

## THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON LECTURER PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY IN BEIJING, CHINA

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to study the impact of transformational leadership on lecturer performance at a university in Beijing, China. This study adopts a quantitative research approach. The selected population for this investigation comprised 385 lecturers from the university. The data collection process involved a purposive sampling method, targeting a sample size of 196 individuals through a questionnaire. The hypotheses were tested utilizing the enter method of multiple regression analysis, complemented by descriptive statistical analyses that encompassed frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The predetermined level of statistical significance was set at 0.05.

The findings of the study indicated that the opinions of the respondents regarding transformational leadership and lecturer performance were situated at a moderate level. Furthermore, the hypothesis testing outcomes revealed that transformational leadership, encompassing idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, significantly influenced lecturer performance at the university. The predictive ability of these factors reached a substantial level at 0.000, with a predictive power of 34.8 percent.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership; Lecturer Performance; University in Beijing; China

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the world places great emphasis on education, especially the knowledge gained from classes that can contribute to the lifestyle and career of educators. As a result, an idea has transformed the education system into a universal model for decades. In particular, higher education programs (Molina & Lattimer, 2013)

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show that China's education system needs to be reformed due to the changing circumstances of society and the continuous development that has taken place in the 21st century. To be ready to deal with the changes that occur, it is necessary to formulate a strategy or reform the education system, leading to the development of people's potential in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and values (Morgan et al., 2017).

The University in Beijing, China, houses many of the oldest institutions in the country. Lecturers from various nationalities are hired to play a role in the development of the teaching and learning system in the university's educational and psychology programs. To achieve basic educational concepts or methods that will benefit China's future youth (Xing, 2019). Observations on changes in course structure with interruptions and lagging behind are important issues for the university to study and improve the content of its courses. Changes to the system or structure in the organization will require leadership that can make a positive impact on educational innovation as well as the development of competencies and potential in personnel in line with the changes that will occur. Therefore, the level of transformational leadership of every personnel plays an important role in bringing the university to higher efficiency. According to a study of transformational leadership among academics from the university, it was found that transformational leadership had an impact on lecturers' maximum efficiency (Nurtjahjani et al., 2020). Transformational leadership in the university, in addition to having an impact on creating efficiency, also contributes to the development of knowledge and innovation (Militaru, 2012).

In the realm of lecturer performance in China, governmental regulations and specific requirements assume a crucial role, establishing a structured framework and clear criteria that direct the assessment of educators. This contributes significantly to a comprehensive understanding of their professional competence (Peng et al., 2014). Past research has consistently supported the notion that transformational leadership has had a positive impact on the lecturer performance of universities in China. For instance, Pongpearchan's (2016) study found a positive correlation between transformational leadership and the work performance of lecturers in Chinese universities. Similarly, Wang et al.'s (2022) research demonstrated that transformational leadership positively influences the development of innovative work behaviors among lecturers in colleges and universities in China.

The circumstances mentioned above are why the researchers recognize the importance of studying the subject, "The impact of transformational leadership on lecturer performance: A case study of a university in Beijing, China." Because the use of transformational leadership to develop the potential of administrators, lecturers, or personnel in the organization will lead to the creation of models for effective performance, it also directly and indirectly impacts the university's operational performance in providing students with knowledge, skills, and innovation.

## 2. OBJECTIVE

To study the impact of transformational leadership on lecturer performance at a university in Beijing, China.

### 3. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H1: Transformational leadership affects lecturer performance at a university in Beijing, China.

### 4. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Concept and theory of transformational leadership

Transformational leadership refers to a style of leadership where a leader recognizes the needs and motivations of their followers by interacting with them in a manner that facilitates positive change. This type of leadership motivates followers to achieve performance beyond expectations and fosters an ideological consciousness while adhering to ethical values (Bakker et al., 2022). Moreover, transformational leaders view change as an opportunity, possessing the ability to identify the right changes and effectively implement them both externally and internally (Jedaman, 2019).

Yukl (2010) explains that transformational leadership is divided into four areas, as follows:

- 1) Idealized influence refers to being a good role model for followers in order to build loyalty, confidence, and identification among them.
- 2) Inspirational motivation refers to inspiring those who are followers through a shared vision, attitudes, and setting objectives for tasks and goals that need to be achieved.
- 3) Intellectual stimulation refers to the behavior of the leader that increases awareness of the problem by influencing the follower to evaluate it from a new perspective through support, encouragement, and training.
- 4) Individualized consideration refers to taking individuality into account, including learning, training, teaching, and showing respect for individual followers, as well as considering the needs of the followers by mentoring, communicating, and empathizing with individual issues.

#### Concept and theory of performance

Performance refers to achieving desired outcomes, which can include producing the desired output, attaining the desired amount, and reaching set goals. To work effectively, one must prioritize actions that are most cost-effective in terms of resources, time, and money compared to the results obtained (Burches & Burches, 2020). There are three components: (1) Quality refers to performing work of high quality in accordance with the standards set by the organization or to satisfy customers or service recipients. (2) Quantity refers to completing tasks that meet the expectations of the organization. The results must align with the volume set by the organization or with the goals established by the organization. (3) Time refers to efficiently utilizing time to complete tasks within the specified period by leveraging skills or techniques to work more efficiently (Gassner et al., 2022).

### 5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

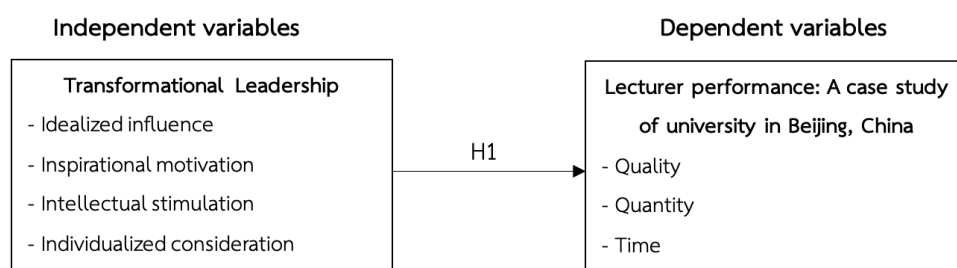
In the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, the examination of factors influencing lecturer performance stands as a critical endeavor. This research delves into the intricate dynamics between transformational leadership and lecturer performance within the unique context of a university in Beijing, China. The conceptual

framework guiding this investigation encapsulates a set of independent variables representing distinct facets of transformational leadership. These include Idealized influence, reflecting the ability of leaders to instill admiration and respect; Inspirational motivation, highlighting the capacity to inspire and motivate; Intellectual stimulation, signifying the encouragement of creativity and critical thinking; and Individualized consideration, emphasizing personalized attention and support (Supermane et al., 2018).

Situated at the nexus of this leadership paradigm is the dependent variable—lecturer performance. Lecturer performance is multifaceted, encompassing Quality, reflecting excellence in educational delivery; Quantity, gauging the extent of academic output; and Time, capturing the efficiency and timeliness in meeting professional responsibilities. This conceptual framework serves as a guiding structure, providing a lens through which the intricate interplay between transformational leadership and lecturer performance can be systematically analyzed and comprehended (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017).

Figure 1

*Conceptual framework*



## 6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a quantitative study that involves a step-by-step research process beginning with the identification of the population and sample size, followed by the design of research tools, data collection, and the analysis of data and statistics for hypothesis testing. These steps are divided into various topics as follows:

1. The population and sample are comprised of lecturers at a university in Beijing, China, with a total population of 385 individuals. The researchers determined the exact population size and used Yamane's (1973) formula as a method for calculating sample sizes from known or countable populations. The estimated population mean, a level of confidence of 95%, and an error margin of not more than 5% were considered, resulting in a sample size of 196. Non-probability sampling was conducted using purposive sampling methods.

2. The research instrument is a questionnaire created after studying and researching concepts and theories to obtain information related to transformational leadership and performance, focusing on aspects relevant to university lecturers. The questionnaire is divided into four sections: (1) A section for gathering respondents' general information. (2) A section for assessing transformational leadership across four areas: Idealized influence,

inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. (3) A section for evaluating lecturer performance in three areas: Quality, quantity, and time. (4) A final section for suggestions. All the questionnaires underwent testing for reliability, and after 30 trials, they were found to have a reliability score of more than 0.7, indicating their reliability.

3. Data analysis consists of descriptive statistics analysis presented as a table of frequency distribution, percentage, mean, and standard deviation to describe basic information about the sample group. Inferential statistical analysis was used to test the hypothesis, with statistical significance set at the 0.05 level, employing multiple regression analysis with the enter method. Multiple Regression Analysis is a statistical technique used to examine the relationship between transformational leadership in four areas, namely, Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, on lecturer's performance.

## 7. RESULT

An analysis of the data of the 196 respondents found that the majority of respondents were male (55.6%) and female (44.4%), mostly aged 41–50 years (37.8%), had a doctoral degree (68.4%), and had a median monthly income of 10,001–20,000 yuan (45.4%). The respondents had a moderate level of opinion of transformational leadership ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.22, SD = 0.30), in descending order as follows: Idealized influence ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.33, SD = 0.43), intellectual stimulation ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.20, SD = 0.45), individualized consideration ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.19, SD = 0.45), and inspirational motivation ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.16, SD = 0.42). The opinions on performance were also at a moderate level, similarly ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.15, SD = 0.35), in descending order as follows: Time ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.18, SD = 0.44), quality ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.14, SD = 0.44), and quantity ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.14, SD = 0.46).

Table 1

*shows the results of the test of the transformational leadership hypothesis regarding lecturer performance at a university in Beijing, China.*

| Lecturer performance  | b     | Std. Error | $\beta$ | t     | Sig.    |
|---|-------|------------|---------|-------|---------|
| (Constant)  | 1.128 | 0.223      |         | 5.054 | .000*** |
| - Idealized influence   | 0.110 | 0.053      | 0.134   | 2.077 | .039*   |
| - Inspirational motivation  | 0.079 | 0.054      | 0.095   | 1.469 | .143    |
| - Intellectual stimulation  | 0.111 | 0.049      | 0.142   | 2.249 | .026*   |
| - Individualized consideration  | 0.330 | 0.049      | 0.428   | 6.688 | .000*** |
| R = 0.590, R <sup>2</sup> = 0.348, Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = 0.334, Std. <sub>EST</sub> = 0.286, F = 25.445, Sig. = .000*** |       |            |         |       |         |

\* Statistical significance level of .05

\*\* Statistical significance level of .01

\*\*\* Statistical significance level of .001

According to Table 1, transformational leadership significantly affects the lecturer performance at the university at the .000 level, comprising idealized influence ( $b = 0.110$ ,  $t = 2.077$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .039$ ), intellectual stimulation ( $b = 0.111$ ,  $t = 2.249$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .026$ ), and individualized consideration ( $b = 0.330$ ,  $t = 6.688$ ,  $\text{Sig.} = .000$ ). The predictive power was 34.8 percent.

## 8. DISCUSSION

The research findings revealed that transformational leadership, including idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, significantly affects the lecturer performance at the university at the .000 level, with a predictive power of 34.8 percent. This demonstrates the key elements of leadership that contribute to making the university in Beijing, China, more efficient. The university offers courses in transformational leadership training, focusing on managing the leadership component, particularly in the area of individualized consideration, to improve job efficiency. Followed by intellectual stimulation, initiatives must be carried out to enable innovation or innovative initiatives that will help improve efficiency in different dimensions from the past, such as reinvention, new knowledge, new teaching techniques, as well as potentially new faculties or disciplines that will be able to meet the educational needs of the population in the area. Finally, there must be an idealized influence to gain confidence and dedication to being a model lecturer or a highly effective lecturer capable of performing the assigned work at the university with quality according to the specified standards. In line with Lau's (2012) research on transformational leadership in China: The role of trust and harmony, the findings showed that transformational leadership is statistically significantly related to efficiency. This is consistent with a study by Miao et al. (2012) on "Transformational leadership and the work outcomes of Chinese migrant workers: The mediating effects of identification with leader", where the findings showed that transformational leadership is statistically significantly related to performance.

Transformational leadership is moderate, with idealized influence being the most average. Since the most important element of transformational leadership is motivating those who are followed by having ideologies or concepts that are aligned with or favored by individuals or groups, this is of utmost importance. Followed by intellectual stimulation, which encourages followers to take initiatives to produce works related to teaching or communication. This includes providing research support to lecturers to create new knowledge for academic circles. Individualized consideration is also an important component of transformational leadership, achieved by creating good mentoring or support for supervisors, colleagues, and students individually. However, inspirational motivation is the least average element. Yet, it is just as important as other aspects. To ensure that people around them are satisfied and share the same vision, inspiration through a shared vision and sharing knowledge and a positive attitude towards work is essential to achieve maximum efficiency. This is consistent with Liu's (2018) study of the concepts and theories of change leadership in China. From 2005 to 2015, it was found that the four elements of transformational leadership were critical to developing oneself and the organization to reach their full potential. It is also a factor that has an impact on innovation, organizational commitment, good membership

in the organization (organizational citizenship behavior), job satisfaction, and performance. Additionally, the research of Metwally and El Zarka (2017) on “An understanding of transformational leadership and its implications on organizational learning: A literature review” suggests that transformational leadership also has a significant positive impact on organizational learning and its ability to manage the learning process.

The performance was moderate. This indicates a moderate level of opinion related to competence and performance potential. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance the efficiency of that operation to a high level. When considering the averages, respondents commented that efficiency in timed operations is the most important because effective work must be punctual or able to perform tasks as scheduled. If work cannot be completed on time, it may have numerous negative effects. Quality follows, demonstrating the ability to perform quality work. This is an important variable that will lead to high performance in accordance with specified standards. The lowest average is quantity, which reflects the ability to manage the amount of work that the organization needs effectively. This is in line with the research by Zhang and Usaho (2018), who conducted a study on “Factors affecting school administration in a public upper secondary school in Heze City, Shandong Province, the People’s Republic of China”. Lecturer performance consists of teaching skills and upgrading students’ abilities, helping and improving learners’ behavior by motivating them to be interested, and solving problems for students individually. This is consistent with a study by Mahgoub and Elyas (2014) on “Development of lecturer performance and its impact on enhancing the quality of the educational process”. The results showed that the improvement of the lecturer’s performance depends on the lesson plan and the design of the teaching schedule.

New knowledge from this research highlights the differential effects of idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The findings underscore the significance of idealized influence, emphasizing that when leaders are perceived as role models and sources of inspiration, lecturers tend to exhibit enhanced performance. This aligns with the established notion that a leader’s ability to instill admiration and respect positively influences the work behavior of followers (Wisse & Rietzschel, 2014). The study brings forth a noteworthy understanding regarding intellectual stimulation. Lecturers exposed to leaders who foster creativity and critical thinking demonstrate heightened job performance. This outcome underscores the importance of leaders in academia encouraging an environment that stimulates intellectual growth and innovation (Shafi et al., 2020). Furthermore, the research illuminates the role of individualized consideration, suggesting that when leaders demonstrate personalized attention and support to the unique needs of lecturers, it contributes significantly to their job performance. Recognizing the individuality of lecturers and tailoring leadership approaches accordingly emerges as a crucial factor in promoting efficiency and satisfaction in the academic setting (Herman & Chiu, 2014). These insights collectively contribute to the broader understanding of the intricate dynamics between transformational leadership and lecturer performance, offering valuable implications for leadership practices within the academic context in China.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Suggestions for implementing the findings

1. Administrators or committees of the university in Beijing, China, should organize training courses to facilitate leadership development for lecturers, tailored to their specific needs and aimed at enhancing their efficiency in their work.

2. Administrators or committees of the university in Beijing, China, should implement a tool or method to measure performance affected by lecturer's transformational leadership. This will enable them to understand and apply strategies for effective personnel management at the university.

3. University administrators or committees in Beijing, China, should define the role of university lecturers as transformational leaders, emphasizing attributes related to idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized attention to achieve a higher level of operational efficiency.

### 2. Suggestions for future research

1. Future research should investigate additional factors such as motivation, organizational support, team-work, etc., that influence the performance of lecturers in universities in Beijing, China. This research will help elucidate the performance of lecturers across different dimensions.

2. Subsequent research should explore the application of transformational leadership in other geographic contexts within China. This will facilitate an understanding of how the model of transformational leadership evolves in diverse contexts.

3. Future research should examine additional factors such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior that may complicate the relationship between transformational leadership and the performance of lecturers in universities. This will contribute to generating new knowledge or expanding existing knowledge to encompass a broader range of topics.

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