THE ROLE OF TRANSFORTIONAL LEADERSHIP ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION IN ZAIN IRAQ

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to identify the concepts of Transformational Leadership and the concept of Organizational Innovation at Zain Iraq and to know the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Innovation, and to know the impact of Transformational Leadership and Innovation on ideal influence and intellectual stimulation from the employees' perspective worked at Zain Iraq. This was done by employing an analytical approach whereby a questionnaire was prepared to gather data. The total data of 120 forms were distributed, and 115 valid forms were retrieved for statistical analysis, the results indicated that there is a statistically significant relationship between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Innovation. The researcher suggested that there is a need for some enhancement in the training and development programmes of the employees to enhance their intellectual and creative capacities, which is in consistent with the transformational leadership style.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the field of administration has been given much attention in the management literature, with transformational leadership as one of the most popular subjects in a time of fast change in the environment and constant change and renewal. The information and communications revolution in Iraq is impacting the administrative and technological landscape in a paradigm shift that urges organizations to tackle new challenges that demand leadership models other than the old ones. Thus, transformational leadership has become one of the catalysts that can influence employees' professional orientations and beliefs in an organization by changing their self-interest in such a way that it is conducive to the organization's greater mission.

Leadership that is characterized as transformational is not just about teaching someone what he or she is giving up or wants in exchange for results; rather, it is rooted in the personal values and beliefs of the leader which seek to raise the intellectual and emotional level of the ones he or she leads, so that they attain extremely high motivation and ethical commitment.

The environment of Zain Iraq is very dynamic and is constantly changing, and the need for transformational leadership has become a strategic need to suppress feelings, values, creativity and the emergence of innovation. In this sector, the transformational leader is a catalyst for innovation by strengthening employees' self-confidence and arousing their unique skills, so that they can better meet their own original performance requirements. This leadership attitude can be seen in its role in facing challenges with creative policies, work methods and services, especially by intellectualizing and motivating employees and turning employees' aspirations into the core values of the company (Fawzi, 2022).

In major telecommunication companies, organizational effectiveness relies on the capacity to predict customer needs and competitors' skills, which depends on proficient human resources that can quickly react to changes in the environment. In this context, transformational leadership becomes an instrument for achieving phenomenal results, by increasing employee awareness of the

importance and value of the results achieved and encouraging them to go beyond the interest they have in themselves, towards the interest that the organization has. Organizational Innovation is the core of sustainability for Telecommunications Companies in Iraq, simply because it is defined as the implementation of new idea or new behavior in the fields of device, system, process, policy or product is within the organization (Al-Hadhrami & Jawad, 2023).

Zain Iraq is an innovating company in a few ways, from technological, to administrative, to incremental. All of these add to the Company's competitive edge in a very dynamic marketplace (Al-Amir, 2025)

1.1. Research Problem

The telecom industry in Iraq is facing significant challenges and rapid transformation with advancements in technology and economic and social changes, which puts pressure on companies to remain competitive and attain sustainable competitive advantage. Management struggles to lead the human resources in a way that helps them attain new and innovative goals, because familiar approaches to leadership emphasize management and control over creativity and improved strategic thinking. Therefore, creativity has become a prime element in concentrating companies' abilities to handle changes and solve new problems. Considering the rise of the importance of organizational innovation in improving the competitive advantage of companies, the main question under study is: What role can transformational leadership play in improving organizational innovation in Zain Iraq?

Several previous studies have suggested that the personality of the leader as a transformational leader, with key traits of creating an idealized influence, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, is one of the key drivers of the increase of employee creativity and performance. To do this, one must establish a leadership philosophy that creates a supportive organisational setting which is conducive to creativity, which in turn results in an ongoing and ongoing phenomenon of innovation.

The study aims at identifying the connection between transformational leadership and the organizational innovation in Zain Iraq and to explore the extent to which the transformational leadership can transform ideas and humans' resources to become an engine for achieving sustainable innovation and organizational excellence in a dynamic environment. Therefore, the following questions are raised, and the aim of this study is to address them: 1) How does the transformational leadership influence the innovation of an organization? 2) Are there any effects of the dimensions of transformational leadership on the organizational innovations?

1.2. Research Objectives

Identify Transformational Leadership, its goals and its multiple characteristics, to explore the level of organizational innovation in Zain Iraq, and the role of transformational leadership in fostering it and to study the effect of dimensions of transformational leadership on organization innovation.

1.3. Significance of the Study

It contributes to highlighting the importance of leadership styles, specifically transformational leadership, and its role in achieving organizational innovation.

It sheds light on the transformational leader's personality and practices, as they represent one of the most prominent sources for enhancing the company's ability to face future challenges in a rapidly changing and highly competitive environment.

It helps in understanding the selected variables of transformational leadership and organizational innovation, and their role in ensuring the success and continuity of companies in the workplace while securing sustainable competitive advantages.

1.4. Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses were formulated based on the research problem and its questions as follows: Main Hypothesis H01: There is no statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership, with its dimensions (idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration), and organizational innovation, with its dimensions (administrative innovation, technological innovation), at Zain Iraq.

Derived from the main hypothesis, the following sub-hypotheses were proposed: Sub-Hypothesis H01-1: There is no statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership, with its dimensions (idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration), and the administrative innovation dimension at Zain Iraq.

Sub-Hypothesis H01-2: There is no statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership, with its dimensions (idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration), and the technological innovation dimension at Zain Iraq.

1.5. The Theoretical Framework

This section introduces the theoretical background of the study, which involves summarizing the key concepts, principles, and theories pertinent to the research interest. Its goal is to develop a far-reaching conceptual understanding and lay the scientific foundation for the analytical and empirical elements that follow.

1.5.1. The Concept and Dimensions of Transformational Leadership

Leadership is regarded as one of the key concepts in management and organisational behaviour because it directly influences individual behaviour and effectiveness of an organisation in reaching the goals effective and efficiently. The fast changing business environment and the growing competitive demands have created a need for changing mindsets and managerial practices in radical ways in business, innovation and employee intrinsic motivation. From this perspective, the theory of transformational leadership has become one of the most popular contemporary theories in administrative thought, which centers on how to bring about qualitative change in the behavior of persons and institutions by deeply influencing their values, motivations, and aspirations to be positive (Xiao & Jinxia, 2022).

This concept was introduced with the work of American scholar, James MacGregor Burns in 1978 who differentiated between transactional and transformational leadership. The core idea re-emerged in the 1980s developed by Bernard M. Bass who set its theoretical frame and operational scales. Since then, transformational leadership has grown in prominence in the fields of scholarly work and its practical implementation in diverse disciplines, including the field of business, where the modern context demands flexibility, innovation, and quick adjustments to change (Gabril, 2024).

1.5.2. Concept of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership style that seeks to bring about positive change in individuals and organizations by inspiring and motivating followers to transcend their personal interests and work toward achieving a shared vision and higher strategic objectives. This leadership approach is based on building trust, strengthening organizational commitment, and developing employees' creative capabilities (Muiruri, 2024).

Transformational leadership is considered today one of the most needed leadership styles in organizations, especially those characterized by rapid development and operating in a fast-changing dynamic environment. This style works to bring about fundamental changes in the beliefs and attitudes of subordinates, guiding them to look beyond their personal interests for the sake of the organization. It also deepens their understanding, awareness, and engagement with the organization's vision and goals through the influence of the leader's personality, individualized attention, and encouragement of creativity (Rahman, 2025).

1.5.3. Dimensions of Transformational Leadership

Idealized Influence

Idealized influence in transformational leadership makes the leader a role model for employees. Transformational leaders are characterized by exemplary behaviors and high ethical values, making them a model for employees in how to act and achieve goals. Through this idealized influence, the leader is able to motivate employees to reach high levels of performance and adopt ethical values that enhance the work environment (Ismail, 2022).

Intellectual stimulation

Another crucial aspect of transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation. The transformational leader will inspire critical and creative thinking from employees as they are encouraged to question the way things are done and to think of other solutions. In addition to problem solving, intellectual stimulation works to create new strategies to enhance the organization's overall performance. The leader encourages employees to think outside the box in an intellectual manner. With this kind of leadership, employees are more likely to explore alternative approaches to challenges, uncover new opportunities and come up with creative solutions. As a result, the intellectual stimulation leads to innovation in the organization and a more competitive organization in the market (Yousefi & Jiang, 2025).

Individualized Consideration

In addition to directing the organization towards success, transformational leadership also places a strong emphasis on the needs of employees. Transformational Leader: Is someone who provides support and guidance to others depending on their needs at an individual level. This individualized consideration stimulates the development of employees' personal skills and abilities, thereby actively participating in the innovation process. If employees think their leader cares about his/her growth and is willing to support him/her, then employees will be more willing to commit and be motivated towards the organization's goals. This personalized treatment also contributes to establishing a trustful relationship among both the leader and the workers, which creates a good environment for the organization to innovate and develop sustainable development (Khan & Saif, 2022).

1.5.4. The Role of Transformational Leadership in Enhancing Organizational Innovation

It is concluded that transformational leadership is crucial in improving the innovation level of the organization as it affects the behavior and culture of the employees. Transformational leaders have been found to make a significant impact on organizational innovation: they create a climate of trust and co-dependence among members, inspire members to embrace new ideas, and catalyze change. Transformational leaders have the ability to stimulate employees' motivation to think beyond traditional boundaries, leading to the development of new products and services. These leaders use a combination of tactics to foster creativity, allowing for open discussion, support for experimenting with new ideas, and acknowledgement of innovative results (Lee & Jeong, 2023).

1.6. Transformational leadership

One dimension of organizational innovation is the backbone of the continuity of telecommunications companies in Iraq. It is the application of a new concept or action, something that involves a device, system, process, policy or product in the organisation. In Zain Iraq, innovation has different dimensions starting with technological innovation, managerial innovation, and incremental innovation, all contributing to improving the company's competitive advantage to adapt to a highly volatile market (Souli & Pierrakeas, 2025).

1.6.1. Benefits of Organizational Innovation

The benefits of Organizational Innovation: Organizational innovation brings a variety of benefits and can really boost the performance and competitiveness of an organization. The following are some of the main advantages (Datta & Srivastava, 2023): 1) Organisations can streamline and optimise their operations, minimise duplication of effort and maximise productivity through reevaluating and optimizing processes and structures. This results in greater efficiency in

resource utilization and quicker project and product turnaround. 2) Improving Employee Engagement and Morale: Innovative organizational practices may also include fostering a more inclusive and empowering workplace. Having a good sense of belonging and feeling valued for their work and ideas can boost their job satisfaction and engagement. This helps employees stay more positive and decreases employee turnover and draws in the best employees. 3) Improving the ability to adapt quickly to market changes: The market is changing at a rapid rate and the ability to adapt quickly is essential. 4) Organizational innovation gives companies the flexibility and reaction ability to new trends, customer needs and new technologies. This adaptability is advantageous for businesses to stay ahead and capitalize on emerging opportunities. 5) Internal innovations are also likely to result in better organizations providing high-quality product and/or services, which in turn will enhance customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Customer-focused culture and improved internal processes can help deliver better customer experiences, and, ultimately, customer loyalty and word-of-mouth marketing. Long-term sustainability and growth.

By continually developing and improving internal practices, the organization can ensure that it will stay sustainable in the long run and grow. Beyond simply helping companies survive, innovation creates opportunities for them to grow and thrive in competitive settings, setting the stage for sustainable growth and market leadership

1.6.2. Dimensions of Organizational Innovation

Administrative innovation

According to Narvaez (2025), managerial innovation is defined as the introduction of new concepts that can be transformed into policies, regulations, and new methods that contribute to improving organizational performance.

Damanpour (2019) argues that managerial innovation aims to enhance productivity by focusing on better utilization of resources to achieve superior results compared to the previous period or relative to top competitors.

Managerial innovation is considered a process of creating new work methods, policies, regulations, and approaches that improve the interaction between human resources and the internal and external environmental conditions. This process develops organizational performance and fosters unique solutions to problems, resulting in outcomes that achieve institutional excellence and distinction (Lee & Jeong, 2023).

Technological innovation

Innovation in organizations is the process of introducing new ideas, technologies, or models to improve processes, develop products, or create new ways to serve customers. When technology is integrated with innovation, organizations become more capable of adapting to rapid changes in the market.

From the above, technological innovation can be summarized as the activities undertaken by an organization aimed at introducing changes in production activities. This may involve creating new services or developing new methods in production processes or making modifications and improvements to existing services. Such innovation ensures the organization's sustainability and helps achieve a competitive position in a constantly evolving business environment (Souli & Pierrakeas, 2025)

2. Method

The study followed the descriptive method to present the data and used the analytical method, which is one of the most prominent and widely used scientific approaches, as it meets the research requirements. A questionnaire was employed to collect data from the research sample, and the analysis was conducted using a statistical software package (SpSS).

2.1. Research Population and Sample

The research population are the employees of Zain Iraq. Systematically, 120 questionnaires were administered to the employees. The sample consisted of male and female staff of the company. The questionnaires were given to a total of 115 people, with 90% responding, which is deemed to be a satisfactory response rate statistically.

2.2. Methods of Data Processing and Analysis

The researcher used the following statistical methods for the processing and analysis of the research data according to their nature and goals: 1) Arithmetic Mean: To find the respondents' patterns on the response scale. 2) Standard Deviation: To show the extent to which the responses vary from the average. 3) Spearman's correlation: To determine the intensity and the nature of the correlation between the variables of the research. 4) Simple Regression Coefficient: To test the impact of independent variable on the dependent variable and the significance of this impact. 5) F-Test: To compare the calculated F value with tabulated F value to measure variance and statistical difference. 6) T-Test: to test the significance of the correlation coefficient, when the distribution is normal distribution.

2.3. Research Model

In order to realize the objectives of the present research and to complete the purpose of this research that is to identify the effect of independent variable with dimensions on the dependent variable with dimensions, the researcher developed a research model which was supported by previous research and references. The independent and dependent variables are part of the study model as shown in Figure 1.

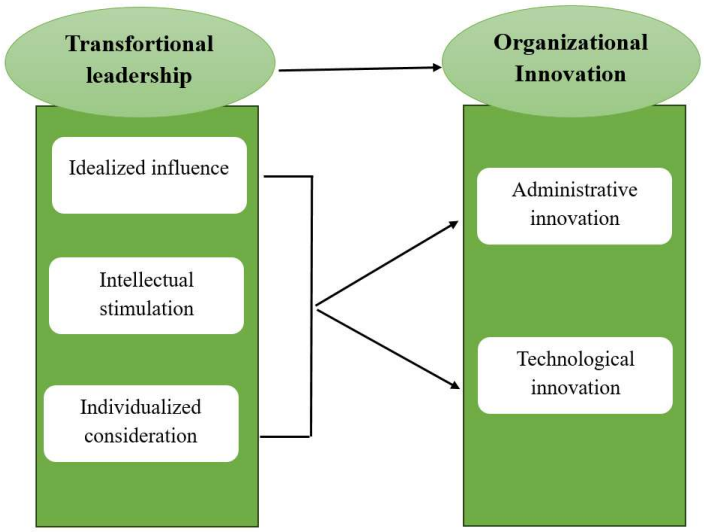


Figure 1. Study Model (Source: Prepared by the researcher)

Table 1. References for the Study Model

Study Variables	Sources and References
Independent Variable: Idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration.	Khan and Saif (2022) Ismail (2022) Muiruri (2024) Yousefi and Jiang (2025) Rahman (2025)
Dependent Variable: administrative innovation, technological innovation	Lee and Jeong (2023) Narvaez (2025) Souli and Pierrakeas (2025)

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Statistical Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

3.1.1. Description and Diagnosis of the Research Variables and Their Dimensions

The researcher conducted a descriptive analysis of the data using the SPSS statistical software to determine the means and standard deviations, as well as to identify the maximum and minimum values that illustrate the characteristics of the research variables based on the employees' responses. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the research variables and their dimensions

Variables	Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Coefficient of Variation	Relative Importance (%)	Level of Agreement
Transfortional leadership	Idealized influence	3.80	0.78	1	5	0.181	80.2	High
	Intellectual stimulation	3.84	0.75	1.3	5	0.189	81.3	High
	Individualized consideration	3.87	0.85	1.2	5	0.184	74.2	High
	Total	3.83	0.79	1.16	5	0.184	78.56	High
Organizational Innovation	Administrative innovation	3.75	0.75	1	5	0.173	72.2	High
	Technological innovation	3.80	0.78	1	5	0.185	83.3	High
	Total	3.77	0.765	1	5	0.179	77.75	High

Variable Description transfortional leadership

Idealized influence: The mean value (3.80) indicates a slightly lower level of performance compared with the other dimensions. The standard deviation (0.78) reflects the dispersion of the responses, while the coefficient of variation (0.181) indicates a moderate level in the implementation of idealized influence methodologies within the company.

Intellectual stimulation: The mean value (3.84) indicates the average level of achievement in this dimension. The standard deviation (0.75) reflects the degree of dispersion in the responses, while the coefficient of variation (0.189) is considered moderate, indicating a relative variation in the implementation of these procedures.

Individualized consideration: The mean value (3.87) indicates a good level of performance compared with the other dimensions. The standard deviation (0.85) reflects the dispersion of the responses, while the coefficient of variation (0.184) indicates that individual consideration within Zain Company is good, as it considers employees' needs, abilities, and personal circumstances.

Variable Description Organizational Innovation

Administrative innovation: The mean value (3.75) indicates a moderate level of technological innovation in the company. The standard deviation (0.75) reflects the dispersion of the responses, while the coefficient of variation (0.173) is relatively low compared with the other dimensions.

Technological innovation: The mean value (3.80) indicates the highest level in the dimension of administrative innovation, reflecting a strong focus of Zain Company on technological innovation. The standard deviation (0.78) reflects a dispersion, with the coefficient of variation (0.185) being higher than that of the other dimension, administrative innovation.

3.2. Hypothesis Testing

Main Hypothesis 1: The main hypothesis assumes the existence of a statistically significant positive relationship between the dimensions of transformational leadership in all its aspects and organizational innovation. The researcher employed Pearson's correlation coefficient to evaluate this hypothesis. Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients of the transformational leadership variable across its three dimensions, in addition to the organizational innovation variable, as shown in the Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix between the Dimensions of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Innovation

Variables		Transfortional leadership	Idealized influence	Intellectual stimulation	Individualized consideration
Organizational Innovation	Pearson	0.833	0.723	0.766	0.701
	Sig	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS software

There is a correlation between transformational leadership and organizational innovation. A positive and statistically significant relationship exists between the dimensions of transformational leadership (idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration) and organizational innovation, with a correlation coefficient of 0.833 at a significance level of 0.000, which is below the standard significance threshold. Therefore, the first main hypothesis is accepted.

There is a Correlation between the Dimensions of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Innovation. Table 3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients and their significance levels between the dimensions of transformational leadership (idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration) and the organizational innovation variable.

The correlation between organizational innovation and idealized influence was 0.723 at a significance level of 0.000, indicating a moderate positive relationship between organizational innovation and idealized influence.

The correlation between organizational innovation and intellectual stimulation was 0.766 at a significance level of 0.000, indicating a moderate positive relationship between organizational innovation and intellectual stimulation.

The correlation between organizational innovation and individual consideration was 0.701 at a significance level of 0.000, indicating a moderate positive relationship between organizational innovation and individual consideration.

3.2.1. Sub-Hypotheses

Sub-Hypothesis $H01\text{-}_1$: There is no statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership, with its dimensions (idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration), and the administrative innovation dimension at Zain Iraq.

Table 4. Results of the regression analysis (coefficients) for the first sub-hypothesis

Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig*
	Std. Error	B	Beta.		
Constant	0.363	0.953		3.592	0.000
idealized influence	0.105	0.274	0.237	2.585	0.000
intellectual stimulation	0.104	0.515	0.055	3.950	0.009
individualized consideration	0.012	0.287	0.239	2.577	0.002

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS software

Table 4 indicates that idealized influence has the greatest and statistically significant effect on the dependent variable (administrative innovation), with a B value of 0.515, a T value of 3.950, and a significance level of 0.000, which is below 0.05.

Following that, individual consideration has a smaller but statistically significant effect on the dependent variable (administrative innovation), with a B value of 0.287, a T value of 2.577, and a significance level of 0.005, which is also below 0.05.

This reflects Zain Company's commitment to encouraging learning and professional development by providing support, guidance, and mentoring to each employee.

Sub-Hypothesis H01-$_2$: There is no statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership, with its dimensions (idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration), and the technological innovation dimension at Zain Iraq.

Table 5. Results of the regression analysis (coefficients) for the second sub-hypothesis

Regression Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig*
	Std. Error	B	Beta.		
Constant	0.332	0.958		2.890	0.005
idealized influence	0.137	0.439	0.392	3.211	0.000
intellectual stimulation	0.132	0.311	0.287	2.351	0.007
individualized consideration	0.135	0.525	0.277	2.650	0.004

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS software

Table 5 indicates that idealized influence has the greatest and statistically significant effect on the dependent variable (technological innovation), with a B value of 0.311, a T value of 2.351, and a significance level of 0.000, which is below 0.05.

Following that, individual consideration has a smaller but statistically significant effect on the dependent variable (technological innovation), with a B value of 0.525, a T value of 2.650, and a significance level of 0.005, which is also below 0.05.

This reflects Zain Company's commitment to listening to employees' problems and assisting them in solving them.

4. Conclusions

The study showed that transformational leadership in Zain Company has a positive and statistically significant effect on organizational innovation, both in the administrative and technological dimensions, reflecting the importance of this leadership style in enhancing the organization's innovative capacity. It was found that Zain Company pays attention to the human aspect by encouraging learning and professional development and providing individual support and guidance, creating an environment conducive to fostering creativity and innovation within the organization. It is observed that intellectual stimulation directly contributes to enhancing employees' ability to propose innovative solutions to administrative problems, reflecting the role of transformational leadership in promoting critical and creative thinking. It also appears that individual consideration plays a greater role in fostering technological innovation by taking into account employees' individual needs and providing personal support and guidance, which strengthens the implementation of new technological solutions within the company. Enhance employee training and professional development programs to strengthen intellectual and creative capabilities, in alignment with the transformational leadership style. Encourage intellectual stimulation by creating a work environment that promotes critical thinking and the development of innovative solutions to organizational problems. Integrate innovation into organizational strategies and link rewards and incentives to success in innovative projects to ensure the continuity of a creative spirit. Regularly evaluate the impact of transformational leadership on all dimensions of organizational innovation to ensure the highest levels of performance and institutional excellence. Encourage leaders to act as positive role models (idealized influence) by reinforcing commitment to company values and motivating employees to adhere to organizational goals.

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