



UNIVERSITY
OF LAGOS



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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR ADMINISTRATORS: A FOCUS ON THE UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS

INTRODUCTION

The previous edition of our newsletter focused on **Change Management: Adapting to Organisational Shift**, where we explored how to navigate organisational change by managing resistance, communicating effectively, and maintaining stability during transitions. This edition builds on that foundation by shifting the focus from simply adapting to change to leading it.

Transformational Leadership for Administrators highlights the importance of creating a clear vision, inspiring people, building capacity, and turning change into lasting progress. While change management equips administrators to navigate change, transformational leadership empowers them to guide others through it and drive meaningful organisational growth.

In today's rapidly evolving higher-education landscape, universities require leaders who can inspire innovation, motivate staff, and drive institutional excellence. Transformational leadership has emerged as one of the most effective leadership models for administrators in universities, including the University of Lagos – **The University of First Choice and the Nation's Pride**. It emphasises vision, motivation, and the development of people, qualities essential for sustaining academic relevance, global competitiveness, and organisational harmony.



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The Meaning of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a leadership approach where leaders inspire followers to exceed expectations by appealing to their values, emotions, and sense of purpose. Rather than relying on authority or transactional rewards, transformational leaders motivate people through vision, trust, and personal development.

In the context of UNILAG, transformational leadership means administrators who can guide teaching and non-teaching staff toward shared goals, foster innovation in teaching and research, and create an environment where students and staff thrive.

Qualities of Transformational Leadership

The key Qualities are as follows:

1. Visionary Thinking

Ability to articulate a compelling future for the university, whether in research excellence, digital transformation, or student experience.

2. Inspirational Motivation

Leaders energize staff, communicate optimism, and build enthusiasm around institutional goals.

3. Intellectual Stimulation

Encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving, crucial in a university setting where innovation drives progress.

4. Individualized Consideration

Paying attention to the needs, strengths, and aspirations of staff and students; mentoring and supporting their growth.

Importance of Transformational Leadership in the University Administration

1. Enhances staff morale and reduces resistance to change.
2. Promotes innovation in curriculum development, research, and service delivery.
3. Strengthens teamwork across faculties, departments, and administrative units.
4. Improves institutional reputation and competitiveness locally and globally.
5. Helps universities adapt to technological, economic, and policy changes.

Developing Transformational Leadership Skills

Administrators in UNILAG can cultivate transformational leadership through:

1. Continuous Professional Development

Participating in leadership workshops, management courses, and higher-education governance training.

2. Effective Communication

Practicing transparency, active listening, and

empathy when engaging with staff and students.

3. Mentorship and Coaching

Supporting junior staff, early-career academics, and student leaders to grow professionally.

4. Encouraging Innovation

Creating safe spaces for experimentation, whether in teaching methods, administrative processes, or research initiatives.

5. Self-Reflection and Emotional Intelligence

Regularly assessing one's leadership style, strengths, and areas for improvement.

6. Leveraging Technology

Using digital tools to improve efficiency, collaboration, and service delivery.

Barriers to Transformational Leadership and How to Overcome Them

Common Barriers:

1. Rigid Bureaucratic Structure

Universities often have hierarchical systems that slow decision-making.

2. Resistance to Change

Staff may fear new policies, technologies, or leadership styles.

3. Limited Resources

Budget constraints can hinder innovation and staff development.

4. Cultural Inertia

Long-standing traditions and norms may discourage new ideas.

5. Communication Gaps

Misunderstandings between management and staff can weaken trust.

Strategies to Overcome the Barriers

1. Streamline administrative processes to reduce bottlenecks.
2. Communicate change clearly, emphasizing benefits and involving stakeholders early.

3. Prioritize resource allocation for high-impact initiatives.

4. Promote a culture of openness, collaboration, and shared responsibility.

5. Invest in staff development to build capacity for innovation.

6. Use participatory leadership, ensuring staff feel heard and valued.

Impact of Transformational Leadership in Administration at the University of Lagos

Transformational leadership can significantly strengthen UNILAG's administrative effectiveness:

1. Improved Staff Engagement and Productivity

Motivated staff is more committed to teaching, research, and service.

2. Enhanced Student Experience

Better leadership leads to improved academic services, welfare systems, and campus life.

3. Stronger Research and Innovation Culture

Transformational leaders encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and research excellence.

4. Organizational Adaptability

UNILAG becomes better positioned to respond to

global trends such as digital learning, internationalization, and industry partnerships.

5. Positive Institutional Reputation

Effective leadership enhances the university's standing locally and internationally.

6. Sustainable Development

Transformational leadership supports long-term planning, resource management, and institutional resilience.

CONCLUSION

Transformational leadership is essential for administrators in the University of Lagos as the institution continues to evolve in a competitive global academic environment. By embracing visionary thinking, fostering innovation, and supporting staff and students, administrators can drive meaningful change and ensure that UNILAG remains a leading institution in Africa.

