

ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT IN PROMOTING INNOVATION AMONG MALAYSIAN ACADEMICS

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Abstract: *This research examines the impact of Transformational Leadership (TL) and Perceived Organisational Support (POS) on Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB) among academic staff in Malaysian universities. The research investigates the effects of leadership and organizational support on innovation in academic settings using data from 338 permanent academics employed in Malaysian HEIs listed in the QS World Rankings 2023. Academic staff members demonstrate significant levels of innovative behaviour, especially when it comes to creating and executing new ideas, according to the study's descriptive and reliability analyses, which are underpinned by Social Exchange Theory (SET). However, there are obstacles when it comes to promoting and campaigning for these innovations. POS is generally good, but there are some shortcomings when it comes to acknowledging additional work and resolving staff issues. Meanwhile, Transformational leadership is crucial in creating a constructive and cooperative atmosphere that stimulates innovation. The results indicate that enhancing leadership skills, ensuring regular acknowledgment, and cultivating a more robust culture of innovation can markedly enhance IWB among academic staff. The study provides actionable and managerial insights for university administrators to formulate policies that foster innovation, resulting in enhanced academic achievement and institutional advancement.*

Keywords: *Higher Education institutions, Innovative Work Behavior, Transformational Leadership and Perceived Organizational Support*

Introduction

Innovative work behaviour (IWB) has emerged as an important factor in maintaining organizational competitiveness, particularly in knowledge-intensive industries such as higher education. Thus effective human capital management is essential for universities to maintain a competitive edge and establish resilience in the market (Wahab et al., 2024). For academic staff, the capacity to develop, accept, and execute innovative ideas is crucial for enhancing knowledge and institutional efficacy. Thus, academic staff in Malaysian institutions play an important role in increasing performance through the use of creative and innovative capabilities (Rajandran & Subramaniam, 2023). To do this, educational institutions need to foster a culture that values creativity and critical thinking and promotes IWB (Carvalho et al., 2023). Hence, it is imperative that organizations identify and foster factors that enhance IWB throughout their workforce (Saif et al., 2024). In this context, leadership and organizational support are crucial elements that influence academics' involvement in innovative activities (Al-Taie & Khattak, 2024; Saif et al., 2024). Transformational leadership is defined by the ability to inspire and motivate subordinates toward elevated performance (Lin, 2023), and perceived organizational support (Kurtessis et al., 2017), which indicates the degree to which employees feel appreciated by their organization are significant factor in fostering IWB.

Leadership style has been identified as a key factor influencing IWB (Abdullatif & Jaleel, 2021; Saif et al., 2024). Past research has revealed that transformational leadership, which aims to improve followers' self-expectations, establish a sense of vision and mission, and aid followers in emphasizing rational solutions, is an important driver of employee creativity and IWB (Grošelj et al., 2021). However, empirical evidence about the role of TL in supporting IWB is still scarce (Suhana et al., 2019). Besides past research between TL and IWB also yielded mixed findings (Bin Saripin & Kassim, 2019; Contreras et al., 2020). Despite the increasing interest in this subject, research within the higher education sector has insufficiently addressed the impact of transformational leadership on workers' IWB.

On the other hand, an in-depth examination of the literature shows that perceived organizational support (POS) has a positive impact on IWB (Ekmekcioglu & Öner, 2023; Fan et al., 2022). Hence, there is limited research on POS in education settings, particularly among academics thus, providing an opportunity to further study in HEIs. This study examines the correlation between transformational leadership, perceived organizational support, and IWB among academic staff in Malaysian universities. This study employs the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which highlights reciprocal interactions among leaders, organizations, and employees, to elucidate the impact of leadership and support on innovation in academic environments.

Despite substantial studies on IWB, little emphasis has been paid to Malaysia's academic sector, specifically how leadership styles and organizational support influence academic staff's IWB. Based on the literature, there is a lack of local studies on IWB specifically within the academic setting (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Hashim et al., 2019; Ibus et al., 2020; Johari et al., 2021). This indicates that research on IWB in Malaysia's education context has not been fully explored (Mohammed Afandi & Mohd Effendi Ewan, 2020). There is still a lot of space and opportunity for research to understand academics' IWB better since it has not yet fully explored how innovative ways of academics can be improved (Mohammed Afandi & Mohd Effendi Ewan, 2020). Malaysian institutions, particularly those in the QS World Rankings, are expected to

maintain high levels of teaching and research (Rajandran & Subramaniam, 2023). However, creating a conducive climate for innovation remains a difficulty. There has been little empirical research into the combined impact of transformative leadership and perceived organizational support on IWB in this context (Bin Saeed et al., 2019; Suifan et al., 2018). Therefore, this study fills a vacuum by investigating the role of these factors in fostering creativity among Malaysian academic professionals.

This research provides three notable contributions to the area of academic innovation. Firstly, this study offers empirical data about the crucial influence of TL in cultivating IWB among staff, showing how leadership practices that encourage creativity and collaboration boost innovation. Second, the findings enhance the comprehension of how POS affects creativity, emphasizing the significance of recognition and support in motivating academic staff to participate in innovative activities. The paper provides pragmatic recommendations for university administration, advocating for leadership development, regular acknowledgment, and nurturing organizational culture to foster academic innovation, hence enhancing institutional performance and competitiveness.

Literature Review

Innovative work Behaviour

Innovative work behaviour (IWB) means exploring, coming up with, promoting, and putting new ideas into action on purpose within a work role, group, or organization (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). In academic environments, IWB is essential for advancing novel research, pedagogical approaches, and administrative practices that enhance institutional quality (Janib et al., 2021). Academic staff in higher education institutions must exhibit innovation and devise novel solutions for their academic responsibilities (Wahab et al., 2024). In Malaysia's academic setting, academic staff are required to be innovative because they are facing multifaced tasks such as being responsible for delivering lectures, conducting classes, preparing budgets, and preparing strategic plans. They also engage in research, publish scholarly work, provide academic consultation to struggling students and participate in extracurricular activities to contribute to the university community's development (Rajandran & Subramaniam, 2023). As a result, their innovative thinking is essential to bringing fresh and creative ideas, methods, equipment, supplies, and protocols into the classroom for the good of students, faculty, staff, and the larger community (Coman et al., 2020).

Perceived Organizational Support

The term POS was introduced in 1986 by Eisenberger et al. Eisenberger et al., (1986) characterize POS as the employees' opinion that the organization prioritizes their well-being and growth while valuing their efforts. Perceived organizational support has its roots in the norm of reciprocity which can be explained through Social Exchange Theory (SET) implies that individuals who receive greater support from their organizations will be more inclined to return the act of goodwill (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Similarly to Al-taie, (2024), employees who believe they receive greater support and respect from their organizations are more inclined to perform effectively and exert additional effort for their organizations. Research has indicated that greater levels of perceived organizational support compel employees to reciprocate by exerting extra effort for their organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Fan et al., (2022) found that supplying staff with necessary innovation resources and creating a comfortable and

equitable working environment is crucial for organizations aiming to foster innovation. In addition Ranihusna et al., (2021) noted that as a result of the company's concern, workers will have greater faith in their abilities to succeed and will be more inclined to provide ideas or initiatives that are intended to improve business performance. According to Masyhuri et al., (2021), workers who perceive that their company is supporting them feel significantly more motivated to come up with creative solutions when faced with organizational challenges. Similarly, Mohd Beta & Ali, (2017) found when academics see the support that they receive as fair and sufficient, it develops a sense of equity in their exchange relationship with their respective universities, which in turn boosts their IWB

Transformational Leadership

The idea of "transformation leadership," initially proposed by Burns, (1978), pertains to leaders who possess the ability to boost the morale and motivation of their followers. While according to Northouse, (2018), transformational leadership is defined by leaders who have extensive knowledge and are skilled at guiding themselves and their followers in implementing organizational changes. According to Ebrahim et al., (2023), transformational leadership plays a key role in nurturing IWB. This leadership approach is preferred for its capacity to inspire and empower employees, motivating them to exceed expectations. It cultivates a shared vision among team members, promotes a culture of creativity, and encourages a willingness to take risks (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Helmy et al., 2023). According to SET, when workers believe that their leader values and acknowledges their achievements, they are more likely to exhibit IWB and respond positively to TFL at work (Saif et al., 2024). Several authors have offered various reasons that establish a connection between TFL and the IWB of employees. Here are a few arguments, the leaders of an organization greatly influence the creation of a favorable environment for IWB through their inspiring, motivating, and visionary actions (Gashema, 2021; Saif et al., 2024), Blau (1964, p.566), when a leader shows personalized care for their staff, it inspires them to be more imaginative and innovative, TFL offer consideration and assistance to individuals within the organization which in turn foster employee IWB (Alnajjar & Hashim, 2020). However, the relationship between transformational leadership and IWB has yielded mixed results in past research, with meta-analytic analyses revealing a wide range of results (Contreras et al., 2020; Sudibjo & Prameswari, 2021). Thus, more research is needed to investigate the underlying mechanisms linking transformational leadership with IWB (Afsar & Umrani, 2020). Hence, this study aims to explore the influence of transformational leaders on employees' IWB.

Methodologies

This research utilizes a quantitative design, implementing a cross-sectional survey method to investigate the interplay between transformational leadership, perceived organizational support, and IWB. The sample consisted of 338 permanent academic staff holding Malaysian citizenship employed at Malaysian universities listed in the QS World Rankings 2023. A purposive sample strategy was employed to guarantee that respondents fulfilled the qualifying criteria. Data were gathered using a standardized questionnaire sent through Google Forms. Data were analyzed utilizing SPSS version 29. Descriptive statistics were utilized to encapsulate the respondents' demographic attributes and present an overview of the key variables.

Measurements

Innovative Work Behavior

The 10-item scale from De Jong and Den Hartog (2010) was used to evaluate the employees' IWB. Participants were required to indicate how frequently, using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always), they manifest the behaviors mentioned in the survey. A sample item is "I generate original solutions for problems".

Transformational Leadership

A 7-item unidimensional scale namely the Global Transformational Leadership (GTL) scale adopted from Carless et al., (2000) were used to measure transformational leadership. Respondents need to assess the frequency at which transformational leadership behaviours are displayed by the leader based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = rarely or never to 5 = very frequently or always). A sample question is "My supervisor Communicates a clear and positive vision of the future".

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organisational Support was measured based on a short version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). The survey consists of 8 items. Participants were required to indicate their agreement, using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample question is "My organization cares about my well-being".

Findings and Discussions

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 1. A total of 382 permanent academic staff members participated in this survey, with the majority being female, constituting 67.8% (n=259) of the sample. This aligns with the overarching trend of rising female involvement in academics, especially within higher education institutions. The majority of respondents (44.2%) are between the ages of 40 and 49, which suggests that most participants are in the middle of their careers. This age group is frequently linked with a high level of professional experience and expertise, which is consistent with the job experience statistics.

Over 20 years of professional experience in the academic field is a major fraction of the responders (24.3%). This demonstrates the sample's experience, which may have an impact on their willingness to engage in innovative work practices because experienced academics are frequently more aware of the procedures and institutional norms that support creativity. The respondents' educational qualifications indicate that the majority possess a PhD, accounting for 77.5% of the sample. This reflects the rigorous academic qualification requirements for permanent lecturer positions at Malaysian universities, notably those ranked in the QS World Ranking 2023.

The majority of respondents (47.4%) occupy the role of Senior Lecturer, signifying a substantial representation of mid-level academic personnel in this study. Simultaneously, Professors form the least numerous groups, accounting for merely 3.9% of the sample. This distribution is to be expected, given that the post of Professor is normally held by a smaller number of academic personnel with the highest level of academic achievement and recognition.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

Item		Frequencies (n)	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	123	32.2
	Female	259	67.8
Age	20-29 years	4	1.0
	30-39 years	117	30.6
	40-49 years	169	44.2
	50-59 years	48	23.3
	More than 60 years	3	0.8
Service Duration	1-5 years	73	19.1
	6-10 years	63	16.5
	11-15 years	76	19.9
	16-20 years	77	20.2
	More than 20 years	93	24.3
Academic Qualification	Master	86	22.5
	PhD	296	77.5
Position	Lecturer	68	17.8
	Senior Lecturer	181	47.4
	PhD Dr.	38	9.9
	Associate Professor Dr.	80	20.9
	Professor	15	3.9

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was performed to evaluate the internal consistency of the scales utilized in this study, consisting of Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB), Perceived Organisational Support (POS), and Transformational Leadership (TL). Cronbach's alpha (α) was utilized to assess the reliability of each construct. Nunnally (1978) proposes that a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.70 or greater is deemed appropriate for indicating internal consistency. The reliability analysis of the IWB scale showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.904, the POS scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.741, above the minimum requirement of 0.70 and the TL scale yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.968, indicating excellent internal consistency. The reliability of the data gathered for analysing the correlations between the constructs is ensured by the reliability analysis, which overall shows that the scales employed in this study have good internal consistency.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Innovative Work Behavior	10	.904
Perceived Organizational Support	8	.741
Transformational Leadership	6	.968

Total Mean Analysis

The mean scores for the primary constructs in the study, namely Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB), Perceived Organisational Support (POS), and Transformational Leadership (TL), were calculated to summarise the respondents' perceptions of these variables. The average ratings provide insight into the perceptions of the academic staff from Malaysian universities regarding their work environment and leadership. The data were analyzed descriptively using mean through SPSS version 29.0. The Mean Score Interpretation Table constructed by Moidunny

(2009) was used in this study to measure the mean score. The Mean Score Interpretation Table is shown in Table 3 while Table 4 shows the descriptive analysis.

The mean score for IWB was ($M=3.829$), classifying it inside the "High" range. This indicates that the respondents typically view themselves as regularly participating in IWB. The high mean score reflects a strong tendency among academic staff to generate, promote, and implement new ideas within their roles. Next the mean score for POS was ($M=3.394$), placing it inside the "High" range. This suggests that the respondents perceive a considerable level of support from their institutions, believing that their universities appreciate their contributions and prioritize their well-being. The mean score for TL was ($M=3.786$), putting it in the "High" category. This shows that respondents believe their leaders engage in transformational behaviours such as motivating, inspiring, and intellectually stimulating their workforce. The high TL score suggests that leadership promotes creativity among academic professionals. In summary, the mean scores suggest that academic staff consider themselves as participating in new practices, receiving significant organizational support, and operating under transformative leadership.

Table 3. Mean Score Interpretation Table

Mean Scale	Level
1.00 – 1.80	Very Low
1.81 – 2.60	Low
2.61 – 3.20	Medium
3.21 – 4.20	High
4.21 – 5.00	Very High

Source: Moidunny, K. (2009). The Effectiveness of the National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders (NPQEL).

Table 4: Mean Score Interpretation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation Level
Mean IWB	382	3.8296	.61122	High
Mean POS	382	3.3943	.63447	High
Mean TL	382	3.7861	.92314	High
Valid N (listwise)	382			

Descriptive analysis of innovative work behaviour

This section offers a comprehensive descriptive analysis of innovative work behaviour (IWB) responses. The study encompasses mean scores, standard deviations, and the proportion of respondents who agreed with each statement. The responses were evaluated using a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The statement Q1: "I pay attention to issues that are not part of my daily work" had a mean score of ($M=3.17$, $SD = 0.996$), indicating a moderate level of participation, with 29.6% agreeing. This shows that, while some academics are attuned to non-routine work, it is not the norm across the group. In contrast, statement Q2: "I wonder how things can be improved" received the highest mean score ($M= 4.24$, $SD = 0.672$), with 54.7% of respondents agreeing, indicating a very high sense of interest. This suggests that

a significant percentage of academic staff are actively introspective and always seeking methods to improve their work processes.

In a similar vein, the statement Q3: "I search for new working methods, techniques, or instruments" received a high mean score of ($M=4.14$, $SD = 0.725$) from 52.4% of respondents, indicating a proactive approach to discovering novel and creative approaches in their job. Additionally, 50.5% of respondents agreed with the statement, Q4: "I generate original solutions for problems," producing a mean score of ($M=3.88$, $SD = 0.748$), suggesting that academic staff members frequently come up with innovative solutions to problems. With a mean score of ($M=4.04$, $SD = 0.720$) and 55% of respondents agreeing, there was a similar pattern shown in Q5: "I find new approaches to executing tasks," suggesting a high degree of participation in looking for novel ways to complete activities.

A lower mean score of ($M=3.67$, $SD = 0.906$) was obtained for the statement Q6: "I make important organizational members enthusiastic about innovative ideas" when it came to influencing others; 39% of respondents agreed with this statement, indicating that while some respondents show enthusiasm for innovation, fewer actively promote innovative ideas to organizational members. Comparably, 42.4% of respondents agreed with the statement, Q7: "I try to convince people to support an innovative idea," which had a mean score of ($M=3.74$, $SD = 0.946$), indicating that there is some, but not much, support for innovation.

Regarding innovation implementation, 43.7% of respondents agreed with the statement Q8: "I systematically introduce innovative ideas into work practices," which had a mean score of ($M=3.68$, $SD = 0.915$) indicating a moderate level of engagement with applying innovations systematically. Furthermore, 47.6% of respondents agreed with the statement, Q9: "I contribute to the implementation of new ideas," which generated a mean score of ($M=3.80$, $SD = 0.873$), suggesting that a large number of respondents are involved in the implementation of new ideas. Finally, 50.8% of respondents agreed with the statement, Q10: "I put effort into the development of new things," which had a mean score of ($M=3.93$, $SD = 0.850$). This indicates that academic staff consistently work to contribute to the creation of novel ideas and innovations.

Table 6: Descriptive Analysis of IWB

Statement	Std. Deviation	Mean	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I pay attention to issues that are not part of my daily work.	.996	3.17	18 (4.7%)	76 (19.9%)	143 (37.4%)	113 (29.6%)	32 (8.4%)
I wonder how things can be improved	.672	4.24		7 (1.8%)	30 (7.9%)	209 (54.7%)	136 (35.6%)
I search for new working methods, techniques, or instruments.	.725	4.14	1 (0.3%)	6 (1.6%)	53 (13.9%)	200 (52.4%)	122 (31.9%)
I generate original solutions for problems.	.748	3.88		10 (2.6%)	103 (27.0%)	193 (50.5%)	76 (19.9%)

I find new approaches to executing tasks.	.720	4.04	1 (0.3%)	6 (1.6%)	68 (17.8%)	210 (55.0%)	97 (25.4%)
I make important organizational members enthusiastic about innovative ideas.	.906	3.67	5 (1.3%)	27 (7.1%)	129 (33.8%)	149 (39.0%)	72 (18.8%)
I attempt to convince people to support an innovative idea	.946	3.74	7 (1.8%)	30 (7.9%)	100 (26.2%)	162 (42.4%)	83 (21.7%)
I systematically introduce innovative ideas into work practices.	.915	3.68	5 (1.3%)	34 (8.9%)	107 (28.0%)	167 (43.7%)	69 (18.1%)
I contribute to the implementation of new ideas.	.873	3.80	6 (1.6%)	19 (5.0%)	97 (25.4%)	182 (47.6%)	78 (20.4%)
I put effort into the development of new things.	.850	3.93	4 (1.0%)	19 (5.0%)	71 (18.6%)	194 (50.8%)	94 (24.6%)
Total Mean IWB	.61122	3.8296					

Descriptive Analysis of Transformational Leadership

The descriptive analysis of transformative leadership yields some important insights regarding how academic staff views their leaders' behaviours. The statement Q1: "My leader communicates a clear and positive vision of the future" had a mean score of ($M=3.80$, $SD = 1.004$), and 40.3% of respondents agreed. This high-scoring result shows that many leaders are effective at presenting a vision that resonates with their employees, providing a sense of direction and purpose inside the team.

The statement, Q2: "My leader treats staff as individuals, supports, and encourages their development" had a slightly higher mean score of ($M=3.85$, $SD = 0.975$), with 43.2% of participants in agreement. The higher mean score indicates that academic staff mainly view their leaders as compassionate and helpful, which is essential for promoting personal growth and development among employees. The encouragement and recognition provided by leaders to staff received a favorable rating, with the statement Q3: "My leader gives encouragement and recognition to the staff" attaining a mean score of ($M=3.82$, $SD = 1.00$), with 39.5% of respondents agreeing. This demonstrates that providing recognition and motivational support is an important aspect of leadership that employees value.

In addition, 41.9% of respondents agreed with the statement, Q4: "My leader fosters trust, involvement, and cooperation among team members," which had a mean score of ($M=3.81$, $SD = 1.011$), indicating a high degree of trust and collaboration encouraged by leaders. Given that academic staff members understand the value of cooperation in accomplishing institutional objectives, fostering cooperative teaming seems to be a core component of transformational leadership in this setting. The statement Q5: "My leader encourages thinking about problems in new ways and questions assumptions" had a mean score of ($M=3.68$, $SD = 1.033$), with

40.6% of respondents in agreement, indicating a modest level of innovation support. Despite this score being classified as high, it indicates that while leaders promote creative problem-solving and questioning conventional thinking, there remains potential for improvement in cultivating new thought processes among academic personnel.

As seen by the statement Q6: "My leader is clear about his/her values and practices what he/she preaches," which received a mean score of ($M=3.77$, $SD = 1.009$) with 43.7% of respondents agreeing, leadership integrity is another essential element of transformational leadership. This finding suggests that university administrators in Malaysia are typically seen as dependable and morally sound, encouraging deference and harmony between their words and deeds. Comparably, 41.4% of respondents agreed with the statement, Q7: "My leader inspires me by being highly competent and instills pride and respect in others," which had a mean score of ($M=3.77$, $SD = 1.014$). This indicates that a leader's competency and capacity to instill pride and respect in others are essential components of their leadership style.

Table 7: Descriptive Analysis of Transformational Leadership

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My leader communicates a clear and positive vision of the future.	3.80	1.004	9 (2.4%)	33 (8.6%)	84 (22.0%)	154 (40.3)	102 (26.7%)
My leader treats staff as individuals, supports and encourages their development.	3.85	.975	8 (2.1)	30 (7.9%)	77 (20.2%)	165 (43.2%)	102 (26.7%)
My leader gives encouragement and recognition to the staff.	3.82	1.000	8 (2.1%)	33 (8.6%)	85 (22.3%)	151 (39.5%)	105 (27.5%)
My leader fosters trust, involvement and cooperation among team members.	3.81	1.011	8 (2.1%)	39 (10.2%)	72 (18.8%)	160 (41.9%)	103 (27.0%)
My leader encourages thinking about problems in new ways and questions assumptions.	3.68	1.033	10 (2.6%)	46 (12.0%)	85 (22.3%)	155 (40.6%)	86 (22.5%)
My leader is clear about his/her values and practices what he/she preaches.	3.77	1.009	11 (2.9%)	35 (9.2%)	77 (20.2%)	167 (43.7%)	92 (24.1%)
My leader instills pride and respect in others and inspires me by being highly competent.	3.77	1.014	7 (1.8%)	44 (11.5%)	76 (19.9%)	158 (41.4%)	97 (25.4%)
Valid N (listwise)	382						

Descriptive Analysis of Perceived Organizational Support

The descriptive study of perceived organizational support (POS) provides valuable insights into how academic staff view the support offered by their organizations. The statement Q1: "My institution values my contribution to its well-being" had an average score of ($M=3.67$, $SD = 0.957$), with 41.45% of respondents agreeing, indicating a high level of perceived worth and recognition from the institution. This indicates that many academic staff members believe their efforts are recognized and appreciated by their organizations. However, there are instances where employees feel underappreciated, as evidenced by the survey question Q2: "My institution fails to appreciate any extra effort from me," which got a mean score of ($M=3.44$, $SD = 1.171$) and only 28.8% agreed. This reasonably high score shows that while some staff members believe their extra efforts go unnoticed, this is not the predominant perspective.

In a further indication of dissatisfaction, the statement Q3: "My institution would ignore any complaint from me" garnered a low mean score of ($M=2.42$, $SD = 1.103$), with 31.4% of respondents expressing disagreement with it. This low score indicates that a considerable percentage of the academic staff perceives their concerns as recognized and that the institution is moderately receptive to grievances. The statement Q4: "My institution cares about my well-being" got a high mean score of ($M=3.58$, $SD = 1.044$), with 36.9% of respondents in agreement, indicating that a significant portion of academic staff perceives their institutions as adequately supportive of their overall welfare.

In a similar vein, 31.7% of respondents agreed with the statement, Q5: "Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice," which received a moderate mean score of ($M=3.51$, $SD = 1.154$). This illustrates a conflicting view among the workers, as some feel their efforts go unappreciated while others think their work is acknowledged. A mean score of ($M=3.47$, $SD = 1.051$) for the statement Q6: "My institution cares about my general satisfaction at work" indicated a reasonably good perceived support for job satisfaction, however, there is still space for improvement, with 34.8% of respondents agreeing.

The majority of respondents (31.2%) agreed with the statement, Q7: "My institution shows very little concern for me," which received a mean score of ($M=3.47$, $SD = 1.124$). Although this opinion is not commonly shared, the moderate score indicates that some academic staff members believe their institutions don't care about them. Lastly, with 41.6% of respondents agreeing, Q8: "My institution takes pride in my accomplishments at work" received a high mean score of ($M=3.59$, $SD = 0.991$). This suggests that a large number of academic staff members take pride in their institutions' acknowledgment of their accomplishments, which is a favorable indicator of organizational support.

Table 8: Descriptive Analysis of Perceived Organizational Support

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My institution values my contribution to its well-being.	3.67	.957	10 (2.6%)	29 (7.6%)	112 (29.3%)	158 (41.45)	73 (19.1%)
My institution fails to appreciate any extra effort from me.	3.44	1.171	24 (6.3%)	59 (15.4%)	106 (27.7%)	110 (28.8%)	83 (21.7%)
My institution would ignore any complaint from me.	2.42	1.103	89 (23.3%)	120 (31.4%)	113 (29.6%)	42 (11.0%)	18 (4.7%)
My institution cares about my well-being.	3.58	1.044	16 (4.2%)	38 (9.9%)	112 (29.3%)	141 (36.9%)	75 (19.6%)
Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice.	3.51	1.154	28 (7.3%)	38 (9.9%)	111 (29.1%)	121 (31.7%)	84 (22%)
My institution cares about my general satisfaction at work.	3.47	1.051	19 (5.0%)	42 (11.0%)	124 (32.5%)	133 (34.8%)	64 (16.8%)
My institution shows very little concern for me.	3.47	1.124	19 (5.0%)	58 (15.2%)	108 (23.0%)	119 (31.2%)	78 (20.4%)
My institution takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	3.59	.991	15 (3.9%)	32 (8.4%)	112 (29.3%)	159 (41.6%)	64 (16.8%)
Valid N (listwise)	382						

Discussion

The findings indicate that academic staff demonstrate a significant degree of Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB), particularly in seeking new methodologies ($M = 4.14$), discovering novel approaches to tasks ($M = 4.04$), and facilitating the execution of innovative ideas ($M = 3.80$). These behaviours are essential in academia, where creativity is frequently associated with progress in teaching, research, and administrative operations. With education changing constantly, sticking to one method is not feasible (Mohammed Afandi & Mohd Effendi Ewan, 2020). Scholars who proactively seek innovative methods or original solutions (e.g., developing original ideas, $M = 3.88$) are likely to enhance both individual and institutional performance. The advancement of education technology, expanding branches of knowledge, and increasing challenges in education require our education system to be innovative to remain competitive (Mohammed Afandi & Mohd Effendi Ewan, 2020). Nonetheless, lower mean scores in activities associated with fostering new concepts ($M = 3.68$ – 3.74) suggest that although academics are conceiving ideas, they may have difficulties in championing or executing these ideas inside their organizations.

One frequently cited cause for the lack of long-term success of educational innovations is the minimal attention given to the continuation and refinement of a new idea once it has been introduced (Lambriex-Schmitz et al., 2020). This indicates that a conducive environment is essential for both the generation and actualization of innovative endeavors. Thus, educational institutions can facilitate and encourage innovation by providing academics with the necessary resources and equipment to experiment with new teaching methodologies (Carvalho et al.,

2023). If the organization fails to provide a conducive and supportive environment for innovation later or sooner the academics will return to their comfortable old routines (Lambriex-Schmitz et al., 2020).

The descriptive statistics indicate that Perceived Organisational Support (POS) is moderately high (total $M = 3.39$). Statements like "My institution values my contribution" ($M = 3.67$) and "My institution cares about my well-being" ($M = 3.58$) indicate that many academic staff believe their institutions offer some level of recognition and support. This sense of appreciation is critical because academics are more engaged and motivated when they feel valued. Employees who receive significant support from their organizations are prepared to present new ideas that could significantly contribute to achieving a competitive advantage for their organizations (Al-Taie & Khattak, 2024). However, lower scores in areas such as "My institution would ignore any complaint from me" ($M = 2.42$) and "My institution fails to appreciate any extra effort from me" ($M = 3.44$) indicate that not all academics feel consistently supported, especially when their efforts exceed standard expectations. Inconsistencies in support can lead to decreased enthusiasm and engagement with innovation, as academics may believe that their extra efforts are going unappreciated. Thus (Ranihusna et al., 2021) suggest organizations should prioritize employee welfare by upholding their rights and assigning tasks according to their work performance.

The influence of Transformational Leadership (TL) on academic performance is demonstrated by the higher mean scores in the majority of leadership behaviours (overall $M = 3.79$). Academic personnel typically regard their leaders as proficient in advocating a constructive vision ($M = 3.80$), facilitating individual growth ($M = 3.85$), and cultivating trust and collaboration ($M = 3.81$). These leadership behaviours are crucial for fostering a work atmosphere conducive to innovation. According to Saif et al., (2024) employees are more likely to be inspired and encouraged to participate in IWB by transformational leaders who foster a positive work atmosphere, recognize and appreciate employee contributions, and recognize and reward creativity. Leaders who articulate a distinct vision and cultivate trust are inclined to motivate academics to engage in new endeavors and interact with peers. The marginally lower mean score for "Encourages thinking about problems in new ways" ($M = 3.68$) indicates that although transformational leadership is predominantly effective, there exists potential for enhancement in fostering creativity and questioning conventional methods. Promoting unconventional thinking and innovation may result in significant academic breakthroughs and institutional progress. Thus Lin, (2023) suggest in the modern workplace, leaders are anticipated to guide team members while attaining organizational objectives.

Implications

This study adds to the literature on IWB by highlighting the significance of transformational leadership and perceived organizational support in academic contexts. It broadens the application of Social Exchange Theory to understanding the dynamics of innovation in higher education. The findings also emphasize the necessity for university administrators and policymakers to cultivate transformational leadership styles and offer sufficient support to academic staff. By implementing this approach, educational institutions may foster an environment that promotes innovation, essential for sustaining a competitive advantage in global university rankings.

Recommendation

Malaysian universities should place a high priority on bolstering leadership development programs that emphasize transformational leadership abilities to improve Innovative Work Behaviour (IWB) among academic personnel. The findings imply that transformational leadership has a beneficial impact on innovative work behaviour, especially when it comes to creating a shared vision, encouraging teamwork, and supporting staff growth. On the other hand, the mean scores for things like questioning assumptions and promoting innovative problem-solving were marginally lower. It is suggested that HEIs make investments in leadership development initiatives that strengthen transformational leadership competencies. It is imperative that leaders receive training on how to effectively foster creative thinking, question established practices, and consistently support innovation. Enhancing these aspects of leadership will provide academic staff members with greater motivation and authority to investigate novel strategies and pursue ground-breaking concepts. The results on Perceived Organisational Support (POS) show that, while academic staff believes their contributions are typically acknowledged, there is a gap in recognizing extra efforts and responding to concerns. To overcome this, universities should set up more extensive assistance and recognition mechanisms. This could involve providing frequent performance evaluations, publicly recognizing excellent achievements, and establishing a clear process for dealing with complaints and issues. Furthermore, universities should ensure that all levels of contribution, particularly those that exceed the typical job scope, are recognized and rewarded. Such initiatives would assist in enhancing morale and motivation, creating a work atmosphere in which academics believe their efforts are completely supported. Lastly, fostering a culture of innovation which is strong is crucial to motivating academic personnel to work together. Institutions might set up official spaces for interdisciplinary cooperation, like brainstorming sessions and innovation laboratories, which encourage the sharing of concepts and original solutions. Additionally, providing academics with up-to-date knowledge of industry trends and best practices through focused professional development opportunities would boost their capacity for innovation and keep them inspired to support the expansion of their institutions.

Conclusion

The current study highlights the significance of transformational leadership and perceived organizational support in promoting innovative work behaviour among academic staff. Utilizing Social Exchange Theory, it underscores the reciprocal relationship of leadership, organizational support, and employee innovation. As Malaysian universities seek to improve their international reputation, the findings offer significant insights into how leadership and support can foster innovation inside academic institutions. In conclusion, the staff exhibits high IWB in several domains, most notably when considering potential areas for improvement and actively seeking out novel approaches. A little less effort is put into persuading people to embrace new ideas or methodically promoting them within the organization, even though coming up with solutions and incorporating ideas into work procedures is frequent. The examination of transformational leadership indicates that academic staff regards their leaders as exceptionally effective in critical domains such as vision articulation, personalized support, and trust cultivation. Although there is substantial consensus regarding leadership behaviours, especially in fostering personal development and team collaboration, there remains potential for enhancement in advocating innovative thinking and problem-solving. The findings indicate that transformational leadership significantly enhances the work environment, motivates personnel, and fosters a culture of collaboration and continuous development. The analysis

indicates that, although there is substantial perceived support regarding acknowledging contributions and achievements, there are also notable areas of concern. Certain staff members perceive that their additional efforts and job happiness are overlooked, or that their institutions exhibit minimal personal concern. The findings indicate that although institutions often offer adequate support, there is potential to improve appreciation, recognition, and individualized attention to cultivate a greater sense of organizational support among academic personnel.

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