# Teacher Motivation and Commitment through Transformational Leadership in China's Vocational Schools

Pinxi Liu[1], Bity Salwana Alias[2], Bity Salwana Alias[3]

## Abstract

*Aim: The goal of this literature review was to look into and rate the roles of transformational leadership in Chinese vocational schools, as well as how these roles affect teachers' motivation and commitment. Methodology: An organized search was done using trustworthy academic sources like ERIC, Education Research Complete, PsycINFO, Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis, and Emerald for this literature review. The purpose of choosing these databases was to make sure that the available literature was looked at in its entirety. Precisely chosen keywords and phrases related to transformational leadership, educator commitment and motivation were used in the search strategy. Results and conclusions: According to the review, the primary factors that make teachers in vocational schools motivated, committed, and good at their jobs are program development, mentorship, and inventive methods of teaching. Transformational leadership is important for inspiring people because it focuses on support, change, and intellectual growth. Leadership styles encourage creative and collaborative learning environments that are good for teachers. Recommendations: To make Chinese vocational schools better places to learn, it is recommended that funding for the development of transformational leadership tonsure teachers have access to basic tools should be given more attention. To get teachers more committed and motivated, you have to deal with resistance to change and draw attention to the benefits of these leadership styles. Practical Implications: The findings from this review have practical implications for educators, administrators, and policymakers, as they highlight the significance of leadership in shaping the educational experiences.*

**Keywords:** *Teacher Motivation and Commitment, Transformational Leadership, China, Vocational Institutions.*

## Introduction

Developing educators' motivation and dedication has always been a difficulty in the field of education administration (Andriani et al., 2018). Whether they are technical colleges, traditional universities, or vocational schools, educational institutions are essential in producing graduates with the knowledge and abilities needed to succeed in the fast-paced workforce (Sohidin, 2018). In addition to acting as locations for the dissemination of knowledge, these establishments act as a furnace for the development of students' future career paths, abilities, and knowledge. However, these institutions' infrastructure, resources, and curricula do not define the quality of education or the preparedness of their graduates. Rather, it rests heavily on the management and leadership of these educational institutions. Improving educational quality and fostering an atmosphere where students can thrive depend heavily on educational leadership (Day et al., 2020).

Educational groups have a long-lasting effect on society because they train people who will work in the future. These groups are important because they help people share information and learn new skills that can help them get around in a world that is always changing. The people who run these groups are just as important to their success and value as the buildings and classes they offer. People in charge of schools are responsible for many things, not just running the school. They make things with a clear vision and set clear goals that are in line with the institution's goals. The people in charge of them set the tone and make sure the atmosphere is good for learning, innovation, and general growth. A good leader changes more than just how the school is run; they also change the way everyone who works there and goes to school, including teachers, students, and support staff (Day et al., 2020). When it comes down to it, a big part of what makes educational places good and important is the people who run them.

Postiglione and Tang (2019) say that vocational schools are what make China's economy grow. Vocational schools programs teach people the skills they need to become skilled workers. This is important for the growth of China's technology and industry. As Legusov et al. (2022) say, graduates from these schools can

[1] Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 43600,Malaysia. E-mail: p118606@siswa.ukm.edu.my
[2] Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 43600,Malaysia. E-mail: bity@ukm.edu.my
[3] Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 43600,Malaysia. E-mail: azlinmansor@ukm.edu.my

not only make the economy grow, but they can also make China a better place in the world of business. As a result, the part of leadership inside China's vocational schools becomes crucial, as it has a significant effect on the level of motivation, commitment, and overall performance of educators within this intricate educational system (Qiu, 2023).

In China's vocational schools, leadership in education goes above and beyond what most people think. Being a mentor, helping to make lesson plans, making choices, and being able to inspire and encourage students and other teachers are just some of the things that come with it. These leaders are like guide points; they help their employees not only do well in school but also grow as people and in their careers. There are many places where they have an effect on people besides just classes and offices. Langdon (2021),wrote that vocational schools play a big role in making the world a better place to learn, where reading books is not the only way to learn. These skills are important in a job market that changes all the time. Leaders of educational schools can give students a life-changing learning experience by making the school a place where students want to work together and keep learning.

A key part of being a good educational leader in vocational schools is being able to shape the professional experiences of teachers. This means that the leaders of these schools have the power to change the course of education and create a path that goes beyond memorization. These teachers create an environment where learning is described as an engaging experience so that students will always be interested in learning and want to do well in school. In addition to academics, these leaders create an environment that values learning useful skills.

Not only does good educational leadership affect the students but it also affects the teachers who work there. Leaders in vocational schools have the amazing power to bring together a group of teachers who share the same ideas about what makes a good school. Mentorship programs, professional development efforts, and collaborative platforms help and support teachers to always improve their methods, keep up with changing trends, and try out new ways of teaching (Moloi & McKenzie, 2021). Good leaders also create an environment where teachers feel valued and supported, which in turn encourages a sense of connection and a commitment to achieving the institution's goals. Additionally, this creates a positive feedback loop such that teachers who are dedicated to their job and eager to teach always help their students learn more and do better in school.

It is clear that educational leaders are important in China's vocational schools as indicated by Langdon's (2021) research because they have a lot of power over how the institutions work. Setting the tone for an environment that supports creative and critical thinking as well as a culture of working together is their job. These leaders create an environment where everyone feels welcome because they support open communication and value differences. In this setting, people with different ideas are not only welcome, they are also valued.

The study's questions are;

How does transformational leadership influence teacher commitment and motivation in Chinese vocational schools?

What are the internal and external factors that influence teacher motivation in Chinese vocational schools?

What are the challenges encountered in promoting teachers' organizational commitment?

## Literature Review

In vocational institutions, leadership has a big impact on teachers' commitment and motivation. The present literature review offers a comprehensive examination of significant topics that illuminate the complex interplay among leadership, motivation, and commitment. Within the framework of China's vocational education, these issues provide a thorough understanding of the dynamic terrain of leadership.

*Transformational Leadership*

Transformational leadership motivates by providing a credible vision that triggers innovation and development. It is visionary and charismatic with an emphasis on tailored-made teaching based upon individuals' progress as well as the growth of creativity through engaging learning (Al Harbi et al., 2019). The leaders with high this leadership develop personal relationships that enable other people to conquer boundaries and become leaders as well. With that, it creates incentive within teams to realize better than normal results through a common objective and direction to the future. This leadership style has the potential to have a substantial impact on educators' motivation and commitment because of its capacity to inspire and engage followers (Agyemang Adarkwah & Zeyuan, 2020).

According to Cooper et al. (2020) transformational leaders are forceful change agents who push back against the status quo and support creativity and ongoing development. This transformative leadership frequently appears in the context of vocational schools as a focus on modernizing and coordinating curricula with changing industry demands (Şenol, 2020). Programs for education that are dynamic and adaptable are very important to transformational leaders. Teachers who work under transformational leaders' direction are more likely to believe that their jobs are essential to ensuring that pupils are ready for the demands of the workforce (Kouni et al., 2018). Their motivation comes from knowing that the work they do helps make sure that students are not only well-prepared for school but also for the job market. Transformational leadership emphasizes the significance and impact of workers' efforts, and this match with the needs of the industry is a key factor in making teachers more internally motivated (Al-Mansoori & Koc, 2019).

Osman and Kamis (2019) also say that transformational leaders make vocational schools more caring and helpful places to be. Teachers who work in this kind of supportive atmosphere feel valued, respected, and fully backed up in their duties, which makes them more committed. Transformational leaders must have high levels of interpersonal and emotional intelligence in order to make teachers feel appreciated and motivated. Transformational leaders know how hard it is for teachers, respect what they bring to the table, and actively seek out their input (Al-Husseini et al., 2021). In vocational schools, where teachers often have to deal with tough situations, having leaders who are always there to back and thank them can be a big motivator. Transformational leadership leads to better ways of teaching and learning, which is good for the standard of education (Asad, 2020).

Transformational leaders have a big effect on teachers by encouraging them to do their best work (Al-Husseini et al., 2021). Transformational leaders put money into their teachers' professional development and push them to use new methods and get better at what they do all the time. Intellectual stimulation is an important part of transformational leadership because it helps teachers think critically and artistically, which ultimately improves the quality of their lessons (Supermane et al., 2018). Leaders who encourage intellectual stimulation are more likely to inspire and motivate teachers to look for professional development chances, find ways to improve their teaching skills, and keep up with the latest changes in education. Due to this, students gain from having teachers who are not only knowledgeable about the material they are teaching, but also skilled at using teaching techniques that accommodate a variety of learning preferences (Luyten & Bazo, 2019).

*Internal and External Factors That Influence Teacher Motivation*

Internal and external factors influence teachers' motivation in Chinese vocational schools. Job satisfaction, as well as the partnering relationships with their colleagues, are key determinants of their motivation within the institution they work (Xia et al., 2023). Furthermore, the formation of a positive perception of organizational support is crucial. Teachers who believe that their institution respects their work, provides necessary resources and support, and fosters their professional growth develop highest motivation (Dzimińska et al., 2018).

Leadership style continues to be recognized as a significant factor affecting teacher motivation in Chinese vocational schools. Transformational leadership, characterized by leaders who create a collaborative

environment and encourage critical thinking, has been associated with higher teacher motivation (Bouwmans et al., 2017). Additionally, the working conditions, including workload and work-life balance, strongly influence teachers' motivation. Factors such as high workload and poor work-life balance can influence job satisfaction and willingness to continue teaching (Ahluwalia & Preet, 2017).

Educational institutions that prioritize fostering a respectful and positive work culture tend to have higher levels of teacher motivation. Conversely, opportunities for professional development are crucial for retaining teachers in the profession. Providing education tools and pathways for career advancement increases the level of motivation (Naway & Haris, 2017). Moreover, external rewards and recognition play a significant role. Recognizing teachers' contributions to their job, offering opportunities for promotion, and providing wage increases can enhance their motivation and commitment (Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017).

*Challenges Encountered in Promoting Teachers' Organizational Commitment*

Teachers' organizational commitment in Chinese technical schools faces quite a lot of problems, which in turn affects the process of educational changes and development to a large degree. These problems spring from the inside the teachers and outside forces that impact schools, and they require both comprehensive interventions and strategies that are workforce oriented to attract and cultivate a committed teaching force. In Chinese vocational school teachers most usually have extremely heavy duties because of large class size, administration and out-of-school job (Teuber et al., 2021). Work related stress have adverse effects of the teachers' burnout in the classrooms as well as lowering their commitment to work within the organizations (Wang et al., 2023). Despite the fact that administrative processes are increasingly streamlined, the attempt to stay on top of the workload remains a major challenge which affects the teacher's job satisfaction and involvement in work.

Another case is immobilization of career potentials and the absence of steps for self-development and promotion. The Chinese vocational schools, still, may lack the structured career development pathways and teachers may lack the opportunities to acquire or improve new the skills and knowledge (Macaro & Han, 2020). Lacking specific channels for career growth, workers will be likely to feel trapped in their roles eventually, which will lead to them losing their organizational commitment with time and eventually creating a clash of interest between the workers and the institution. The creation of leaders in an organization is also connected on how they can help in teacher organizational commitment in the school. In some cases, school leaders have the lack of skills such as big vision to guide and inspire the teachers in the right direction (Day et al., 2020). Teachers' trust might be undermined in a leadership style of autocrats and micromanagement, and a commitment to their institution might decrease. Overcoming leadership practices and building working environment based on teamwork and joint decision making are the fundamental elements for the reduction of leadership-dedicated problems.

**Methodology**

To investigate teacher motivation and commitment through transformational leadership in China's vocational schools, a comprehensive literature search was conducted across several databases, including ERIC, Education Research Complete, PsycINFO, Google Scholar, Taylor & Francis, and Emerald. The search employed specific phrases and Boolean operators such as "transformational leadership AND educator commitment," "educator motivation OR teacher engagement," and "Chinese vocational schools AND leadership." This approach yielded 49 relevant research articles. The selection process began with the elimination of duplicate entries to ensure impartiality. Next, the titles and abstracts of the remaining articles were scrutinized to determine their relevance to the study question and inclusion criteria. Articles were included if they specifically addressed transformational leadership, teacher motivation, and commitment within the context of Chinese vocational schools. Exclusion criteria encompassed studies not focused on China, those unrelated to vocational education, or articles lacking empirical data. Full-text versions of the selected articles were then retrieved for a thorough evaluation. This meticulous process ensured that the review comprised only pertinent and high-quality research, providing a robust foundation for examining how transformational leadership influences teacher motivation and commitment in China's vocational educational settings.

## Findings and discussion

Transformational leadership recognised to be among the important factors that influence teacher motivation and loyalty in the organization. This sort of leadership is fueled by the features of vision, charisma and empowerment and considered to be that typical environment-changing element in the structures of educational establishments (Al Harbi et al. , 2019). Through a clear vision and thriving with intellectual stimulation, extraordinary leaders motivate teachers to make a difference by excelling and consequently the academics of the students are greatly improved (Supermane et al. , 2018).  Leadership rooted in transformational aspect assumes a prominent position in the framework of China's chronic weaknesses in vocational education.  Hence, the curricula has to be updated and school systems harmonized with the rapidly changing economic demands (Şenol, 2020). The responsibilities of the educators are entrusted to the progressive and flexible educational programs coordinated by transformative leaders.  The teachers through such programs will be able to realize the impact of their roles in preparing students for the workplace, which in turn will uplift their motivation and dedication (Kouni et al.   2018). Transformational leadership recognised to be among the important factors that influence teacher motivation and loyalty in the organization. This sort of leadership is fueled by the features of vision, charisma and empowerment and considered to be that typical environment-changing element in the structures of educational establishments (Al Harbi et al. , 2019). Through a clear vision and thriving with intellectual stimulation, extraordinary leaders motivate teachers to make a difference by excelling and consequently the academics of the students are greatly improved (Supermane et al. , 2018).  Leadership rooted in transformational aspect assumes a prominent position in the framework of China's chronic weaknesses in vocational education.  Hence, the curricula has to be updated and school systems harmonized with the rapidly changing economic demands(Şenol, 2020). The responsibilities of the educators are entrusted to the progressive and flexible educational programs coordinated by transformative leaders.  The teachers through such programs will be able to realize the impact of their roles in preparing students for the workplace, which in turn will uplift their motivation and dedication (Kouni et al.  2018). similarly, when taking into account the internal factors of the job, teacher commitment in Vocational schools is influenced by job satisfaction and organizational support that they perceive. Teachers who are clearly felt valued and supported by the school system tend to have high commitment (Dzimińska et al. , 2018). Transformational leaders, those who prioritize inclusion and constant development may elaborate workplaces where the teachers feel encouraged to participate in the process.  They will result in share their ideas to the organization (Al-Mansoori and Koc, 2019).

 Outstanding factors of job, job surroundings and professional trainings may have send big impact on the sentiment of teachers. Continuous workload and job stress can exert a negative influence on teachers causing them to enter the burnout cycle decline and which can ultimately lead to burnout and decreased commitment among teachers (Wang et al. , 2023). Failure to create viable step-up career opportunities and pragmatic leadership strategies adds fuel to the fire on problems related to teacher organizational commitment (Macaro & Han, 2020).

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One of the solution to this problem could be the application of comprehensive interventions and strategies that aim at the creation of appropriate work environment that is friendly and supportive. Enhancing administrators' effectiveness in streamlining bureaucratic procedures, teacher's professional growth schedule and building cooperative culture ideally conducive to shared decisions and dedication are the pillars of such a strategic plan (Teuber et al. 2021). Furthermore, investing in leadership development, management, and executing transformational leaders' practices can also play a very vital role in intriguing and causing working commitment for teachers (Day et al, 2020).

On the subject of Chinese vocational schools, where the teachers regularly have to meet with the challenge of the massiveness of classes and the quick alterations of the industry, highly efficient leadership becomes the main thing. Transformation leaders having them capacity to motivate and inspire others, can tackle dynamic challenges successfully, therefore, creating an innovate and improving culture. Besides, the issues of workplace environment satisfyment where the educators are respected and appreciated is of utmost importance in order to develop the staff's organizational commitment (Huang & Wu, 2019).

Furthermore, external factors also come into play like resource limitation and financial constraint and they at the same time present massive challenges to keeping teachers committed. Chinese vocational schools often face the situation where their budget is not enough, their buildings are not good enough, or the educational resources are not available to meet their real needs (Wei et al. , 2020). Overcoming the resource limitations calls for rigorous planning, lobbying for more funds, as well as resource appropriation techniques to ensure that teachers are adequately supported with the right staff, resources and training to do their role effectively.

## Implications

Transformational leadership tend to be the key element of the decision-making process, determining whether the teacher can be motivated to work and stay in the vocational school in China. Leaders with such attributes, for example, purposefulness, charm, and leadership skills are turned to as key role players in the culture and operations of academic settings. With optimistic vision and high brouhaha for intellectual

stimulation, transformational leaders motivates teachers to improve performance, which increases level of students academic success.

For the Chinese vocational educational institutions, transformation leadership is a key factor that enables to solve the main problems and to orient curriculums development in response to the dynamic modern economy. Providing responsible educators with modern and flexible educational systems that will arouse in them awareness about the uppermost position of educational staff in ensuring the students' professional readiness, in the end, will increase their motivation and receptivity.

The psychological aspect of work matters too because employees are affected by job satisfaction and their view of the organization. This could be true as well as employee commitment. When school administration and administrators feel respected and supported by the schooltime system, they demonstrate higher degrees of empathy and involvement. Through their ability to value diverse skills and perspectives, transformational leaders construct an environment that is friendly and conducive to the contribution of ideas as well as participation in the decision-making processes by provision of a safe space. Not only factors outside of the work, such as workloads, work environments and professional development opportunities are among the factors that significantly influence teacher commitment, but so are internal factors, including personality and commitment to education. For confronting these difficulties, we need the overall actions of preparing the encouraged and the empowering workplace to reach such a goal. Managing directors to develop their skills in the optimizing of bureaucratic process and creating a career plan for teachers is one of the most important features of such a strategic plan. Promoting a cooperated culture for the whole staff where everybody can participate in making decisions is also very important.

## Limitations

Limitations in comprehending the nature of transformative leadership in the context of Chinese technical vocational colleges and its effect on teacher loyalty is due to multiple factors. One of the main issues surrounds self-report data that is used in many studies, which brings the risk of bias and subjectivity and may weaken the power of findings. Additionally, the specific issue of the context in the vocational education systems could be a restraining factor for the transferability of the results. Such cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional differences could affect the efficiency of the leadership practices. Furthermore, the way transformational leadership is portrayed with predominantly positive narratives around it, ignores some of the possible negatives or difficulties this leadership style can bring along.

## Recommendations

Put in place to the leadership development programs that promote individual development, group capability, ethical practice, and vision could be the starting point. Such programs must focus on establishing the merits of a well-sighted teacher whose potentials are tapped into and whose intellectual ability is activated. developing Developing a nurturing work environment in which teachers are wanted and valued, cared about, and supported is extremely important. Leaders of schools, on the other hand, are encouraged to act in a way that promotes a culture of working together and sharing actual facts for decision-making in the joint with teachers to enclose vision of belongingness. Furthermore, the unceasing appraisal and gives teachers activities whose goals are meant to improve their teaching skills in vocational education are important as well. These changes will entail improving teaching competences of the personnel as well as applying new approaches and technologies and keeping up with the changing industries. Besides, the issue of workload pressure can be resolved by utilizing revision of curricula and provision of resources.

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