

The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Lecturers' Quality of Work Life: A Case Study at a Malaysian Professional College

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of transformational leadership on the quality of work life among lecturers at Malaysian Professionals' College. Transformational leadership, characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, plays a crucial role in shaping lecturers' work environments and well-being. The study employs a quantitative research approach, utilizing survey questionnaires distributed among lecturers. Data analysis includes descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression techniques to assess the relationship between leadership style and quality work of life. The results indicate a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership and quality work of life. Leaders who exhibit transformational qualities foster job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment among lecturers. This research underscores the importance of implementing transformational leadership practices to enhance the work environment in educational institutions, thereby improving lecturers' overall well-being and institutional effectiveness. The findings contribute to the body of knowledge on leadership in higher education and provide practical insights for policymakers and educational administrators in Malaysia.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, quality of work life, lecturers, higher education, Malaysian Professionals' College

INTRODUCTION

The quality of work life of lecturers is a critical factor in ensuring the success and sustainability of educational institutions. Effective leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the work environment, influencing job satisfaction, motivation, and overall performance. Transformational leadership, which focuses on inspiring and motivating employees, has been recognized as an effective leadership style in educational settings. This study examines the influence of transformational leadership on the quality work of life lecturers at Malaysian Professionals' College in Malaysia. These colleges which are funded by the Council of Trust for the People offer diploma and semi-professional programs around Malaysia. This paper aims to investigate the influence of transformational leadership on the quality of work life among lecturers in the organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership theory, developed by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985), highlights the leader's ability to inspire and motivate subordinates. This leadership style consists of four key dimensions, Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation – Leaders, Individualized Consideration.

Adenia & Mohamed (2022) explored the impact of transformational leadership on work motivation among honorary teachers in private Islamic high schools. Their findings suggest that leaders who exhibit transformational traits contribute significantly to teachers' motivation and commitment.

Communication Styles and Leadership in Education play a crucial role in shaping organizational culture and employee engagement (Mawarni & Halilah, 2021). A study on principals' communication styles in vocational colleges in Selangor found that assertive communication positively correlates with strong school culture, enhancing collaboration, shared leadership, and professional commitment (Mawarni & Halilah, 2021). This supports the notion that transformational leaders who communicate effectively can establish a positive work culture and strengthen organizational identity.

In colleges, deans are leaders, and instrumental in shaping the academic and administrative culture by motivating faculty and staff to accomplish education objectives. Wen-Juan (2012) agrees that a quality dean promotes education teaching management through accurate placement, occupation quality study, staff potential development, and standardized, scientific, and efficient teaching management. Additionally, deans that employ transformational leadership can effectively mitigate resistance to change and advance collective progress by fostering trust and respect.

Transformational leadership has been shown to enhance workplace flexibility, job security, employee dedication, morale, and overall job satisfaction (Voon et al., 2011). Additionally, transformational leadership by deans can increase faculty job satisfaction by fostering emotional wealth (Yuan, 2023). This leadership style emphasizes vision, creativity, and empowerment that enable leaders to align higher education institutional objectives.

Quality of Work Life in Higher Education

Quality of work life refers to a set of principles held by people within an organization, where they are seen as trustworthy, responsible, and capable of making valuable contributions. The quality of work life encompasses factors such as job satisfaction, compensation, work-life balance, and career development opportunities were identified by Walton (1980). Studies have demonstrated that a high-quality work of life leads to increased employee well-being, reduced turnover, and enhanced job performance.

Kaniz et al. (2021) found that transformational leadership significantly improves quality work of life by fostering a culture of trust, mutual respect, and professional fulfillment. Similarly, Akar & Ustuner (2019) emphasized the role of organizational justice and support in enhancing faculty members' work life in educational institutions.

Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Quality Work of Life

The influence of transformational leadership on Quality Work of Life has been widely documented. For example, Lin et al. (2016) found that a leader's ability to instill confidence and motivation in employees positively affects their work-life balance and job performance. Similarly, Jurado et al. (2018) highlighted the impact of transformational leadership in improving workplace well-being in the healthcare sector, reinforcing its applicability in education. Transformational leaders contribute to organizational success by fostering motivation, innovation, and job satisfaction. Research suggests that institutions with strong transformational leadership practices experience higher employee engagement and lower burnout rates (Tsani et al., 2024).

Scholars have discussed how transformational leadership and quality of work life are interconnected. A., Utami, S., & Nizam, A. (2022) assert that transformational leadership improves work-life quality and employee productivity. Tsani et al. (2024) asserted that transformational leadership, an excellent work ethic, and good quality work life positively influence educators' organizational hence enhancing overall educational efficacy.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research approach with a survey design to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and the quality of work life among lecturers in Malaysia Professional College. The target population consists of 59 lecturers, and data was collected through an online structured questionnaire adapted from Bass and Avolio's (1994) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and Walton's (1980) quality work of life framework. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale to measure responses.

Statistical such as correlation analysis and multiple regression were applied using SPSS to assess the relationship between transformational leadership and quality work of life, as well as determining the contributing factor of transformational leadership dimensions to quality work of life. Ethics approval from the University Technology MARA was obtained to collect data at the Professional College.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile

TABLE I Demographic Profile

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| Gender | Male | 19 | 32.2 |
| | Female | 40 | 67.8 |
| | Total | 59 | 100 |
| Age | <30 years | 2 | 3.4 |
| | 31-40 years | 20 | 33.9 |
| | 41-50 years | 36 | 61 |
| | >51 years | 1 | 1.7 |
| | Total | 59 | 100 |
| Ethnicity | Malay | 58 | 98.3 |
| | Chinese | 1 | 1.7 |
| | Total | 59 | 100 |
| Teaching Experience | <5 years | 5 | 8.5 |
| | 6-10 years | 9 | 15.3 |
| | 11-15 years | 19 | 32.2 |
| | 16 years and above | 26 | 44.1 |
| | Total | 59 | 100 |
| Academic Qualification | Degree | 12 | 20.3 |
| | Master | 45 | 76.3 |
| | PhD | 2 | 3.4 |
| | Total | 59 | 100 |

The demographic profile of the 59 participants highlights key characteristics. The sample is predominantly female (67.8%). Most lecturers (61.0%) are aged 41–50, while 33.9% are 31–40, indicating an experienced workforce. Malays form 98.3% of the group. Regarding experience, 44.1% have over 16 years, while 8.5% have less than 5 years, emphasizing the need for leadership strategies catering to both experienced and newer lecturers. Educationally, 76.3% hold a master’s degree, reflecting high qualifications. Overall, lecturers at Malaysia Professional College are highly skilled, experienced, and mature, influencing their perspectives on leadership and work quality in higher education.

Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Quality of Work Life.

To determine the relationship, lecturers’ perceptions of transformational leadership within the academic context and their quality of work life levels were first measured.

TABLE II Lecturers' Perceptions of Transformational Leadership

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-----------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Transformational Leadership | 3.6331 | 0.35314 |

Table II shows that the mean score for transformational leadership is 3.6331 (SD = .35314), indicating moderate to high perception among lecturers. This suggests a shared understanding of leadership approaches at Malaysia Professional College. Overall, lecturers have a positive perception of transformational leadership within their institution.

TABLE III Factors Influencing the Quality of Work Life

| | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|----------------------|------|----------------|
| Quality of Work Life | 3.29 | 0.353 |

Table III shows a moderately high mean score (M = 3.29, SD = .353) for Quality of Work Life, indicating lecturers at Malaysia Professional College perceive workplace conditions positively. Minimal disagreement suggests a shared view, reflecting overall satisfaction with work life quality and the factors influencing their overall work experience.

TABLE III Correlation Transformational Leadership Style and The Quality of Work Life

| Correlation Between Transformational Leadership Style and The Quality of Work Life Among Lecturers at Malaysia Professional College | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| | | Transformational Leadership Style | Quality Of Work Life |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | |
| Transformational Leadership Style | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .480** |
| Quality Of Work Life | Pearson Correlation | .480** | 1 |

The findings of this study indicate a statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership style and the quality of work life among lecturers at Malaysia Professional College. A Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated a positive relationship at the 0.01 significance level ($r = .480$, $p < .01$), suggesting that higher levels of transformational leadership are associated with an improved quality of work life.

This relationship aligns with existing literature, which underscores the role of transformational leadership in fostering supportive work environments. Transformational leaders emphasize individualized support, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation, which contribute to a more positive and engaging work culture. These leadership practices enhance job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work-life balance, all of which are crucial for lecturers’ overall well-being.

TABLE IV Correlation Idealized Influence and All the Eight Dimensions

| | | Idealized influence | Adequate compensation | Working condition | Use capacities at work | Opportunity for career growth | Social integration in workforce | Constitutionalism | Occupied space | Social relevance |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Idealized influence | Pearson Correlation | 1 | 0.148 | .414** | 0.232 | -0.029 | 0.028 | .601** | .260* | .701** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.263 | 0.001 | 0.076 | 0.825 | 0.835 | 0 | 0.047 | 0 |

Furthermore, the study highlights that specific transformational leadership components, such as idealized influence, significantly impact dimensions of work-life quality, including working conditions, social relevance of work, and constitutionalism in the work organization. This indicates that transformational leaders who inspire trust and provide clear vision positively shape the professional experiences of lecturers.

Relative Contribution of Transformational Leadership to Quality of Work Life

TABLE II Model Summary of Regression

| Model Summary of Regression | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1 | .480a | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.217 | 0.31284 |

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to better understand the impact of transformational leadership style on the quality of work life among lecturers at Malaysia Professional College in Malaysia.

Regression analysis further explored the extent to which transformational leadership contributes to quality work of life. The model revealed that transformational leadership accounts for 23.1% of the variance in work-life quality ($R^2 = .231$). This suggests that while transformational leadership plays a significant role, other organizational and personal factors also influence lecturers' quality work of life.

The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership positively impacts essential aspects of quality work of life, including job satisfaction, career growth opportunities, and workplace motivation. However, certain factors, such as compensation and workload management, may require additional institutional support beyond leadership influence. This aligns with previous studies indicating that while leadership fosters a supportive work culture, broader structural policies are needed to enhance overall job satisfaction and well-being.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of transformational leadership in higher education. While it significantly impacts quality work of life, institutional policies should complement leadership practices to create a holistic and sustainable work environment for lecturers. Future research could further explore additional factors that mediate the relationship between leadership and quality work of life, such as workload distribution and institutional support mechanisms.

DISCUSSION

Transformational leadership plays a significant role in shaping the quality of work life for lecturers at Malaysia Professional College. Fostering a culture of engagement, creativity, and support, this leadership style creates a more dynamic and inclusive work environment. When leaders inspire and empower their teams, lecturers feel a stronger sense of motivation and purpose in their roles, leading to higher job satisfaction and overall well-being.

Transformational leadership encourages self-governance and professional growth. Thus, lecturers have the autonomy to innovate and collaborate, they develop a sense of ownership over their work, which translates

into improved performance and commitment to their institution. This approach also nurtures respect and trust within the workplace, strengthening professional relationships and promoting a positive organizational culture.

Moreover, the emphasis on motivation and career development under transformational leadership helps lecturers maintain a better work-life balance. Reduced stress levels, a sense of belonging, and opportunities for continuous learning contribute to a more fulfilling academic environment. In turn, this benefits not only the educators but also the students and the institution, as it fosters innovation and long-term success. Ultimately, transformational leadership is a key factor in enhancing the quality of work life for lecturers, ensuring a healthier, more productive, and inspiring academic setting.

Since a deeper understanding of transformational leadership impacts the quality of work life, the results showed that lecturers agreed that their workload, academic tenure, and motivation further explain variations in quality of work life. Lecturers with heavier workloads perceived transformational leadership differently compared to those with lighter responsibilities, as motivation levels influence their ability to engage with and benefit from this leadership style.

Demographic characteristics, including age and professional experience, significantly influence the relationship between transformative leadership and quality of work life. This indicates that experienced lecturers may possess differing perspectives on leadership methods in contrast to younger lecturers who are still acclimating to their professional duties.

Meanwhile, comparing transformational leadership with other leadership approaches, such as transactional leadership, gives a broader perspective that different leadership styles give impact to quality work of life. Transformational leadership encourages creativity and involvement by inspiring lecturers to think innovatively, being initiative and contribute actively to the institution's vision. This leadership style fosters an environment where new ideas are welcomed, collaboration is emphasized, and individuals feel empowered to take ownership of their roles.

In contrast, transactional leadership is more successful in situations requiring well-defined expectations and systematic incentives, as it focuses on structure, clear goals, and performance-based rewards. This suggests that a balanced approach, integrating elements of both transformational and transactional leadership, may optimize faculty engagement, motivation, and overall job satisfaction.

Future research may explore these additional factors to develop a more comprehensive framework for improving lecturers' experiences. Education institutions can create an enhanced and sustainable work environment for lecturers by integrating various leadership styles and considering organizational and psychological aspects.

CONCLUSIONS

This study highlights the significant influence of transformational leadership on the quality of work life among lecturers at Malaysia Professional College. The findings confirm a positive relationship between transformational leadership and quality work of life, emphasizing the role of leadership in fostering a supportive and engaging work environment. Leaders who exhibit idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration contribute to higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall well-being of lecturers.

In conclusion, transformational leadership serves as a vital factor in enhancing lecturers' work-life quality, reinforcing the need for educational institutions to adopt leadership practices that inspire and support faculty members. Future research should explore additional factors influencing quality work of life and make comparisons on other leadership styles to develop a more on lecturers' motivation, professional experiences and quality work of life.

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