

Transformational Leadership Influences Employee Performance: A Review and Directions for Future Research

Jiayue Shang *

School of Economics and Management, Nanjing University of Technology, Nanjing, China

* Corresponding Author Email: jy13057615661@163.com

Abstract. The world is currently in an era of great turmoil, from the increase in sudden changes such as industrial accidents and terrorist threats to the global spread of the COVID-19, thus showing that the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity characteristic of the market environment has become a norm. The personal traits and abilities of the entrepreneur determine the survival and success or failure of the company, and it is only by choosing a more appropriate leadership style according to the time and the right changes that one can seek opportunities in the crisis. Leadership style affects the work atmosphere and morale of the entire organization, and plays an important role in work performance, and how to use leadership theory to improve employee performance is attracting more and more attention from scholars at home and abroad. In this paper, based on a review of related studies at home and abroad, and from the perspectives of social exchange theory, upper echelons theory and leadership-member exchange theory, the mechanisms and relationships between transformational leadership and employee performance are organized based on a review of the conceptual structure, influencing factors and mechanisms of action of related concepts. At the same time, the more complex influence relationship between the two is also sorted out to reveal the impact path of transformational leadership on employee performance. In addition, we summarize the shortcomings of the existing research results and propose the future outlook, so as to provide some reference value for future scholars who study transformational leadership and employee performance.

Keywords: Leadership Style; Transformational Leadership; Employee Performance.

1. Introduction

The issue of the relationship between leaders and employees has always been a focal point of concern for organizational managers and academics. The development of an organization is dependent on the efforts of both leaders and employees, and each needs to play his or her role well.

Peter F. Drucker has said that leaders are crucial to the success or failure of an organization, especially in a time of great turmoil and economic change. As a leader, it is important to uphold a sense of mission, to use the "Art of War", to use the "Harmony of Men", to assess the situation and to continuously lead team members in the pursuit and achievement of organizational goals. As Sun Tzu's "The Art of War" emphasizes, leaders should respond to the "opportune time", examine the "geographic advantage" and make use of the "unity of all ranks". "Unity of all ranks" is not only a historical necessity of the changing times, but also a special requirement in the current context of great turmoil and change.

In addition, another key factor for organizational success is employees, of which employee performance has been a long-standing interest of researchers, due to the fact that employee performance as an organizational output variable is not only an important measure of organizational health, but also an important indicator of leadership effectiveness. Numerous studies have found that leadership style affects the work climate and work morale of the entire organization and plays an important role in performance (He Li, Ling Wenquan, 2010; Hu Haijun, Weng Qingxiong, and Cao Weilin, 2015; Xu Yan, and Li Chaoping, 2019) [1-3]. Therefore, how to use leadership theory to improve employee performance has also increasingly attracted extensive attention from many domestic and international scholars (Koene, Vogelaar, Soeters, 2002; Walumbwa, Wu, Orwa, 2008; Zhang Shuhua, Liu Zhaoyan, 2016; Wang Zhen, Long Yufan and Peng Jian, 2019) [4-7].

2. Transformational Leadership

2.1. The concept of transformational leadership

Leadership style is a unique habitual way of behavior based on the effective summary and in-depth research and analysis of long-term practice and experience (Schein, 2014) [8]. It is not a specific leadership behavior, but refers to the synthesis of a series of leadership behaviors that provide support for a particular function and that change with the leadership situation (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007) [9]. So far, the representative leadership style theories in the West have been developed in three stages: leadership trait theory, behavioral model theory, and power change theory, respectively. The main leadership styles are transformational leadership, ethical leadership, charismatic leadership, inclusive leadership, and transactional leadership.

The most representative study of transformational leadership is Bass. Bass (1985) argued that transformational leaders have a very strong sense of intrinsic value and conceptual system, and they stimulate their subordinates' higher-level needs such as responsibility and honor by making them aware of the importance of the tasks they undertake, so that they can put more effort into the team or organizational interests and ultimately achieve performance that exceeds expectations [10]. He pointed out that a distinguishing characteristic of transformational leaders from other types of leaders is their demonstrated ability and efforts in providing constructive feedback to employees, through which feedback and the leader's own modeling and coaching provide additional opportunities for employee development and growth.

Although foreign scholars have made certain research results on transformational leadership, due to the differences in countries, leaders are influenced by the cultural background of their countries, so the concept and composition of leadership may also differ in different countries, and leaders have different degrees of influence on employees depending on their leadership styles (Hofstede, 1993; Hofstede, 2001) [11,12], therefore, transformational leadership styles have attracted extensive attention and research from scholars in China.

Using an open-ended questionnaire to survey leaders and employees with traditional Chinese cultural backgrounds, Li Chaoping and Kan Shi (2005) found eight categories of behaviors of transformational leaders in China and formed the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire. Later, after two rounds of questionnaire collection, it was finally determined that the meaning of transformational leadership in China not only includes Bass' view, but also considers transformational leaders as moral role models or exemplars of their subordinates who lead their employees by example and by virtue, caring not only for their work but also for their lives [13]. The study of Chen Yongxia et al. (2006) argues that transformational leadership style mainly reflects the good influence of the leader's behavior on employees, where the leader's behavior is the inspiration and the good influence on employees (e.g., employees will trust the leader more in their hearts, respect the leader, and take the leader as a role model at work) refers to the charisma of the leader [14].

In summary, transformational leaders will use the organization's vision and strategic goals to motivate employees to achieve a higher level of self-worth, use their leadership charisma to influence employees, care about the work and life of employees, encourage employees to sacrifice their personal interests in order to achieve organizational interests, focus on interaction and communication with employees, give employees the necessary support and help, and ultimately make employees strive for the realization of organizational goals and objectives.

2.2. The dimensions and measurement of transformational leadership

Scholars in China and abroad have been digging deeper and expanding the concept of transformational leadership, while on the other hand, they have been dividing the structure of transformational leadership and designing questionnaires for transformational leadership by means of interviews or open-ended questionnaires.

Bass and Avolio classify four dimensions of transformational leadership, which are: Idealized Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration, and Inspirational Motivation.

Inspirational Motivation (Bass and Avolio, 1996; Bass and Avolio, 1990) [15,16]. This four-dimensional structure has been widely accepted by researchers and supported by empirical studies, and the development of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) has also been shown to have good reliability and validity. The four dimensions are as follows: Idealized Influence refers to the leader's personal qualities and performance that make subordinates follow him/her willingly and become a role model for them to follow; Intellectual stimulation refers to the leader's ability to stimulate the imagination and thinking of employees, encouraging them to keep up with the times and to use new and efficient methods to solve problems in their work in order to accomplish their tasks. Individualized Consideration means that the leader cares about the work and life of employees, understands their working ability, and cares about their career development and achievement needs; Inspirational Motivation means that the transformational leader takes the initiative to describe the organization's development prospects and development blueprint to subordinates, convincing them to believe in the development potential of the organization and to be willing to undertake challenging work for the realization of organizational goals.

Subsequently, domestic and international scholars have mostly built on Bass and Avolio's findings when studying the structural division of transformational leadership. Podsakoff et al. (1990) also built on Bass et al.'s work by dividing transformational leadership into six dimensions, namely, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, raising high performance expectations, promoting collaboration, articulating vision, and modeling by example, for a total of six dimensions, and developed a scale for measuring transformational leadership [17]. Rafferty and Griffin (2004) classified transformational leadership into intellectual stimulation, personal recognition, vision, contagious communication, and supportive leadership, but only the dimensions were classified without developing a corresponding scale [18].

Based on the Chinese cultural context, Li Chaoping and Shi Kan (2005) collected three rounds of questionnaires and finally confirmed that transformational leadership consists of four dimensions, namely, moral exemplification, leadership charisma, visionary motivation, and individualized consideration [13]. Among them, there are two dimensions that differ from Bass (1996) [15], Li Chaoping and Kan Shi (2005) individualized consideration contains more content, Bass et al.'s individualized consideration refers to transformational leaders who only care about employees' work and career development future, while Li Chaoping and Kan Shi (2005) personalized care also emphasizes that transformational leaders not only care about employees' work, but also care about The personalized care of Li Chaoping and Kan Shi (2005) also emphasizes that transformational leaders care not only about employees' work but also about employees' lives and family relationships. They believe that the moral quality of leaders has a great influence on the behavior of their subordinates because, unlike the class-based characteristics of the West, China is a humanistic society and the traditional Chinese moral culture is deeply rooted in people's hearts, thus adding the dimension of moral exemplarity. In addition to delineating the dimensions of transformational leadership, Li Chaoping and Kan Shi (2005) also developed the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ), which contains 26 questions and was proved by factor analysis to have a good level of reliability and validity and to be consistent with the Chinese condition.

2.3. The Influencing Factors of transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is the most effective leadership style, and the study of its influencing factors has important theoretical and practical significance. As far as the existing literature is sorted out, the relevant factors influencing transformational leadership behavior can be divided into three categories: the leader's own factors, colleagues and subordinates' factors, and organizational environment factors (Wei Huimin, and Long Lirong, 2011) [19].

2.3.1 The leader's own factors

The main characteristics of transformational leadership are "leadership charisma" and where this comes from. Firstly, studies on the gender of leaders, such as Careless (1998), show that self-evaluation measures show that female managers can give more humane attention to their employees

than male managers, while gender differences in transformational leadership are not significant in the eyes of subordinates, and measures from superiors show that female managers tend to exhibit transformational leadership traits [20]. In research on personality traits, Bono and Judge (2004) found that extraversion, responsibility, agreeableness and openness were associated with a positive influence on transformational leadership, while neuroticism had a negative influence on transformational leadership [21]. In terms of research on emotional intelligence, Barling et al. (2000) identified emotional intelligence as a significant influence on transformational leadership and their findings showed that emotional intelligence was significantly related to the evocative, charismatic and personalised care dimensions of transformational leadership [22]. Hautala (2006) found that according to leaders' self-ratings, extraversion, intuition and perceived preference favoured transformational leadership, while subordinates perceived a sensitive personality to be more conducive to transformational leadership [23]. In recent years, scholars have begun to focus on the impact of leaders' own factors on organizational output through transformational leadership (Hautala, 2006; Hur, Van, Wilderom, 2011; Cavazotte et al., 2012) [23-25]. For example, Hur, Van, Wilderom (2011) found that emotional intelligence (emotional intelligence) was associated with transformational leadership behavior and influenced team output through transformational leadership [24].

2.3.2 Factors from peer leaders and subordinates

Influence from colleagues and subordinates is also an important factor in the study of transformational leadership influences. Bommer, Rubin, and Baldwin (2004) suggest that transformational leadership is positively related to subordinates' expectations of transformational leadership behaviors [26]. The results showed that highly autonomous subordinates expected or received some transformational leadership behaviors from their leaders, while less autonomous subordinates had the opposite attitude [27]. Hautala (2005) found that extroverted and affectionate subordinates were more receptive to transformational leadership behaviors than introverted and reflective subordinates [28].

2.3.3 Organizational contextual factors

The specific organizational context is another important factor that influences transformational leadership. Conger and Kanungo (1998) found that different organizational contexts have different effects on transformational leadership, for example, contexts that are full of uncertainty or are more dangerous, where leaders usually act differently, can facilitate the emergence of transformational leadership behavior [29]. Pawar and Eastman (1997) found that organizational goals, work processes, organizational structure and management style were all important factors influencing transformational leadership [30]. Manning (2002) found through empirical research that the evaluation of different members within an organization can also influence transformational leadership [31].

2.4. The related research of transformational leadership

In terms of outcome variables for the impact of transformational leadership, there is less research at the organizational level, more research at the team level and the most outcome variables at the employee level.

At the organizational level, the most important outcome variable is organizational performance, and there has been a great deal of research demonstrating the contribution of transformational leadership to organizational performance. Howell et al. (1993) were the first to apply transformational leadership to organizational level research, and based on a study of the presidents of 78 business units, found that transformational presidents were more likely than those who did not practice transformational leadership to inspire employee solidarity and cooperation, as well as the ability to bring leadership charisma to bear in a correspondingly motivational and role-model role, thereby increasing corporate productivity [32].

To further substantiate Howell's findings, Geyery and Steyrer (1998) used the banking industry as a study to demonstrate that organizational performance is positively influenced by transformational leadership [33]. In addition, Elenkov (2002) studied Russian companies and confirmed Howell's findings that there is a relationship between organizational performance and transformational leadership [34]. However, Menguc, Auh, Shih (2007), in order to go deeper into this research, suggest that organizational performance is not directly influenced by transformational leadership, but that there is a complex mediating process between them, so that competition between business units needs to use market orientation in order to achieve better competitiveness [35]. Similarly, Aragón-Correa, García-Morales, Cordon-Pozo (2007) and García-Morales, Lloréns-Montes, Verdú-Jover (2008) also support the view of Menguc, Auh, Shih (2007) [35] that there is a complex mediating process between organizational performance and transformational leadership, and that it can have the effect of enhancing and strengthening its organizational capacity through the process of organizing and managing knowledge and influence, which can bring innovation to organizational performance [36-37]. The relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance has also been studied by domestic scholars in recent years, and in the Chinese context, transformational leadership also has a significant positive effect on organizational performance (Wang Fengbin and Chen, Jianxun, 2011; Chen, Jianxun, 2011) [38,39].

Team-level research is richer, with transformational leadership influencing team outcome variables such as team performance and team innovation. Kahai, Sosik, Avolio (2003) confirmed in their study that transformational leadership improves team performance [40]; Patiar and Mia (2009) used a luxury hotel in Australia to verify the positive relationship between transformational leadership behavior and departmental Patiar and Mia (2009) used a luxury hotel in Australia to verify the positive relationship between transformational leadership behavior and departmental performance [41]. Domestic scholars Zhou Zhicheng and Zhu Yuelong (2005) found that the three dimensions of transformational team leadership behavior - inspirational, charismatic leadership and personalized care - had a significant impact on team effectiveness, while the dimension of challenging stereotypes did not have a significant impact on team effectiveness [42]. Zhu Shaoying et al. (2008) showed that transformational leadership was positively related to team climate and knowledge sharing [43]. Yang Kai, Ma Jianhong (2009) used an experimental method of ERP sandbox simulation and showed that both transformational leadership and transactional leadership had a positive effect on team performance [44]. Xie Zhitao, Tian Xinmin and Zhu Jinlong (2010) used leader-employee pairing to verify the positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee organizational citizenship behavior, for example, and identified the mediating role of distributive and procedural equity between transformational leadership and employee organizational citizenship behavior [45].

Employee-level research is of most interest to scholars, with outcome variables ranging from employee performance and job satisfaction to organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior being explored. The outcome variable of transformational leadership promoting positivity has been extensively validated. This study focuses on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance, and therefore related research is detailed in Chapter 4.

In addition, Hoch et al. (2018) used a meta-analysis to compare the impact of three emerging forms of positive leadership: ethical leadership, transformational leadership and servant leadership [46], but the Chinese literature was not used in that article, so the impact of these leadership styles in a Chinese cultural context could not be determined.

Through a review of the literature on transformational leadership theory, it can be seen that the study of transformational leadership has gone through three important stages: conceptual structure, influencing factors and mechanism of action. At present, the research on the concept and structure of transformational leadership is relatively clear, and the research on the factors influencing transformational leadership is mainly focused on the leader himself, his colleagues and subordinates, and the organizational environment, and the research on the effectiveness of transformational leadership has also obtained fruitful theoretical results. In general, however, research on the

mechanisms of transformational leadership is still in its infancy. Further research is needed to investigate the causal relationships between transformational leadership and related variables, as well as the moderating role of related mediating influences.

3. Employee Performance

3.1. The concept of employee performance

Employee performance, the individual dimension of performance research. In terms of connotation, there are three main perspectives: the outcome performance perspective, the behavioral performance perspective and the competency value performance perspective. These views consider employee performance as the result of completing a task, as a behavior in the process of completing a task, and as the value that employee attributes and competencies bring to the organization, respectively. For example, Bernardin (1995) and others argue that performance should be defined as the results of work because they are most closely related to the organization's strategic goals, customer satisfaction and the money invested [47]. Campbell (1990) argues that performance is behavioral and should be separated from outcomes because outcomes are influenced by systemic factors [48]. Hoga and Sheltonl (1998) argue that performance is a random variable of personality and that although skills, competencies and personality traits represent performance at the same time, skills and competencies are explicit while personality traits are implicit [49]. Each of the three perspectives takes a different view of performance and all have had a significant impact on the development of performance theory.

In general, all three perspectives have valid points; skills and employee traits are the basis of work behavior, behavior is the means by which performance is produced, and outcomes are a visual representation of the contribution of work to the organization. The now generally accepted view, which defines performance as a unity of behavior and outcomes, was proposed by Borman and Motowidlo (1997) [50]. Borman and Motowidlo (1997) classified employee performance as task performance and contextual performance. Task performance is defined as behavior that is prescribed by the organization or related to organizational goals; contextual performance is defined as behavior that is spontaneously demonstrated by employees, such as organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment and performance behavior that is not related to specific organizational goals.

3.2. The dimensions and measurement of employee performance

Katz and Kahn (1978) pioneered the study of performance structures by introducing "citizen performance" [51]. After that, Borman and Motowidlo (1993) proposed a two-dimensional performance structure model including task performance and contextual performance, which is a commonly used structural model nowadays [52]. With the progress of social technology and the development of modern management theory, scholars have enriched the two-dimensional structure from different perspectives. Hesketh and Allworth (1997) proposed a three-dimensional performance structure of task performance, contextual performance, and adaptive performance [53], based on which London, Mone, and Scott (2004) added the learning performance dimension [54]. Pulakos (2002), on the other hand, introduced innovative performance in the performance model [55]. Domestic scholars, Sun Jianmin and Jiao Changquan (2002), derived a three-dimensional performance structure of task performance, individual trait performance, and interpersonal performance through their study [56]. Han Yi (2006) validated the four-dimensional performance structure of task, contextual, learning, and innovation through his study [57].

Based on a review of the literature, employee performance structures can be broadly categorized into five stages (Table 1). It is easy to see from Table 1 that research on performance structure is enriched and developed as uncertainties in factors such as employee quality and work environment increase. Innovative performance and learning performance will be increasingly prominent in future research areas.

Table 1. Changes in employee performance structure

Phase	Representative	Main ideas	Contributions
Citizen Performance	Katz & Kahn	A well-functioning organization requires three types of behaviors: (1) joining and staying with the organization; (2) meeting or exceeding the performance standards set by the organization for the employee; and (3) spontaneously performing activities other than those set by the organization for the employee.	Presenting the "human" factor of performance
Task - Contextual Performance	Borman & Motowidlo	Employee performance can be divided into task performance and contextual performance, and for the first time, the concepts of contextual performance and task performance were introduced. And the structure of contextual performance was distilled into two dimensions: interpersonal facilitation and job dedication. They argued that performance is an intermittent multiple behavioral construct that can be assessed and is influenced by premises such as personality and cognitive ability.	Presented the contextual performance
High Dimensional Performance	Campbell	Individual differences in any performance component are caused by the combined effect of individual differences in knowledge, skills, and choice behaviors.	A variety of factors are considered
Three Dimensional Performance	Hesketh & Neal	Adaptive performance discusses role flexibility, self-management, new learning experiences, adapting to new things, and encompasses a wide range of performance behaviors with different task demands. Adaptive performance should be added to the performance components other than task performance and contextual performance.	Presented the adaptive performance
Four Dimensional Performance	London et al.; Han	Employee performance was significantly classified into four dimensions: task performance, contextual performance, learning performance, and innovation performance, and was influenced by job satisfaction, organizational commitment, day marker orientation, and performance propensity variables.	Dividing adaptive performance into innovation and learning performance

The measurement of employee performance also has diversity: the two-dimensional model proposed by Borman and Motowidlo (1993) [52] includes task performance and contextual performance; the three-dimensional scale designed by VanScotter and Motowidlo (1996) includes task performance, work dedication, and interpersonal promotion [58]; Wen Zhiyi (2005) developed a four-dimensional structural model with the scale divided into four dimensions: task performance, adaptive performance, interpersonal performance, and effort performance [59]. The dimensional

classification of employee performance scales since then has been mostly based on the above classification model.

3.3. Influencing Factors of employee performance

By reviewing and sorting through the extensive research literature on factors influencing employee performance, a summary was conducted for this study (as shown in Table 2).

Table 2. Factors influencing employee performance

Representative	Main ideas
Vromo (1964)	Performance is determined by two factors, competence and motivation, i.e., performance = F (competence, motivation). Where, competence = skills x knowledge; motivation = needs x incentives.
Konnan (1977)	Motivation, knowledge and skills can affect performance.
Einhom & Hogarth (1981)	The factors proposed by Vromo were adjusted and the role of the influence of knowledge and environment was emphasized.
Libby (1983)	The performance formula is proposed: performance = f (skills, motivation, opportunity, environment).
Piece & Dunham (1987)	Factors considered to influence employee performance include: job satisfaction, management satisfaction, organizational commitment, and expected effort.
Waldman & Spangler (1989)	An integrated model of the factors influencing individual performance was constructed. It consists of five main levels: overall individual competence, organizational motivation, organizational feedback, leadership, and collective work processes.
Campbell (1993)	The factors influencing performance are personal knowledge, personal skills, motivation.
Cardy & Dobbins (1994)	Employees bring their individual factors to work, which can influence decisions.
Robbins (1996)	Performance is a function of personal factors, environmental factors and the nature of the work, personal factors mainly include ability, values, attitude, responsibility, etc.
AXA Consulting (1998)	The top 5 motivating factors for knowledge workers' performance are: compensation, job nature, promotion, relationship with colleagues and influence on decision making.
Huang (2002)	Factors influencing individual performance improvement include: ability factors, personality factors, motivation factors, values factors, attitude factors, stress factors, and work and work environment factors.
Tan (2007)	A framework of factors influencing employee performance is proposed: individual factors, job characteristics factors, group factors, and organizational factors.

The diversity of employee performance concepts, the multidimensional nature of the performance structure, and the complexity and variability of the influencing factors all add to the difficulty of systematically sorting out and studying the influencing factors of employee performance. Through the analysis of the available literature, it is found that most of the studies only focus on one or a few specific factors. However, in general, there are three factors influencing employee performance, namely, individual factors, job factors and environmental factors.

First, individual factors. Here are mainly all factors related to the employees themselves, such as their attitude at work, their motivation at work, the job-related skills and knowledge they have, and the interpersonal relationships they have to promote their work.

Second, job factors. It refers to all the factors of the work itself, such as the preparation goals and plans before the work starts, the process, norms and requirements during the work, the standards and time achieved after the work is finished, and the methods and tools, processes and division of labor used to complete the work.

Third, environmental factors. Employee performance is also related to the organizational environment and work group in which employees work, including factors such as organizational climate, organizational motivation, and leadership style.

Both individual and team factors can have a significant impact on employee performance, and there is a great deal of research on such. Studies have found that personal traits affect employee performance. The influence of personal traits is reflected in the personality and competencies of employees. For example, Barrick and Mount (1991) identified the rigor of the Big Five personality model as one of the factors that affect employee performance, and extraversion can also have an impact [60].

It was also found that the higher the cognitive ability of employees, the faster they accept new things, the easier it is to acquire the expertise needed for their jobs, the more knowledge they learn, and the more they are able to apply their knowledge to their jobs, thus increasing their level of performance (Hunter & Schmidt, 1996) [61].

In addition to this, other factors may also influence the relationship between employees' personality, competence, and performance; relevant mediating variables include employees' self-esteem, employees' organizational commitment, employees' perceived organizational fairness, the leadership support employees receive, and employees' job satisfaction (LePine, Erez, Johnson, 2002) [62].

3.4. The related research of employee performance

In current research, employee performance has been a hot topic of research in various fields, and it is also a core issue and a constant topic in the field of management and organizational behavior because of its relevance to corporate development goals.

Fewer studies have used employee performance as an antecedent variable, such as Schneider and Bowen (1985), who found that employee job performance plays an important role in selecting, training, motivating and retaining employees in a firm [63]. After extensive research on employee turnover, Schwab (1991) found that higher-performing employees are more likely to leave their own jobs or their firms voluntarily due to stimulation by external conditions, that the loss of replaceable low-performing employees in the internal or external labor market may actually increase organizational productivity, and that the consequences of turnover are detrimental to the organization only when high-performing employees leave, thus the findings indicate that the relationship between employee job performance and turnover is of great relevance to the proper functioning of the organization [64].

Most studies examine the factors influencing job performance and the paths of improvement, that is, job performance as an outcome variable, which can be divided into three aspects.

(1) Job characteristics aspects. Hackman and Oldham (1975) suggested that rich or complex job content has a positive effect on job performance [65]. Job skill diversity positively affects employee creativity and job performance through employees' psychological ownership of their jobs, and the effect of this effect is moderated by job feedback (Xie Yao and Gu Qinxuan, 2015) [66].

(2) Aspects of individual characteristics. Emotion management ability (EMA) involves a person's ability to regulate their own and others' emotions, and since increasing positive emotions improves motivation, EMA has the potential to positively influence job performance by subsequently increasing motivation (Erez and Isen, 2002) [67]. Personality has an effect on job performance, with introverted employees tending to have better job performance and extroverted employees having lower performance over time (Bendersky and Shah, 2013) [68]. Joseph and Newman (2010), for example, found that EMA predicted "Big Five personality" task performance in high emotional labor jobs [69]. Domestic scholars have also suggested that the Big Five personality can have a significant

positive impact on employee performance (Yao Ruosong, Chen Huaijin and Miao Qunying 2013) [70]. A study by Hou Min et al. (2014) confirmed that individuals with high emotional intelligence (emotional intelligence) are better able to identify and monitor their emotions and feelings, they are less susceptible to bad emotions at work and their job performance is higher, and that family facilitation and employees' proactive behaviors play multiple mediating roles in the effect of emotional intelligence on job performance [71]. Zhao Xiaoyun (2016) showed that employees with a high sense of professional mission are better able to gain passion and strength at work and feel meaningful at work, which has a positive effect on their job performance [72].

(3) In terms of team and organizational characteristics. a study by Barrick & Mount (1991) found that fairness in business management can positively affect job performance [60]. Farndale et al. (2011) argued that employee-oriented management practices such as encouraging employees to participate in their work and providing them with professional training can motivate them to work and thus positively affect employee performance output [73]. Loneliness in the workplace acts on job performance through lower approachability and emotional engagement with the organization of lonely employees, and the greater the loneliness in the workplace, the lower the employee performance (Ozcelik and Barsade, 2018) [74]. Xu Yangyang and Lin Xinqi (2021), offered the same view on the relationship between loneliness and job performance and suggested the moderating role of task complexity and role ambiguity. In addition, the leader-employee match can also affect employee performance [75]. For example, when the leader's empowerment matches the subordinate's self-leadership, employees experience less role conflict and emotional exhaustion, which in turn increases job performance (Chen Chen et al., 2020) [76]. Similar matching studies include, Jiang Daokui, Yu Mengxiao and Bai Qun (2018), who argues that the better the match between people and organizations, the higher their job performance will be [77]. Leader-subordinate relationship schema congruence positively affects employees' task performance (Wang Yanfei et al., 2021) [78]. In terms of leadership style, Liang Xiongjun et al. (2011) found that inclusive and friendly leadership behaviors with modern characteristics were more significant in enhancing employee loyalty and individual performance by comparing the different effects of authoritative, democratic, and permissive leadership styles on employees through an empirical study [79]. An empirical study by Song Qi (2011) found significant differences in the intergenerational effects of ethical and authoritative leadership in paternalistic leadership styles on employees in the Chinese context, with ethical leadership having a significant positive effect on task performance, interpersonal facilitation, and job commitment [80].

By combing through the literature on employee performance, it can be seen that the definitions of employee performance are mainly explained from three perspectives: outcome, behavior and comprehensive, and with the depth of research, the comprehensive definitions based on outcome and behavior have been widely recognized by scholars at home and abroad. As the research continues to deepen, most of the previous studies were conducted based on traditional organizational forms, and now with the increasing emergence and rise of new organizational forms, whether there are different models and dimensions of job performance will likely be an issue that future researchers need to pay further attention to.

4. The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Employee Performance

4.1. Transformational leadership directly influences employee performance

Numerous studies have shown that employee performance is a multidimensional concept that is influenced by several factors such as individual, job, and situational factors. Leadership style is a representative factor among the situational factors (Chen Xun and Le Yun, 2013) [81], and it is now generally accepted that leadership style has an impact on employee performance.

The transformational leadership, which is more numerous in the research on leadership style types, has also been studied by numerous domestic and international scholars who have been able to demonstrate that it can have a direct or indirect significant effect on employee performance.

In order to deeply explore the path of influence of transformational leadership on employee performance, scholars have made a lot of work, and related studies are summarized in four categories according to transformational leadership directly influences employee performance, transformational leadership indirectly influences employee performance through mediating variables, transformational leadership influences factors related to employee performance other than task performance, and transformational leadership influences other factors related to employee performance, as summarized in Table 3 to 6.

Table 3. Transformational leadership influences employee performance directly

Representative	Time	Main contents
Podsakoff et al.	1990	The transformational leader's own exemplary behavior is very important. The leader sets an example for employees to follow, and employees can imitate and learn to close the gap between them and the leader.
Kirkpatrick & Lock [82]	1996	The impact of transformational and charismatic leadership on employee attitudes and performance. The study found that the implementation of a vision in the form of a task had a positive impact on employee performance.
Dvir et al. [83]	2002	There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance.
Judge & Piccolo [84]	2004	Transformational leadership is positively correlated with team and organizational performance.
Tang Xiao [85]	2008	Transformational leadership behaviors are significantly correlated with both task performance and adaptive performance.
Advani & Abbas [86]	2015	Both transformational leadership and transactional leadership are effective in motivating employee performance.
Abdullah [87]	2018	Transformational leaders motivate and inspire employees to exceed performance expectations by changing their attitudes, beliefs and values.

4.2. Transformational leadership influences employee performance through mediating variables

Table 4. Influences through mediating variables

Mediating variable	Representative	Time
Leader-member Exchange Relationship	Wang et al.	2005
Organizational Commitment	Wang Guangling	2010
	Almutairi	2016
Collective Effectiveness and Knowledge Sharing	Zhang et al.	2011
Psychological Capital	Sui Yang, Wang Hui and Yue Yini	2012
Trust in leadership	Kasemsap	2013
Sense of self-efficacy	Cavazotte , Moreno , Bernardo	2013
Organizational equity	Zehir & Yildirim	2015
Psychological empowerment and team empowerment climate	Yuan Boqiao	2017
Employee Engagement	Al-Amin	2017
Exploratory Innovation	Chen et al.	2019
Work Engagement	Buil, Martínez, Matute	2019

	Tao	2020
Work Motivation	Guterresa, Armanu, Rofiaty	2020
Job Satisfaction	Kawiana et al.	2020
Knowledge Management	Fei	2021

Wang et al. (2005) argued that the correlation between transformational leadership and employee performance and organizational citizenship behavior is transmitted through a mediating variable (leader-member exchange relationship), and here the inverse effect of leader-member exchange relationship on transformational leadership is insignificant, and they argued that on the principle of social exchange, there would be reciprocal and mutually beneficial responses to such behaviors, such as completing work tasks with high quality, caring for the organization, and engaging in behaviors that are beneficial to the organization's development [88]. Wang Guangling (2010) conducted an empirical study on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance and showed that transformational leadership has a positive predictive effect on employee performance mediated by organizational commitment [89]. A study by Almutairi (2016) found that organizational commitment mediates the relationship between transformational leadership style and employee performance, and the study showed a positive association between transformational leadership style and employee performance [90].

Zhang, Tsui, and Wang (2011), in order to understand the factors affecting team creativity in China, delved into the positive role played by transformational leadership style in enhancing team creativity by influencing the collective efficacy and knowledge sharing of team members [91]. Sui Yang, Wang Hui and Yue Yini (2012) distributed questionnaires to 785 employees and their direct supervisors in order to examine the mediating role of employees' psychological capital between transformational leadership and employees performance and job satisfaction. The results of the study showed that employees' psychological capital was positively related to performance and job satisfaction; transformational leadership had a positive effect on employee performance and job satisfaction, and employees' psychological capital played a partially mediating role in it [92]. Kasemsap (2013) showed that trust in leadership fully mediates transformational leadership and employee performance, while transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on employee performance [93]. Cavazotte, Moreno, Bernardo (2013), using Brazilian employees, concluded that self-efficacy partially mediates transformational leadership and employee performance, while transformational leadership has a significant positive contribution to employee performance [94]. A study by Zehir, Yildirim (2015) showed that transformational leadership application has a positive effect on perceptions of interactional fairness, followed by perceptions of distributive fairness and procedural fairness. And positive organizational fairness perceptions of employees positively affect employees, while negative organizational fairness perceptions lead to a decrease in individual employee performance [95].

Based on the literature research, Yuan Boqiao (2017) constructed a theoretical model of the cross-level mediating and moderating effects of employee psychological empowerment and team empowerment climate on the relationship between transformational leadership and employee innovation performance. The theoretical analysis led to the hypothesis that transformational leaders influence employee innovation performance through employee psychological empowerment; and transformational leaders influence employee innovation performance through team empowerment climate [96]. Al-Amin (2017) selected 200 employees working in various jobs in small and medium enterprises in Bangladesh and conducted a questionnaire survey on them and found that transformational leadership was positively related to employee performance, which also confirmed the mediating role of employee engagement [97]. Chen et al. (2019) demonstrated the mediating role of exploratory innovation on the relationship between CEO transformational leadership behavior and organizational performance based on upper echelons theory, in other words, the CEO's transformational leadership behavior triggers exploratory innovation in the organization, which in turn has an inverted U-shaped effect on organizational performance, thus compensating for the

inconsistent findings regarding the impact of CEO transformational leadership on organizational performance [98]. Buil, Martínez, Matute (2019) studied the mechanisms and boundary conditions underlying the relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance and found that transformational leadership directly predicted employee performance and that work engagement mediated the relationship [99]. A study by Guterres, Armanu, Rofiaty (2020) found that leadership style can influence employee performance through job motivation [100]. Kawiana et al. (2020) found that transformational leaders positively influence employee performance through satisfaction [101].

4.3. Transformational leadership influences factors related to employee performance other than task performance

Table 5. Influences factors related to employee performance other than task performance

Related variable	Representative	Time
Creativity	Shin & Zhou	2003
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	Piccolo & Colquitt	2006
	Liang & Chi	2013
Innovation Performance	Ke Jianglin, Sun Jianmin and Shi Jintao	2009
	Ding Lin, Xi Youmin, and Zhang Hua	2010

Shin and Zhou (2003) showed that transformational leadership is positively related to employee creativity [102]. Transformational leaders improve employee performance and encourage organizational citizenship behaviors. A meta-analytic study by Judge and Piccolo (2004) claimed that transformational leadership is positively related to team and organizational performance [84]. Similarly, Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) concluded that this leadership style increased both task performance and organizational citizenship behavior among employees [103]. Liang and Chi (2013) also showed that transformational leadership was positively related to task performance and organizational citizenship behavior [104]. Ke Jianglin, Sun Jianmin and Shi Jintao (2009) indicated that leaders' transformational leadership style positively influences and effectively improves team innovation performance in R&D teams [105]. Ding Lin, Xi Youmin, and Zhang Hua (2010) used a structural equation approach to analyze in detail the impact of transformational leadership on employee innovation from different dimensions and concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee innovation, with employee performance being a particularly important dimension of innovation performance [106].

4.4. Transformational leadership influences other factors related to employee performance

Table 6. Transformational leadership influences other factors related to employee performance

Other factors	Representative	Content
Employees' extra effort and satisfaction with leadership	Li Chaoping & Shi Kan (2003)	The dimensions of idealized influence and intellectual stimulation have a positive effect on both extra effort and employee satisfaction with leadership; the dimension of individualized consideration has a positive effect on extra effort; and the effect of inspirational motivation on extra effort and employee satisfaction with leadership is not significant.
The Chinese Context	Chen Chunhua, Su Tao and Wang Xingshan (2016)	Transformational leadership in the Chinese context has a significant contribution to individual employee performance (task, contextual, and innovation performance), team performance, and organizational performance, and the contribution is

The different dimensions of transformational leadership	Mangkunegara & miiftahuddin (2016)	greater than in the Western context. Transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on employee performance in part or in whole.
	Top, Abdullah, Faraj (2020)	Transformational leadership has a significant effect with employee performance. And inspiration motivation is the strongest factor influencing employee performance, followed by individualized consideration, with idealized influence and intellectual stimulation having a weaker effect on employee performance.
Five core mechanisms of the transformational leadership-performance relationship	Thomas et al. (2017)	Integrating the diverse literature related to the mechanisms that mediate the transformational leadership- performance relationship, the current study identified five core mechanisms— affective, motivational, identification, social exchange, and justice enhancement—that are consistent with established social and psychological theories.

Li Chaoping and Shi Kan (2003) found that among the four dimensions of transformational leadership, the dimensions of leadership charisma and intellectual stimulation had a positive effect on both extra effort and employee satisfaction with the leader; the dimension of personalized care had a positive effect on extra effort; and the effect of evocation on extra effort and employee satisfaction with the leader was not significant [107].

Chen Chunhua, Su Tao and Wang Xingshan(2016) conducted a Meta-analysis of 117 independent empirical papers and concluded that: transformational leadership leads to higher performance in the Chinese context relative to the Western context; transformational leadership in the Chinese context has a significant contribution to individual employee performance (task, contextual, and innovation performance), team performance, and organizational performance, and the contribution is greater in all cases than in the Western context, however, the ranking of the strength of the contribution to different types of individual performance is not consistent with the Western context [108]. Mangkunegara and Huddin (2016) showed that transformational leadership partially or overall had a positive and significant impact on performance [109].

In the study of Top, Abdullah, Faraj (2020) found that transformational leadership has a significant effect with employee performance. And among the four dimensions of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation is the strongest factor affecting employee performance, followed by individualized consideration, and idealized influence and intellectual stimulation have a weak effect on employee performance, although all four hypotheses hold [110].

Ng Thomas (2017) integrated the literature on the mediating mechanisms of the transformational leadership-performance relationship and found that the five core mechanisms of the transformational leadership-performance relationship—emotional, motivational, identity, social exchange, and equity-enhancing mechanisms—are consistent with established social psychological theories [111].

5. Discussion

The above paper provides a systematic review of the current state of research on transformational leadership, employee performance, and the relationships between the two. It also presents the types of research on the impact of transformational leadership on employee performance in four categories: transformational leadership directly influences employee performance, transformational leadership indirectly influences employee performance through mediating variables, transformational leadership influences factors related to performance other than performance, and transformational leadership

influences other factors of employee performance. From the existing studies, scholars have actively conducted fruitful research on transformational leadership and employee performance. Based on the literature review above, the following diagram was compiled to demonstrate the framework of research on the impact of transformational leadership on employee performance.

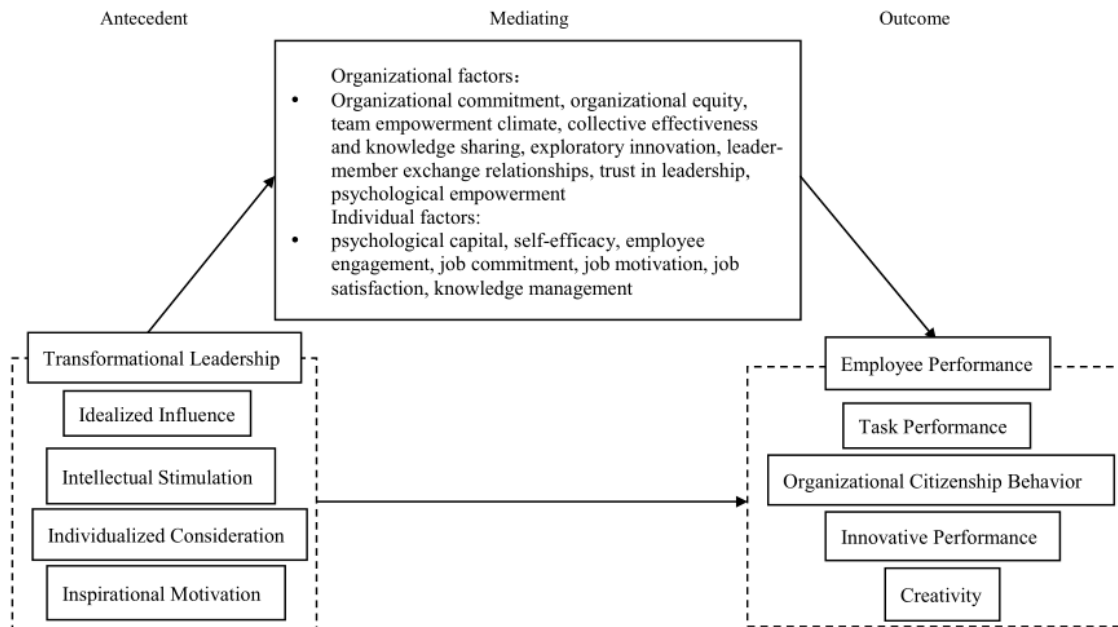


Figure 1. An integrated model of the relationships between transformational leadership and employee performance

6. Conclusion and Future Research

Based on a review of related studies at home and abroad, and from the perspectives of social exchange theory, upper echelons theory and leader-member exchange theory, we compiled the mechanisms and relationships between transformational leadership and employee performance based on a review of the conceptual structure, influencing factors and mechanisms of related concepts. At the same time, it also sorts out the more complex influence relationships between the two and reveals the paths of influence of transformational leadership on employee performance.

Although many scholars at home and abroad have achieved certain results, there are still some limitations. Therefore, here are six perspectives for future research in this area.

6.1. Refine the research questions and look for other variables

Studies have been conducted to explore the impact of transformational leadership style on employee performance from various aspects. In the future, we can adopt a refined research question to explore the impact of transformational leadership on employee contextual performance, employee in-role and out-of-role performance, and propose more targeted improvement countermeasures; or continue to search for other effective variables that affect the relationship between leadership style and employee performance; we can also include situational factors into the analysis to expand the analytical model and further improve the model's conformity to the real situation.

6.2. Carry out cross-level research

Reviewing the existing literature, we find that previous research on leadership-mediation-performance has basically been discussed from a single level, such as organizational level, team level, or individual employee level, and there is a lack of cross-level research.

Future research can adopt a multi-level empirical study of employee influencing factors, integrate multiple theories, integrate the influencing factors of employee performance across levels, establish

a theoretical model, and use a cross-level empirical approach for empirical testing, which can provide a new perspective on the study of employee performance.

6.3. Diversified research methods

Most existing studies use electronic questionnaires to conduct empirical research; however, due to electronic delivery, there is no way to monitor whether the respondents' questionnaire answers are careful enough. In addition, on-site interviews can learn more about the deeper reasons behind the problems, which is more helpful to understand the real thoughts of the respondents, so that the recommendations obtained may be more practical. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies use various ways and channels to distribute questionnaires, such as on-site distribution combined with online questionnaires, and try to give some guidance when the researched people fill out the questionnaires to improve the validity of the questionnaires.

In recent years, different research methods such as experimental research and simulation research have gradually emerged as a trend in the field of management to explore the intrinsic relationship between variables as a way to compensate for the shortcomings of a certain type of research method to a certain extent (Wei Xin, and Zhang Zhixue, 2018) [112]. Therefore, in future research, case studies, simulation studies, empirical studies, experimental studies, and other research methods can be used in combination to continuously expand and improve the research on the issue of the role of leadership style on employee performance.

6.4. Increase longitudinal studies and obtain data from a two-way perspective of manager-employee

Since the variables of transformational leadership perceptions and job performance are usually dynamic and complex phenomena that change over time, in addition to the fact that a leader's leadership style influences employee performance over a long period of time. Most of the existing studies are cross-sectional rather than longitudinal studies, and studying cross-sectional data alone cannot delve into the complex mechanisms at play. Moreover, in the few studies where data were collected multiple times, the length and number of time intervals were not sufficient, so there are limitations to the generalizability of the data obtained.

It is recommended that future research be conducted in a longitudinal manner, measuring employee performance at more time points, in order to provide a more realistic picture of the leadership role of transformational leaders and their impact on employee performance.

At the same time, most studies have focused only on the employee perspective and lack empirical research from the manager's perspective. Future studies that can be conducted from both manager and employee perspectives will be more comprehensive and objective. And it is suggested that future studies should expand the scope of the research population and expand the representative of the sample as much as possible when resources allow.

6.5. Further research in the context of China

Although there is a classification of transformational leadership in the Chinese context (Li Chaoping and Shi Kan, 2005) [25], there is little research on the mechanisms that influence transformational leadership on employee performance in the Chinese context.

In future studies, more cognitive variables can be embedded in the model, especially some variables specific to the Chinese context, such as "convincing people with virtue" and "the Pattern of Difference Sequence", which are useful for a comprehensive investigation of the mechanisms of transformational leaders' influence on employee performance in the Chinese context. This is very helpful to fully explore the mechanisms by which transformational leaders influence employee performance in the Chinese context.

In addition, based on the Chinese culture, employees perceive their leaders as being in a position of authority and therefore are afraid to speak out against certain behaviors. When answering questions about leadership behavior, some employees may find the questions relatively sensitive, thus making

the results of the questionnaire deviate from the real situation. In this regard, future research can use case study or interview analysis to make up for some of the shortcomings of the questionnaire survey, improve the research findings, and enhance the quality of the study.

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