

Factors Influencing Teaching Performance Among University Teachers in Shanghai City, China

Pan, Lili^{1*}

¹University of Melaka, Melaka, 78200, Malaysia

Email Address:

694084436@qq.com (Pan, Lili)

*Corresponding author: 694084436@qq.com

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Abstract: This study investigates the multifaceted factors influencing teaching performance among university teachers in Shanghai City, China, against a backdrop of global educational transformation and increasing demands for innovative teaching practices. It focuses on the roles of transformational leadership, organizational climate, and professional development, and their interrelation with employee engagement. Employing a quantitative research design, the study analyzes data from 550 faculty members across 23 higher education institutions in Shanghai using structured questionnaires and advanced statistical techniques. The findings reveal that transformational leadership significantly enhances teaching performance by motivating and inspiring educators, while organizational climate and professional development also contribute positively. Employee engagement emerges as a critical mediator, amplifying the positive effect of the examined factors on teaching performance. This research contributes to the understanding of how educational leadership and institutional climate can be leveraged to improve teaching quality, providing actionable insights for policymakers and educational leaders aiming to enhance academic standards and teacher effectiveness in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Organizational Climate, Professional Development, Employee Engagement, Teaching Performance

1. Introduction

The landscape of higher education is experiencing a profound transformation on a global scale, driven by rapid technological advances, evolving societal needs, and increasing global interconnectedness (Guàrdia et al., 2021). In this dynamic environment, the performance of university teachers in China has become a critical factor influencing the quality and effectiveness of higher education (Guo et al., 2023). As China continues its rapid expansion and internationalization of higher education, the demand for innovative and responsive teaching practices has grown, necessitating a deeper examination of the factors that enhance or hinder superior teaching performance in this context.

Transformational leadership within educational institutions has garnered significant attention as a catalyst for positive change and innovation (Owusu-Agyeman, 2021). Characterized by leaders who inspire, intellectually stimulate,

and personally care for their followers, transformational leadership has been associated with numerous positive outcomes, including enhanced teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Alongside leadership, the organizational climate within universities, encompassing elements such as trust, open communication, and a supportive work environment, plays a pivotal role in shaping teacher attitudes and behaviors (Sanchez, 2022). A positive organizational climate is often linked to greater job satisfaction and commitment, which are essential for high-quality teaching.

Professional development is another crucial element for university teachers, particularly in an era where knowledge and educational methodologies are continually evolving. Continuous professional development ensures that teachers are equipped with the necessary pedagogic skills and social competencies to meet the diverse and complex needs of their students (Vadivel et al., 2021). This is especially pertinent in the Chinese context, where universities are striving to enhance their global standing and adapt to international educational standards.

Employee engagement, characterized by physical, cognitive, and emotional investment in one's work, is a vital link that potentially connects transformational leadership, a positive organizational climate, and robust professional development efforts with enhanced teaching performance. Understanding the nuances of how employee engagement operates in the context of Chinese higher education is essential for developing strategies to enhance teacher performance.

This research aims to explore the intricate relationships between transformational leadership, organizational climate, professional development, and teaching performance, with a particular focus on the mediating role of employee engagement. This investigation is both timely and relevant, given the rapid changes occurring in the Chinese higher education landscape. By examining how these factors interplay within the unique cultural and operational context of Chinese universities, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into improving teaching performance and overall educational quality.

Transformational leadership, though recognized for its potential to inspire and drive significant change, faces unique challenges within the context of Chinese universities (Meng, 2022). One fundamental issue is the clash between the hierarchical and Confucian culture that permeates Chinese society and the principles of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership promotes empowerment, innovation, and challenging the status quo, which can conflict with the traditional respect for authority and conformity prevalent in Chinese universities (Zheng & Hahm, 2019). This cultural dissonance can hinder the effectiveness of transformational leaders, as their efforts to inspire change and foster innovation may be met with resistance or skepticism from faculty and staff accustomed to more authoritative management styles (Huang et al., 2019).

The bureaucratic nature of many Chinese universities further complicates the implementation of transformational leadership (Zhu & Zayim-Kurtay, 2019). Rigid structures and processes can stifle creativity and impede the introduction of innovative teaching practices or organizational changes. Transformational leaders may find it challenging to navigate these bureaucratic hurdles and actualize their vision for a more engaged and adaptable educational environment (Wadei et al., 2021). Additionally, there is a lack of training and development opportunities for leaders in Chinese universities to adopt and effectively apply transformational leadership techniques (Huang et al., 2021). The shift from traditional to transformational leadership models requires a significant change in mindset, skills, and behaviors, which may be difficult to achieve without adequate support and development programs (Zhang, 2021).

Performance evaluation systems in Chinese universities often emphasize research output and short-term achievements over teaching excellence or long-term developmental goals (Zhu & Guo, 2021). This focus can discourage leaders from investing in transformational activities such as mentoring and developing faculty, fostering a supportive organizational climate, or implementing innovative teaching methods. The rapid expansion and internationalization of higher education in China add to these pressures, as university leaders are often driven to achieve immediate and visible results, potentially at the expense of long-term, transformative changes (Dai et al., 2022).

Organizational climate within Chinese universities also presents significant challenges. Traditional hierarchical

structures and a focus on conformity can stifle open communication and collaboration, essential components of a supportive organizational climate (Dee et al., 2023). The pressures for research output and academic achievement often overshadow efforts to create a nurturing environment, leading to diminished job satisfaction and negatively affecting teaching performance (Wu & Xu, 2022). Resource allocation issues and cultural factors further complicate the development of a positive organizational climate. Limited resources can foster competition rather than cooperation, and cultural norms emphasizing harmony can suppress open dialogue and innovative ideas (Shafait et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020).

Professional development for teachers in Chinese universities is critical yet fraught with challenges. Programs often fail to address the specific needs of educators, focusing instead on a one-size-fits-all approach (Lin et al., 2023). The emphasis on research over teaching excellence further undermines professional development efforts, as faculty are pressured to prioritize research outputs (Scott et al., 2023). Bureaucratic barriers, insufficient collaborative opportunities, and a lack of training in integrating technology into teaching practices also hinder effective professional development (Qi, 2022; Xu & Wang, 2024).

Teaching performance in Chinese universities is influenced by these interconnected factors. The heavy focus on research output over teaching quality, large class sizes, and inadequate professional development support impact the effectiveness of educators (Du & Liang, 2023; Shi et al., 2022). Additionally, cultural norms and traditional evaluation systems that rely heavily on student feedback complicate efforts to improve teaching performance (Weng et al., 2019; Tao et al., 2019). The push for internationalization and the adoption of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) without adequate support further strains teachers (Ren, 2022).

These multifaceted challenges underscore the need for a nuanced exploration of how transformational leadership, organizational climate, and professional development interact to influence teaching performance in Chinese universities. By understanding these dynamics and the mediating role of employee engagement, this research aims to identify barriers and propose strategies to enhance teacher performance and educational quality in the rapidly evolving landscape of Chinese higher education.

Based on research background and problems outlined above, the study proposes the following objectives:

(1) To investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and teaching performance among university teachers in Shanghai city, China.

(2) To analyze the relationship between organizational climate and teaching performance among university teachers in Shanghai city, China.

(3) To examine the relationship between professional development and teaching performance among university teachers in Shanghai city, China.

(4) To explore the mediating effect of employee engagement in the relationship between transformational leadership, organizational climate, professional development (three independent variables) and teaching performance (one dependent variable) among university teachers in Shanghai city, China.

2. Literature review

2.1 Transformational Leadership and Teaching Performance

This section aims to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and teaching performance across various educational contexts.

The research conducted by Purwanto (2022), Sirait (2021), and Susilawati et al. (2021) collectively underscores the profound impact of transformational leadership on teaching performance across various educational levels, from primary and secondary institutions to higher education settings. Purwanto (2022) highlighted how transformational leaders, through their inspiring vision, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, significantly enhance teaching effectiveness, encouraging teachers to adopt innovative teaching methods and increase their job satisfaction.

This was echoed in Sirait's (2021) findings, which focused on the primary and secondary educational stages, demonstrating that such leadership fosters a sense of purpose and enthusiasm among teachers, leading to more engaged teaching practices and positively affecting student learning experiences. In a similar vein, Susilawati et al. (2021) found a positive correlation between transformational leadership and teaching efficacy in higher education, showing that this leadership style leads to a more empowered and recognized teaching staff, capable of adopting innovative and effective teaching approaches. These studies reinforce the consensus that transformational leadership is a crucial factor in advancing teaching performance, with its tailored application across educational stages offering key strategies for addressing the evolving demands of the educational landscape.

2.2 Organizational Climate and Teaching Performance

This section aims to explore the intricate relationship between organizational climate and teaching performance in the past few years.

Balkar (2020), Mailool et al. (2020), and Suriansyah (2020) all affirm the critical role of organizational climate in enhancing teaching performance, albeit through differing lenses. Balkar (2020) emphasizes the importance of a supportive and encouraging working environment, where teachers feel valued, leading to increased enthusiasm and willingness to adopt innovative teaching methods. This perspective highlights the direct impact of a positive organizational climate on the motivational level of teachers and their commitment to excellence in education. Conversely, Mailool et al. (2020) shed light on the significance of supportive leadership within the organizational climate. They argue that leadership goes beyond administrative tasks to include emotional and professional support, fostering a sense of community and collaboration among staff. This support is seen as essential for boosting teachers' self-efficacy, confidence, and, subsequently, their performance. Suriansyah (2020) introduces an additional dimension by focusing on the impact of respecting cultural diversity and promoting collaborative opportunities within the organizational climate. Such an environment not only enhances teachers' job satisfaction and performance but also enriches the educational experience by making teaching more inclusive. These perspectives reveal a common acknowledgment of the multifaceted influence of organizational climate on teaching performance. While Balkar (2020) underscores the motivational aspects of a nurturing environment, Mailool et al. (2020) highlight the pivotal role of leadership in creating a supportive climate. Suriansyah (2020), on the other hand, points to the importance of cultural respect and collaboration, suggesting these elements uniquely contribute to an enhanced organizational climate. The divergence in their viewpoints suggests that while all agree on the positive impact of organizational climate on teaching performance, the pathways through which this influence materializes vary. Each study contributes to a broader understanding of how different elements within the organizational climate can individually and collectively foster an environment conducive to teaching excellence. These studies underscore the complexity of the organizational climate's role in educational settings and the necessity for a holistic approach that encompasses emotional support, leadership, cultural respect, and collaboration to optimize teaching performance.

2.3 Professional Development and Teaching Performance

This section aims to explore the diverse aspects and impacts of professional development on teaching performance in the past few years.

Recent studies underscore the profound impact of professional development on teaching performance, illustrating varied dimensions of enhancement across different focus areas. Derakhshan et al. (2020) highlighted the benefits of interdisciplinary professional development, revealing how collaboration across subjects not only fosters creativity in lesson planning but also enables teachers to weave diverse subjects into a cohesive curriculum, thus dismantling educational silos for a more interconnected teaching approach. This method evidently enriches content delivery, making learning environments more engaging. On a similar trajectory, Setyaningsih (2020) shed light on how

leadership-oriented professional development programs uplift teaching by bolstering classroom leadership and student engagement, suggesting that equipping teachers with leadership skills extends their influence beyond traditional pedagogical methods to shape more dynamic educational settings. Further complementing these perspectives, Farooqi et al. (2019) demonstrated that professional development focusing on mindfulness and well-being significantly elevates teachers' ability to manage classroom dynamics and cultivate a positive learning atmosphere, thereby acknowledging the indispensable role of educators' mental and emotional health in teaching efficacy. While Derakhshan et al. (2020) and Setiyaningsih (2020) focus on the enhancement of teaching methodologies through interdisciplinary collaboration and leadership skills, respectively, suggesting a direct influence on educational content and teacher roles, Farooqi et al. (2019) pivot towards the internal well-being of educators as a critical factor for effective teaching. The juxtaposition of these studies indicates a holistic view of professional development, encompassing the enrichment of both the external teaching environment and the internal state of educators. Although Derakhshan et al. (2020) and Setiyaningsih (2020) advocate for structural and curricular innovations, Farooqi et al. (2019) place paramount importance on the psychological well-being of teachers, proposing that such personal development is foundational to achieving the external objectives outlined by their counterparts. These studies elucidate that while methodologies and educational leadership significantly contribute to teaching performance, the underlying well-being of educators is equally critical, painting a comprehensive picture of professional development's impact on teaching efficacy.

2.4 Transformational Leadership and Employee Engagement

This section aims to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement in the past few years.

The consensus among scholars, as elucidated by Azim et al. (2019), Milhem et al. (2019), and Azis et al. (2019), strongly supports the notion that transformational leadership positively influences employee engagement across various organizational contexts. Azim et al. (2019) emphasize the role of transformational leaders in inspiring employees through idealized influence and inspirational motivation, fostering an environment that encourages innovation and a deeper sense of belonging. This approach, as they suggest, not only elevates employee engagement but also promotes a culture of creativity and recognition of individual efforts. On a similar note, Milhem et al. (2019) argued that in the milieu of multinational corporations, transformational leaders are pivotal in aligning employees' personal goals with organizational objectives, thereby crafting a unified vision that transcends cultural and geographical boundaries. This alignment, coupled with the leaders' support and empowerment, significantly enhances employee engagement by bolstering their confidence and fostering a shared purpose. Meanwhile, Azis et al. (2019) highlighted the criticality of transformational leadership during organizational change, pointing out the leaders' ability to maintain high engagement levels by articulating a clear vision and addressing employees' emotional needs amidst uncertainties. However, while all three studies underscore the positive impact of transformational leadership on engagement, they also illuminate different facets of how this leadership style manifests its effects in varied organizational settings. Azim et al. (2019) concentrate on the psychological and motivational dimensions within a stable organizational context, whereas Milhem et al. (2019) focus on the complexities of managing a culturally and geographically diverse workforce. Azis et al. (2019), on the other hand, offer insights into the dynamics of leadership during periods of change. Despite these differences, the overarching narrative converges on the efficacy of transformational leadership in enhancing employee engagement, albeit through different mechanisms and in distinct environments. These studies not only reinforce the value of transformational leadership in fostering engaged and motivated workforces but also shed light on the multifaceted ways in which such leadership can be effectively leveraged across various organizational challenges and changes.

2.5 Organizational Climate and Employee Engagement

This section aims to review the relationship between organizational climate and employee engagement in the past few years.

Nwogwugwu et al. (2022) underscored the significance of a positive organizational climate, marked by mutual respect, open communication, and supportive management, in fostering employee engagement across various cultural contexts, suggesting a nearly universal applicability of these principles. Conversely, Ramadan et al. (2021) focused on the unique demands of remote work environments, pinpointing virtual support, communication clarity, and digital inclusivity as key drivers of engagement among remote employees. This highlights a pivotal shift towards digital-centric strategies in enhancing employee engagement. Ogechukwu et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive organizational climate amidst rapid changes, advocating for adaptability, transparent communication, and strong support systems to stabilize employee engagement during such transitions. Although these studies collectively affirm the positive impact of organizational climate on employee engagement, they also reveal nuanced perspectives based on different work environments and circumstances. While Nwogwugwu et al. (2022) presented a broad, culturally inclusive view, Ramadan et al. (2021) provided insights specific to the digital and virtual context, and Ogechukwu et al. (2021) addressed the challenges posed by rapid organizational changes. These distinctions underscore the complexity of implementing a one-size-fits-all approach to enhancing employee engagement through organizational climate. Instead, they suggest the necessity for tailored strategies that consider the unique characteristics of the workforce and the specific challenges they face, whether these are cultural differences, the nature of remote work, or the dynamics of rapid organizational change.

2.6 Professional Development and Employee Engagement

This section aims to explore the relationship between professional development and employee engagement in the past few years.

Mugizi et al. (2020) highlighted the profound impact of technology-focused professional development on teacher engagement, suggesting that the integration of technology in professional development significantly enhances teacher engagement through empowerment and the acquisition of new, relevant technological skills. This empowerment stems from teachers' ability to incorporate these tools into their teaching methodologies, which in turn boosts their job satisfaction and encourages the exploration of innovative teaching methods. Casis-Woidyla (2020) extended this narrative by emphasizing the benefits of collaborative professional development models, where peer learning and community-centric environments lead to higher levels of work engagement. Such environments not only foster professional and emotional connections among teachers but also mitigate professional isolation, thereby elevating morale and job satisfaction. Conversely, Contreras et al. (2021) advocated for the superiority of hands-on, interactive professional development programs over more passive, lecture-based ones, citing the active participation and experiential learning opportunities they provide as key to increasing motivation and engagement. These interactive programs encourage a communal learning atmosphere, allowing teachers to collaboratively engage in problem-solving and skill-building activities. These perspectives reveal a shared acknowledgment of the positive correlation between innovative professional development models and teacher engagement. However, while Mugizi et al. (2020) and Casis-Woidyla (2020) focus on the empowerment and community-building aspects of professional development, respectively, Contreras et al. (2021) distinguish themselves by valuing the experiential and interactive dimensions of learning. These studies underscore an understanding of how different professional development strategies contribute to enhancing teacher engagement, with each approach bringing its own set of benefits to the educational ecosystem. The collective insights of these studies underscore the necessity of adopting multifaceted professional development programs that not only update teachers' technological competencies but also foster collaborative and experiential learning environments to maximize engagement and job satisfaction.

2.7 Employee Engagement and Teaching Performance

This section aims to explore the relationship between employee engagement and teaching performance, drawing insights from recent studies.

Asare & Amo (2023), Dago-oc & Tagadiad (2023), and Zuwefa et al. (2023) collectively affirm the pivotal role of teacher engagement in enhancing educational effectiveness through varied investigative lenses. Asare & Amo's (2023) comprehensive study, marked by its longitudinal approach and attention to confounding variables, underscores the linkage between teacher engagement and educational delivery excellence. It posits that engaged teachers are more prone to adopting innovative pedagogies and dedicating themselves to their students' academic advancement. Complementarily, Dago-oc & Tagadiad (2023) pinpoint the direct correlation between teacher engagement and improved student outcomes, emphasizing the transformative power of teacher enthusiasm on students' grades and understanding, especially in subjects requiring intensive interaction. This research suggests that fostering teacher engagement could be a strategic tool for elevating educational standards and student performance. Meanwhile, Zuwefa et al. (2023) enrich the discourse with qualitative insights, revealing that engaged teachers are inclined towards employing innovative instructional strategies that cater to diverse learning styles, thereby fostering critical thinking and problem-solving abilities among students. These findings collectively herald a shift towards recognizing and cultivating teacher engagement as a cornerstone for advancing teaching methodologies and educational outcomes.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of transformational leadership, organizational climate, professional development, and employee engagement on teaching performance among university faculty in Shanghai. The quantitative approach is instrumental for its ability to provide objective measurements and facilitate statistical analysis across a substantial sample, aiming to discover patterns and relationships that could be generalized to the broader academic population (Stockemer et al., 2019). The use of statistical tools to evaluate data ensures the minimization of researcher bias and enhances the reliability of the findings (Lemerrier & Zalc, 2019). Furthermore, this methodology supports hypothesis testing and the prediction of relationships between variables, thereby offering valuable insights for educational policy and strategy (Canela et al., 2019).

3.2 Research Population and Sample Size

The study targets the faculty of 23 recognized higher education institutions in Shanghai, representing a total of 51,292 faculty members as per the latest available data. A sample size of 550 participants is selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure diversity and representativeness. Each university contributes approximately 25 participants, reflecting a range of disciplines and experiences. This method not only aids in achieving statistical power but also enhances the representativeness across different university settings, thereby allowing for accurate generalizations of the study results.

3.3 Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling is utilized to maintain equality and representativeness among the participating universities. This technique involves categorizing the population into strata, here defined by the 23 universities, and randomly selecting participants from each stratum. This method is crucial in minimizing sampling bias and ensuring that each institution, irrespective of its size, is proportionally represented in the sample (Purwanto, 2022). The adoption of this sampling method is intended to bolster the study's claims by enhancing the precision and relevance of the findings across the academic community in Shanghai.

3.4 Research Instrument

The primary tool for data collection is a structured questionnaire, designed to meticulously gauge various aspects of transformational leadership, organizational climate, professional development, employee engagement, and teaching performance. The questionnaire is bifurcated into sections; the first collects demographic information, while the second assesses the core study variables using items derived from validated scales in previous research. This ensures the reliability and validity of the data collected, enabling a thorough examination of the influence of the studied variables on teaching performance (Schutt, 2019).

3.5 Data analysis Techniques

Data analysis will commence with descriptive statistical techniques using SPSS to outline the basic properties of the data set, including central tendency and variability. Subsequent analysis involves Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using SEM to validate the measurement model's factor structure (Özdemir et al., 2020). Path analysis will also be employed to explore the hypothesized relationships and the potential mediating effects of employee engagement on the relationship between the predictors and teaching performance.

4. Major Findings and Discussion

Through SEM path analysis, the study explores the relationship among five research latent variables of transformational leadership (TL), organizational climate (OC), professional development (PD), employee engagement (EE), and teaching performance (TP) among university teachers in Shanghai City, China. SEM path analysis results are displayed in **Figure 1**.

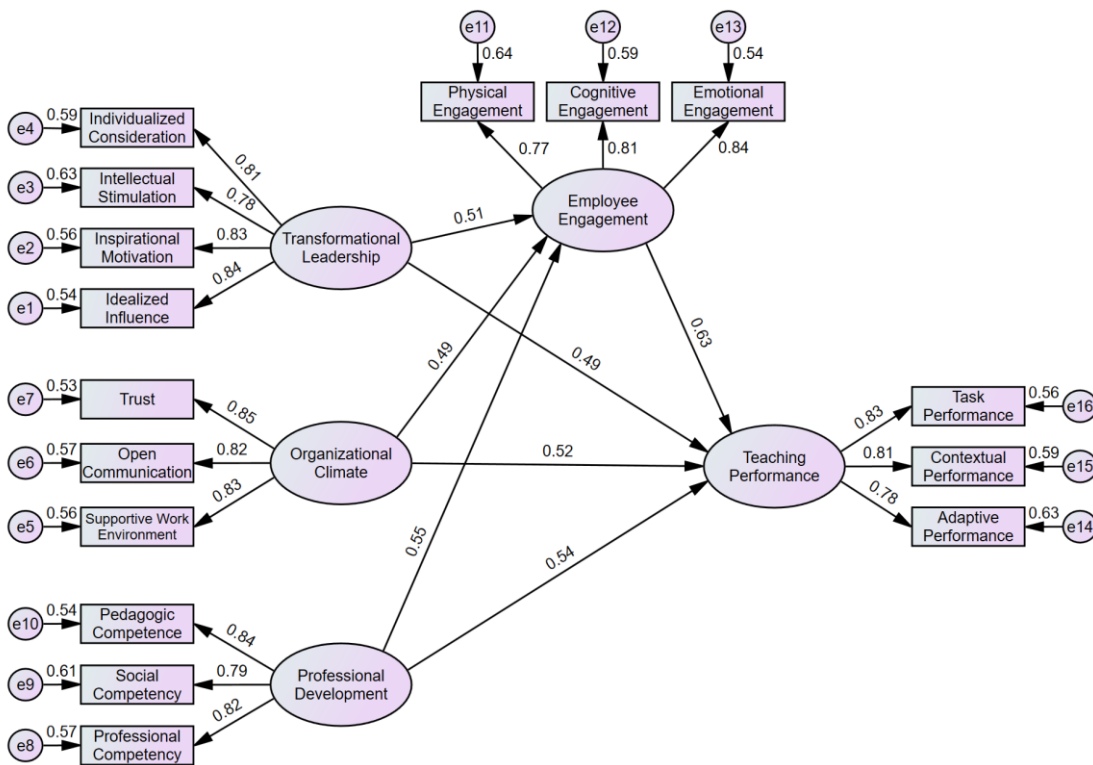


Figure 1: Results of SEM path analysis

The study also utilized bootstrap method to verify the mediating effect of employee engagement in the relationship

between three independent variables (transformational leadership, organizational climate and professional development) and teaching performance. The mediating effect analysis results of employee engagement are displayed in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Mediating effect analysis results of employee engagement

Standard effect	Path	Effect coefficient	95% confidence interval		S.E.	P-value	Results
			Lower	Upper			
Total effect	TL --->TP	0.812	0.759	0.865	0.027	***	Mediating effect
Direct effect	TL --->TP	0.492	0.445	0.539	0.024	***	
Indirect effect	TL--->EE---> TP	0.320	0.279	0.361	0.021	***	
Total effect	OC ---> TP	0.831	0.780	0.882	0.026	***	Mediating effect
Direct effect	OC ---> TP	0.521	0.476	0.566	0.023	***	
Indirect effect	OC--->EE--->TP	0.310	0.267	0.353	0.022	***	
Total effect	PD --->TP	0.883	0.834	0.932	0.025	***	Mediating effect
Direct effect	PD --->TP	0.538	0.491	0.585	0.024	***	
Indirect effect	PD--->EE--->TP	0.345	0.306	0.384	0.020	***	

Based on mediating effect analysis results and SEM path analysis results, the major findings are summarized as follows:

4.1 Transformational Leadership and Teaching Performance

The results indicate a positive and significant influence of transformational leadership on teaching performance. Transformational leaders in universities inspire and intellectually stimulate faculty members, which leads to increased motivation and a higher commitment to teaching excellence. This aligns with previous research by Purwanto (2022) and Susilawati et al. (2021), which highlighted the role of transformational leadership in fostering innovative teaching methods and enhancing job satisfaction. In the context of Shanghai, where educational reforms and internationalization are prominent, transformational leadership helps bridge the gap between traditional teaching practices and modern, student-centered approaches, thus significantly improving teaching performance.

4.2 Organizational Climate and Teaching Performance

A positive organizational climate is another critical factor that enhances teaching performance. The study confirms that elements such as trust, open communication, and a supportive work environment contribute significantly to better teaching outcomes. This finding is consistent with the work of Balkar (2020) and Mailool et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of a nurturing environment in boosting teachers' morale and willingness to adopt innovative teaching practices. In Shanghai's universities, where competition and pressure for research output are high, a supportive organizational climate mitigates stress and fosters a collaborative atmosphere, thereby enhancing teaching performance.

4.3 Professional Development and Teaching Performance

The impact of professional development on teaching performance is also profound. Continuous professional development equips teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the evolving needs of students. This study's findings support the conclusions of Derakhshan et al. (2020) and Setiyarningsih (2020), who demonstrated that professional development enhances creativity in lesson planning and improves classroom management. In Shanghai, where universities aim to align with global educational standards, professional development is crucial in helping faculty members stay updated with the latest teaching methodologies and technological advancements, thereby improving their teaching effectiveness.

4.4 Transformational Leadership and Employee Engagement

The study also found that transformational leadership positively influences employee engagement. Leaders who exhibit transformational qualities such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration foster a sense of belonging and engagement among faculty members. This finding echoes the work of Azim et al. (2019) and Milhem et al. (2019), who highlighted the role of transformational leadership in enhancing employee engagement. In the context of Shanghai's universities, transformational leaders inspire faculty members to align their personal goals with organizational objectives, resulting in higher engagement and motivation.

4.5 Organizational Climate and Employee Engagement

A positive organizational climate significantly enhances employee engagement as well. The study confirms that a supportive and collaborative work environment leads to higher levels of engagement among university teachers. This is consistent with the findings of Nwogwugwu et al. (2022) and Ramadan et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of open communication and supportive management in fostering engagement. In Shanghai, where the pressures of academia can lead to burnout, a positive organizational climate helps sustain faculty engagement and job satisfaction.

4.6 Professional Development and Employee Engagement

Professional development also plays a crucial role in enhancing employee engagement. The study found that opportunities for continuous learning and professional growth lead to higher levels of engagement among teachers. This supports the conclusions of Mugizi et al. (2020) and Casis-Woidyla (2020), who highlighted the benefits of technology-focused and collaborative professional development programs. In Shanghai's universities, where rapid technological advancements are prevalent, professional development that focuses on integrating new technologies into teaching practices not only enhances teachers' skills but also their engagement and commitment to their roles.

4.7 Employee Engagement and Teaching Performance

The relationship between employee engagement and teaching performance is significant. Engaged teachers are more likely to adopt innovative teaching methods, dedicate themselves to student success, and maintain high standards of teaching quality. This finding aligns with the research by Asare & Amo (2023) and Dago-oc & Tagadiad (2023), which demonstrated that higher teacher engagement leads to improved student outcomes and overall teaching effectiveness. In Shanghai, fostering teacher engagement is essential for achieving educational excellence and improving student learning experiences.

4.8 The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement

The study highlights the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationships between transformational leadership, organizational climate, professional development, and teaching performance. Transformational leadership, a positive organizational climate, and robust professional development programs all contribute to higher employee engagement, which in turn enhances teaching performance.

4.8.1 Mediating Role in Transformational Leadership and Teaching Performance

Employee engagement mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and teaching performance. Transformational leaders who foster engagement among faculty members create an environment where teachers are more motivated and committed to their work, leading to improved teaching performance. This finding supports the work of Azis et al. (2019), who emphasized the importance of employee engagement in the effectiveness of transformational leadership.

4.8.2 Mediating Role in Organizational Climate and Teaching Performance

The positive organizational climate enhances teaching performance through increased employee engagement. When teachers feel supported and valued in their work environment, their engagement levels rise, leading to better teaching outcomes. This mediating role is consistent with the findings of Ogechukwu et al. (2021), who highlighted the importance of a supportive organizational climate in maintaining high levels of employee engagement.

4.8.3 Mediating Role in Professional Development and Teaching Performance

Professional development influences teaching performance through its impact on employee engagement. Opportunities for continuous learning and professional growth engage teachers, leading to higher levels of teaching effectiveness. This finding aligns with the conclusions of Contreras et al. (2021), who emphasized the importance of hands-on, interactive professional development in fostering teacher engagement.

5. Conclusion

The study conducted on the factors influencing teaching performance among university teachers in Shanghai City, China, substantiates the integral roles played by transformational leadership, organizational climate, professional development, and employee engagement. Transformational leadership has demonstrated a significant positive impact on teaching performance by inspiring educators to adopt innovative teaching methods and enhance their job satisfaction. Similarly, a supportive organizational climate contributes to better teaching outcomes by fostering a nurturing environment that motivates and values educators. Professional development is confirmed as essential in equipping teachers with the latest pedagogical skills and knowledge, crucial for adapting to global educational standards and improving teaching effectiveness. Crucially, employee engagement has emerged as a pivotal factor, mediating the relationships between transformational leadership, organizational climate, professional development, and teaching performance. This engagement not only enhances the individual commitment of teachers but also significantly uplifts the overall educational quality. Thus, the findings underscore the necessity of nurturing these key aspects within educational institutions to foster an environment conducive to exceptional teaching and learning outcomes.

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