

The Moderating Role of Educational Training on the Relationship between Leadership Styles and Job Performance: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Sector Employees of Shanghai, China

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Abstract: This study explores the moderating role of educational training on employees in the public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China. This study aims to investigate the correlation between various leadership styles and job performance, particularly emphasising the influence of educational training on this relationship. By exploring the impact of academic training on leadership styles and job performance, this research seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in leadership studies. The data collection process uses a random sampling technique, wherein information is gathered from employees from the public and private educational sectors through surveys. In this study, two statistical analysis methods, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling), were adopted to investigate the moderating effect of educational training on the relationship between various leadership styles and job performance within the educational sectors of Shanghai, China. The study contributes to understanding leadership and job performance in the academic context, highlighting the significance of educational training as a potential moderator. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to optimize workforce performance in Shanghai's educational institutions. Ultimately, the study aims to inform evidence-based strategies that foster effective leadership practices and enhance educational outcomes.

Keywords: Autocratic Leadership; Laissez-faire Leadership; Transformational

Leadership; Transactional Leadership; Educational Training; Job Performance

1. Introduction

Effective leadership is crucial for organizations to thrive and achieve their goals in today's rapidly changing business environment. Research has shown that different leadership styles can impact job performance differently. Autocratic leadership, laissez-faire leadership, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership are four commonly studied leadership styles that have been found to influence job performance differently ^[1]. However, the impact of these leadership styles on job performance may be moderated by other factors, such as educational training.

1.1 Background of the Study

It is important to acknowledge that the private educational industry in China is often described as possessing more dynamism and flexibility compared to the governmental educational sector, which is commonly seen as being more bureaucratic and hierarchical. The investigation and discourse around job performance in China have emerged as a significant area of scholarly inquiry in recent times. China has seen substantial transformations in its workforce and job environment because of its economic expansion and globalisation. Consequently, there is an increasing need for proficient and efficient personnel who can make valuable contributions to the achievements of enterprises. Nevertheless, the assessment of work performance in China presents a formidable task owing to the existence of cultural disparities, divergent job anticipations, and diverse performance evaluation mechanisms ^[2]. In the context of Chinese

culture, the preservation of one's reputation, sometimes referred to as face-saving, has significant importance. Consequently, workers may exhibit hesitancy in acknowledging errors or seeking assistance, thus potentially influencing their job performance. Moreover, the significant emphasis put on preserving social peace and interpersonal connections within Chinese culture may sometimes result in a hesitancy to provide constructive criticism, therefore impeding the progress and effectiveness of employees.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, there have been endeavours aimed at enhancing work performance in China. The Chinese government has established regulations aimed at enhancing the quality of the workforce and fostering innovation and creativity inside the workplace. The objective of the "Made in China 2025" initiative is to enhance China's position as a prominent global manufacturing force via the enhancement of labour skills and productivity. Furthermore, a multitude of organisations inside China have acknowledged the significance of staff development and training to augment work effectiveness. The findings of a study done by Hao, Xiao, and Chon (2020) indicate that a significant majority of Chinese enterprises, over 90%, allocate resources towards staff training and development with the aim of enhancing work performance ^[3]. Hence, it is important for organisations to comprehend the many elements that influence work performance in China, such as leadership styles and educational training, to thrive in a fiercely competitive business landscape.

1.2 Problem Statement

The absence of consensus on the effectiveness of leadership styles in China's dynamic business environment underscores the multifaceted nature of leadership in this context. On one hand, proponents of autocratic leadership argue that it can effectively achieve short-term goals in China's fast-paced business landscape. Autocratic leadership may be seen as authoritative and directive, aligning with the traditional Chinese hierarchical structure. On the other hand, transformational leadership is advocated for its potential to promote long-term growth and innovation. This divergence in perspectives

necessitates in-depth research to discern the nuances and situational factors that dictate the appropriateness of different leadership styles in various Chinese organizations.

The dearth of empirical evidence regarding the relationship between leadership styles and job performance in China raises important questions about the generalizability of Western leadership theories to this unique cultural context. While some studies suggest a positive correlation between transformational leadership and job performance, others have failed to establish a significant link. This inconsistency underscores the complexity of leadership dynamics in China and highlights the need for rigorous research methods to validate or refute existing theories. Understanding how leadership styles impact job performance is crucial for developing effective leadership strategies in China.

Recognizing the need for culturally appropriate leadership styles is crucial in a country as culturally diverse as China. Many leadership models developed in Western contexts may not resonate with Chinese employees due to differences in values, beliefs, and attitudes toward leadership. A culturally sensitive approach to leadership acknowledges the importance of Confucian values, collectivism, and harmonious interpersonal relationships in Chinese culture. Research in this area can contribute to the development of leadership models that align with these cultural norms, fostering better leader-follower relationships and enhancing organizational effectiveness ^[4].

The significance of tailoring leadership styles to specific industries in China cannot be overstated. Different industries have unique characteristics and requirements that demand distinct leadership approaches. For instance, the technology sector may thrive on transformational leadership that encourages innovation and creativity, while the manufacturing industry may benefit from more autocratic leadership to ensure streamlined operations and efficiency. Understanding the industry-specific impact of leadership styles is essential for organizations to optimize leadership practices and drive performance improvements within their respective sectors.

1.3 Research Purpose

As the global landscape of the educational sector becomes intensively competitive. The leadership style has been gaining significance for driving the level of efficient and productive job performance among the staff as they are the key determinants of the performance of an educational institution. The present study is designed to investigate the impact of transformational leadership and transactional leadership on the job performance of employees in the public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China. In addition, the present study focuses on exploring the extent to which educational training mediates the relationship between these leadership styles and the job performance of employees belonging to the educational sector in China.

1.4 Research Objectives

RO 1: To examine the impact of autocratic leadership on educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China.

RO 2: To determine the impact of transformational leadership on educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China.

RO 3: To identify the impact of transactional leadership on educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China.

RO 4: To examine the impact of laissez-faire leadership on educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China.

RO 5: To determine the impact of educational trainings on moderating the relationship between autocratic leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership and educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China.

RO 5a: To examine the impact of educational trainings on moderating the relationship between autocratic leadership and educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China.

RO 5b: To determine the impact of educational trainings on moderating the relationship between transformational leadership and educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China.

RO 5c: To determine the impact of educational trainings on moderating the relationship between transactional leadership and educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China.

RO 5d: To identify the impact of educational trainings on moderating the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China.

RO 6: To examine the relative effectiveness of different leadership styles (autocratic, transformational, transactional, laissez-faire) in promoting educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China.

1.5 Research Questions

RQ 1: What is the impact of autocratic leadership on educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China?

RQ 2: What is the impact of transformational leadership on educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China?

RQ 3: What is the impact of transactional leadership on educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China?

RQ 4: What is the impact of laissez-faire leadership on educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China?

RQ 5: What is the impact of educational trainings in moderating the relationships between autocratic leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership, and educational job performance?

RQ 5a: What is the impact of educational trainings in moderating the relationship between autocratic leadership and educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China?

RQ 5b: What is the impact of educational trainings in moderating the relationship between transformational leadership and educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China?

RQ 5c: What is the impact of educational trainings in moderating the relationship between transactional leadership and job performance in public and private educational

sectors in Shanghai, China?

RQ 5d: What is the impact of educational trainings in moderating the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China?

RQ 6: Which leadership style is the most effective in promoting educational job performance in public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this research could have significant contributions to the government, industry, and policymakers in China. Firstly, the government could benefit from this research by gaining insights into the effectiveness of different leadership styles in improving job performance in public and private educational sector organizations. The results of this study could inform the development of leadership training programs for government officials and public educational sector employees to enhance their leadership skills and ultimately improve job performance^[5].

This study has theoretical and practical significance for understanding the relationship between leadership styles, job performance, and educational training in China. The findings of this study can contribute to the existing literature on leadership development and employee training. They can inform the design and implementation of effective policies and initiatives to improve organizational performance in China.

2. Literature Review

Drawing on the existing literature, the moderating effect of educational training on the relationship between leadership style and job performance in the public and private academic sectors in China is explored in detail. The literature review lays the foundation for understanding the theoretical and empirical background of the study, critically analysing previous studies, identifying knowledge gaps, and highlighting the importance of the current study^[6].

2.1 Underlying Theories

The application of theoretical frameworks within organizational contexts offers valuable insights into shaping behaviors, enhancing

motivation, and optimizing performance. The theories of Social Learning, Self-Determination, and Expectancy each provide distinct lenses through which to understand and improve leadership styles and educational training programs, ultimately impacting employee engagement and job performance.

2.1.1 Social learning theory

The Social Learning Theory is a psychological framework that places significant emphasis on the observation and imitation of others' conduct, attitudes, and values in influencing individual behaviour. The hypothesis, first introduced by psychologist Albert Bandura during the 1970s, posits that the process of learning is facilitated by social interactions. According to this theory, people acquire novel behaviours and information by watching others and then mimicking their behaviours.

2.1.2 Self-determination theory

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT), a psychological paradigm established by Deci and Ryan, provides significant insights into the intricacies of human motivation and behaviour, especially within organisational contexts. SDT proposes that humans inherently possess three core psychological demands, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these requirements are adequately fulfilled, they contribute to the development of intrinsic motivation and well-being. Within the scope of our research pertaining to the moderating influence of educational training on employees in the public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China, the SDT can provide valuable insights into the interplay between leadership styles and educational training programmes, and their impact on employees' motivation and subsequent job performance.

2.1.3 Expectancy theory

The notion of Expectancy Theory, which has significant importance in the field of organisational psychology, provides valuable insights into the interplay of employee motivation, performance, and perceived results. The theory proposed by Victor Vroom asserts that people are motivated to participate in behaviours that they perceive as likely to result in desirable outcomes. This motivation is controlled by three fundamental elements: expectation, instrumentality, and valence. Within the scope of our investigation into the

moderating influence of educational training on employees in the public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China, Expectancy Theory offers a comprehensive framework for comprehending the interrelationships among leadership styles, educational training, and job performance.

2.1.4 Agency theory

Agency Theory, a fundamental concept in economics and organizational theory, provides a lens through which to understand the intricate relationship between leaders (principals) and employees (agents) within an organization. This theory acknowledges the inherent divergence of interests between these two parties and explores the mechanisms employed to align their interests and ensure efficient cooperation. At the core of Agency Theory is the principal-agent relationship, where leaders delegate tasks and authority to employees with the expectation that they will act in the best interest of the organization. Leadership styles play a crucial role in shaping this relationship and influencing employees' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities [7]. Autocratic leadership, for instance, tends to involve more direct control and supervision, which can foster a sense of dependence and hinder employees' agency. In contrast, transformational leadership, which emphasizes collaboration, shared vision, and employee development, is more likely to empower employees and enhance their agency. Such leadership styles can stimulate intrinsic motivation, leading employees to take ownership of their tasks and proactively contribute to achieving organizational goals.

2.2 Leadership and Job Performance in the Educational Sector

The role of leadership in the field of education is of paramount importance as it significantly influences the effectiveness and achievements of both educators and administrators. This literature review offers a comprehensive examination of the current body of research pertaining to the correlation between leadership and job performance within the educational domain. It emphasises the significance of proficient leadership in attaining favourable results.

2.2.1 Autocratic leadership and educational job performance

The impact of leadership styles on work

performance outcomes is substantial across several sectors, including the educational sector. The primary objective of this literature review is to analyse the effects of authoritarian leadership on the academic work performance of individuals. Authoritarian leadership is distinguished by a hierarchical structure, whereby leaders possess predominant decision-making power and get little input from their subordinates.

2.2.2 Transformational leadership and educational job performance

The function of leadership is of utmost importance in influencing work performance outcomes within the educational sector. The primary objective of this literature study is to examine the concept of transformational leadership and its influence on the work performance of individuals in academic settings. Transformational leadership is distinguished by its ability to inspire and motivate followers, cultivate intellectual stimulation, and facilitate individual growth and development.

2.2.3 Transactional leadership and educational job performance

According to Young, Glerum, Joseph, and McCord (2021), transactional leadership is characterised by a reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers, with the primary emphasis being placed on delivering rewards and punishments that are dependent upon performance. The characteristics of transactional leadership include the ability of leaders to express the ramifications connected with both the fulfilment and non-fulfillment of expectations, as well as the creation of defined expectations and the delineation of exact goals. Those individuals who are successful in attaining their aims or display remarkable performance are presented with incentives such as recognition, money prizes, or career progression opportunities. On the other side, those individuals who do not live up to the standards that have been set are susceptible to disciplinary actions such as being reprimanded or having their rights taken away. The administration and maintenance of existing procedures and systems is the primary focus of transactional leaders, who do this with the intention of ensuring that their responsibilities are carried out in an effective and timely manner. This specific model of leadership is founded on the concept of a

transactional framework. Within this model, the leader is tasked with the job of guiding the followers, establishing performance standards, and granting rewards or punishments in exchange for the followers' commitment and success in accomplishing their goals.

2.2.4 Laissez-faire leadership and education job performance

A laissez-faire leader is one who takes a non-interventionist stance and gives little in the way of counsel, guidance, or supervision to their subordinates. This style of leadership is characterised by the phrase "let them eat cake" In the context of this specific style of leadership, leaders often have a propensity to refrain from making decisions or having an active role in the day-to-day operations of the organisation. On the other hand, a more passive and non-interventionist style is adopted, in which people or teams are given the autonomy to work independently and exercise their own judgement with minimal intervention or advice from the leader. This allows the leader to focus more on long-term strategy and less on day-to-day operations. Laissez-faire leaders often participate in the practise of task delegation, which involves providing subordinates with a substantial amount of autonomy and freedom in the assumption of responsibilities. This kind of leadership is predicated on the concept that individuals are capable of self-direction and self-motivation, and that these capabilities will be nurtured to their full potential in an environment that gives them the latitude and adaptability to pursue their own goals ^[8].

2.3 Moderating Effect of Educational Training

In the context of education, one definition of "educational training" is "a methodical and organised procedure for obtaining information, skills, and competencies that are relevant to the field of education." In the field of education, "professional development" refers to a wide variety of practises, which might take the form of activities, programmes, classes, or seminars, with the overarching goal of enhancing educational professionals' knowledge, abilities, and expertise. This comprises people such as teachers, administrators, support workers, and other professionals working in the subject of education. The major goal of academic

training is to improve and hone one's knowledge and skill in a variety of subject matters that are pertinent to educational practises. These are the categories that encompass instructional tactics, curriculum creation, assessment methods, classroom administration, educational technology, leadership abilities, and any other components that contribute to good teaching and learning ^[9]. The delivery of training may be achieved via a variety of techniques, including in-person seminars, academic conferences, web-based courses, or experiential learning opportunities within the business.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present study used a quantitative research methodology to investigate the moderating influence of educational training on the association between leadership styles and job performance across the public and private educational sectors in China. The research design serves as a structured approach to methodically gather and examine data in order to address the research inquiries and evaluate the hypotheses. The research used a cross-sectional design, which included the collection of data at a given point in time to capture a momentary representation of the variables under investigation. The use of a cross-sectional design is especially well-suited for the examination of correlations between variables and the exploration of possible moderating effects.

The research focused its attention on three key components, including leadership styles, work performance, and educational training, with the aim of identifying the factors of interest. The measurement of leadership styles was conducted via the use of well-established scales, such as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). This questionnaire evaluates several facets of leadership, including transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles. The assessment of job performance included the use of either self-report measures or objective indicators, such as performance ratings or productivity metrics. The evaluation of educational training included the inquiry of participants on their formal education level and any supplementary training or professional development

initiatives they had undertaken. A well-designed questionnaire was devised to gather quantitative data from the participants. The survey consisted of inquiries that assessed the participants' impressions of various leadership styles, their self-reported work performance, and their educational training background. The items were developed using known scales and prior research in order to assure the validity and reliability of the measurements.

3.2 Research Approach

The research method pertains to the comprehensive strategy or course of action used to tackle the research goals and provide answers to the research questions. The present study used a quantitative research methodology to examine the moderating influence of educational training on the association between leadership styles and job performance across the public and private educational sectors in China.

3.3 Research Philosophies

Research philosophies are fundamental frameworks that underpin the approach and perspective taken in a study ^[10]. They guide the researcher's beliefs and assumptions about the nature of knowledge, reality, and the research process. In the investigation of the impact of educational training on the relationship between leadership styles and job performance in Shanghai's educational sectors, two research philosophies are particularly relevant: positivism and interpretivism.

3.4 Instrumentation and Measurement

According to Uren and Price (2018), instrumentation and measurement are both terms that relate to the equipment and processes that are used to gather data in a research investigation. A structured questionnaire was the major instrument that was used for data collection in this research on the moderating function of educational training on the link between leadership styles and job performance among workers working in public and private educational sectors in China. The purpose of this study was to investigate the moderating impact of educational training on the relationship between leadership styles and job performance. The survey's primary purpose was to gauge the various leadership styles,

occupational performance, and educational backgrounds of its respondents. To operationalize each concept, particular items or scales that have previously been verified and used in appropriate research settings were utilised ^[11].

3.5 Population, Sampling and Unit of Analysis

The population of this study comprises all employees working in the public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China. Shanghai, a major global city and an educational centre, hosts many educational institutions, including public schools, universities, private schools, and academic companies. In 2021, the total number of employees officially recorded in the Shanghai municipality amounted to around 13.65 million people. However, this number may vary over time due to changes in the workforce, expansions of educational institutions, or other factors affecting the sector's employment rate.

The public educational sector includes employees working in government-funded schools and institutions, while the private educational sector comprises employees working in privately-owned educational organizations. Employees in these sectors encompass diverse roles, such as teachers, principals, administrators, counsellors, support staff, and other personnel directly or indirectly involved in the educational process. Understanding the leadership styles and job performance of this population can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and efficiency of the educational sector in Shanghai, China.

The type of sampling used in this study is random sampling. Random sampling is a probability sampling method where every individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected for the sample. This study uses random sampling to ensure that their sample is representative of the entire population of employees working in the public and private educational sectors in Shanghai, China.

3.6 Data Collection Approach

A quantitative questionnaire will be used as part of a data collecting strategy in this investigation into the function that educational

training plays in influencing the connection between leadership styles and job performance among workers in Shanghai's public and private educational sectors. The purpose of this research is to determine whether educational training plays a moderating effect in this connection. A structured questionnaire would be given to the participants who were chosen for the study to obtain quantitative data on their views and experiences of different leadership styles, work performance, and educational training. This would be the strategy that would be used to collect the data ^[12].

3.7 Data Analysis

In this study, two statistical analysis methods, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling), were adopted to investigate the moderating effect of educational training on the relationship between various leadership styles and job performance within the educational sectors of Shanghai, China ^[13].

The data analysis approach for this study involves descriptive and inferential analyses, including correlation analysis, multiple regression analysis, subgroup analysis, and statistical significance testing. These analytical techniques will comprehensively explore the relationships between leadership styles, job performance, and educational training while considering potential sector-specific variations ^[14]. By employing these statistical methods, the study aims to gain meaningful insights into the moderating role of academic training on the relationship between leadership styles and job performance among public and private educational sector employees in Shanghai, China.

4. Findings

The findings are expected to indicate a significant impact of both leadership styles on job performance with a significant mediating impact of educational training. Therefore, the direct and indirect associations among variables would be significant. Thus, the study's findings will present crucial practical implications for the educational sector to enhance the job performance of employees by exercising effective leadership roles.

The study's findings contribute to the broader discourse on leadership and performance within educational institutions, offering a nuanced understanding of how educational training modifies these relationships. By grounding its analysis in the context of Shanghai's educational sector, the study bridges existing research gaps, offering fresh insights into the culturally specific dynamics of leadership and performance. The implications extend to theoretical models of leadership, suggesting a need to incorporate contextual factors such as educational training in understanding leadership effectiveness.

For practitioners within the educational sector—ranging from policy makers to school administrators—the study provides actionable insights into optimizing leadership strategies and training programs. The findings underscore the importance of investing in educational training as a means of amplifying the positive impacts of effective leadership on job performance. Moreover, the study offers a blueprint for developing targeted training programs that cater to the specific needs of employees under different leadership styles, thereby maximizing job performance and organizational efficiency. Acknowledging the study's limitations, such as its geographical focus on Shanghai, offers a segue into advocating for future research. There is a compelling need for similar studies across diverse geographical and cultural contexts to ascertain the generalizability of the findings. Future research could also explore the longitudinal impacts of educational training on the relationship between leadership styles and job performance, offering deeper insights into the sustainability of training effects.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes by synthesizing its findings into a cohesive narrative that emphasizes the nuanced interplay between leadership styles, educational training, and job performance within the educational sectors of Shanghai, China. This investigation has uncovered a complex picture where the effectiveness of leadership styles—autocratic, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—varies significantly in influencing job performance, with educational training playing a critical moderating role. Transformational leadership emerges as a

particularly potent force, with its emphasis on inspiration, motivation, and personal development aligning well with the goals of educational training to enhance job performance. The study suggests that transformational leaders, by fostering a vision and facilitating personal growth, create an environment where educational training can be most effective.

The investigation also highlights the contrasting effects of autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on job performance. Autocratic leadership, with its centralized decision-making and control, may not always provide the most conducive environment for the application of educational training, possibly stifling innovation and creativity essential for job performance enhancement. On the other hand, laissez-faire leadership, characterized by its hands-off approach, may fail to provide the necessary guidance and support for educational training to be fully effective. Transactional leadership, with its focus on rewards and punishments, presents a nuanced picture. While this leadership style can foster a clear understanding of expectations and objectives, its impact on job performance through educational training is less straightforward and requires further exploration to fully understand its potential benefits and limitations.

Educational training emerges as a pivotal factor across all leadership styles, acting as a bridge that can enhance the positive aspects of each style on job performance. By providing employees with the skills, knowledge, and competencies required for their roles, educational training not only improves job performance directly but also moderates the relationship between leadership styles and job performance, amplifying the effectiveness of conducive leadership styles and mitigating the limitations of less effective ones. The study's findings underscore the importance of a strategic approach to leadership and educational training within Shanghai's educational sectors. For policymakers and educational administrators, the insights garnered suggest a need for investment in leadership development programs that emphasize transformational qualities and the implementation of comprehensive, tailored educational training programs that align with organizational goals and employee

development needs. The research contributes significantly to the body of knowledge on leadership, educational training, and job performance, offering valuable insights for enhancing educational outcomes in Shanghai. The study calls for a balanced, informed approach to leadership development and educational training, highlighting the critical role these factors play in achieving high job performance and, ultimately, educational excellence.

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