

The Impact of Transformational Leadership and Commitment on Teachers' Innovative Behaviour

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Abstract. *Rapid technological and social changes in society have led to reformation and transformation in educational system. This has demands for innovative behaviour among teachers that play the key role in implementing the educational reformation and transformation schemas at school. The purpose of this study is to describe the level of innovative behaviour among teachers in secondary school in Malaysia and the impact of transformational leadership on teachers' innovative behaviour before and after the inclusion of teachers' commitment as mediator. This study employed a survey method, which utilised a set of questionnaire containing items to measure three main variables, namely, transformational leadership of school leaders, teachers' commitment and innovative behaviour. There were 961 teachers from various secondary schools were randomly selected as respondents which consisted of 704 female teachers and 257 male teachers. The mean values show that the level of innovative behaviour among teachers are moderately high. Further, the hierarchical linear regression analysis identified teachers' commitment partially mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' innovative behaviour. This study provides a glimpse of teachers innovative behaviour improvement resulted from transformational leadership and their commitment towards their career and organization.*

Keyword: *Transformational leadership, commitment, innovative behaviour, schoolteachers.*

Introduction

The profligate changing in society needs towards knowledge and skills provided by education system has shifted the key role of teachers. Nowadays teachers are not only responsible to teach students about knowledge, skills and attitudes according to standard syllabus determined by the Ministry, but also encouraged to be innovative in their teaching. According to Ferrari, Cachia, and Punie (2009), in present and future education landscape, innovative teaching becoming an important element for assisting students to reach their full potential. Thus, teachers need to design their teaching and learning process in a new ways that can attract students' interests and attention (Chang, Di, Cai & Engels, 2013), and offer them the best learning experience.

Afsar, Badir and Saeed (2014) proclaim that having innovative employees is the best way of organization to foster innovation for success including education organization. Many researchers have discovered the important role of transformational leaders in persuading employees at individual levels to display creative behaviours (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang & Chen, 2005). They able to motivate employees to do more than they are expected to do (Bass, 1985) as transformational leadership involves active and emotional relationships between leaders and followers (Aziah, 2018). Researchers around the globe have repeatedly revealed similar findings on the significant influence of transformational leadership on teachers'

innovative behaviour (Zahari & Abd Latiff, 2016). For instance, Zahari and Abdul Latif (2016) found that transformational leadership that practiced by school leaders in Malaysia affected teachers innovative behaviours.

As well transformational leadership, researchers in management field also learn that commitment is another important aspect that significantly contributed to employee innovative behaviour (Hakimian, Farid, Ismail & Nair, 2016).

According to Muhammad Ali and Puah (2017), committed employees are required for organizations to foster innovative behaviours. At school, Bawuro, Danjuma and Wajiga (2018) found that organizational commitment has positive impact in creating the essential conditions to encourage teachers to show innovative behaviour in secondary schools in North East of Nigeria.

In LMX theory, the reciprocity of leaders' behaviour and employees' satisfaction are explained. According to Sanders, Moorkamp, Torck, Groeneveld and Groeneveld (2010), employees who are satisfied with their leaders then reciprocated back to the organisation by showing their positive behaviour. Further, previous studies that utilised LMX theory for instance Stinglhamber, Marique, Caesens, De Zanet (2015) revealed that employees who led by transformational leaders are highly committed to their organization and innovative in doing their tasks. Contrarily, finding in a study on public servants in Nijmegen, Netherland by van Schaijk (2018) has revealed that affective commitment has not significantly

related to innovative behaviour. According to her discussion, the insignificant relationship explained by the fact that many organizations in the data set are not innovative. Thus, affectively committed employees will identify themselves as non/less-innovative persons.

As innovative behaviour becomes significant and importance in sustaining educational quality and school performance, this study intends to investigate the influence of transformational leadership on teachers' innovative behaviour. Further, the mediating effect of commitment on the relationship between transformational leadership with innovative behaviour is also examined through this study. Precisely, this study intends to identify; a) The level of teachers innovative behaviour, b) The significant correlation between transformational leadership, commitment and innovative behaviour, c) The significant mediating role of commitment on the relationship between transformational leadership and innovative behaviour.

Literature Review

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership refers to leadership style that can influence followers to go beyond their own interests to bring their organization to the greatest level in order to achieve the higher level of performance (Bass, 1985). Transformational leaders motivate their followers to perform beyond expectations by generating high levels of needs among themselves and promoting a climate of trust (Stinglhamber, et al., 2015). According to Bass (1985), transformational leadership consists four basic elements i.e. individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealized influence.

Aziah (2018) explains that individualized consideration refers to the behaviour of leaders who focus on individual needs for good achievement in their career. They understood and accepted the differences among their individual employee. Transformational leaders will encourage two-way communication and develop climate of trust and honesty within their organization environment (Bass & Avolio, 2009). Besides, the element of intellectual stimulation is refers to the intellectual challenges and supports (moral and financial) that given by transformational leaders to promote the employee creativity and innovativeness. Employees are encouraged to be creative and innovative in approaching old situation in new ways (Aziah, 2018).

Further, Bass (1985) explains that inspirational motivation is another basic elements of transformational leadership as it explains the ways of leaders to energize people by identifying and communicating organizational vision and purpose (Vinger & Collier, 2006). Transformational leaders need to have charisma and act as the best model for their subordinates. Aziah (2018) proclaims that this element is grounded in the leader's capability to motivate people by making them seeing the value of their work. In addition, the appeal of transformational leaders allow them serve as role models

to their followers and Bass (1985) refers it as idealized influence. They need to display their high moral and it is conducted in ethical manner, and thus be counted to do the right things (Vinger & Collier, 2006). According to Lippstreu (2010), transformational leaders can be relied on to do the right thing as they demonstrate high standards of ethical and moral conduct.

Teachers' commitment

Commitment is a crucial aspect for increasing and sustaining the organization performance. At school level, committed teachers are required as they are directly involved in educational process and development as well as responsible to equip students with knowledge and positive manners. Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982) have stated that employees who are committed will display their voluntary behaviour and have strong desire to serve their organization to pay efforts in providing conscious awareness to organizational objectives beyond passive loyalty. Three dimensions of commitment proposed by Meyer and Allen's (1991) model are; 1) *Affective commitment* refers to the employees' positive emotional attachment to the organization. 2) *Continuance commitment* refers to the 'need' component or the gains verses losses of working in an organization and 3) *Normative commitment* refers to the feelings of obligation by individuals that cause them to commit and stick with the organization.

Teachers' Innovative behaviour

Rapid technological and social changes in society have demand for organization to embark on innovation activities as this aspect is highly correlated with better performance and productivity in organization (Janssen, 2003). West and Farr (1990) define innovative work behaviour as generating, promoting and realizing new ideas for individual, teamwork or organization. This behaviour is often associated with employees' creativity. However, innovative behaviour implies more creativity in producing a wide range of benefits that contain clearer useful components (de Jong & den Hartog, 2007). Janssen (2000) identifies three dimensions of innovative behavior, such as idea generation (problem recognition), idea promotion (introduction and dissemination) and, idea realization (application).

Methods

In this study, researchers employed a survey method in which a set of questionnaires containing items to measure three main variables; transformational leadership of principal, teachers' commitment and innovative behaviour were included. There were 961 teachers from various secondary schools were randomly selected as respondents. Moreover, researchers specified the participants to be 704 female teachers and 257 male teachers. In this study, transformational leadership was the independent variable, while teachers' commitment was a mediator and innovative work behavior was

dependent variables. A questionnaire consisted of four sections used for data collection, namely:

- Section A:* Demographics of respondents and school.
- Section B:* Transformational leadership was measured by using the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1990). As the current study was focused on transformational leadership, only four MLQ subscales were selected. The subscales identified transformational leadership including idealized influence behaviour (eight items), inspirational motivation (four items), intellectual stimulation (four items), and individualized consideration (four items). The coefficients were 0.90, 0.89, 0.91, and 0.80, respectively.
- Section C:* Teachers' commitment adopted from Meyer and Allen's (1997) with the reliability value $\alpha = 0.93$.
- Section D:* Teachers' innovative behaviour which contains 9 items were adapted from Janssen (2000). The 9 IWB item scale was referred to three constructs; idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization with reliability values of 0.89, 0.93 and 0.90 respectively. All items on the questionnaire B to D were measured by using a 5-point Likert scale with a value of 1 = 'strongly disagree' to 5 = 'strongly agree'. In order to analyse the data, mean and standard deviation and inferential analysis such as multiple regression and hierarchical multiple regression were as well as recruited.

Results

In this subchapter, the findings will be presented according to the objectives of this study.

The level of teachers' innovative behaviour

The first objective of this study is to identify the level of innovative behaviour among respondents. In Table 1, the mean value shows that the level of innovative behaviour of respondents is moderate (M=3.63, std=.59). Amongst three dimensions of innovative behaviour, idea generation shows the highest level, followed by idea promotion and idea realization. However, all the dimensions are at highly moderate level (Majid Konting, 1990).

Table 1: Level of innovative behaviour

Dimensions	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level*
Idea generation	3.66	.59	moderate
Idea promotion	3.63	.66	moderate
Idea realization	3.61	.69	moderate
Innovative behaviour	3.63	.59	moderate

*Level according to score developed by Majid Konting (1990)

Correlation between transformational leadership, commitment and innovative behaviour

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is computed to assess the relationship between transformational leadership and its dimensions,

commitment and innovative behaviour. The results in Table 2 shows that there is a positive significant correlation between the three main variables. In general, the results indicate that transformational leaders are able to increase the teachers' commitment and innovative behaviour.

Table 2: Correlation between variables

Mediating role of commit

Variable / Dimensions	Charisma	Inspirational motivation	Individualised consideration	Intellectual stimulation	Commitment	Innovative behaviour
Charisma	1	.853**	.855**	.798**	.406**	.465**
Inspirational motivation	.833**	1	.918**	.857**	.406**	.527**
Individualised consideration	.855**	.918**	1	.876**	.441**	.563**
Intellectual stimulation	.798**	.857**	.876**	1	.407**	.502**
Commitment	.406**	.406**	.441**	.407**	1	.453**
Innovative behaviour	.465**	.527**	.563**	.502**	.453**	1

Note:** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

ment on the relationship between transformational leadership with innovative behaviour.

Baron and Kenny's (1986) approach is recruited to test the mediation effect of POPs on the relationship between transformational leadership and IWB. The hierarchical linear regressions (HLR) is conducted and transformational leadership and commitment as predictor variables while teachers' innovative behaviour as the outcome variable are examined.

The R² value in Model 1 indicates that the change of variance in the teachers' innovative behaviour explained by the transformational leadership is .30% ($\beta = .54$; $p = .01$). In Model 2, the R² indicates that 35% ($\beta = .43$, $p = .01$) of the variance changes in the teachers' innovative behaviour can be explained by transformational leadership and teachers' commitment. The significant of three paths (direct and indirect effect) and the decrement of the β value of transformational leadership after the inclusion of mediator (teachers' commitment) in Model 2 dictate that commitment is a significant partial mediator. (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Mathieu & Taylor, 2006; Pallant, 2005).

Discussion

As innovation behaviour becoming a crucial aspect in developing and sustaining an organization performance, this study is an attempt to investigate the role of transformational leadership in promoting this aspect among Malaysian teachers. The results have revealed that innovative behaviour of Malaysian teachers are indicated moderate. It is suggested that Malaysian teachers have their effort in becoming innovative in doing their job tasks. These results can be used to inculcate innovation and invention as a culture in education system as innovative teachers able to generate new ideas and translate the curriculum goals and needs by using creative and innovative methods, approaches and strategies of teaching and learning (Syed Ismail, Syed Ahmad Mustapa & Subki Miskon, 2010). Armbruster (2008) suggests that organizations should embark on innovation activities that are highly correlated in producing better performance and productivity as well

as high level of teachers' commitment (Janssen, 2003) in order to survive in global changes and competition. Thus, Ministry of Education Malaysia needs to heighten its effort in order to increase the level of innovative behaviour among Malaysian teachers.

According to Xiangyin and Zheng (2014), leadership is one of the important aspect that contribute to the employees' innovative behaviour. The results in this study showed the significant direct effect of transformational leadership on teachers' innovativeness and this results are consistent with previous findings such study by Zahari and Abd Latiff (2016), and Sanders et al. (2010). Afsar et al. (2014) proclaim that transformational leadership is able to persuade their subordinate at individual level to display their creativity and become innovative. Further, this study also as finds that commitment has a significant mediating role on the relationship between transformational leadership with innovative behaviour. This finding suggests that the influence of transformational leadership on innovative behaviour is going to increase if teachers are committed to their organization and their work. As explained by Muhammad Ali and Puah (2017), the process of fostering innovative behaviour in an organization does not solely lie on effective leadership, but it also depends on employees' commitment.

In short, it is suggested that the transformational leadership and the commitment can bring about the improvement of teachers' innovative behaviour. School leaders, who are better address all the challenges and consider teachers' commitment as important aspect in promoting innovation among teachers, will improve teachers work performance.

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