THE CHARISMATIC ASPECTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THEIR PREDICTION OF THE UNIVERSITY TEACHER’S WORK ENGAGEMENT: THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF TRUST IN LEADERS

a Chunhui Lin, b Ali Sorayyaei Azar, c Albattat Ahmad

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigates the effect that idealized influence and inspirational motivation of transformational leadership on work engagement of university teacher and the mediating role of trust in leaders between the relationships.

Theoretical framework: Job-Demand Resources Model (JD-R) and Social Exchange Theory (SET) were adopted in this study.

Design/methodology/approach: The study population is the university teachers in seven public universities in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China. The unit of analysis of this study is the individual university teacher from these seven public universities. With a stratified sampling and a cross-sectional design, 381 respondents are employed in the study for data collection by self-report questionnaires and the data is analyzed by Amos with structural equation modeling.

Findings: The findings indicate that idealised influence has a positive effect on teachers’ work engagement, inspirational motivation has a positive effect on teachers’ work engagement, and teachers’ trust in leaders mediates the relationship between idealised influence and teacher’s work engagement, inspirational motivation, and teacher’s work engagement.

Research, Practical & Social implications: This study will be beneficial for future researchers and university administrative to aware the importance of trust in leaders in the workplace to improve the work engagement. Meanwhile, more psychological factors like psychological safety or psychological fulfillment on work engagement should be explored and tested. This finding also provides solutions to the improvement of teachers’ work engagement from a charismatic perspective of leadership to those universities located in less developed cities of China and the world. Leaders’ Charm matters and should be improved and make best use of it.

Originality/value: The study provides valuable insight on the effect of charismatic aspects of transformational leadership on work engagement by introducing a psychological factor, trust in leaders, as a mediator between the relationship and providing a new perspective of illustration and reason by considering idealized influence and inspirational motivation as job resources.

a PhD Candidate in Management & Business, Graduate School of Management, Post Graduate Centre, Management and Science University, University Drive, College of Foreign Languages, Yulin Normal University, Guangxi, China, E-mail: 012021021748@msu.edu.my, Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-2645-6152
b PhD, Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics, School of Education and Social Sciences, Management and Science University, University Drive, Selangor, Malaysia, E-mail: ali_sorayyaei@msu.edu.my, Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3539-8250
c PhD in Hospitality Management, Graduate School of Management, Post Graduate Centre, Management and Science University, University Drive, Selangor, Malaysia, E-mail: dr.battat@msu.edu.my, Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3127-4405

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OS ASPECTOS CARISMÁTICOS DA LIDERANÇA TRANSFORMACIONAL E SUA PREVISÃO DO ENGAJAMENTO NO TRABALHO DO PROFESSOR UNIVERSITÁRIO: O EFEITO MEDIADOR DA CONFIANÇA NOS LÍDERES

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este estudo investiga o efeito da influência idealizada e da motivação inspiradora da liderança transformacional no engajamento no trabalho de professores universitários e no papel mediatriz da confiança nos líderes entre os relacionamentos.

Referencial teórico: Modelo Job-Demand Resources (JD-R) e Teoria das Trocas Sociais (SET) foram adotados neste estudo.

Desenho/metodologia/abordagem: A população do estudo são professores universitários de sete universidades públicas na Região Autônoma Zhuang de Guangxi, na China. A unidade de análise deste estudo é o professor universitário individual destas sete universidades públicas. Com amostragem estratificada e desenho transversal, 381 respondentes são empregados no estudo para coleta de dados por meio de questionários de autorrelato e os dados são analisados por Amos com modelagem de equações estruturais.

Resultados: Os resultados indicam que a influência idealizada tem um efeito positivo no envolvimento dos professores no trabalho, a motivação inspiradora tem um efeito positivo no envolvimento dos professores no trabalho e a confiança dos professores nos líderes medeia a relação entre a influência idealizada e o envolvimento do professor no trabalho, a motivação inspiradora, e o envolvimento do professor no trabalho.

Implicações de pesquisa, práticas e sociais: Este estudo será benéfico para futuros pesquisadores e administradores universitários para conscientizarem a importância da confiança nos líderes no local de trabalho para melhorar o engajamento no trabalho. Entretanto, mais fatores psicológicos, como a segurança psicológica ou a realização psicológica no envolvimento no trabalho, devem ser explorados e testados. Esta descoberta também fornece soluções para a melhoria do envolvimento dos professores no trabalho, a partir de uma perspectiva carismática de liderança, para as universidades localizadas em cidades menos desenvolvidas da China e do mundo. O charme dos líderes é importante e deve ser melhorado e aproveitado da melhor forma.

Originalidade/valor: O estudo fornece informações valiosas sobre o efeito dos aspectos carismáticos da liderança transformacional no engajamento no trabalho, introduzindo um fator psicológico, a confiança nos líderes, como mediatriz entre o relacionamento e fornecendo uma nova perspectiva de ilustração e razão, considerando a influência idealizada e motivação inspiradora como recursos de trabalho.

Palavras-chave: influência idealizada, motivação inspiradora, confiança nos líderes, engajamento no trabalho.
INTRODUCTION

Teachers' work engagement influences not just their own professional development (Botham, 2018), but also the physical and mental growth and academic achievement of their students (Cacciamani et al., 2022; Chen, 2017). Moreover, sustainable school development is contingent upon teachers' commitment to their work and desire to fulfill school objectives (Day et al., 2001; Khan, 2019). A high level of work engagement is typically associated with higher levels of dedication, involvement, and productivity (Baran & Sypniewska, 2020). Highly engaged teachers are more likely to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) and innovative conduct (Emirie & Gebremeskel, 2022). Thus, engaged university teachers that give quality education and meet students' needs and expectations are crucial to the success of universities. But unfortunately, according to Gallup's College Teacher Engagement Survey Report 2015, "the vast majority universities teachers worldwide are neither engaged nor very unengaged and work disengagement is an acknowledged issue in all fields" (Bergdahl et al., 2020) including education sector and it is true that many university teachers are losing their passion for their work and lead to a very low engagement in the job.

The enhancement of teaching quality depends on instructors' commitment and job-related engagement. Just as Asiwe et al. (2017) claimed that increasing work engagement sustainably still remains as a challenge despite years of research on the topic of engagement. Aghaz and Tarighian (2016b), Akingbola and van den Berg (2019) also figured out that more studies of the elements that motivate and keep people engaged should be conducted. According to Aghaz and Tarighian (2016a), investigating additional antecedents of employee engagement is worthwhile for future research due to the dearth of studies focusing on the organizational elements that drive engagement, especially among university personnel. To boost employee engagement, Akanji et al. (2018) noted that university administrators need a deeper understanding of how employees perceive leadership actions since Leadership styles of a leader is one of the potential precursors that can influence employees' engagement in their jobs (Ancarani et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Purba, 2021) and have a significant impact on the success of organization and the employees’ productivity. Transformational leadership has confirmed to be a most adopted and effective leadership style in education section (Asad et al., 2021). Numerous studies have exhaustively studied the effect transformational leadership on individual and organizational engagement, see (Besieux et al., 2018; Ghadi et al., 2013; Islam et al.,...
2021a; Mozammel & Haan, 2016; Prochazka et al., 2017). While these studies mostly treated the idea of transformational leadership as a general one, failing to distinguish between the various ways that each transformational leadership dimension affects employee engagement. Treating transformational leadership as a dimensional level construct rather than a general concept could provide a more nuanced understanding on the impact of leadership on work engagement (Bottomley et al., 2016; Seitz & Owens, 2021).

Thus, based on a Job- Demand Resource model (JD-R) and Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study assumes university leader’s idealized influence and inspirational motivation behavior as the job resources from the leadership perspective as the predictors of teachers’ work engagement and test the hypothesis that whether they can motivate and help university teachers to enhance their work engagement directly and indirectly through trust in leaders.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT
2.1 IDEALIZED INFLUENCE AND WORK ENGAGEMENT

The term “idealized influence” describes the behaviors of the leader as a role model and provides the employees with a wonderful image of being confident, capable (Windlinger et al., 2020) thus to make employees engage in the work. Additionally, Obuobisa-Darko (2020) pointed that this style has a positive influence on their followers and can change the future view of employees from negative to positive. Thus, it will make subordinates become more engaged with the vision and be willing to make more sacrifices to achieve the organizational goals (Njau, 2019).

There is strong evidence linking idealized influence to beneficial outcomes for employees (Afshari, 2021), employee’s engagement in the work is one of these outcomes. Transformational leaders, who exhibit the transformational leadership components (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) can create a highly engaged, productive, and proactive workforce (Rasdi et al., 2022) thus to motivate followers to favorably modify their perceptions, motivations, and expectations, so contributing to organizational success (Afsar et al., 2020). The findings of Hayati et al. (2014) suggested that transformational leadership has positive and significant impact on work engagement and its dimensions. To see if the implementation of the specific dimensions of transformational leadership style aspects
has increased employee engagement in Kenyan parastatals. From the three impact parameters of idealized influence, namely charisma, ethical leadership, and teamwork (Bass & Bass Bernard, 1985), Change et al. (2019) did a quantitative study to assess the impact of idealized influence on employee engagement in Kenyan parastatals in the energy sector. The results show that employee engagement has a statistically significant link with dimensions such as charisma, ethical leadership, and teamwork of idealized influence. According to these above arguments, H1 can be formulated as followed:

**H1: Idealized Influence has a positive impact on Work Engagement.**

### 2.2 INSPIRATIONAL MOTIVATION AND WORK ENGAGEMENT

Inspirational motivation is a kind of leadership that transformational leaders employ to promote a sense of pride or role model behavior. According to (Bass & Bass Bernard, 1985), charismatic leaders motivate their followers to put the organization's interests ahead of their own through a combination of inspirational words and emotional appeals. The use of emotional components and emotional appeals in the workplace is a key part of the process by which inspirational leadership impacts employees. When a follower feels inspired or touched by the leader, inspirational motivation is utilized. A leader’s inspirational motivation occurs when they “raise followers’ expectations and communicate confidence that followers can achieve ambitious goals through inspiring and motivating followers to reach ambitious goals that may have previously looked impossible” (Erdel & TakkaÅ, 2020). Just like Lai et al. (2020) stated that transformational leadership can increase an employee’s engagement, particularly if the leader is able to engage them in the organization’s goals.

In the research of Datche and Mukulu (2015), he sought to identify the effects of transformational leadership on employee engagement and found that supervisors’ inspirational motivation of leaders was weak and insignificant to employee engagement. The findings of Hayati et al. (2014) suggested that transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on work engagement and its dimensions. The research indicates that transformational leaders can readily communicate their inspirational motivation to subordinates, resulting in the creation of a positive vision that, by setting high standards, pushes employees and instills passion and optimism for work success. Mansor et al. (2017) also found there is a significant association between the inspiration...
motivation and employee engagement among Generation Y in Malaysia. The same positive relationship between inspirational motivation and employee engagement were also found in the research of Evelyn and Hazel (2015). In Sri Lanka, Thisera and Sewwandi (2018) investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and executive-level employee engagement in Sri Lanka's hotel sector. And it found that transformational leadership and each of its dimensions including inspirational motivation has a favorable effect on employee engagement. Based on this justification, H2 of this study can be formed:

**H2: Inspirational Motivation has a positive influence on Work Engagement.**

2.3 IDEALIZED INFLUENCE AND TRUST IN LEADERS

According to Avolio et al. (1991), transformational leaders can build trustworthy relationships with their team members. The core tenet of transformational leadership is that people will follow those who can motivate and inspire them. Meng et al. (2013) in China also discovered that one aspect of moral model of Chinese leaders, known as Idealized Influence, is to win the trust of subordinates through leaders’ personnel’s charm identification. By exhibiting constant commitment to the company's vision and guiding principles, transformational leaders motivate their people to collaborate towards the organization's objectives. Increases in openness and trust are potential results (Yue et al., 2019; Zainab et al., 2021). According to Kotlyar and Karakowsky (2007), subordinates are more inclined to follow their leader if they have an emotional bond with the leader and transformational leadership increases followers’ trust in their leaders (Budur & Demir, 2022; Yuan et al., 2021).

More empirical evidences can be found in the research of Kariuki (2021), Ohunakin et al. (2019), Yuan et al. (2022). These studies found that leaders’ idealized influence positively related to the subordinate’s trust in leaders. Being supported by these evidences, the hypothesis related to idealized influence and trust in leaders can be formulated as follow:

**H3: There is a relationship between Idealized Influence and Trust in Leaders.**

2.4 INSPIRATIONAL MOTIVATION AND TRUST IN LEADERS

Inspirational motivation leaders propel workers forward by presenting them a compelling future vision and communicate this goal to followers clearly (Sajjad &
Muhaibes, 2021). A manager who is optimistic about the future can immediately acquire the team's trust and offer employees with a sense of career stability (Cross et al., 2020). According to (Tørring et al., 2019), a unifying goal that everyone on the team can relate to can help a team create trust. By building a shared vision for the organization, a transformational leader with inspirational motivation behavior can gain the trust of his or her team members and motivate them to work together towards common goals (Chai et al., 2017). When exploring the relationship among transformational leadership, transparent communication, employee openness to change and trust, it is discovered that supervisors who can communicate the change vision effectively, demonstrate their personal concern about the employees, and provide inspiration to their subordinates during the change period are likely to gain employees’ trust (Yue et al., 2019).

According to the social exchange idea, relationships are more likely to last and even get better when two people find something in common through communication. As a result, Dinh et al. (2021) found that the motivation of a shared goal can encourage followers to identify with the leader and have faith in him. Charisma-filled leaders with Inspirational Motivation, have the power to motivate their colleagues, switch their focus from personal objectives to the needs of the organization as a whole, and boost follower trust in leaders (Amini et al., 2022). Evidence from the above analysis supports the formulation of the following Hypothesis:

**H4: There is a relationship between Inspirational Motivation and teacher’s Trust in Leaders.**

2.5 TRUST IN LEADERS AND WORK ENGAGEMENT

Trust is the foundation of work engagement, which enhances employees' ties to the company (Baquero, 2023). Additionally, it was suggested that fostering a culture of trust among staff members can boost enthusiasm at work to improve their work engagement (Chughtai & Buckley, 2011). Although employee job engagement has several facets, it is claimed that a leader's behavior was the most important predictor of staff engagement (Nikolova et al., 2019).

Trust in leaders affects employees' attitudes and behaviors at work (Kim et al., 2017) and trust in leaders was linked to favorable work outcomes like job satisfaction, loyalty, and citizenship behavior (Hsieh & Wang, 2015). The psychological wellness of employees is increased when they have faith in their supervisors (Kelloway et al.,
When examining the relationship among Authentic Leadership, Employee Work Engagement, Trust in the Leaders, and Workplace Well-Being in hospitality industry, one of the findings of Baquer (2023) figured out that there is a positive relationship between trust in leaders and employees work engagement. Being backed up by the above analysis, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**H5: There is a relationship between teacher’s Trust in Leaders and teacher’s Work Engagement.**

**2.6 THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF TRUST IN LEADERS BETWEEN IDEALIZED INFLUENCE, INSPIRATIONAL MOTIVATION AND WORK ENGAGEMENT**

There are several studies having investigated the indirect consequences that transformational leadership affect Work Engagement (WE), the mediating effect is brought about by structural empowerment (Amor et al., 2020), employees’ self-determined motivation (Chua & Ayoko, 2021), emotional intelligence (Milhem et al., 2019). The research cited above show that efforts have been undertaken recently to look into the inverse relationship between transformational leadership and job engagement.

Trust in leaders, as a psychological mechanism, has a significant role in enhancing employee outcomes. Regarding servant leadership, Chan and Mak (2014) study aims to examine the connections between servant leadership, followers' trust in their leaders, and job satisfaction as well as the moderating impact of tenure in the organization. The findings revealed that the relationship between servant leadership and subordinate job satisfaction is mediated by followers' trust in their leaders.

Jaiswal and Dhar (2017) delved into the relationship between servant leadership, trust in leader, and employee innovation. It was found that trust in leaders positively mediate servant leadership and employees' ability to think creatively and successful workers were more likely to take risks and think outside the box when they had trust in their manager.

The study by Islam et al. (2021b) set out to look into the effects of transformational leadership on employee championing behavior during an organizational shift and to examine the role that trust in the leaders plays as a mediator between these two phenomena. This study demonstrates that the relationship between transformational leadership and employee championing behavior is mediated by the trust in leaders.

In the context of an epidemic, Yuan et al. (2021) investigates the effects of
leadership style and trust in leaders on employees' affective commitment. The findings indicated that transformational leadership was a positive predictor of both affective commitment and trust in leaders. The link between transformational leadership and organizational commitment is mediated by trust in the leaders. The above existing literatures have fully demonstrated its significant role as a mediator between transformational leadership and work engagement related behaviors like commitment, championing behavior, job satisfaction. And Islam et al. (2021a) explores how transformational leadership can increase employee engagement throughout organizational transition, as well as the unique and sequential mediating roles that valence and trust in leadership play and trust in leadership is found to have a positive mediating effect between transformational leadership and work engagement. Thus, based on these analysis, the following two hypotheses related to the indirect effect of trust in leaders are formulated:

**H6:** Trust in Leaders mediate the effect of Idealized Influence on teacher’s Work Engagement.

**H7:** Trust in Leaders mediate the effect of Inspirational Motivation on teacher’s Work Engagement.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 INSTRUMENTS

Multi-item scales from previous research were utilized to test the constructs in order to evaluate the presented hypotheses; all items were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

#### 3.1.1 Idealized Influence and Inspirational Motivation

For the assessment of these two charismatic dimensions of transformational leadership, a combined instrument of western MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1989) and the eastern TLQ (Li & Shi, 2005) is adopted considering the culture adaptation. A sample item for idealized influence is “My leader inspires me through being good role model” and there are totally 7 indicators for idealized influence. A sample item for inspirational motivation is “My leader has the vision that paints or promises me a better future”. And there are 6 indicators for the assessment of inspirational motivation.
3.1.2 Trust in Leaders

The instrument of Trust in Leaders (TIL) developed by Gabarro and Athos (1976) is utilized in this research with some adaptation since there are some statements using reverse score. The statement “I fully trust my leaders”, “My leaders is always honest and truthful” are samples items in the questionnaires and there is total 7 indicators here for assessment of trust in leaders.

3.1.3 Work Engagement

Schaufeli (2003) compiled the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and later improved it, designing three subscales including vigor, dedication and absorption. The short version (9 questions) of Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) is adopted in this research to assess university teachers’ work engagement. An example item is like: “At my work, I feel bursting with energy”.

3.2 SAMPLE

This research used a quantitative strategy and a cross-sectional study design. This allowed us to gather information at a single juncture and test whether or not our hypotheses were correct (Creswell, 2014). Professional teachers from seven public universities of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China were employed in the research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>Location (city)</th>
<th>Established time</th>
<th>Professional teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yulin Normal University</td>
<td>Yulin</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hechi University</td>
<td>Hechi</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Guangxi University of Finance and Economics</td>
<td>Nanning</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Baise University</td>
<td>Baise</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hezhou University</td>
<td>Hezhou</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wuzhou University</td>
<td>Wuzhou</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Beibu Gulf Universities</td>
<td>Qinzhou</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1092</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7148</td>
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Source: Authors Data

As listed in Table 1, these universities constituted a study population of 7148. By applying the Krejcie and Morgan method of sampling, a pool of 367 (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970) can be drawn as the sample size. Data were collected from the professional teachers from different majors from lecturers to professors of these universities. Using a stratified
sampling method, 734 full-time professional teachers were invited to participate in the survey. After 2 months, 381 valid and usable responses had been collected (response rate was 52%), and 381 samples are thought to be adequate to run the structural equation modelling (Hair et al., 2010).

4 RESULTS

4.1 SAMPLE PROFILE

In this study, 46.7% of the sample are male and 53.3% are female. And the group of aged 41-50 make up the highest percentage (51.8%) in age category, followed by those aged 31-40 (31.5%). Regarding years of teaching, the group with 16-20 years of experience accounts for the largest share of the entire (38.3%), while the group with 11-15 years of experience contributes 24.8% of the whole. Regarding to education, a whopping 70.4% (266/381) of the total population hold master degree and the group with doctorates accounts for 11.8% of the total. As to academic ranks, the highest percentage of respondents (37.1%) comes from the category of senior lecturers, while the second highest (34%) comes from the category of associate professors. And each university contribute a reasonable proportion of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Respondent demographics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Item</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Years of Teaching</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Background</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.2 COMMON METHOD BIAS ASSESSMENT

This study used a cross-sectional research design, and data were gathered over a single time by adopting the same questionnaire, which could have resulted in common technique bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, in this research, common method bias was assessed with Harman's single-factor and all variables were fixed in Harman's single-factor test in order to extract a single factor. According to Hair (1998), when the variance explained by the first factor obtained from exploratory factor analysis does not exceed 50%, then the common method bias is not serious. As can be seen from Table 3, the first-factor initial eigenvalue variance is 41.469 % which is much lower than 50%, thus the common method bias in this study is not serious and will not affect the precise of the analysis.

4.3 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The variables are subjected to KMO and Bartlett's sphericity test. The results show that the KMO value is 0.952, which is greater than 0.7. And the Bartlett test chi-squared value of 7620.135 with a p-value of 0.000 reaches its level of significance. Both tests indicate that the sample bears a very good construct validity and is suitable for further factor analysis. In this study, the smallest extraction value 0.571 which is much higher than 0.4 and should be retained in the analysis. The factor loadings are all in the range of 0.702 to 0.9, which is greater than the standard value of 0.6. This indicates that the 4 variables can be effectively reflected by each measurement. The Cronbach's alpha values for each variable were greater than 0.9, which exceeded the standard value of 0.7. This indicates that the internal consistency of the measures within a single dimension is good. The values for CR and AVE are greater than the standard values of 0.7 and 0.5 respectively. This indicates that the convergent validity of the model is good (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Reliability and validity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), if the value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is greater than the square of the correlation coefficient between two dimensions or the square root of the AVE value is greater than the correlation coefficient between two dimensions, it means that the two dimensions have differential validity. The data in Table 4 shows that the square root of AVE of each dimension is significantly greater than any correlation coefficient in the model, indicating that each dimension in this research has good discriminant validity.

4.4 GOODNESS-OF-FIT TEST OF STRUCTURAL MODEL

The structure model of this research fitted the data adequately: $\chi^2/df = 1.682$, CFI = 0.966, IFI = 0.966, TLI = 0.963, and RMSEA = 0.042, SRMR 0.367. Hence, it is possible to conclude that this model is well-fitting.
Table 5: Model fit of Measurement Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Fit</th>
<th>χ²/df</th>
<th>RMSEA</th>
<th>IFI</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>TLI</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference values</td>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>&lt;0.08</td>
<td>&gt;0.900</td>
<td>&gt;0.900</td>
<td>&gt;0.900</td>
<td>&lt;0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test value</td>
<td>1.682</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.966</td>
<td>0.966</td>
<td>0.963</td>
<td>0.0367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors Data

4.5 HYPOTHESES TESTING

Based on Table 7, the standardized path coefficients for H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5 are 0.113, 0.241, 0.359, 0.416 and 0.507 respectively. All P values are less than 0.05 and Z values are all larger than 1.96, which indicates a significant effect, thus H1 to H5 are all supported.

Table 6: The results of path analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Path Relationship</th>
<th>Unstd</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Std</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1</td>
<td>II→WE</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>2.789</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2</td>
<td>IM→WE</td>
<td>0.251</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>5.776</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>0.241</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3</td>
<td>II→TIL</td>
<td>0.362</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>8.373</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>0.359</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H4</td>
<td>IM→TIL</td>
<td>0.467</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>9.702</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>0.416</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5</td>
<td>TIL→WE</td>
<td>0.472</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>11.345</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>0.507</td>
<td>supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors Data

4.6 MEDIATION EFFECT TEST

After the construct including trust in leaders as a mediator was built, the number of bootstrap samples is designed as 1000, and both the confidence interval of percentile and bias-corrected confidence interval are designed as 95% and then bootstrapping is performed to assess the significance of the mediating effect of trust in leaders. As shown in the following Table 7, the lower limit and upper limit is provided. The significance of indirect effect with lower and upper bound range without zero indicates the mediation effect exists. And the mediating effect of trust in leaders here in the relationship between idealized influence and work engagement, inspirational motivation and work engagement is a partial mediation effect.

Table 7: The Results of Bootstrapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path Relationship</th>
<th>Path Relationship</th>
<th>Point Estimate</th>
<th>Product of Coefficient</th>
<th>Bias-corrected 95%</th>
<th>Percentile 95%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE1</td>
<td>II→TIL→WE</td>
<td>0.171</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>6.333</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE2</td>
<td>IM→TIL→WE</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td>5.789</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.391</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>7.980</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE1</td>
<td>II→WE</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>2.120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE2</td>
<td>IM→WE</td>
<td>0.251</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>4.328</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.358</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>4.475</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors Data
5 DISCUSSION

5.1 IDEALIZED INFLUENCE AND WORK ENGAGEMENT

As theorized, both idealized influence, inspirational motivation and trust in leaders have significant positive influence on work engagement of university teachers. These results are in line with JD-R theory, which asserts that a workplace's "good things" (resources) naturally encourage employees to perform better since they help them feel enthusiastic and invested in their work (Akingbola et al., 2022). The particular traits of transformational leadership make for excellent job resources in the workplace. Leaders with idealized influence develop confidence, arouse courage and pride, and put the needs of their followers ahead of their own interests (Franco & Matos, 2015). They also act with integrity, explain their ideas and viewpoints, focus on a desirable vision, and consider the moral and ethical ramifications of their actions (Zhu et al., 2015). All these make idealized influence a perfect job resource and enhance work engagement. Additionally, this findings is also consistent with former studies of Thisera and Sewwandi (2018), Change et al. (2019), Afshari (2021), Mathende and Karim (2022) and O’Reilly and Chatman (2020), in which the significant influence idealized influence having on work engagement is found.

5.2 Inspirational Motivation and Work Engagement

By giving their followers' work a purpose and a challenge, communicating with them clearly, inspirational leaders inspire those around them (Kirby et al., 1992). A shared goal and clear communication make inspiration another significant job resource that can improve teachers’ work engagement and performance. The findings related to a positive effect of inspirational motivation on work engagement are also echoed in the former literatures of Hayati et al. (2014), Evelyn and Hazel (2015), Mansor et al. (2017), Thisera and Sewwandi (2018), Lee et al. (2019).

5.3 Idealized Influence and Trust in Leaders

The reciprocity principle of Social Exchange Theory (SET) asserts that when a leader looks out for the interests of their subordinates, those subordinates will reciprocate and support the leader in efforts to safeguard best interests of both sides. The idealized
influence behavior can be explained by the behaviors to be a good role model, to consider the moral and ethical effect before making decisions, to go beyond self-interest for the benefit of the subordinates and the organization, and to fulfil the promises they made. Thus, when leaders exhibit these types of Idealized Influence behaviors in their daily work, teachers will naturally respond to them with their trust in leaders. And the findings that idealized influence positively affect trust in leaders can find its agreement in the research of Yuan et al. (2022), Kariuki (2021).

5.4 INSPIRATIONAL MOTIVATION AND TRUST IN LEADERS

Leaders instills pride and motivation into teachers by communicating the university goals with them and mentoring them how to realize their long-term interest and individual goal as well. They also appreciate their subordinates' effort to achieve the university goal, meanwhile to display their confidence in the realization of organization goal. According to the Social Exchange Theory (SET), when leaders demonstrate a role as a good leader, guiding the group to realize the aim of the university and the instructors themselves, the teachers would reward the leader with their affection and trust in leaders. Thus, it is concluded that inspirational motivation has a positive influence on trust in leaders. This finding keep in line with the findings of Yue et al. (2019), (Dinh et al., 2021) and (Amini et al., 2022).

5.5 TRUST IN LEADERS AND WORK ENGAGEMENT

The subordinates can only feel and accept the leader's behaviors if they have their trust in leaders(Podsakoff et al., 1990). According to Job Demand Resources (JD-R), Trust in Leaders is also a crucial job resource in the workplace thus can enhance the work engagement of the university teachers (Nazir et al., 2016). When having trust in leaders, they will also exert greater cognitive, emotional, and physical effort in their employment duties(Saks, 2006). Teachers who trust their leaders are more likely to be motivated in their teaching and research, more likely to actively explore effective teaching methods (Bektaş et al., 2022), thus to be more engaged in their work. This findings related to the positive effect of trust in leaders on work engagement is also supported in the research of Nikolova et al. (2019), Harter (2020) and (Puni et al., 2020).
5.6 THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF TRUST IN LEADERS

Similarly, our research results provide support to the hypothesis that idealized influence and inspirational motivation use trust in leaders as a mediating factor to increase subordinate-level engagement at work. Additionally, this data is also supported by the claim of SET that many social interactions are based on principles of perceived duty or reciprocity to repay favors (Wang, 2007). Leaders’ idealized influence and inspirational motivation are the “good things” as the JD-R theory holds and welcomed by the followers. During the interaction with the leaders with idealized influence and inspirational motivation, they will return something good back. Their trust in leaders is a way that they show their support and accept their leaders. When the followers are willing to trust the leaders, the leaders’ words and behaviors will consequently exert a positive impact on the work behaviors of the subordinates thus to induce their good performance and high level of work engagement in job (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2012). Thus, trust in leaders can mediate the relationship between idealized influence and work engagement, inspirational motivation and work engagement.

These mediating effects are also supported by the former researches. H. Khan et al. (2020), Mutha and Srivastava (2023) found a mediation effect of trust in leaders between idealized influence and work engagement, while S. N. Khan et al. (2020) and Abas et al. (2019); Islam et al. (2021a) found a mediation effect between inspirational motivation and work engagement.

6 CONCLUSION

Overall, this study significantly increases the extent to which SET and JD-R model explain charismatic aspects of transformational leadership, trust in leaders and work engagement. More crucially, this study investigates the mediating factor of trust in leaders, which is a very significant psychological factors between social interaction and confirm its positive mediating effect between leadership behaviors and subordinates work engagement which contribute to the academia by arousing more researching interests goes to the psychological factors and cross-field research.

The understanding and effect of leadership behaviors may differ between cultures, and leaders' performance is influenced by contextual and other elements, as well as how they motivate and create goals, thus the design and findings of this study can provide an angle or implication for other researchers to explore the affecting factors and mechanisms.
in their culture.

THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are two theoretical implications here in the study. Firstly, by applying combining assessment indicators for idealized influence and inspirational motivation of transformational leadership, this study provides a new extend understanding of the construct of each dimension of the leadership in the context of China. Thus, as to the academia, the assessment of transformational leadership can be specified in certain culture and the scholars should have the awareness of culture difference when conducting research on related topic. Secondly, it is indicated by the findings of this research that some factors of psychological aspects are very good predictors for the improvement of employee work engagement, such as trust in leaders. Thus, in the future study, more psychological factors like psychological safety or psychological fulfillment should be employed in future research and their direct effect and indirect mechanism on work engagement should be explored.

As to managerial implications, university administrative should organize more leadership training programs to improve the transformational leadership skills for the university leaders at different levels to help them to be aware the importance of being idealized influence and inspirational motivation and apply these leading behaviors in their daily job. On the other hand, when the outside factors of the universities such as location that may affect teachers work engagement cannot changed, the factors related to human, like leaders’ leading skills, teachers’ psychological safety, should be weighted heavily. Finally, considering the importance of teachers’ work engagement, more policy and incentive system should be established to encourage university teachers to be more engaged.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

One of the limitations is related to the research scope. In this study, the 7 public universities in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region are chosen as the research scope which is limited in a specific population, geographic area and time. This limited scope restricts the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts or populations. In the future study, a wider scope should be enrolled to include not only the public universities
but also private ones. As to the geographic area, may be more provinces and cities but not only Guangxi included in the research will be more advisable.

Secondly, the inherent causality in this study's findings may be reduced over time due to its cross-sectional design. In the future study, a longitude design is suggested to be employed.

Though idealized influence, inspirational motivation and trust in leaders are all confirmed a positive direct and indirect effect on work engagement, more factors from a leader’s side and more affecting mechanism is still waiting to be tested. Future studies could try to investigate more psychological affecting mechanism and factors to combine management and psychology together to conduct a cross-subject research.
REFERENCES


737-758.


