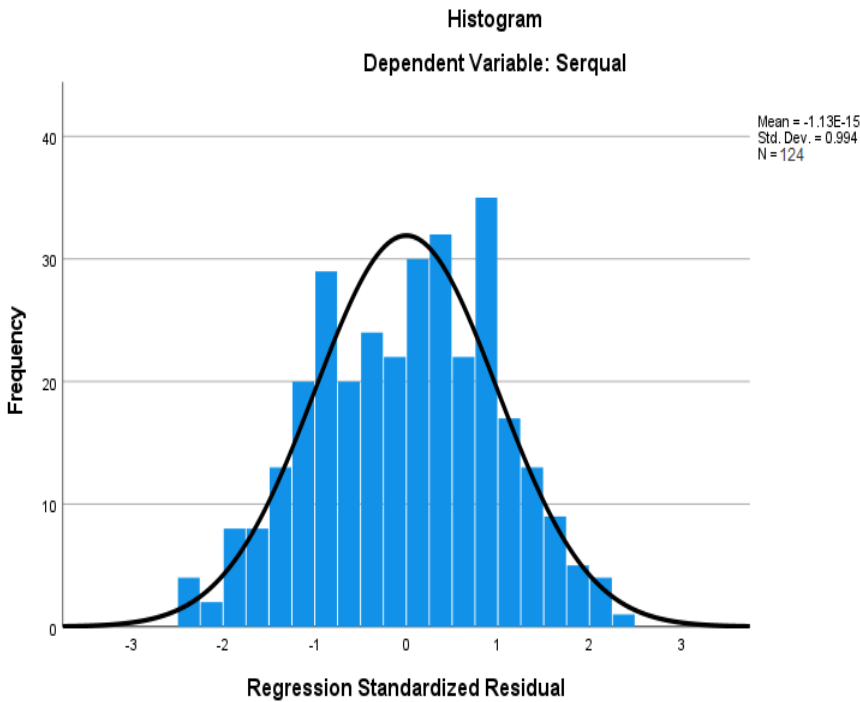


Figure 6. Linearity assumption test

Analyzing a histogram alone can sometimes be difficult to assess the linearity assumption. A normal probability plot can then be used to better see any deviations from the normality assumption. In this plot, each residual is plotted against its expected value assuming the normal distribution holds. If the points fall along the plotted line, then the residuals agree with the assumption of normality; if the points deviate from this line, the residuals do not agree with the assumption. Accordingly, as shown in Figure 7 below the straight line reasonably fits along the data, this displayed the normality assumption's validity.

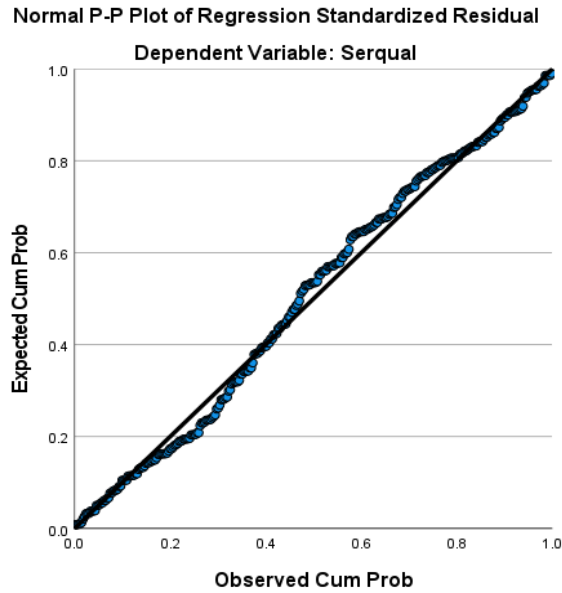


Figure 7. Linearity assumption test

Homoscedasticity assumption test

Residual scatter plots provide a visual examination of the assumption of homoscedasticity between the predicted dependent variable scores and the errors of prediction. In other way round it describes a situation in which the error term (that is, the “noise” or random disturbance in the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable) is the same across all values of the independent variables. In homoscedasticity test, uneven variances in samples led to biased and skewed test results. Figure 8 below indicates a homoscedasticity test with residuals that are randomly scattered around zero, with no specific pattern designated that the assumption is met.

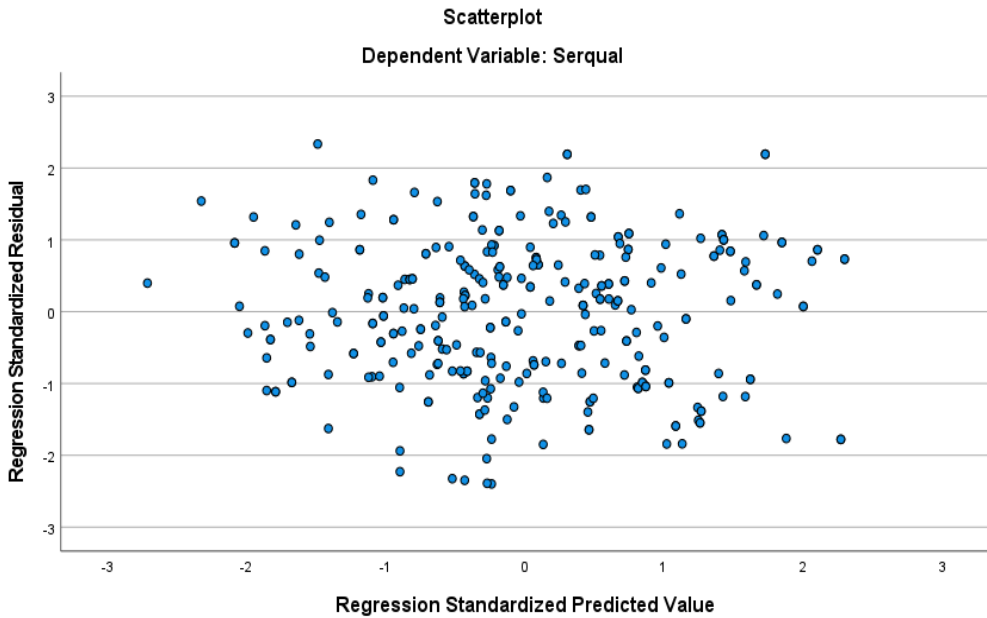


Figure 8. Homoscedasticity assumption test

Multicollinearity assumption test

Multicollinearity was also evaluated using the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance values. According to Kline (2012), in the VIF statistics, which measure the ratio of the overall standardized variance to the tolerance variance, it is described that a variable is redundant if the VIF exceeds 10. While Hair et al. (2014) recommended a VIF value of 5 or less and a tolerance value above 0.2 for a variable to become free from collinearity issues. Hence, as illustrated in Table 4 below, the VIF values in this study ranged from 1.704 to 3.181 and the tolerance values are above 0.2, which suggest that multicollinearity is not an issue.

Table 4

Multicollinearity assumption test

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
Idealized influence (attributed)	.54	1.704
Idealized influence (behavior)	.72	3.181
Inspirational motivation	.65	2.519
Intellectual stimulation	.57	2.046
Individualized consideration	.78	1.722

Results

Practices of transformational leadership

Table 5 below includes the means and standard deviations of each of the five dimensions of transformational leadership and its overall instrument. Respondents indicated that the leaders of the study institutions lack the practice of transformational leadership to manage their work. The mean value of idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration were 1.89, 2.25, 2.01, 1.91, and 1.70 with a corresponding standard deviation of 1.135, 1.050, 1.212, 1.110, and 1.169, in order. The result of the transformational leadership components together indicated a mean of 1.95 and a standard deviation of 1.135. Thus, all dimensions of transformational leadership were rated with a mean value below the norms developed by Avolio et al. (2004) indicating that transformational leadership is displayed rarely by public institution leaders of the study site with the greatest score of difference found in intellectual Stimulation (-1.17) and individualized consideration (-1.42).

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics of Transformational Leadership in the Study area

Dimension/criteria	N	Mean	Norm	Mean Difference	Ideal score	Std. deviation
Idealized Influence (Attributed)	124	1.89	2.66	-0.77	>3.0	1.135
Idealized Influence (Behavior)	124	2.25	2.66	-0.41	>3.0	1.135
Inspirational Motivation	124	2.01	3.21	-1.2	>3.0	1.050
Intellectual Stimulation	124	1.91	3.08	-1.17	>3.0	1.212
Individualized Consideration	124	1.70	3.12	-1.42	>3.0	1.110
Overall Transformational	124	1.95	2.87	-0.92	>3.0	1.169

The qualitative analysis from interview data also showed a similar output as of the quantitative. Regarding this, eight interviews were conducted. The result showed that the majority of the participants believe that their leadership style is not a transformational leader. However, few interviewees stated that they are “uncertain” whether their leadership style is transformational or not.

Practices of service quality

To examine the survey data and understand the extent of service quality practice, a one sample t-test was used and triangulated by interview data. To ascertain whether a sample originates from a population with a definite mean value, the one-sample t-test is used. As indicated in Table 6 below, the extent of institutions’ practice has a mean value of 2.4032 and Std.Deviation of 1.0814. The result showed that the statistics mean is found in a poor range. This demonstrated that the status of service quality practice in the study institutions was placed in a low level. This designates that the customers were dissatisfied with the service provided by the public service institution since the mean values that lie between 1.00 - 1.49, 1.50-2.39, 2.40-3.49, 3.50-4.49 and 4.50-5.00 indicate very poor, poor, moderate, high, and very high service quality respectively (Dauda et al., 2013). Thus, the result displayed the existence poor service quality practices in the public institutions.

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics of Service Quality

	One-Sample Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Service quality	124	2.4032	1.08140	.09711

Moreover, a single sample t-test is also important to determine the statistical significance of mean difference among the institutions. Thus, as shown in the Table 7 below, there is a statistically significant mean difference in practicing service quality among the institutions with $t(123) = 24.747$ and $p = 0.000$. Hence, the practice difference among the institutions is statistically significant at $p < 0.0001$.

Table 7
One sample t-test

	One-Sample Test					
	Test Value=0					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Service quality	24.747	123	.000	2.40323	2.2110	2.5955

In the qualitative analysis the respondents also explained the existence of dissatisfaction on the service provision. They further asserted that service performance affect customer’s perceptions about the organization. As a result, in the study area there is a high disagreement against the service delivered by public institutions. Respondents claimed that availability of equipment, cleanliness, the way employee dressed, the way they handle customers, the way they speak and how quick the services offered are factors affecting service quality. Furthermore, documents indicated that the practices of services to the customers are poorly delivered and as to the document sources, civil service institution is repeatedly ranked the lowest from public institutions in annual evaluations.

Correlations between transformational leadership and service quality

Table 8 below showed the relationships among the five dimensions of transformational leadership and service quality. In the analysis, higher positive correlations were observed among the variables. Again, all correlations were statistically significant at the level of 0.01. The highest correlation value was between individualized consideration and service quality ($r = .914^{**}$). The lowest correlation value was between idealized influence (behavior) and service quality ($r = .862^{**}$). As a result, one can infer from the correlation statistics that there are significant and positive correlations between all of the variables investigated. This is to mean that as leaders apply transformational leadership dimensions in their daily leadership practices, they may attain improved service quality and create conducive working condition in public institutions. Ultimately, they may secure effectiveness in their institutions.

Table 8
Correlation between Transformational Leadership components and Service Quality

	1	2	3	4	5
6					
1 Service quality	1				
	124				
2 Idealized influence attributed	.894**	1		*	
	.000				
	124	124			
3 Idealized influence	.862**	.916**	1		
	.000	.000			

behavior	124	124	124			
4	.890**	.963**	.928**	1		
Inspirational motivation	.000	.000	.000			
5 Intellectual stimulation	.896**	.965**	.905**	.951**	1	
	.000	.000	.000	.000		
6 Individualized consideration	.914**	.937**	.908**	.927**	.935**	1
	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	124	124	124	124	124	124

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Effects of transformational leadership on service quality practice in public institutions

A sequential linear regression analysis was conducted to assess if transformational leadership dimensions predicted service quality for public institutions. Assessment of the assumption of normality by viewing a P-P scatter plot of the residuals was conducted. The scatter plot showed no large deviation from normality and the assumption was met. Again, assessment of the assumption of homoscedasticity by viewing a scatter plot between the residuals and predicted values was conducted. The results showed no obvious pattern to the point, and the assumption was met. The researchers also checked the assumption of multicollinearity by examining VIF and tolerance. All the VIF below 10 and tolerance above 0.2 suggests no presence of multicollinearity. And the result showed the absence of multicollinearity and the assumption was met as well.

Then, the statistical significance of relationships between transformational leadership dimensions and service quality was tested by examining the p-value and the coefficient of determination. Change in the coefficient of determination (ΔR^2) was used to examine the additional change in the variation of service quality practice with the subsequent addition of transformational leadership dimensions in the model. Thus, the model summary output explained that there were five models computed. The results presented in Table 9 showed that transformational leadership has a statistically significant and positive effect on service quality practice with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.799. This indicates that idealized influence (attributed) explains 79.9% of the variation in service quality practice. The F Statistics was also significant at 0.000 indicating that the regression model was fit for estimating the relationship between idealized influence (attributed) and service quality practice. Again, the result in model 2 showed that idealized influence (behavior) has significant influence on service quality practice ($\Delta R^2=0.012$, $\Delta F =7.482$, $p \leq .01$). This implies that the addition of idealized influence (behavior) significantly

improved on the prediction of idealized influence (attributed) alone by explaining almost 1.2% additional variance. When we add inspirational motivation in Model 3, the results showed significant positive influence on service quality practice ($\Delta R^2=0.005$, $\Delta F=3.187$, $p \leq .05$). Again, when we control for intellectual stimulation in Model 4, the result revealed a positive influence on service quality practice ($\Delta R^2=.009$, $\Delta F =6.083$, $p \leq .05$). Besides, when we control for individual consideration in Model 5, the result demonstrated a positive influence on service quality practice ($\Delta R^2=.028$, $\Delta F =22.500$, $p \leq .01$).

Regarding the qualitative analysis of the relationship of transformational leadership and service quality, the interviewees said that even if you have best educated employees, adequate resources, better environment but ineffective leadership, your workforce is not motivated, and if they are not provided with constant learning, training, influence and inspiration from their leader they cannot perform well. Furthermore if leaders are not properly communicating with the staff, respondents argued that they consequently failed to focus on motivational factors, rewards, visioning and listen to the others concern. Therefore, if trainings are not properly adopted in focus of transformational leadership characteristics, the institutions cannot succeed in the future. The respondents again said that the secret behind the success of top service providers in the context of the study is all about successfulness in influencing, inspiring and effectiveness in leadership. The respondents added that in the future, if the institutions don't fulfill customer expectations regarding the promises made, customer will be disappointed and can switch their relationship.

Table 9
Hierarchical linear regression model summary

Model Summary ^f									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.894 _a	.799	.797	.48711	.799	484.201	1	12	.000
2	.900 _b	.810	.807	.47467	.012	7.482	1	12	.007
3	.903 _c	.815	.811	.47043	.005	3.187	1	12	.047
4	.908 _d	.824	.818	.46078	.009	6.083	1	11	.015
5	.923	.852	.846	.42406	.028	22.500	1	11	.000

Discussion

The study emphasized on the practices and relationships of transformational leadership and service quality in public institutions. In this paper the survey outputs are considerably supported and aligned by qualitative results. In regard to transformational leadership, earlier studies asserted that it is practicable and helpful for the effectiveness of public institutions. A study by Tesfaye (2009), for example, has addressed the role of leadership effectiveness in leading transformation. In his work, the writer contended that the difficulty faced by Ethiopian leaders at various levels is aligned with organizational strategy with success discrepancies. This previous work finding is aligned with the present study result. The result of the transformational leadership component indicated a mean of 1.95 and a standard deviation of 1.135. This indicated that the leaders in the study area faced a tangle of strategy alignment with reshaping the success challenges. Furthermore, the failure to realize the norm mean value in all dimensions of transformational leadership is the indication of the leaders' incapability to work as anticipated.

The findings of the survey data also revealed a 'poor' level of service quality practice with a mean value of 2.4032 and Std.Deviation of 1.0814. The study's findings agree with those of earlier research findings. For example the research results conducted by (Milana, 2018; Yoon & Suh, 2003; Ghayas & Hussain, 2015) explicit that public institutions are manifested by low service quality practice. Therefore, leaders in public institutions are required to narrow the customer gap to satisfy the customers' service expectation. The result was also further triangulated through interviews and document observations. Thus, most of the participants in the interview indicated the existence of poor institutional service quality. Besides, the previous studies finding also showed congruent result with this study (Milana, 2018).

In addition, another concern of the study was to examine the link between transformational leadership and service quality in public institutions. The findings showed that the correlations between all the variables were statistically significant and have strong positive relationship. The correlation between service quality with idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration are ($r=.894^{**}$, $.862^{**}$, $.890^{**}$, $.896^{**}$ and $.914^{**}$) respectively. From the results one can infer that the relationships among transformational leadership's components and public service quality were significant positive. This result showed that the degree of service quality and employee commitment increased as the frequency with which public institution leaders implementation

of transformational leadership style increased. Therefore, it is conceivable to draw the conclusion that public leaders who adopt the transformational leadership style may see an increase in high-quality service delivery from their workforce as well as an increase in productivity and efficiency. These findings confirm academics who stressed the significance of transformational leadership as the most effective strategy in both the public and private sectors to improve service quality (Alghamdi, 2016). Once more, research by Park and Rainey (2008) investigated a similar output with this research finding. Their study validated the availability of association between transformational leadership style and service quality. Additionally, the results of this research are consistent with the work of Ugaddan and Park (2017). Their study discovered that the effectiveness of transformational leadership can raise public service motivation. Statistically substantial predictive capacity of transformational leadership characteristics on the practice of service quality in the study area was also demonstrated by the results of the sequential linear regression analysis. With a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.799, $p=0.000$, the model summary result showed that idealized influence (attributed) had a statistically significant and positive effect on service quality practice. This suggests that idealized influence/attributed/ accounts for 79.9% of the heterogeneity in service quality practice. Once more, the findings from models 2, 3, 4, and 5 showed that idealized influence behavior, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration have significant effects on service quality practice, as indicated by changes in the coefficient of determination values of ($\Delta R^2=.012$, $\Delta F =7.482$, $p \leq .01$; $\Delta R^2=.005$, $\Delta F=3.187$, $p \leq .05$; $\Delta R^2=.009$, $\Delta F =6.083$, $p \leq .05$; $\Delta R^2=.028$, $\Delta F =22.500$, $p \leq .01$) respectively. This demonstrates that by explaining nearly 1.2 percent, 0.5 percent, 0.9 percent, and 2.8 percent additional variance on the service quality practice respectively, the addition of idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration significantly improved on the prediction of idealized influence (attribute) alone. As a result, the current study's findings are significantly similar to those of other studies that demonstrated the predictive value of transformational leadership dimensions on service quality in public organizations (Atmojo, 2012; Omar & Hussein, 2013; Stander & Rothmann, 2008). According to Kekäläinen (2019), the ultimate kind of influence is when leaders can inspire their team by being examples of themselves. Besides, Jing and Xiang (2011) discovered that such leadership style add to the customer's happiness by creating positive influence on the service providers.

Conclusion

The findings of the study showed that transformational leadership and service quality are poorly practiced by leaders and practitioners in the study site. From this, one may infer that despite relative differences, leaders in public institutions in the study area exhibit shortages to show behaviors associated to the aforementioned variables. Therefore, hard work on the predictor variables may encourage changes for service quality in public institutions. Such results may also require leaders of public institutions to better aware and consider the contributions of transformational leadership for better service quality that can motivate employees for job commitment. In a nutshell, leaders should be mindful of the combined contributions of the predictor variables to realize quality service in public institutions.

Limitations of the study

Even if this study offers important insight into the constructive link between transformational leadership and service quality in public institutions of the study site, it has the following weakness. The research sample was confined only of a single study area because of time and access constraint. As a result, the application of findings could not be generalized to all contexts of public sector or private sector except to the institutions with similar setting and contexts. Moreover, due to the nature of the study, where the participants were asked to evaluate their supervisors, this might affect the employee's focus to answer correctly and provide honest responses about the organizations. This is to mean that this responding bias may influence the validity of the data used in the study. Hence, it requires including private organizations for future research on the area in order to make possible generalization to the wider context.

Implications of the study

The implications of this investigation can be comprehended from theoretical, research methodology, and practical importance. Regarding theoretical importance, this study showed that all transformational leadership dimensions have relationships with service quality. This outcome is consistent with study by Avolio, et al. (2004). In the case of capitalization of research methodology, the data gathered using MLQ, SERVPREF and semi structured interview have exceeded acceptable standards of validity and reliability analysis resulted in accurate and reliable outcomes. Practically, the outputs of this research can be utilized as a guide by organization leaders' to enhance the effectiveness of their leadership practice. Thus, to achieve this aim, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration. First, leadership

practices will be effective if employees are constantly educated with new knowledge, important skills and high moral values. Secondly, transformational leadership style can be meaningful if followers are empowered. Finally, interactions and interrelation between employees and leaders will boost constructive personal outcomes. If organizations will take into consideration these suggestions, they may motivate employees and leaders to attain organizational objectives and goals.

Declarations

Conflict of interest

No any potential conflict of interest regarding this research.

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