BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR STIMULATING INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOURS THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

BY

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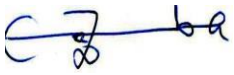
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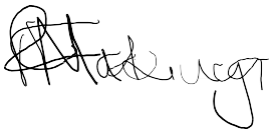
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DECLARATION

I, Racheal Chiyedza Madzinga, Student Reg Number: B252529A, do hereby declare that this dissertation is a result of my own investigation and research, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgments, bibliography, references, and comments included in the body of the report, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my esteemed fellows in the legal profession. May this study serve as a beacon of possibility, demonstrating how transformational leadership can inspire innovative work behaviours and reshape our profession for the greater good. It is my hope that together, we embrace leadership that not only uplifts individuals but also strengthens the collective pursuit of justice, integrity, and progress.

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ABSTRACT

Innovation is a critical driver of effectiveness in knowledge-intensive professions, yet the legal sector remains constrained by traditional structures and regulatory frameworks. This study examines how transformational leadership fosters innovative work behaviours (IWB) among junior legal practitioners in Zimbabwe. Drawing on transformational leadership theory, the research disaggregates its four dimensions, idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration to assess their distinct effects on IWB. A quantitative, cross-sectional design was employed, with data collected from 400 practitioners through structured questionnaires and analysed using structural equation modelling. Findings reveal that inspirational motivation is the strongest predictor of IWB, while idealised influence and intellectual stimulation also play significant roles. Leaders who encourage critical thinking, challenge conventional practices, and promote creative solutions enhance employees' willingness to experiment with new approaches an especially relevant outcome in the legal profession, where practitioners must interpret complex issues, adapt to evolving laws, and meet changing client needs. Intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration demonstrated relatively stronger relationships with IWB, underscoring the importance of supportive and intellectually engaging leadership practices. Overall, the study establishes that transformational leadership dimensions are related yet distinct, each contributing uniquely to innovation within legal institutions.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Innovative work behaviours, Idealised influence, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction and Background of the Study

Innovation has increasingly become central to organisational effectiveness, especially in knowledge-driven professions where problem-solving and adaptation are fundamental. In such settings, innovative work behaviours (IWB), defined as the creation, advocacy, and realisation of new ideas, are crucial for enhancing individual and organisational performance (Scott and Bruce, 1994). Empirical evidence indicates that IWB positively influences outcomes such as employee performance, organisational efficiency, and lowered turnover intentions (Jia and Li, 2024; Pham et al., 2024).

Leadership is recognised as a crucial facilitator of innovative behaviour. Among the diverse approaches to leadership, transformational leadership has garnered considerable attention for its capacity to influence employee attitudes and behaviours beyond mere transactional exchanges (Bass, 1985). This leadership style functions through four essential dimensions: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Bass and Avolio, 1994). Collectively, these dimensions shape employees' motivation, cognition, and engagement, thus impacting their ability to innovate.

Recent empirical research shows that transformational leadership positively correlates with innovative work behaviors and related outcomes like creativity, engagement, and organizational innovation (Hariri et al., 2024; Agusven et al., 2024; Abdulmawla et al., 2025). These links are often mediated by psychological processes such as empowerment and organizational commitment (Alwaely et al., 2024; Abdulrab et al., 2025). However, most research views transformational leadership as a single construct, paying limited attention to the unique contributions of its individual dimensions (Pham et al., 2024; Hariri et al., 2024).

The legal profession offers a distinctive environment for analysing these relationships. Legal activities are traditionally organised and regulated by established rules, which may restrict

innovation. Nevertheless, increasing demands for efficiency, technological progress, and client-focused services necessitate that legal practitioners adopt innovative strategies. In Zimbabwe, these pressures are further intensified by economic and institutional challenges, making innovation an essential competency. Despite the expanding body of research, there is limited empirical evidence on how specific leadership dimensions impact innovative work behaviours in the legal sector, particularly in African contexts. Consequently, this study aims to investigate the influence of transformational leadership dimensions on innovative work behaviours among employees in Zimbabwe's legal profession.

1.2 Problem Statement

Although transformational leadership has been widely associated with positive organisational outcomes, significant gaps remain in understanding how it influences innovative work behaviours. Existing research consistently shows that transformational leadership enhances employee performance, innovation, and engagement (Ha and Hang, 2024; Kher et al., 2024; Hariri et al., 2024). However, most studies conceptualise transformational leadership as a single aggregated construct, rather than examining its four dimensions individually. This aggregation obscures the distinct mechanisms through which each dimension may influence innovative behaviour. Limited evidence suggests that different dimensions may have varying effects. For example, inspirational motivation and individualised consideration have been found to directly influence creativity, while other dimensions exert indirect effects through empowerment (Alwaely et al., 2024). However, such findings remain fragmented and insufficiently developed across the literature.

Furthermore, many studies focus on outcomes such as creativity, organisational innovation, or performance, rather than explicitly examining innovative work behaviours as a multi-stage behavioural construct (Jia and Li, 2024; Abdulmawla et al., 2025). This limits the understanding of how leadership influences the full innovation process, from idea generation to implementation. There is also a significant contextual gap. The majority of empirical studies have been conducted in sectors such as healthcare, hospitality, and manufacturing, predominantly in Asian and Middle Eastern contexts (Agusven et al., 2024; Alshahrani et al., 2024). The legal profession, which operates under distinct professional norms and regulatory frameworks, remains underexplored.

In Zimbabwe, the legal profession faces increasing pressure to adapt to changing client expectations, technological advancements, and institutional challenges. Despite this, there is limited empirical knowledge on how leadership practices influence innovative work behaviours within this context. Therefore, the research problem lies in the limited understanding of how the individual dimensions of transformational leadership influence innovative work behaviours among legal professionals in Zimbabwe. Addressing this gap is essential for both theoretical advancement and practical application.

1.3 Research aims and objectives

The principal aim of the study is to examine the influence of transformational leadership behaviours on innovative work behaviour in legal organisations. This will be achieved via the following sub-objectives:

1.3.1 Sub-objectives

- To examine how idealised influence affects innovative work behaviour among legal professionals
- To analyse the influence of inspirational motivation on innovative work behaviour in law firms
- To establish the effect of intellectual stimulation on encouraging innovative work behaviours in the legal profession
- To assess how individualised consideration influences innovative work behaviour among lawyers

1.4 Research questions

The study proposes the following research questions:

- Does idealised influence affect innovative work behaviour among legal professionals?
- How does inspirational motivation influence innovative work behaviour among legal professionals?
- Does intellectual stimulation contribute to innovative work behaviour among legal

professionals?

- In what ways does individualised consideration influence innovative work behaviour among legal professionals?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research enhances both theoretical understanding and practical application by filling important gaps in the literature on transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour. Theoretically, it broadens transformational leadership theory by exploring its multidimensional aspects. Although the theory identifies four dimensions, many empirical studies treat it as a single construct (Pham et al., 2024; Hariri et al., 2024). By examining the individual impacts of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, this study offers a deeper insight into how leadership affects innovative behaviour. This helps refine existing models of leadership and innovation.

From an empirical perspective, the study extends existing research by focusing specifically on innovative work behaviour rather than related constructs such as creativity or organisational innovation. This distinction is important because IWB captures the full innovation process, including implementation (Scott and Bruce, 1994). Practically, the findings offer useful insights for leaders in the legal field. Research indicates that leadership behaviors impact employee engagement, empowerment, and innovation (Abdulrab et al., 2025; Khattak et al., 2024). By identifying which leadership dimensions are most effective, the study can inform leadership development programmes and organisational practices that foster innovation.

From a policy perspective, the study has implications for professional bodies and regulatory institutions within Zimbabwe's legal sector. As the profession adapts to evolving demands, there is a need for frameworks that support innovation while maintaining professional standards. Finally, the study contributes to the African research context, where empirical evidence on leadership and innovation remains limited. By focusing on Zimbabwe, the study provides context-specific insights that can inform both local and regional discussions on leadership and innovation in professional service sectors.

1.6 Limitations and Delimitations

- Using self-reported data can lead to response bias.
- Non-probability sampling may limit generalisability
- The study adopts a cross-sectional design, limiting causal inference.
- The research is limited to junior legal practitioners.
- Only transformational leadership is examined, excluding other leadership styles
- The study focuses on Zimbabwe and might not apply to other settings.

1.7 Assumptions

- Respondents are expected to give truthful and precise answers.
- Participants possess adequate exposure to leadership behaviours.
- The measurement scales accurately capture the constructs
- Transformational leadership dimensions are applicable in the legal context
- Innovative work behaviour is observable and measurable among legal practitioners

1.8 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the effect of the dimensions of transformational leadership on innovative work behaviours among junior legal practitioners in Zimbabwe. It specifically analyses the four transformational leadership dimensions, namely, idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration and their relationships with innovative work behaviours. The study is limited to employees within the legal profession, including those working in law firms and corporate legal departments. The research adheres to the deductive, quantitative research approach and relies on self-reported data collected through structured questionnaires. Geographically, the study is confined to Zimbabwe, providing context-specific insights into leadership and innovation within a developing country setting. The findings are therefore most applicable to similar professional and institutional environments.

1.9 Organisation of the Study

The study comprises 5 chapters.

Chapter One: The introductory chapter that provides the background, explains the problem that motivated this research, and outlines the main objectives.

Chapter Two introduces the literature review, covering the theoretical and conceptual frameworks derived from relevant existing literature.

Chapter Three delineates the research methodology, encompassing the philosophical approach, research design, and methods employed to ensure the successful execution of the study.

Chapter Four encompasses data analysis, presentation, and discussion of the results.

Chapter Five: This final chapter presents the study's major findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

1.10 Chapter Summary

The chapter presents the study by discussing its background, clarifying the problem, and defining the research objectives. It also includes the research hypotheses, questions, and delimitations. Additionally, the chapter emphasizes the study's contributions and explains its organization.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on transformational leadership, its dimensions, and its theoretical relevance to understanding innovative work behaviour. It outlines the conceptual definitions of the transformational leadership dimensions and appraises the hypotheses.

2.2 Understanding Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership occupies a central position in contemporary leadership and innovation literature because it provides a framework for understanding how leaders influence followers beyond formal authority, routine supervision and transactional exchange. In the literature, transformational leadership is consistently portrayed as a leadership style in which leaders inspire followers, stimulate them intellectually, serve as role models and provide individualised support, thereby encouraging higher levels of engagement, development and innovation (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Li et al., 2019; Sueb & Sopiah, 2023). The development of transformational leadership as a research construct within innovation studies began with a broader concern for how leaders shape employee innovative behaviour. One of the earliest studies, de Jong and den Hartog (2007), did not reduce leadership to a single abstract style but instead examined how leaders influence employees' innovative behaviour through concrete, day-to-day actions. This established an early behavioural foundation for later transformational leadership research. Rather than treating innovation as an individual trait alone, it showed that leaders influence whether employees generate and apply ideas in practice (de Jong & den Hartog, 2007). This early work laid the groundwork for later studies that more explicitly framed such influence in transformational terms.

As the field developed, transformational leadership came to be treated as a distinct and increasingly important explanatory construct in studies of employee innovation. Hansen and Pihl-Thingvad (2018), for example, showed that transformational leadership positively affected employee innovative behaviour in a public-sector setting. Their findings also suggested that transformational leadership worked alongside selected transactional behaviours, such as verbal rewards, to

influence innovation. This indicates that the concept developed not in isolation, but in relation to broader leadership debates about how best to motivate innovation in different organisational settings (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2018). The literature, therefore, evolved from a general behavioural concern with leadership and innovation to a more refined comparison of leadership styles and their distinct effects.

A key milestone in developing the concept is establishing transformational leadership as a multidimensional construct. Recent studies consistently define it through four dimensions: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Zakaria et al., 2025; Mamo et al., 2025). This multidimensional conceptualisation represents an important theoretical advancement because it allows scholars to distinguish among different mechanisms of leadership influence rather than treating transformational leadership as a monolithic variable. It also provides a stronger basis for analysing why some aspects of leadership may have stronger effects on innovative behaviour than others.

Across the extant literature, definitions of transformational leadership emphasise leaders' ability to create meaning, motivate commitment, foster learning and encourage developmental growth. Empirically, transformational leaders are characterized by their ability to articulate a compelling vision, challenge traditional ideas, exemplify desired values, and focus on employee development (Chebon et al., 2019; Sutanto et al., 2021). In this respect, the literature conceptualises transformational leadership not merely as charisma or personal appeal, but as a coordinated set of leader behaviours that shape employee cognition, affect and action in ways that support change and innovation.

The concept has also evolved methodologically and analytically. Earlier studies tended to examine direct relationships between transformational leadership and innovative behaviour, asking whether transformational leadership predicts innovation. For example, Masood and Afsar (2017) found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour among nursing staff, while Knezović and Drkić (2020) reported similar positive effects in SMEs. These studies helped establish transformational leadership as a robust predictor of innovation across

sectors. However, more recent studies move beyond direct-effect models and examine the underlying processes through which transformational leadership exerts its influence.

This development represents one of the clearest advances in the existing literature. Afsar and Umrani (2019) demonstrated that transformational leadership impacts innovative work behaviour through motivation to learn, with task complexity and innovation climate influencing the strength of this link. Similarly, Li et al. (2019) identified mediation and moderation mechanisms connecting transformational leadership to innovative work behaviour in sustainable organizations. Stănescu et al. (2020) pointed out psychological empowerment as a mediator, while Tan et al. (2021) found support for innovation and innovation readiness acting as serial mediators. Jun and Lee (2023) further established that commitment to change and organizational support for creativity help explain how transformational leadership fosters followers' innovative behaviour. These studies indicate that transformational leadership is increasingly viewed as a process-oriented concept. Instead of being seen merely as a direct driver of innovation, it is now regarded as an enabling leadership system that influences psychological and organizational factors, creating conditions conducive to innovation.

Another important development in the literature is the contextualisation of transformational leadership. The studies span banking, nursing, hospitality, education, public administration, SMEs, IT organisations and public research universities (Masood & Afsar, 2017; Knezović & Drkić, 2020; Lin, 2023; Kim & Yoon, 2025; Mamo et al., 2025). This broad range of contexts shows that transformational leadership has become a highly portable construct. At the same time, the findings indicate that its effect is context-sensitive. In some settings, it has a strong and direct positive impact on innovative work behaviour; in others, its influence is indirect and depends heavily on organisational culture, job autonomy, support for creativity or employee psychological resources (Karimi et al., 2023; Oh & Sabharwal, 2025; Mamo et al., 2025).

This contextual sensitivity is especially clear in studies analyzing the four dimensions of transformational leadership. Zakaria et al. (2025) observed that idealised influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation positively impact innovative work behaviour, while individual consideration was not significant. In a Nigerian banking study, idealised influence and inspirational motivation had stronger direct effects than intellectual stimulation and individual

consideration (Afolabi et al., 2022). Conversely, Mamo et al. (2025) found that some dimensions had negative direct effects but positive indirect effects mediated by organisational culture. These findings are important because they challenge the simplistic view that all transformational leadership behaviours equally promote innovation. Instead, they support a nuanced understanding where each dimension influences outcomes through different pathways and contextual factors.

The literature suggests that transformational leadership is increasingly understood in terms of psychological states and resources. Messmann et al. (2021) found that it fosters innovative behavior by fulfilling basic psychological needs like autonomy and competence. Karimi et al. (2023) showed that employees' psychological capital, especially hope and self-efficacy, mediates the link between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviors. Vu et al. (2025) further extended this understanding by showing that psychological empowerment and work engagement also serve as mediators. Collectively, these studies expand the view of transformational leadership from merely inspiring influence to a resource that enables employees to feel capable, empowered, and motivated to innovate.

Furthermore, the literature does not support an unqualified positive view of transformational leadership. Reddy and Chan (2022) discovered an adverse nexus between transformational leadership and one dimension of innovative work behaviour, namely idea realisation, among knowledge workers in South Africa. Mamo et al. (2025) likewise posits that some transformational leadership dimensions were negatively associated with innovative behaviour, unless this association was mediated by organisational culture. Such findings are theoretically important because they reflect the non-universal applicability of transformational leadership in all innovation contexts. Rather, its effects depend on how the interaction of leadership with organisational systems, employee readiness and the stage of innovation being examined.

Overall, transformational leadership has evolved in the literature from a broad behavioural explanation of leader influence to a multidimensional, analytically sophisticated framework for explaining employee innovation. It is now conceptualised not simply as a leader trait or general style, but as a set of interrelated behaviours that shape motivation, cognition, empowerment, identification, support and readiness for change (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Bhatia, 2023; Oh &

Sabharwal, 2025). This evolution makes transformational leadership a strong conceptual lens for examining how leadership dimensions influence innovative work behaviour.

2.3 Transformational Leadership Dimensions

2.3.1 Idealised Influence

Idealised influence can be described as the extent to which leaders serve as admired role models who earn followers' respect, trust and identification. This dimension is associated with ethical example, value-based influence and leader credibility, all of which can shape employees' willingness to emulate the leader's attitudes and behaviours (Chebon et al., 2019; Sutanto et al., 2021). In innovation contexts, idealised influence is particularly relevant because innovative work behaviour often involves uncertainty, visibility and risk. Employees are inclined to engage in innovative work when they perceive the leader as credible, consistent and supportive of change (de Jong & den Hartog, 2007; Bhatia, 2023).

The empirical evidence generally supports the importance of idealised influence for promoting innovative work behaviour. In the Nigerian banking industry, idealised influence significantly impacted employee innovation, showing that leaders who earn trust and admiration can encourage an innovative mindset among staff (Afolabi et al., 2022). Similarly, Zakaria et al. (2025) observed that idealised influence positively and significantly influenced innovative behaviour among bank employees. These results imply that employees gain confidence from their leader's example and may be more open to supporting innovation when a respected leader publicly endorses it. Analytically, idealised influence mainly functions through social legitimacy and trust. Since innovative work behaviour involves not just generating ideas but also presenting, defending, and implementing them amid potential challenges or neglect, a leader who demonstrates commitment, integrity, and vision can mitigate interpersonal risks. Therefore, idealised influence acts as a mechanism to legitimize innovation by signaling that change-driven actions are valued and credible (Lin, 2023; Jun & Lee, 2023).

However, the literature also indicates that idealised influence is not, in itself, sufficient for innovation. Mamo et al. (2025) found a negative direct effect of idealised influence on employee innovative behaviour in Ethiopian public research universities, although organisational culture

strongly and positively mediated the relationship. This finding suggests that role modelling alone may not automatically produce innovation. In some settings, high levels of leader admiration may encourage deference or symbolic alignment rather than active experimentation unless a supportive organisational culture converts that influence into concrete behavioural freedom (Mamo et al., 2025). This nuance is important because it highlights the possibility that idealised influence can remain largely symbolic in the absence of an enabling environment.

The wider body of transformational leadership research supports this idea, indicating that innovation is often facilitated through factors like empowerment, support for innovation, psychological capital, and job crafting (Masood & Afsar, 2017; Tan et al., 2021; Karimi et al., 2023). While idealized influence may indirectly promote these processes by increasing employees' trust and openness to leadership, it is rarely the only factor driving innovation. Its impact is most significant when combined with other leadership qualities that offer cognitive challenges and motivational guidance. Khan et al. (2022) also argue that idealized influence is reinforced by inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, implying that admiration for the leader is most effective for fostering innovation when paired with visionary messaging and the encouragement of new ideas.

Idealised influence should not be seen solely as charisma but as a component of a broader leadership process that combines legitimacy, vision, and challenge to foster employee innovation. It is considered a socially and normatively significant aspect of transformational leadership, helping to build trust and legitimacy around innovation. However, its effect on innovative work behavior seems to depend on whether the organizational environment supports employees in acting on the confidence that this leadership inspires (Zakaria et al., 2025; Mamo et al., 2025).

2.3.2 Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational motivation involves a leader’s capacity to share an engaging vision, inspire confidence, convey optimism, and rally followers around meaningful shared objectives. Literature links this dimension closely with enthusiasm, clarity of mission, and future-focused communication (Chebon et al., 2019; Sutanto et al., 2021). It is especially relevant for innovative work behaviour, which demands sustained effort, resilience, and openness to uncertain outcomes.

Empirical studies highlight inspirational motivation as a key transformational leadership factor influencing innovative work behaviour. For instance, in the Nigerian banking sector, it had a significant direct impact on employee innovation (Afolabi et al., 2022). Similarly, Zakaria et al. (2025) observed that inspirational motivation was a significant predictor of innovative work behaviour among bank employees. Mamo et al. (2025) also found a strong positive direct effect of inspirational motivation on employee innovation in Ethiopian public research universities, even when other dimensions showed weak or negative effects.

These findings suggest that inspirational motivation may have a particularly immediate effect on innovation because it addresses one of the central behavioural challenges of innovative work: maintaining employee commitment under conditions of uncertainty. Employees are more likely to explore and pursue new ideas when leadership frames innovation as purposeful, valued and achievable. In this way, inspirational motivation works by giving innovation meaning. It helps employees see their efforts not as isolated tasks but as part of a larger organisational aspiration (Jun & Lee, 2023; Bhatia, 2023).

The literature also shows that motivational processes are central to the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour more broadly. Afsar and Umrani (2019) found that motivation to learn mediated the relationship, while Tan et al. (2021) demonstrated serial mediation through support for innovation and innovation readiness. Although these studies did not isolate inspirational motivation alone, their findings are consistent with the logic of this dimension. Inspirational leaders energise followers, strengthen collective direction and reinforce the perceived value of investing effort in change and improvement.

Another analytical strength of inspirational motivation is that it appears to connect emotional and strategic dimensions of leadership. It does not merely excite followers. It provides a shared sense of purpose that can align employee behaviour with innovation goals. This is particularly important because innovative work behaviour includes not only idea generation but also idea championing and implementation, which require persistence and social influence as much as creativity (de Jong & den Hartog, 2007; Sjahruddin et al., 2024). A leader who communicates a compelling vision may therefore influence not just the emergence of ideas, but also employees' willingness to advocate for them.

Nevertheless, the literature reviewed suggests that inspirational motivation is insufficient without contextual support. Its effects are stronger in environments where employees perceive support for creativity, innovation climate and readiness for change (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Jun & Lee, 2023; Lin, 2023). This means that visionary leadership can mobilise effort, but translating that effort into actual innovative behaviour still depends on structural and cultural conditions. Overall, inspirational motivation emerges as the purposive and energising dimension of transformational leadership. It appears especially important in helping employees understand why innovation matters and why it is worth pursuing despite uncertainty. This makes it one of the most directly relevant dimensions for explaining innovative work behaviour in the present study (Afolabi et al., 2022; Mamo et al., 2025).

2.3.3 Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation refers to the extent to which leaders encourage followers to question assumptions, reframe problems, explore alternatives and think in novel ways (Afolabi et al., 2022). Among the four transformational leadership dimensions, this one is most directly aligned with the cognitive demands of innovative work behaviour because innovation requires employees to challenge routine patterns and develop new solutions (Chebon et al., 2019; Sutanto et al., 2021). The empirical literature reviewed here provides substantial support for the relevance of intellectual stimulation to innovative work behaviour. Zakaria et al. (2025) found that intellectual stimulation positively and significantly affected innovative work behaviour among bank employees. The Nigerian banking study also reported a positive relationship, although the effect was weaker than idealised influence and inspirational motivation and was significant only at the 10 per cent level (Afolabi et al., 2022). Palupi (2020) similarly found that transformational leadership contributes to employee creativity, a finding conceptually consistent with the role of intellectual stimulation in fostering new thinking.

From an analytical perspective, intellectual stimulation appears especially important at the early stages of innovation, where employees must identify problems, challenge existing assumptions and develop possible solutions. De Jong and den Hartog (2007) argued that leaders influence innovative behaviour by encouraging behaviours related to idea generation and application. Intellectual stimulation is the transformational leadership dimension that most clearly embodies

this function because it actively invites cognitive exploration and problem redefinition. However, studies also show that cognitive stimulation alone may not be enough to produce full innovative work behaviour. Mamo et al. (2025) found that intellectual stimulation had minimal direct influence on innovative work behaviour in public research universities, but a strong positive indirect effect through organisational culture. This suggests that employees may respond intellectually to leadership challenges without necessarily translating those challenges into implemented innovation unless the organisational environment supports experimentation, collaboration, and action. In other words, intellectual stimulation can initiate thought, but culture and structure determine whether that thought becomes behaviour.

Several studies support this interpretation. Afsar et al. (2019) showed that job crafting and knowledge sharing help explain how transformational leadership affects innovative work behaviour. Stănescu et al. (2020) identified psychological empowerment as a mediator, while Oh and Sabharwal (2025) highlighted the synergistic role of job autonomy and innovative organisational culture. These studies suggest that intellectual stimulation is most effective when employees have both the psychological readiness and the structural discretion to act on new ideas. Khan et al. (2022) also demonstrated that intellectual stimulation strongly mediates the relationship between individualised consideration and idealised influence. This indicates that intellectual stimulation is not only a direct driver of innovation but also a central mechanism through which other transformational leadership processes gain practical meaning. Employees may respect and feel supported by the leader, but innovation is more likely when the leader also challenges them to think differently.

In the context of the present study, intellectual stimulation should therefore be understood as the cognitively generative dimension of transformational leadership. It is central to the development of ideas and the reframing of problems. Still, its effect on innovative work behaviour depends heavily on whether the organisation provides a climate in which new thinking can be voiced, tested and implemented (Zakaria et al., 2025; Mamo et al., 2025).

2.3.4 Individualised Consideration

Individualised consideration refers to the leader's attentiveness to followers' unique needs, abilities and development (Afolabi et al., 2022). In the literature, this dimension is associated with coaching, mentoring, recognition and personal support (Messmann et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2022). Theoretically, it is relevant to innovative work behaviour because employees may be more willing to propose and pursue new ideas when they feel supported, valued and capable.

The empirical evidence on individualised consideration is more mixed than for the other transformational leadership dimensions. In the Nigerian banking study, individual consideration had a weaker positive effect on employee innovative behaviour and was significant only at the 10 per cent level (Afolabi et al., 2022). Zakaria et al. (2025) found no significant effect of individual consideration on innovative work behaviour. Mamo et al. (2025) likewise reported a negative direct effect of individualised consideration on employee innovative behaviour, although organisational culture strongly mediated the relationship, turning its indirect effect positive.

These findings suggest that individualised consideration may not drive innovation as directly as inspirational motivation or intellectual stimulation. Analytically, this may be because personalised support does not necessarily push employees toward novelty unless it is explicitly connected to challenge, autonomy or innovation goals. Employees can feel supported without being stimulated to think differently or act innovatively. As a result, the influence of individualised consideration may be more indirect and developmental than immediate. Messmann et al. (2021) found that transformational leadership enhances innovative work behaviour by satisfying basic psychological needs, particularly competence and autonomy. Karimi et al. (2023) similarly showed that hope and self-efficacy mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour. These studies suggest that individualised consideration contributes to innovation mainly by strengthening employees' confidence, developmental readiness and psychological resources rather than by directly triggering innovative action.

Khan et al. (2022) also provide a useful insight by showing that individualised consideration predicts idealised influence and that this relationship is strengthened by inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. This finding implies that individualised consideration may become

innovation-relevant when it forms part of a broader transformational pattern rather than functioning in isolation. Personal support may help build a leader's credibility and followers' trust, but innovation is more likely when that support is combined with vision and challenge. The sectoral context may further explain the mixed evidence. In formal and constrained organisational environments, such as banking and public universities, personal support may be insufficient to overcome procedural rigidity or risk aversion unless supported by broader organisational culture and autonomy (Zakaria et al., 2025; Mamo et al., 2025). In more developmental or collaborative settings, however, individualised consideration may exert stronger indirect effects through competence and confidence.

For the purposes of this study, individualised consideration is therefore best conceptualised as the developmental and relational dimension of transformational leadership. Its effect on innovative work behaviour appears less direct than that of the other dimensions, but it remains important because it can foster psychological support and developmental capacity, enabling employees to participate more fully in innovation processes (Messmann et al., 2021; Karimi et al., 2023).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

In the literature, transformational leadership theory serves as the dominant explanatory lens for understanding how leaders shape employee attitudes, motivation, and behaviour in ways that support change and innovation. Although the literature does not include the classical founding texts that originally formalised the theory, the empirical studies collectively demonstrate how transformational leadership theory has been developed, operationalised and applied in innovation research. At its core, transformational leadership theory explains how leaders influence followers to transcend routine expectations and engage more fully with organisational goals. Thus influence is expressed through four dimensions: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Zakaria et al., 2025; Mamo et al., 2025). These dimensions together capture how leaders model values, communicate vision, stimulate new thinking and support follower development. As a theoretical framework,

transformational leadership therefore explains not only that leaders matter, but also how specific leadership behaviours can shape employee innovation.

The theory's development within the reviewed literature can be understood in three broad stages. First, earlier studies established the behavioural importance of leadership for innovation. De Jong and den Hartog (2007) showed that leaders influence employees' innovative behaviour through actions that encourage idea generation and application. This stage was important because it moved innovation research beyond individualistic explanations and recognised leadership as a contextual determinant of employee innovation. Second, the literature increasingly used transformational leadership as a distinct explanatory style. Hansen and Pihl-Thingvad (2018), Masood and Afsar (2017), and Knezović and Drkić (2020) all demonstrated positive links between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour across different organisational settings. At this stage, the theory was primarily used to explain why employees under certain leaders were more likely to engage in innovation-oriented behaviours. The dominant analytical move was to test whether transformational leadership predicts innovation.

Third, more recent studies have extended transformational leadership theory into a complex mechanism-based and context-sensitive framework. Afsar and Umrani (2019) found that transformational leadership affects innovative work behaviour through motivation to learn, and that innovation climate and task complexity shape this relationship. Li et al. (2019) likewise tested mediation and moderation processes in sustainable organisations. Stănescu et al. (2020), Vu et al. (2025), Karimi et al. (2023), and Kim and Yoon (2025) all highlight mediating roles for psychological empowerment, work engagement, psychological capital and thriving at work. Jun and Lee (2023) further demonstrated that commitment to change and organisational support for creativity are key mechanisms through which transformational leadership influences innovative behaviour. These studies show that transformational leadership theory has evolved from a direct-effect model into a processual theory of how leadership creates conditions that increase the likelihood of innovation.

This development is analytically important because it means transformational leadership theory is no longer treated simply as a theory of inspirational leader behaviour. It is increasingly used as a resource-based and contextual framework. Leaders shape employees' autonomy, competence,

confidence, identification, motivation to learn and readiness for change, all of which contribute to innovative work behaviour (Messmann et al., 2021; Karimi et al., 2023; Kim & Yoon, 2025). In this way, the theory explains innovation not through command or control, but through the transformation of follower mindsets and work contexts.

Previous studies also show that transformational leadership theory has been widely applied across sectors, including banking, healthcare, education, hospitality, public administration, SMEs, and IT corporations (Masood & Afsar, 2017; Lin, 2023; Oh & Sabharwal, 2025; Kim & Yoon, 2025). This broad application suggests that the theory has strong explanatory reach. However, the specific pathways differ by context. In some studies, psychological empowerment is central; in others, job crafting, innovation support, organisational culture or job autonomy are more important (Afsar et al., 2019; Tan et al., 2021; Mamo et al., 2025; Oh & Sabharwal, 2025). This does not weaken the theory. Rather, it shows that transformational leadership theory is adaptable and capable of explaining innovation through contextually specific mechanisms.

At the same time, some scholars caution against assuming that transformational leadership always produces positive innovation outcomes. Reddy and Chan (2022) found that transformational leadership was negatively associated with idea realisation, while Mamo et al. (2025) reported negative direct effects for some transformational leadership dimensions. These findings are important because they reveal that transformational leadership theory is best understood as a contingent explanatory framework. Leadership behaviours may create the innovation potential, but whether that potential becomes behaviour depends on organisational culture, support, autonomy, and the specific innovation stage.

For this study, transformational leadership theory is highly relevant for several reasons. First, it provides a clear multidimensional structure that corresponds directly to the study's independent variables: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration. Second, it is supported by a substantial body of empirical research showing that transformational leadership is associated with innovative work behaviour across multiple sectors and countries (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Bhatia, 2023; Zakaria et al., 2025). Third, the theory offers a strong explanation for why dimensions may differ in their effects, as each operates through distinct psychological and behavioural pathways. Finally, the theory is compatible with the

evidence that innovation is mediated by empowerment, support, learning and culture, thereby allowing for a nuanced interpretation of results. Thus, transformational leadership theory serves as the primary lens for explaining how leadership dimensions may foster, constrain, or indirectly shape innovative work behaviour. It provides both conceptual clarity and empirical relevance for examining the differentiated influence of the four dimensions on employee innovation.

2.4.2 Innovation Theory

Innovative work behaviour (IWB) has become an increasingly important construct in organisational research because it captures how employees explore, generate, promote and implement ideas that improve work processes, services and organisational outcomes (de Jong & den Hartog, 2007; Parveen & Reddy, 2024; Sjahruddin et al., 2024). As organisations face growing environmental uncertainty and competitive pressure, leadership has emerged as one of the most studied contextual drivers of employee innovation. Transformational leadership (TL) is repeatedly identified as a leadership approach that can stimulate employees to transcend routine performance and engage in change-oriented and innovation-oriented behaviours (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Knezović & Drkić, 2020; Bhatia, 2023). However, the literature increasingly shows that this influence is not uniform or automatic. Rather, the impact of TL on IWB is shaped by specific leadership dimensions, mediating psychological mechanisms, and organisational conditions such as culture, support for creativity and autonomy (Messmann et al., 2021; Jun & Lee, 2023; Oh & Sabharwal, 2025).

Innovative work behaviour is consistently treated as more than creativity alone. De Jong and den Hartog (2007) conceptualised innovative behaviour as involving both idea generation and the application of ideas. Sjahruddin et al. (2024) further identified idea exploration, idea generation, idea championing and idea implementation as important dimensions of innovative work behaviour. Parveen and Reddy (2024) likewise highlighted the ideas of exploration, generation, and realisation. These studies show that innovation at work is best understood as a behavioural process rather than a single event. Employees must not only produce ideas, but also communicate, defend and implement them.

The development of this innovation framework within the reviewed literature also reflects increasing conceptual maturity. Early empirical work focused on identifying innovative work behaviour and its links to leadership and work context (de Jong & den Hartog, 2007). Later, systematic reviews such as those by AlEssa and Durugbo (2021), Srirahayu et al. (2023) and Parveen and Reddy (2024) consolidated the field by clarifying definitions, dimensions and antecedents. These reviews are important because they show that innovative work behaviour has developed into a recognised construct with an established conceptual domain. It is no longer treated as a vague synonym for creativity or change orientation, but as a distinct employee behaviour with identifiable stages and predictors.

A major insight from this body of literature is that innovative work behaviour is multilevel and multicausal. Parveen and Reddy (2024) categorised its antecedents into individual, work-environment and organisational factors. Bos-Nehles et al. (2017) showed that HRM practices, such as autonomy, training, and job design, influence innovative work behaviour. Quang (2022) highlighted the importance of employee-level factors such as creative self-efficacy, work passion and commitment, while Sjahruddin et al. (2024) emphasised psychological empowerment and intellectual capital. Taken together, these studies suggest that innovation theory should not be reduced to a purely individualistic explanation. Innovative work behaviour emerges from the interaction of personal capability, leadership influence, work design and organisational support.

This multilevel understanding is reinforced by studies that explicitly examine mediating and contextual processes. Essen et al. (2022) argued that innovation-related properties such as creativity, optimism, and psychological empowerment require “innovation energy” to be translated into innovative work behaviour. Tan et al. (2021) similarly showed that innovation support and innovation readiness mediate the influence of transformational leadership on innovative work behaviour. Oh, and Sabharwal (2025) demonstrated the joint importance of transformational leadership, job autonomy and innovative organisational culture. These studies suggest that innovation theory is not simply about why employees can innovate, but also about what activates and sustains innovation in practice.

Another important aspect is the recognition that innovative work behaviour has organisational consequences. Sjahruddin et al. (2024) found that innovative work behaviour affects business

performance in SMEs, while Parveen and Reddy (2024) noted its links to job satisfaction, productivity and organisational effectiveness. Knezović and Drkić (2020) and Tan et al. (2021) similarly treated innovative work behaviour as a critical mechanism through which organisations adapt and remain competitive. This means that innovative work behaviour is not only a theoretically interesting employee outcome, but also an organisationally significant one.

The practical application of this innovation framework across settings further supports its relevance. The reviewed studies examine innovative work behaviour in hospitals, public organisations, banks, SMEs, hotels, universities and IT firms (Masood & Afsar, 2017; Knezović & Drkić, 2020; Lin, 2023; Oh & Sabharwal, 2025; Kim & Yoon, 2025). Across these contexts, innovative work behaviour is consistently influenced by combinations of autonomy, support, leadership, empowerment and culture. What differs is the relative importance of each mechanism. This suggests that innovation theory is flexible enough to be applied across sectors while remaining sensitive to contextual variation.

For this study, this innovation framework is especially useful because it clarifies what kind of outcome is being explained. The focus is not on innovation as a firm-level technological breakthrough, but on employee innovative work behaviour as a staged and socially embedded process. This matters because different transformational leadership dimensions may influence different stages of that process. Intellectual stimulation may be especially relevant for idea generation, inspirational motivation for idea championing, idealised influence for legitimacy and trust, and individualised consideration for confidence and developmental support (de Jong & den Hartog, 2007; Messmann et al., 2021; Sjahruddin et al., 2024). The innovation framework, therefore, complements transformational leadership theory by specifying the behavioural pathway through which leadership effects may manifest.

Thus, innovation theory is operationalised as a theory of innovative work behaviour: a multistage, multilevel and context-sensitive process through which employees explore, generate, champion and implement new ideas. This framework is highly relevant because it aligns closely with the reviewed evidence and provides a strong basis for analysing how the dimensions of transformational leadership may shape employee innovation in differentiated ways.

2.5 Hypotheses Development

Transformational leadership is a multidimensional construct whose dimensions may influence innovative work behaviour (IWB) through different psychological and behavioural mechanisms. Consistent with the reviewed studies, IWB is understood as employee behaviour involving the exploration, generation, promotion and implementation of useful new ideas in the workplace (de Jong & den Hartog, 2007; Parveen & Reddy, 2024; Sjahruddin et al., 2024). Previous studies indicate that these constructs are commonly measured using structured questionnaire instruments completed by employees, while IWB is similarly measured through validated survey scales assessing innovation-related behaviour (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Stănescu et al., 2020; Zakaria et al., 2025).

Although the uploaded studies do not specifically focus on legal professionals, their findings from other professional settings provide a credible theoretical basis for extending these relationships to the legal sector. Legal professionals operate in knowledge-intensive environments that increasingly require adaptation, service improvement and creative problem-solving. It is therefore reasonable to expect transformational leadership behaviours to shape their innovative work behaviour.

2.5.1 Idealised Influence and Innovative Work Behaviour

Idealised influence refers to the extent to which leaders are perceived as trustworthy, admirable and worthy of emulation. It reflects the role-model component of transformational leadership, in which followers identify with leaders who demonstrate integrity, commitment, and strong values (Chebon et al., 2019; Sutanto et al., 2021). In empirical research, idealised influence is typically measured through employee survey responses assessing the extent to which leaders inspire trust, respect and confidence as part of broader transformational leadership scales (Zakaria et al., 2025; Mamo et al., 2025). This dimension is theoretically relevant to innovative work behaviour because innovation often involves uncertainty and the possibility of failure. Employees may be more willing to pursue new ideas when leadership signals that experimentation and change are legitimate. Prior studies provide support for this relationship. Zakaria et al. (2025) found that idealised influence positively and significantly predicted innovative work behaviour among bank

employees. Similarly, the Nigerian banking study reported a significant positive effect of idealised influence on employee innovative behaviour (Afolabi et al., 2022). Although some evidence suggests contextual variation (Mamo et al., 2025), the dominant pattern remains positive. In legal settings, leadership credibility may be especially important in legitimising new approaches and improved professional practice. Hence, it is hypothesised that:

H1: Idealised influence positively influences innovative work behaviour among legal professionals.

2.5.2 Inspirational Motivation and Innovative Work Behaviour

Inspirational motivation refers to the leader's ability to communicate a compelling vision, express optimism and energise followers toward shared goals. It captures the motivational component of transformational leadership through which leaders create enthusiasm, purpose and commitment (Chebon et al., 2019; Sutanto et al., 2021). In prior studies, this construct has been measured through employee questionnaire items assessing whether leaders articulate an inspiring future, encourage commitment and instil confidence in achieving organisational goals (Zakaria et al., 2025; Mamo et al., 2025).

The relationship between inspirational motivation and innovative work behaviour is strongly supported in the reviewed literature. Innovation requires persistence, effort and willingness to continue despite ambiguity or resistance. Leaders who provide a meaningful vision may therefore increase employees' readiness to generate and implement new ideas. The Nigerian banking study found that inspirational motivation had a significant positive effect on employee innovative behaviour (Afolabi et al., 2022). Zakaria et al. (2025) reported similar positive results, while Mamo et al. (2025) found that inspirational motivation was the strongest direct predictor of innovative work behaviour in Ethiopian public universities. Broader studies also show that transformational leadership fosters innovation through motivation to learn, commitment to change and support for creativity (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Jun & Lee, 2023). For legal professionals, a motivating and future-oriented leader may help employees embrace innovation in service delivery and legal problem-solving. Therefore, the study proposed that:

H2: Inspirational motivation positively influences innovative work behaviour among legal professionals.

2.5.3 Intellectual Stimulation and Innovative Work Behaviour

Intellectual stimulation refers to the extent to which leaders encourage followers to question assumptions, rethink routines and explore novel solutions. It is the cognitively oriented dimension of transformational leadership, emphasising critical thinking, creativity and problem reframing (Chebon et al., 2019; Sutanto et al., 2021). Intellectual stimulation is commonly measured through survey items asking whether leaders challenge traditional ways of working and stimulate new ideas as part of transformational leadership scales (Zakaria et al., 2025; Mamo et al., 2025). This dimension has a strong conceptual link with innovative work behaviour because IWB depends on identifying opportunities, generating alternatives and solving problems in new ways. De Jong and den Hartog (2007) noted that leadership influences employees' innovative behaviour partly through encouraging idea generation and application.

Empirical findings also support this association. Zakaria et al. (2025) found that intellectual stimulation positively influenced innovative work behaviour among bank employees. The Nigerian banking study reported a positive effect, though weaker than some other dimensions (Afolabi et al., 2022). While Mamo et al. (2025) found that organisational culture strengthened this relationship, the overall evidence suggests that leaders' cognitive challenge encourages employee innovation. In legal organisations, where reasoning and analytical judgement are central, leaders who stimulate new thinking may enhance innovation in legal processes, case management and client solutions. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Intellectual stimulation positively influences innovative work behaviour among legal professionals.

2.5.4 Individualised Consideration and Innovative Work Behaviour

Individualised consideration refers to the degree to which leaders recognise employees' unique needs and provide coaching and support for individual development. It reflects the relational and developmental side of transformational leadership, where leaders mentor followers and help them

realise their potential (Messmann et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2022). In empirical studies, this construct is typically measured through employee perceptions of whether leaders provide personal attention, guidance and encouragement as part of multidimensional transformational leadership scales (Zakaria et al., 2025; Mamo et al., 2025).

Compared with the other dimensions, the empirical evidence is more mixed yet remains theoretically meaningful. Afolabi et al. (2022) found a positive, albeit weaker, effect of individualised consideration on innovative behaviour. Although Zakaria et al. (2025) found no significant direct effect and Mamo et al. (2025) reported contextual variation, broader evidence suggests that transformational leadership enhances innovation through competence, autonomy, self-efficacy and psychological capital (Messmann et al., 2021; Karimi et al., 2023). This implies that individualised attention may indirectly influence IWB by building employee confidence and developmental readiness. In legal practice, where work can be demanding and highly scrutinised, personalised support may encourage professionals to voice ideas, refine methods, and experiment with more effective service approaches. Based on the above, the study hypothesises that:

H4: Individualised consideration positively influences innovative work behaviour among legal professionals.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature on transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour and developed the study's theoretical foundation. The analysis showed that transformational leadership has evolved in the literature from a broad behavioural explanation of leader influence into a multidimensional, context-sensitive framework. The chapter further demonstrated that the four dimensions of transformational leadership do not uniformly influence innovative work behaviour. Idealised influence and inspirational motivation often show stronger direct effects; intellectual stimulation is closely aligned with idea generation and problem reframing; and individualised consideration appears to operate more indirectly through developmental and psychological mechanisms. The chapter also established that innovative work behaviour is best understood as a multistage behavioural process shaped by leadership, psychological states, work design and organisational context. On this basis, transformational leadership theory and innovation

theory together provide an appropriate conceptual foundation for examining how the dimensions of transformational leadership influence innovative work behaviour.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the research methodology, which is a logical framework used by the researcher to explain how and why certain techniques are selected and justified to meet the study's objectives and address its challenges. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) define research methodology as an explanation of the methods related to the goals and targets of the research. Therefore, the methodology shapes the overall structure by specifying the approaches that will be used to answer the research questions. This chapter outlines the study design, data collection methods, sampling process, data analysis strategy, measurement testing, and ethical considerations.

3.1. RESEARCH PARADIGM/PHILOSOPHY

Creswell (2013) describes a research paradigm or philosophy as the framework of concepts and philosophies that guides the direction and structure of a study. The three main research philosophies are interpretivism, pragmatism, and positivism. Due to the lower cost of conducting interviews or observations, this study will adopt a positivist perspective. Positivism is characterised as a philosophy that emphasises quantitative methods, aiming to explain relationships between variables and relying on the natural sciences to interpret reality through fixed variables (Sallis, 2021). Hair et al. (2021) define positivism as a philosophy that facilitates an objective understanding of the social world, allowing researchers to remain unaffected by personal beliefs or emotions and enabling independent observation and the presentation of facts. Saunders et al. (2019) assert that only information obtained through measurement and observation is trustworthy. Therefore, positivist philosophy leverages observation and measurement to gather factual and accurate data (Creswell, 2017). This approach helped the researcher produce reliable information aligned with the study's goal. Nonetheless, a key limitation of positivism is that it

primarily explains causes and effects, often overlooking respondents' feelings and motives (Hair et al., 2021).

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

A research approach refers to the procedural plans providing justified reasons for various research decisions, including broad assumptions and detailed techniques for data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Saunders et al., 2019). Its main goal is to ensure the study is conducted within a rational set of philosophical frameworks (Kothari, 2004). Consequently, this study adopted a quantitative research approach, which enabled the researcher to gather data that is straightforward to interpret and analyse using advanced statistical methods. This approach supported data collection and quantitative analysis by identifying key frequencies, correlations, and relationships through observable, measurable statistical techniques (Dudovskiy, 2018). The quantitative method was selected because it is quick, focused, scientific, and easy to approach, making it particularly useful for examining the impact of transformational leadership dimensions on innovative work behaviours among legal professionals.

This study uses a quantitative, cross-sectional research approach to explore the links between transformational leadership traits and innovative work behaviours. A quantitative method is suitable because it allows for the precise measurement of constructs and statistical analysis of hypothesised relationships (Creswell, 2014; Saunders et al., 2019). The cross-sectional design enables data collection at one point in time, making it an efficient way to identify patterns and correlations among variables in organisational settings (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Although this approach cannot establish causality, it is effective for exploratory and descriptive research into behavioural connections.

Given the study’s focus on multiple latent constructs, structural equation modelling (SEM) is employed as the primary analytical technique. SEM allows for the simultaneous estimation of measurement and structural models, offering a rigorous approach to analysing complex relationships (Hair et al., 2019). Overall, the research design is appropriate for examining how the

four dimensions of transformational leadership influence innovative work behaviours among legal professionals.

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Saunders et al. (2016) describe the research design as a comprehensive blueprint that guides a researcher in addressing research questions, meeting objectives, and determining methods for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) add that a research design integrates all research components and ensures a continuous flow of activities, maximising information gain while minimising effort, time, and costs. This study will employ a cross-sectional survey design, which allows flexible data collection through multiple channels and captures participants' environments and lived experiences. Saunders et al. (2019) note that a cross-sectional survey involves gathering data from a sample to analyse the population's characteristics, perspectives, feelings, and needs related to a particular issue or topic.

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) note that cross-sectional surveys are useful for comparing participants' views and tracking attitude changes over time. They allow researchers to gather large amounts of data cost-effectively. However, a limitation is response bias, which happens when respondents do not accurately represent their true thoughts, attitudes, or behaviours. Kothari (2004) explains that answer biases can result from factors such as social desirability, question phrasing, and the order in which questions are asked.

3.4 Target Population

The target population includes registered legal practitioners in Zimbabwe, mainly focusing on junior practitioners. These professionals work in law firms, corporate legal departments, and related institutions. They are chosen because they handle operational legal tasks such as research, case preparation, and client engagement, which demand analytical thinking and adaptability—traits linked to innovative work behaviours. Concentrating on this group aligns with the study’s goal to explore employee-level behavioural outcomes and reflects the hierarchical nature of the legal profession, where junior practitioners work under supervision and are influenced by

leadership practices. As of May 2025, the Law Society of Zimbabwe reported 5,988 registered legal practitioners in the country, with 70% based in Harare.

3.4.1 Sample Selection

Sampling involves selecting a subset from a population to infer its characteristics (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Its significance lies in enabling analysis of the entire population through a smaller, representative sample with similar traits. Sampling is broadly classified into probability and non-probability methods. Saunders et al. (2019) explain that probability sampling ensures all individuals have an equal chance of selection. This method assigns each member of a large population an equal probability of inclusion. Probability sampling is advantageous because it reduces bias and allows for the estimation of sampling error (Bryman, 2021).

The study uses a non-probability purposive sampling method to select participants. This is suitable when respondents need to meet specific criteria aligned with the research goals, such as being practising legal professionals familiar with organisational leadership. Purposive sampling allows for choosing respondents with relevant experience, improving data quality and relevance. Due to the specialised nature of the legal field and access limitations, probability sampling isn't practical. When access is restricted, elements of convenience sampling might be used. Although this could introduce bias, it is common in organisational research with specialised groups and acceptable if these limitations are acknowledged.

Moreover, the framework requires information-rich respondents meeting substantive eligibility criteria, specifically legal professionals who have sufficient organisational/leadership experience to evaluate transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour. Furthermore, conclusions are appropriately bounded to the sampled/accessibly defined population rather than claimed as statistically representative of all legal professionals. Additionally, examining transformational leadership and innovative work behaviours requires respondents with relevant experience within the legal profession, rather than unrestricted population members.

3.4.2 Population sampling frame

Hair et al. (2021) describe a sampling frame as a list of identifiable, eligible individuals from a study community used to create sample units. Saunders et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of having a proper sampling frame for designing a representative sample, since a flawed or incomplete frame can undermine the study's representativeness and the validity of its findings. For this study, the sampling frame will consist of a list of legal professionals in Zimbabwe, specifically those registered with the Law Society of Zimbabwe. The total population involved is 5988 individuals.

3.4.3 Sample Size Determination

Kothari (2004) defined the minimum sample size as the number of participants drawn from the intended community to produce a realistic and convincing representation of the study population in the sample. Creswell (2017) defines sample size as the number of items in the obtained sample. In the opinion of Kothari (2004), one advantage of utilising a sample is that it reduces costs and errors in conducting the study compared to interrogating the entire research population. The study targets a sample size of 400 respondents drawn from a population of approximately 5 988 legal practitioners. This sample size is appropriate for structural equation modelling, which requires relatively large samples to ensure stable parameter estimates and adequate statistical power (Hair et al., 2019).

Samples exceeding 200 are generally sufficient, with larger samples improving reliability and broader applicability. A sample size of 400 respondents is ideal for robust statistical analysis, in line with SEM sampling standards. SEM usually demands larger samples for stable parameter estimation and good model fit, typically ranging from 100 to over 400 cases (Hair et al., 2021). Common guidelines recommend 10–20 cases per estimated parameter or 5–10 cases per indicator. The study’s sample size meets these recommended criteria.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

A standardised closed-ended questionnaire was used in this study to effectively and efficiently collect primary data from research participants. A questionnaire, according to McLeod (2018), is a research instrument comprising many questions in a predetermined order, designed to elicit direct responses from research participants through brief, standardised replies. One advantage of employing questionnaires is that they are inexpensive, provide wide coverage, are quick, are ideal for certain types of responses, and allow for repeated data collection. It is vital to note that questionnaires can be delivered in person, by phone, by email, or via social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Google Surveys, and LinkedIn, allowing professionals to respond. As stated by Kothari (2004), a questionnaire with closed-ended questions provides research participants with limited response options that can be used in statistical and/or quantitative analysis. As a result, closed-ended questions will be utilised to conduct a large-scale survey, gain quantitative insights, and limit response options.

Structured questionnaires enabled consistent data collection and facilitated statistical analysis of relationships among variables (Creswell, 2014). The instrument measured transformational leadership dimensions and innovative work behaviours using Likert scale items adapted from established scales. This approach enhances measurement reliability and ensures comparability across respondents (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Data collection was conducted through self-administered questionnaires, distributed electronically via online platforms. This method is efficient, cost-effective and appropriate for reaching respondents across geographically dispersed organisations (Saunders et al., 2019). It also reduces interviewer bias and allows respondents to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. The use of self-reported data is justified because the constructs under investigation, such as leadership perception and innovative behaviour, are subjective and best captured through individual responses. Prior studies examining similar constructs have successfully employed this approach (Hariri et al., 2024; Agusven et al., 2024). To enhance response rates, the questionnaire will be concise, clearly structured and accompanied by clear instructions. Follow-up reminders may be used where necessary.

3.5.1 Data Collection Methods

Data collection processes outline how a researcher gains authorised access to the research environment and participants (Creswell, 2017). These techniques also help describe the relationship between the researcher and respondents during data gathering, capturing, and management. In this study, the researcher used simple methods, such as face-to-face interactions, WhatsApp, and Google Forms, to collect and distribute structured questionnaires. This approach was flexible enough to accommodate respondents' varying work-life balances. Additionally, these methods minimised the costs and logistical challenges of travelling to meet participants in person (Baker et al., 2013). They enabled the collection of large amounts of quantitative data, ensuring reliable, timely research at low cost. Moreover, these techniques increased the chances of receiving detailed feedback from respondents.

3.6 Coding of Data

Data were coded numerically to support statistical analysis. Likert-scale responses were given values from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Each variable and item received a unique code for streamlined data entry and analysis with software like SPSS and SmartPLS. Reverse-coded items, where relevant, were recalculated beforehand to maintain consistent interpretation.

3.6.1 Processing of Data

Data processing involved systematic screening and cleaning procedures. This includes identifying missing values, detecting outliers and checking for inconsistencies. Incomplete responses will be excluded where necessary, while minor missing data may be handled using appropriate techniques. The dataset was assessed for normality and multicollinearity to ensure suitability for multivariate analysis (Hair et al., 2019). These procedures ensured that the dataset is accurate and suitable for subsequent analysis.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

The study assessed both the reliability and validity of the measurement model to ensure the robustness of the findings.

3.7.1 Reliability

Hair et al. (2021) describe reliability as the consistency of a research method in measuring a variable. It also refers to how closely the researcher's data recording matches what actually occurs in the natural setting being studied (Creswell, 2017). This implies that if the study is repeated with similar data collection and analysis procedures, the results should be consistent. Internal reliability can be assessed by randomly splitting the data into two parts and examining the correlation between them; a high correlation suggests the data is reliable. Consequently, data reliability is evaluated through internal consistency. Creswell (2017) defines internal consistency as the degree to which items on a scale are related, often assessed using metrics such as Cronbach's alpha and average inter-item correlation. In this study, internal consistency was assessed with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, with values above 0.70 indicating acceptable reliability. In SEM, composite reliability provides a more precise estimate because it accounts for indicator loadings (Hair et al., 2019).

3.7.2 Convergent Validity

Data validity reflects how well a research instrument accurately measures what it is intended to measure. For a study to be credible, its findings should align with real-world elements (Creswell, 2017). Therefore, Saunders et al. (2019) proposed that improving the content and construct validity of research instruments can be achieved during the research design process. Convergent validity was evaluated using factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). Factor loadings should be above 0.70 to confirm that items effectively represent their underlying constructs. AVE values exceeding 0.50 indicate that a construct accounts for more than half of the variance in its indicators (Hair et al., 2019).

3.7.3 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). The Fornell-Larcker criterion requires that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct be higher than its correlations with other constructs. HTMT values below 0.85 or 0.90 suggest acceptable discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019).

3.7.4 Measurement Model Assessment

Before analysing the structural model, the measurement model was assessed to verify accurate construct measurement. This step is essential because measurement errors can distort the observed relationships. These procedures collectively help ensure that the constructs pertaining to transformational leadership dimensions and innovative work behaviors are measured reliably and accurately.

3.8 Structure of the Questionnaire/Instrument

The questionnaire consists of three sections.

Section A: Demographic Information

This section captures respondent characteristics such as age, gender, years of experience and organisational setting. These variables provide context for interpreting the findings.

Section B: Transformational Leadership Dimensions

This section measures Idealised Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individualised Consideration. Items will be adapted from established leadership scales and measured using a five-point Likert scale (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Section C: Innovative Work Behaviours

This section assesses respondents' engagement in innovative work behaviours, including idea generation, promotion and implementation. These items were also measured using a five-point Likert scale.

The questionnaire was designed to ensure clarity, logical flow and ease of completion, thereby minimising response bias and enhancing data quality.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are central to this study. Ethical concerns are the principles and ideals that govern research and ensure it is conducted morally and responsibly. Researchers are expected to observe ethical norms to protect research participants' rights and welfare, maintain scientific integrity, and promote social responsibility. In order to ensure the integrity of the research, the researcher focused on the following ethical considerations:

First, the researcher ensured that suitable introductions were made and that the gatekeeper's relationship and purpose were maximised, thereby creating trust and confidence between the researcher and the organisations that participated in the research. Before the research participants answered the questionnaire, the researcher obtained informed consent, and the information gathered will be used for the disclosed purpose only. The researcher will respect the wishes of the research participants, especially if they wish to discontinue participation. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher advised participants not to provide their names or any other information that may be used to identify them on the questionnaires.

After the research participants turned in their completed and answered questionnaires, the researcher thanked them for their time. Furthermore, the researcher told the research participants they could receive the research results through the gatekeeper or by contacting the researcher directly. After collecting the questionnaires, the researcher filed them and stored them in a secure cardboard box. The data were then uploaded, recorded, and stored on a computer, email, and a flash drive so that the researcher could easily analyse them using SPSS. Password protection was also employed to protect the soft copies of the acquired study information from unauthorised access, as well as the security of the computer and flash drive.

Respondents will be given explicit information about the study’s goal before providing informed consent, and participation will be entirely voluntary. By not collecting personally identifiable information and by providing results in aggregate form, confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. The safely preserved data were used only for scholarly purposes. At any point during the trial, participants were free to leave without any consequences. The study complied with established institutional policies and ethical standards (Saunders et al., 2019). These steps

guarantee that the study is carried out ethically and that the rights and welfare of the participants are safeguarded.

3.10. CHAPTER SUMMARY

The methodology chapter outlined the procedures and processes used to produce the findings. It described the research design, target population, sampling methods, data collection techniques, and analysis approach. The chapter also explained how the study's goals were achieved through creating data collection tools. Data were coded, revised, and analyzed with statistical software to derive insights. These results from the methodology informed the next chapter, which presented and discussed the data analysis findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from a structured questionnaire given to legal professionals in Zimbabwe. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 24. The analysis covers descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, variances, and standard deviations for each variable. It also includes correlation and regression analyses to examine relationships between independent and dependent variables. The chapter starts with the survey response rate and demographic data. It then discusses the data's reliability and validity. After that, it presents the results of the correlation analysis and hypothesis testing. The chapter ends by discussing the findings and comparing them with previous research.

Before presenting the results, it is worth restating the aims and objectives of the study. The main goal is to examine how transformational leadership behaviors impact innovative work behavior in legal organizations. This will be accomplished through the following sub-objectives:

- To examine how idealised influence affects innovative work behaviour among legal professionals.
- To analyse the influence of inspirational motivation on innovative work behaviour in law firms.
- To establish the effect of intellectual stimulation on encouraging innovative work behaviours in the legal profession.
- To assess how individualised consideration influences innovative work behaviour among lawyers.

4.1 Response Rate

Table 4.1.1: Response rate

Research instrument	Questionnaires sent	Questionnaires received	Valid questionnaire	Response rate

Questionnaire	270	256	232	95%

A total of 270 legal professionals received questionnaires. 256 were returned, indicating a strong initial response rate. Following data screening, 232 questionnaires were deemed valid and suitable for statistical analysis, yielding a final response rate of 95%. This response rate is considered sufficient for behavioural and business research because it enhances representativeness and reduces the risk of non-response bias affecting the study's conclusions.

4.2 Analysis of Demographic Data

This section presents demographic data collected from legal professionals in Zimbabwe via a structured questionnaire. The results are presented in bar graphs and tables for clarity. This analysis offers insights into the characteristics of legal professionals and can inform policies and strategies that support innovation in the sector.

4.2.1 Age Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.2.2: Participant Age Distribution

Age category (years)	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
18-24	32	14
25-34	112	18
35-44	48	21
45-54	30	13
55+	10	4

Nearly half of respondents (48%) are between 25 and 34 years old, which suggests that the legal field attracts many younger people. This youthful group is important for bringing new ideas and energy. Reynolds et al. (2018) found similar results, noting that innovative activity is highest among those aged 25 to 34. They observed that, in many countries, people in this age group are most active in starting new ventures and showing innovative behaviour. According to their

research, this is likely because these individuals have finished their education, gained some work experience, and still have relatively few family responsibilities.

Delmar and Wennberg (2019) found that individuals in their late twenties and early thirties experience a 'window of opportunity.' At this stage, they have sufficient experience to identify market gaps but are not yet established in their careers, making them more likely to start new ventures. Hart and Acs (2021) noted that this age group often secures seed funding more easily than both younger (18-24) and older (45+) groups, as investors view them as a balanced risk. However, Kautonen et al. (2020) observed that while those aged 25 to 34 launch the most new businesses, older workers (over 50) achieve higher survival rates due to greater industry knowledge and broader networks. Collectively, these studies indicate that a high number of 25-34-year-olds is expected, but this does not always translate into sustained innovation.

4.2.2 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Table 4.2.3: Gender Distribution of Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	144	62
Female	88	38

There is a clear gender gap in the sector, with 62% of participants being men and 38% women. This shows there is room to encourage more women to join. Turner (2021) found that gender imbalances in innovation are ongoing and stressed the need for programs that support women. Kumar and Singh (2021) noted that women often succeed in nurturing sectors, which means gender dynamics can make it harder to assess innovation outcomes among employees. They suggest offering targeted support in industries where women are more involved.

Other studies also show that men are more involved in business, but the reasons and solutions differ. Brush et al. (2019) analysed data from 14 countries and found that the 62-38 split between men and women is common in technology startups. They believe this is mostly because men have better access to informal investor networks, not because of ability. Jennings and Brush (2022) warn that comparing only men and women can mask larger differences among groups of women, as different identities affect participation. Overall, these authors agree there is a gender gap and suggest industry-specific solutions to address the unique barriers in each innovation ecosystem.

4.2.4 Education Level of Respondents

Education Level of Participants

Educational level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ordinary level certificate	29	12.5
Advanced level certificate	45	19
College certificate/Diploma	58	25
Bachelor's Degree	71	31
Master's Degree	16	7
Doctorate (PhD)	13	5.5
Total	232	100

Most respondents had a bachelor's degree (31%), showing that the workforce is fairly well-educated. The next largest group had a college certificate or diploma (25%), followed by those with an advanced level certificate (19%) and an ordinary level certificate (12.5%). A smaller share held a doctoral degree (5.5%) or a master's degree (7%). This level of education may help people work more innovatively. Johnson (2021) also found a positive link between education and innovative work. Munyanyi (2023) noted that Zimbabwe's workforce is becoming more educated and that these individuals are more likely to use innovative work practices, which helps firms become more productive.

Education is often linked to stronger analytical skills, the ability to spot opportunities, and strategic thinking among innovative employees (Shane, 2023). Some researchers believe that people with more education can handle complex information and make better decisions, which can help companies perform well (Audretsch, 2025). Education is also connected to greater innovation and the ability to identify and exploit new market opportunities (Drucker, 1985). However, some experts argue that formal education alone is insufficient for employee success. Practical experience, industry knowledge, and social connections also play a major role in shaping how people work innovatively (Sarasvathy, 2021). So, while having many degree holders in this study suggests possible management skills, it is important to also consider other experiences and factors that affect innovative performance.

4.2.5 Years of Experience in Business

Table 4.2.5: Years of Experience in Business

Years of experience	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 year	47	20
1-3 years	105	46
4-6 years	45	19
7-10 years	23	10
More than 10 years	12	5

A significant portion of respondents (46%) have between one and three years of legal experience, indicating that the legal professional environment is primarily composed of early-career individuals. Respondents with less than one year of experience make up 20%, those with four to six years account for 19%, seven to ten years represent 10%, and over ten years constitute 5%. These results suggest a relatively young and dynamic innovative ecosystem where many are still developing key skills in innovation and legal expertise. Previous research shows that limited experience can hinder employee innovation, as newer employees often face challenges in decision-making, resource management, and adapting to the market (Shane, 2023; Gartner, 1985).

Research shows that learning is mainly experiential, with skills and competencies developing over time through active participation in innovation activities (Sarasvathy, 2021). As a result, individuals with limited experience tend to face higher risks of failure, particularly in uncertain or resource-limited settings. These findings highlight the need for targeted support measures, such as mentorship programs, training initiatives, and access to advisory services, to assist early-stage innovators.

4.3 Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity of the measurement scales were assessed using factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Table 4.3 shows that all constructs met the recommended standards for internal consistency reliability and convergent validity.

Table 4.3 Reliability and validity

Variable	Code	Indicator loadings (λ)	Alpha (α)
Idealised influence (IDI)	IDI1	0.718	0.718
	IDI2	0.871	
	IDI3	0.794	
	IDI4	0.843	
Inspirational motivation (IM)	IM1	0.788	0.812
	IM2	0.899	
	IM3	0.864	
	IM4	0.785	
Intellectual stimulation (IS)	IS1	0.898	0.786
	IS2	0.776	
	IS3	0.782	
	IS4	0.716	
Individualised consideration (IC)	IC1	0.744	0.843
	IC2	0.896	
	IC3	0.855	
	IC4	0.776	
Innovative work behaviour (IWB)	IWB1	0.788	0.786
	IWB2	0.789	
	IWB3	0.884	
	IWB4	0.816	

	IWB5	0.786	
	IWB6	0.788	

All measurement items demonstrated factor loadings above 0.70, with values ranging from 0.716 to 0.899. These results indicate that the items effectively represented their respective constructs. Specifically, idealised influence ranged from 0.718 to 0.871, inspirational motivation from 0.785 to 0.899, intellectual stimulation from 0.716 to 0.898, individualised consideration from 0.744 to 0.896, and innovative work behaviour from 0.786 to 0.884.

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess internal consistency reliability. All constructs showed coefficients above 0.70: idealised influence (0.718), inspirational motivation (0.812), intellectual stimulation (0.786), individualised consideration (0.843), and innovative work behaviour (0.786). These results confirm the reliability and consistency of the measurement items. In sum, the results show that the research instrument was reliable and valid. These strong results provide a solid foundation for further analyses, such as correlation and hypothesis testing.

The measurement model demonstrates satisfactory indicator reliability and internal consistency across all constructs. Factor loadings ranging from 0.716 to 0.899 exceed the recommended 0.70 threshold, indicating that each indicator makes a substantial contribution to measuring its intended construct. Cronbach's alpha coefficients, ranging from 0.718 to 0.843, further demonstrate acceptable-to-good internal consistency, with individualised consideration exhibiting the highest reliability. However, reliability and indicator loadings alone are insufficient to establish overall construct validity. Convergent validity should additionally be confirmed using composite reliability and average variance extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity should be assessed using HTMT and/or Fornell–Larcker criteria before proceeding to structural model assessment and hypothesis testing.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Table 4.4 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients. The results indicate positive relationships among all variables included in the study.

Table 4.4 Correlation analysis

Variable	Idealised influence	Inspirational motivation	Intellectual stimulation	Individualised consideration	Innovative work behaviour
Idealised influence	**1.00**				
Inspirational motivation	0.45	**1.00**			
Intellectual stimulation	0.52	0.55	**1.00**		
Individualised consideration	0.48	0.47	0.54	**1.00**	
Innovative work behaviour	0.50	0.49	0.55	0.53	**1.00**

The results show that idealised influence has a positive link with innovative work behaviour (r = 0.50). Legal professionals who see their leaders as role models are more likely to act innovatively at work. Inspirational motivation is also positively related to innovative work behaviour (r = 0.49), which means leaders who inspire and motivate their teams help encourage innovation in legal institutions. Intellectual stimulation has the strongest positive link with innovative work behaviour (r = 0.55). This suggests that when employees are encouraged to think creatively and question usual practices, innovation increases. Individualised consideration is also positively linked to innovative work behaviour (r = 0.53), showing that leaders who offer personal support and mentorship help legal professionals become more innovative.

The independent variables showed moderate, positive correlations, with values between 0.45 and 0.55. For example, idealised influence and inspirational motivation had a correlation of 0.45, while intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration had a correlation of 0.54. These results suggest that the dimensions of transformational leadership are related but still distinct concepts.

Since none of the correlations were higher than 0.80, there was no multicollinearity among the variables.

The correlation results indicate moderate and positive associations among the transformational leadership dimensions, with coefficients ranging from 0.45 to 0.55. These relationships suggest that the dimensions share a common underlying leadership orientation while retaining sufficient empirical distinctiveness. The correlation of 0.54 between intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration represents the strongest association, whereas the 0.45 correlation between idealised influence and inspirational motivation indicates a comparatively weaker relationship. Importantly, all coefficients remain below the commonly applied 0.80 threshold, providing preliminary evidence that excessive intercorrelation is unlikely to compromise the analysis. Nevertheless, multicollinearity should be formally assessed using variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance statistics. Hence, the correlation analysis demonstrates that TL is positively associated with IWB among legal professionals in Zimbabwe. These results provide preliminary support for the proposed hypotheses.

4.6 Hypotheses Testing Results

The study's hypotheses were tested using path analysis. The statistical results are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Hypotheses testing

Paths	**Hypotheses**	**Path coefficients (β)**	***T*-values**	**P-values (p<0.05)**	**Decision**
H1	IDI → IWB	0.329	4.543	0.000	Supported
H2	IM → IWB	0.532	6.324	0.010	supported
H3	IS → IWB	0.317	3.334	0.000	Supported
H4	IC → IWB	0.448	3.989	0.031	Supported

The results showed that idealised influence positively impact on IWB *(β = 0.329, t = 4.543, p = 0.000)*. Because the p-value was below 0.05, H1 was supported. This means that leaders who act ethically, show confidence, and serve as role models help encourage innovative work behaviour

among legal professionals. The positive coefficient indicates that stronger perceptions of leaders as ethical, confident, trustworthy, and exemplary are associated with higher levels of innovative behaviour among legal professionals. The magnitude of the coefficient suggests a meaningful contribution to IWB, although its effect is weaker than those of inspirational motivation and individualised consideration. This finding suggests that credible and exemplary leadership can create behavioural and normative conditions that encourage legal professionals to pursue new ideas and improved work practices.

Inspirational motivation also had a significant positive relationship with IWB *($\beta = 0.532$, $t = 6.324$, $p = 0.010$)*. As a result, Hypothesis 2 was supported. The findings suggest that leaders who inspire employees with vision, encouragement, and motivation can greatly increase innovative behaviours in legal workplaces. Of all the transformational leadership traits studied, inspirational motivation had the highest path coefficient, making it the strongest predictor of IWB in this research. The relatively large path coefficient indicates that inspirational motivation makes the strongest contribution to IWB among the transformational leadership dimensions examined. This suggests that communicating an attractive vision, articulating meaningful goals, and motivating employees to exceed routine expectations may substantially stimulate innovation among legal professionals. The finding highlights the importance of leaders creating a compelling sense of purpose that encourages employees to reconsider established practices and pursue novel solutions.

Intellectual stimulation also positively affected IWB *($\beta = 0.317$, $t = 3.334$, $p = 0.000$)*, supporting H3. This means that legal professionals are more likely to be innovative when leaders encourage critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. The positive path coefficient demonstrates that encouraging legal professionals to challenge established assumptions, critically evaluate existing procedures, and explore alternative solutions is associated with increased innovative behaviour. Although intellectual stimulation produces a smaller effect than inspirational motivation and individualised consideration, its statistically significant contribution confirms its relevance within the transformational leadership framework. In the legal profession, where established procedures and professional conventions can constrain experimentation, leadership that legitimises questioning and creative problem-solving may provide an important mechanism for stimulating innovation.

Finally, individualised consideration had a positive and significant effect on innovative work behaviour ($\beta = 0.448$, $t = 3.989$, $p = 0.031$). This means H4 was supported. Leaders who offer personal support, coaching, and mentorship help to drive employee creativity practices among legal professionals. The coefficient indicates a relatively substantial contribution to IWB, exceeding the effects of idealised influence and intellectual stimulation but remaining below inspirational motivation. This finding suggests that leaders who recognise individual capabilities, provide personalised coaching, offer developmental support, and attend to employees' professional needs can create conditions conducive to innovation among legal professionals. Such support may enhance employees' confidence and willingness to experiment with new approaches. Consequently, individualised consideration represents an important interpersonal mechanism through which transformational leadership can stimulate innovative workplace practices.

The results indicate that all four components of TL have a significant positive influence on IWB among legal professionals in Zimbabwe. This underscores the role of TL in promoting innovation within the legal sector.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

This research examined how transformational leadership influences innovative work behaviour among legal professionals in Zimbabwe. All four dimensions, namely, idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration, showed significant positive impacts. These results reinforce transformational leadership theory, suggesting that leaders can inspire followers to surpass expectations and engage in creative efforts.

The results showed that idealised influence had a clear positive effect on IWB. This means legal professionals are more likely to try new approaches when their leaders show integrity, professionalism, and ethical behaviour. Leaders who act as role models build trust and respect, fostering a workplace that supports innovation. This finding aligns with Zakaria, Rahman, and Mohyedin (2025), who found that idealised influence boosts innovative work behaviour in the banking sector. Jun and Lee (2023) also found that leaders with credibility and strong values encourage employees to solve problems creatively and innovate. In Zimbabwe’s legal field, ethical

leadership is especially important because legal professionals work in settings that demand professionalism, accountability, and public trust.

The results also showed that inspirational motivation had the strongest positive impact on IWB among the leadership dimensions. This means legal professionals are more innovative when leaders share a clear vision, encourage optimism, and motivate employees to reach organisational goals. Inspirational leaders build enthusiasm and commitment, which help employees generate new ideas and solutions. This finding aligns with Vu, Nguyen, and Le (2025), who found that inspirational motivation increases employee engagement and innovation. Zakaria et al. (2025) also identified inspirational motivation as a key factor in encouraging innovative work behaviour. These results support transformational leadership theory, which says that inspirational leaders help employees go beyond routine tasks. In Zimbabwean legal organisations, this kind of leadership can help introduce new legal practices, improve client service, and respond effectively to technological and regulatory changes.

Intellectual stimulation was also shown to affect innovative work behaviour positively. Leaders who encourage employees to question current practices, think critically, and look for new solutions help drive innovation at work. Legal professionals who experience intellectual stimulation are more likely to develop and adopt new legal strategies, procedures, and service delivery approaches. This aligns with the findings of Jun and Lee (2023), who showed that intellectual stimulation leads employees to challenge old ideas and become more innovative. Kim (2025) also found that intellectual stimulation supports creative problem-solving in knowledge-intensive fields. This is especially important in Zimbabwe's legal sector, where changing laws, digital advances, and higher client expectations require new ways of thinking and working.

The study also found that individualised consideration positively affected innovative work behaviour. Legal professionals are more likely to be innovative when leaders offer personal support, mentorship, and coaching and recognise individual needs. When employees feel valued and supported, they are more confident in sharing and trying out new ideas. This finding agrees with Vu et al. (2025), who found that supportive leadership boosts psychological empowerment and innovation. Jun and Lee (2023) also reported that leaders who focus on employee development encourage more innovative behaviour. In legal workplaces, mentorship and support are important

because legal professionals often work in challenging environments that require constant learning and adaptation.

Leaders who help employees grow can foster greater creativity and innovation within legal institutions. The correlation analysis also showed moderate positive links between the dimensions of TL and IWB. Intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration were more strongly associated with IWB, suggesting that support and mental stimulation are key drivers of innovation. The moderate correlations among the leadership dimensions also showed that, while they are related, each represents a different leadership style. The lack of multicollinearity issues made the regression and hypothesis-testing results more reliable.

In conclusion, transformational leadership enhances innovative work behaviour across diverse organisations. This research offers new insights for Zimbabwe's legal profession, where prior research has been limited. The results suggest that transformational leadership can help legal institutions become more innovative by fostering creativity, motivating staff, supporting professional growth, and promoting flexible thinking. As a result, legal organisations in Zimbabwe should consider investing in leadership development programmes to build transformational leadership skills among supervisors and managers.

4.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter details the data analysis procedures and interprets the results. Reliability and validity tests confirmed the suitability of the measurement scales. Correlation and hypothesis testing indicated that all dimensions of TL positively influenced IWB among legal professionals in Zimbabwe. The findings were further compared with those of previous studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the main conclusions from the study on how transformational leadership affects innovative work behaviour among legal professionals in Zimbabwe. It also discusses the study's theoretical, managerial, and practical implications, and ends with suggestions for future research.

5.2 Conclusions

This study investigated how different elements of transformational leadership influence innovative work behaviour among legal professionals in Zimbabwe. It specifically examined idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration, and their impact on workplace innovation. The findings indicated that all four leadership factors positively and significantly affected legal professionals' innovative behaviour.

The study found that idealised influence plays an important role in encouraging innovation in legal institutions. Legal professionals are more likely to come up with new ideas when leaders act ethically, show professionalism and confidence, and set a good example. Leaders who are respected and trusted help create a workplace where creativity and openness to new ideas are valued. This shows that leadership credibility and ethical behaviour are crucial for promoting innovation in the legal field. Since legal practice is closely tied to ethics and integrity, leaders who show these qualities are more likely to inspire employees to innovate.

The study also found that inspirational motivation is the strongest factor in encouraging innovative work behaviour among the different aspects of transformational leadership. Leaders who share a clear vision, motivate their teams, and inspire optimism help legal professionals come up with and try out new ideas. These leaders build enthusiasm and commitment, which helps employees go beyond their usual tasks and improve the organisation. In Zimbabwe's legal sector, where there is

pressure to become more efficient and keep up with technology, inspirational leadership is especially important for driving innovation.

The findings show that intellectual stimulation has a strong effect on innovative work behaviour. Leaders who encourage critical thinking, question old ways of doing things, and support creative solutions help drive innovation at work. Intellectual stimulation makes employees more willing to try new approaches and solve problems in different ways. This is especially important in the legal field, where professionals need to handle complex issues, adjust to new laws, and meet changing client needs. Leaders who support critical thinking and creativity are key to promoting innovation in legal institutions.

The study also found that individualised consideration has a positive impact on innovative work behaviour among legal professionals. Leaders who give personal support, mentorship, coaching, and help employees grow encourage more innovation. When employees feel valued and supported, they are more confident in sharing and trying out new ideas. This highlights how important it is for leaders to focus on their employees to promote innovation. In legal institutions, where ongoing learning and professional growth matter, leaders who invest in their teams help build a creative and innovative environment.

The correlation analysis confirmed that all parts of transformational leadership are linked to innovative work behaviour. Intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration had the strongest connections, showing that supportive and engaging leadership is important for encouraging innovation among legal professionals. The study also found that each part of transformational leadership is related but different, and each one helps drive innovation in its own way within Zimbabwe's legal profession. The results suggest that legal organisations using transformational leadership are more likely to create workplaces that support innovation, creativity, and adaptability. This study supports the idea that transformational leadership theory helps explain how employees innovate in professional service sectors like the legal field.

This study adds to the small amount of research on leadership and innovation in Zimbabwe's legal sector. Earlier studies looked at banking, education, manufacturing, and information technology, but this research applies transformational leadership theory to the legal field. The findings suggest

that transformational leadership can help legal organisations respond well to changes in law, technology, and how organisations work.

In summary, the study found that transformational leadership strongly encourages innovative work behaviour among legal professionals in Zimbabwe. Leaders who inspire, support intellectual growth, help their teams, and set an ethical example are more likely to promote innovation in legal institutions. These results show why it is important to develop transformational leadership skills to boost innovation and improve how legal organisations work.

5.3 Implications of the Study

5.3.1 Theoretical Implications

This study offers significant theoretical contributions to the literature on transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour. First, the findings empirically support transformational leadership theory by confirming that idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration each positively affect innovative work behaviour. These results reinforce the idea that transformational leadership encourages employees to exceed routine expectations and pursue creative, innovative activities.

Second, this study extends transformational leadership theory to the legal profession in Zimbabwe, addressing a gap in existing research that has largely focused on sectors such as banking, education, healthcare, and information technology. These findings broaden the contextual understanding of transformational leadership and innovation within professional service organisations in developing countries.

Third, the study shows that the four dimensions of transformational leadership have varying impacts on innovative work behaviour, with inspirational motivation as the strongest predictor. This finding highlights the relative importance of specific leadership behaviours in fostering innovation and provides a foundation for future research in similar professional contexts.

5.3.2 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for managers and leaders within legal institutions in Zimbabwe. The study demonstrates that transformational leadership behaviours significantly enhance innovative work behaviour among legal professionals. Managers should therefore adopt leadership approaches that inspire, motivate, support, and intellectually stimulate employees. Legal organisations should invest in leadership development programmes aimed at strengthening transformational leadership competencies among supervisors, partners, and managers. Training programmes should focus on improving communication skills, employee motivation, mentorship, ethical leadership, and creative problem-solving. Such initiatives may help leaders create work environments that encourage innovation and adaptability.

The findings also suggest that leaders should provide employees with opportunities to contribute ideas, participate in decision-making, and experiment with new approaches to legal practice. Encouraging open communication and knowledge sharing may enhance employee engagement and innovation within legal workplaces. Furthermore, managers should prioritise employee support and professional development. Leaders who mentor employees, recognise individual contributions, and provide constructive feedback are more likely to foster innovative behaviour. In highly demanding legal environments, supportive leadership practices may improve employee confidence, commitment, and willingness to propose innovative solutions.

5.3.3 Practical Implications

Practically, the study provides useful insights for legal institutions seeking to improve organisational effectiveness and innovation. The findings indicate that transformational leadership can assist legal organisations in responding to increasing competition, technological advancement, and changing client expectations.

Legal institutions should create organisational cultures that support innovation and creativity. This may include encouraging collaborative work practices, recognising innovative contributions, and providing employees with opportunities for continuous learning and professional development. Organisations that promote innovation are more likely to improve service delivery, operational efficiency, and client satisfaction. The study also highlights the importance of ethical and

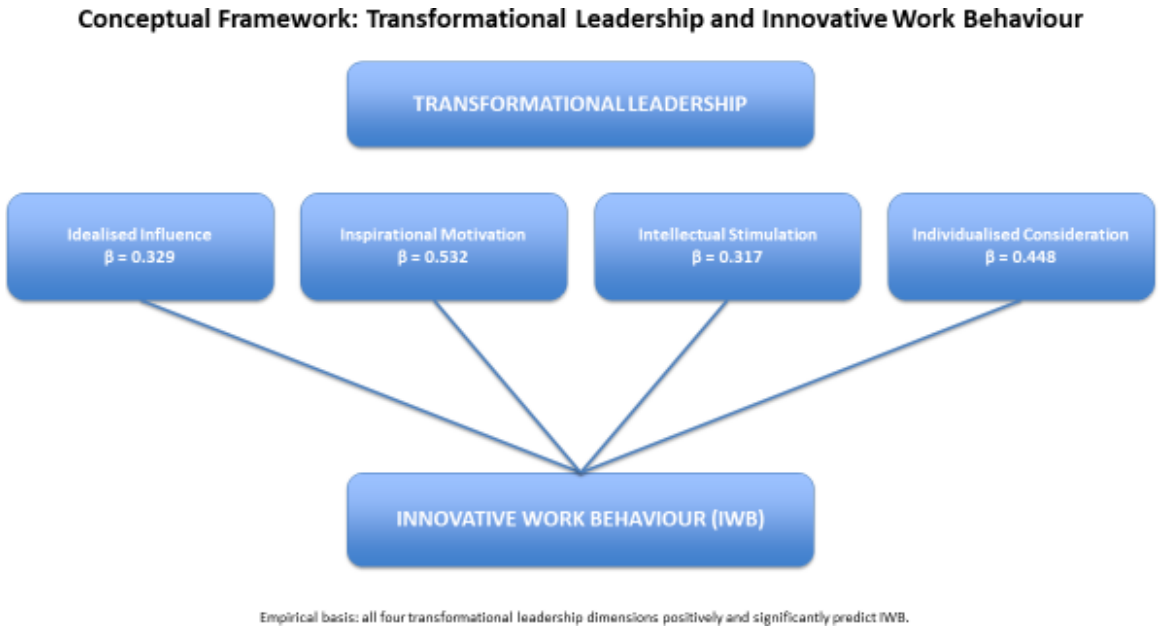
inspirational leadership within the legal profession. Since legal professionals operate in environments that require integrity and professionalism, leaders should model ethical behaviour and establish clear organisational visions that motivate employees toward innovation and excellence.

In addition, legal organisations should embrace digital transformation and innovative legal practices. Leaders who intellectually stimulate employees and encourage experimentation can help organisations adapt to emerging technologies, such as legal research software, electronic case management systems, and virtual legal services. These innovations may improve productivity and competitiveness within the legal sector. Overall, the practical implication of the study is that transformational leadership can serve as a strategic tool for promoting innovation and improving organisational performance within legal institutions in Zimbabwe.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research could explore additional leadership styles, such as servant, authentic, or ethical leadership, and their effects on innovative work behaviour in the legal profession. Researchers may also investigate mediating or moderating factors, including organisational culture, employee engagement, psychological empowerment, and job satisfaction. Longitudinal studies could assess changes in leadership and innovation over time. Comparative research across sectors or countries may provide broader insights into the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative work behaviour. Larger sample sizes and mixed-methods approaches that combine quantitative and qualitative data could improve generalisability. Qualitative studies may offer a deeper understanding of how legal professionals experience leadership and innovation within organisations.

5.5 Proposed framework



The proposed framework explains how transformational leadership stimulates innovative work behaviour (IWB) among legal professionals through four complementary leadership dimensions: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. The framework is empirically grounded in the reported structural-model results, which demonstrate positive and statistically significant relationships between each transformational leadership dimension and IWB.

Inspirational motivation represents the strongest predictor of IWB ($\beta = 0.532$), suggesting that communicating an inspiring vision, encouraging employees, and creating enthusiasm for organisational goals constitute the most influential mechanism for stimulating innovation. Individualised consideration demonstrates the second-strongest effect ($\beta = 0.448$), indicating that personalised coaching, mentoring, and developmental support can strengthen employees' capacity and willingness to innovate.

Idealised influence also contributes positively to IWB ($\beta = 0.329$), suggesting that ethical and exemplary leaders establish behavioural standards that encourage innovative conduct. Intellectual

stimulation has a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.317$), demonstrating that encouraging critical thinking, creativity, and questioning of established practices facilitates innovation.

Accordingly, the framework proposes that transformational leadership functions as a multidimensional antecedent of IWB within the legal profession. The four dimensions operate as distinct but complementary mechanisms through which leaders can create an organisational environment conducive to idea generation, experimentation, implementation, and improvement of professional practices.

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APPENDICES
Appendix 1
QUESTIONAIRE

Survey Instrument: Transformational Leadership and Innovative Work Behaviour among Legal Professionals in Zimbabwe

Purpose of the Study

This questionnaire is designed to collect data for a quantitative study examining the influence of transformational leadership on innovative work behaviour among legal professionals in Zimbabwe. Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used for academic research purposes.

Instructions

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement by selecting the appropriate response on the scale below:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

Section A: Demographic Information

- Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say ☐ Other
- Age Group: ☐ 20–29 ☐ 30–39 ☐ 40–49 ☐ 50–59 ☐ 60 and above
- Highest Educational Qualification: ☐ Diploma ☐ Bachelor's Degree ☐ Master's Degree ☐ Doctorate ☐ Other
- Years of Professional Experience in the Legal Profession: ☐ Less than 5 years ☐ 5–10 years ☐ 11–15 years ☐ 16–20 years ☐ More than 20 years
- Current Position: _____
- Type of Legal Institution: ☐ Private Law Firm ☐ Judiciary ☐ Government Legal Department ☐ Corporate Legal Office ☐ NGO/International Organisation ☐ Other

Section B: Idealised Influence

Code	**Item**	1	2	3	4	5
IDI1	My supervisor acts in ways that build my respect and trust.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IDI2	My supervisor demonstrates high ethical standards in professional matters.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IDI3	My supervisor behaves in a manner that makes me proud to be associated with him/her.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IDI4	My supervisor serves as a role model in legal practice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section C: Inspirational Motivation

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
IM1	My supervisor communicates a clear and compelling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	vision for our legal work.					
IM2	My supervisor inspires me to go beyond routine performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IM3	My supervisor motivates employees to achieve shared professional goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IM4	My supervisor encourages optimism about the future of our organisation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section D: Intellectual Stimulation

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
IS1	My supervisor encourages me to question old ways of handling legal work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IS2	My supervisor encourages creative solutions to client, court, or administrative challenges.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IS3	My supervisor challenges me to think critically about legal problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IS4	My supervisor supports new ideas and innovative approaches to legal work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section E: Individualised Consideration

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
IC1	My supervisor treats me as an individual with unique professional development needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IC2	My supervisor mentors or coaches me to improve my legal practice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IC3	My supervisor listens to my concerns and professional aspirations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IC4	My supervisor provides support that helps me grow professionally.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section F: Innovative Work Behaviour

	Item	1	2	3	4	5
IWB1	I generate new ideas for improving how legal services are delivered.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IWB2	I search for new methods, technologies, or procedures that can improve legal work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IWB3	I promote my innovative ideas to colleagues or supervisors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IWB4	I help implement new ideas that improve legal processes or client service.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IWB4	I try out new approaches when existing legal work methods are inefficient.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
IWB5	I actively contribute to innovation within my legal workplace.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Racheal Chiyedza Madzinga

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BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION [BUSE]

11 June 2026

Rachel C Madzinga
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Dear Rachel C Madzinga

RE: INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE ETHICAL CLEARANCE-APPROVAL NUMBER: BUSEREC/0213/2026

Your application for research ethical clearance related to the topic '**A framework for stimulating innovative work behaviours through transformational leadership in the legal profession'** has been approved and allocated approval Number: **BUSEREC/0213/2026**. You are to quote this approval number for all correspondences inclusive of consent forms and any other documents as and Awhen appropriate. The approval period is as stated below:

Type of Meeting	:	19th Research Ethics Committee meeting
Approval Date	:	11/06/2026
Expiry date	:	10/06/2027

The project will automatically discontinue on the expiry date. You can apply for renewal three months before the expiry date. The renewal application should be accompanied by a progress report.

You are not expected to make any changes/adjustments to the protocol including the consent documents. Any trials involving drugs, devices and biologics require approval of the Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe before commencement. All problems to do with the safety of participants must be reported to BUSEREC within three (3) working days.

Upon termination of the study, a report has to be submitted to BUSEREC.

Yours sincerely

BUSEREC CHAIRPERSON