

## A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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### ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is crucial to the development of an enterprise, and transformational leadership can stimulate employees' intrinsic work motivation, effectively improve employee engagement, and thereby achieve organizational goals. This article combs the literature on the concepts and measurement of transformational leadership, employee engagement, and the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement, explores the shortcomings of research on transformational leadership and employee engagement, and makes a summary to provide reference for future research.

**Keywords:** transformational leadership; employee engagement

### 1.0 DEFINITION OF CONCEPT CONNOTATION

#### 1.1 Conceptual connotation of transformational leadership

Burns (1978) first proposed the concept of transformational leadership. He believed that transformational leadership is a process in which oneself and organizational members jointly improve their work familiarity and level through their own charisma. Transformational leadership style is a leadership style with firm beliefs and personal charisma that can create a beautiful vision for employees, enhance employees' intrinsic motivation, and enable them to work hard to realize their own value and achieve organizational goals (Feng Cailing, 2017). Transformational leadership has a positive impact on employee engagement (Xu Yan, 2019). Transformational leadership is mainly a process of achieving one's own organizational goals by creating an organizational cultural atmosphere, which includes providing employees with some organizational support, encouragement and organizational trust. Make employees perceive the organization's care and recognition of their own value, thereby motivating employees to continue working hard to achieve organizational goals. Therefore, transformational leadership has an impact on employees' work attitudes, behaviors, and work performance in various aspects (Xue Yuhong, 2018). Transformational leadership has a direct positive prediction effect on employees' work engagement and can affect the work enthusiasm of members within the organization Wang Jiakun (2020). Transformational leadership also affects organizational innovation at the level of organizational culture and team work. A culture that supports organizational innovation encourages researchers to develop new knowledge and ideas within their teams. Therefore, transformational leadership also affects followers' risk

orientation. The personalized caring behavior of transformational leaders will strive to provide information and resources for the development of subordinates and promote their learning and interaction. Therefore, subordinates are more likely to develop their own independent thinking abilities and innovate. When the organizational culture supports innovative behaviors, subordinates will tend to engage in more entrepreneurial behaviors within the expected risk (Li Yuan, 2019). Transformational leadership uses certain means to stimulate employees' inner enthusiasm for work, and these means include the creation of an environmental atmosphere, the transformation of organizational models, and the guidance of employees' thoughts, etc., to promote employees' sense of participation, presence, and importance within the enterprise, this will then improve the creative ability of employees and provide fundamental motivation for the development of the enterprise (Xu Xiao, 2019). Revolutionary leadership has a "spiritual uplifting effect" and a "strong emotional component" and pays particular attention to effective communication with subordinates at work to enhance their positive emotions. Leaders with transformational leadership convey an optimistic mood, that is, paint a vision for their subordinates, making them enthusiastic about their work and looking forward to the future. At the same time, transformational leadership not only stimulates positive emotions in subordinates, but also suppresses negative emotions and reduces anxiety and disappointment. Therefore, compared with subordinates of non-transformational leaders, subordinates of transformational leaders are more enthusiastic about their daily work under the leadership of their leaders, gain more happiness, and have better satisfaction (Liu Yan, 2022). Transformational leadership focuses on emotions and values, positions itself as a guide for employees, is committed to transforming employees' values, and promotes innovative behaviors among subordinates by expressing motivational visions. By making employees aware of the value and importance of the tasks they are engaged in, leaders gradually motivate employees to have higher levels of needs, establish a good atmosphere of mutual trust and mutual benefit, and encourage employees to put the interests of the organization first, thus producing work results that exceed expectations (Wang Jing, 2020).

Xue Ya (2018) believes that transformational leadership behavior refers to the process in which leaders influence employees with their own behavior, charm and characteristics, so that they can shape positive lives and values, enhance their intrinsic motivation, and make them work hard to realize their own value. Chen Chunhua et al. (2020) believe that transformational leadership is a process in which leaders help employees improve relevant skills and instill correct moral values, and continue to motivate employees through their own charm and charisma. Han Yuexiang (2021) believes that transformational leadership is the behavior and process of respecting and valuing subordinates, assisting employees in self-planning, stimulating employees' potential, encouraging and driving employees to exert their innovative abilities, and thereby working hard to achieve the organization's predetermined goals. Wang Jing (2020) defines transformational leadership as: As a leadership style that pursues innovation, transformational leadership inspires employees to continuously stimulate their potential and achieve higher self-worth in the process of interacting with employees, thereby achieving organizational goals. Transformational leaders are leaders with high moral standards and dedication. They can not only provide individualized care and visionary encouragement to subordinates, but also have excellent leadership charisma, making employees feel the heavy responsibility they bear and motivating them. Higher-level needs motivate employees to increase their work input for the benefit of the organization and the collective, thereby obtaining results beyond original expectations.

## 1.2 Concept and connotation of employee engagement

Kahn first proposed the concept of employee engagement in 1990, stating that engagement is the degree to which organizational members invest their physical, cognitive and emotional energy into their work roles. Arcus Buckingham (2019) proposed that corporate leaders are eager to improve employee engagement, maintain employee stability, and attract competitive employees to join the corporate team. Wang Zhen, Chen Leni et al. (2015) believe that transformational leadership has a positive impact on employee engagement. Shi Dan, Tao Yiyi et al. (2019) believe that high-quality leader-member exchange relationships can improve employee engagement levels. Tang Chunyong, Chen Bing (2018) and others believe that inclusive leadership can improve employee engagement. Guo Wenchen, Cao Qihan (2022) believe that employee engagement is affected by multiple variables such as demographic characteristics, individual psychological and behavioral characteristics, organizational characteristics, leadership characteristics, corporate social responsibility, high-performance work systems, transformational leadership, inclusive leadership, and organizational support. Job satisfaction, job satisfaction, etc. are all significantly correlated with engagement, and engagement shows a strong correlation.

Research by Luo Zhengqing et al. (2018) shows that employee engagement is significantly positively affected by the sense of organizational support. Ye Yindan and Liu Wen (2021) believe that engagement is a degree of physical, emotional and cognitive resource investment that can affect the work efficiency and service quality of corporate employees, thereby affecting corporate operating efficiency. Zhang Ming (2020) stated that engagement is an important concept based on vitality, focus and dedication, showing the health and prosperity of individuals and organizations at work. Zhang Zhao (2021) believes that the measurement of engagement is not determined by the length of working hours, which means that employees go to work every day or even work overtime does not mean that they have high engagement. The benchmark of engagement is primarily engagement. That is, whether employees are truly integrated into the company, whether they can devote themselves wholeheartedly to work and think actively about problems. Niu Xiaoqing (2019) believes that organizational factors such as leadership style, organizational fairness, and organizational support for employees will affect employees' engagement in work. Transformational leaders' personal engagement in work also has a positive impact on employee engagement. The level of management and support given to employees by their direct superiors has a significant impact on employees being more engaged. In addition, work factors such as the richness of the work, whether the work is interesting or challenging, whether the employee's abilities meet the needs of the job, and a good working environment will also have an impact on employee engagement. The variety of work content, the autonomy employees have over their jobs, and whether their jobs are challenging can have an impact on employee engagement. Individual factors such as an employee's personality and demographic characteristics will have a large impact on their engagement level. Demographic characteristics such as gender, age, and years of experience will also have a large impact on employees' work engagement. Guo Wenchen (2022) believes that engagement is the degree of employee identification, commitment and investment in the work, team and organization itself. When employees have higher engagement, their emotional investment in work will be more positive, their satisfaction will be higher, and they will be more interested in the work. They are more loyal to the organization and have less intention to leave, and at the same time, their commitment to the organization will be enhanced. In order to

help the organization develop better, employees will continue to come up with new ideas and take actions. After completing their own work, they will take the initiative to do some work beyond the scope of their responsibilities, and at the same time, they will reduce negative work behavior and hostility. When employees' creativity and work performance are relatively high, they will receive more attention and more resources from their leaders, resulting in higher levels of engagement, forming a virtuous cycle.

Employee engagement is a sense of personal worth and an individual's degree of involvement in the organization and in their work and career, including behavioral, psychological and emotional involvement. Qian Chu (2018) believes that employee engagement is when employees combine themselves with their work roles during the work process, commit to, identify with, and invest a lot of energy in their work and organization. The psychological state of being fully integrated into the work role with full enthusiasm. Ma Yue (2020) believes that engagement tends to be an expression of positive energy, which refers to the degree to which organizational members integrate themselves with their work roles and invest their personal emotions, cognitions, and behaviors in the context of creating work performance. Yang Xiaolei (2021) believes that engagement is not only a continuously positive working state, but also a kind of employees' independent control of their own behavior and mobility. Employees with high engagement can generate positive incentives for themselves regardless of the work content, or whether the task is in line with your own preferences, you can devote yourself to work with full energy and perseverance, and at the same time be willing to dedicate yourself to your work. Maling et al. (2020) pointed out through research that employees' engagement is a state in which they integrate their personal self with their work, and invest their emotions, practical actions and cognitive abilities in this process.

## **2.0 STRUCTURE AND MEASUREMENT OF RELATED CONCEPTS**

### **2.1 Structure and measurement of transformational leadership**

In terms of the elements and measurement methods of transformational leadership, Bass first proposed a three-dimensional structure of transformational leadership, namely intelligent stimulation, charismatic-inspirational leadership and personalized care. Later, Bass et al. further divided "charismatic-inspirational leadership" into two dimensions: leadership charisma and charisma based on the three-dimensional division. On this basis, Bass et al. compiled the Multi-Factor Leadership Behavior Questionnaire (MLQ), which contains the four-dimensional theoretical model of transformational leadership. The four dimensions include leadership charisma, charisma, intellectual stimulation and personalized care. Li Chaoping and Shi Kan (2005) proposed that transformational leadership is divided into 4 dimensions, and compiled a Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) suitable for Chinese situations and with Chinese characteristics, including 26 elements in 4 dimensions. The four dimensions are moral conduct, vision inspiration, personalized care and leadership charisma. Setting an example by virtue means that leaders have high moral standards and set a good example for their subordinates through their actions. The leadership's moral conduct sets a good example for new employees. Leaders set an example, be consistent in their words and deeds, and have strict requirements on themselves. This role model demonstrates leadership's conscientiousness and will inspire new employees to be enthusiastic about their work. Vision motivation means that leaders can outline a clear vision for followers and use the vision to

motivate followers. Vision motivation can stimulate the enthusiasm of new employees for work, and new employees will devote themselves to work more enthusiastically, actively and focusedly. Leads to higher engagement. Personalized care means that leaders can pay attention to the needs of subordinates, understand and try to solve the needs of subordinates, provide employees with help in life and work, help employees solve problems in life and family, and care about employees' work, life and growth, etc., will make employees more willing to follow leaders to complete tasks, and employees will be more likely to work hard for long-term goals, and their work engagement will become higher. Leadership charisma means that leaders have strong business capabilities, strong professionalism and enterprising spirit, and constantly improve themselves, which can enhance employees' recognition of leadership, and thereby effectively change employees' values and self-perception, making employees develop Higher motivation levels such as needs and desires, whereby employees will increase their work input in order to realize value, leading to higher engagement. It should be pointed out that this study found that China's transformational leadership, compared with Bass's four-dimensional structure, also includes a unique dimension: virtue modeling, that is, managers use their own virtues as a way of leadership and set an example for employees by setting an example. Subtly influence the concepts and values of subordinates, and guide subordinates to work towards the goals and missions set by the organization. In addition, the personalized care dimension in this theoretical model is also different from Bass's. Its meaning is broader, including not only care for employees' personal development and work, but also care for family and life; vision motivation and Leadership charisma is basically consistent with foreign research. After empirical testing, the questionnaire has good reliability and validity, and is the most commonly used in research on transformational leadership in my country. This is also the questionnaire used in this study.

**Table 1 Transformational leadership (TL)**

Item Code	Item	Adapted from
TL1	Honest and honest, not seeking personal gain.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL2	Suffering comes first, enjoyment comes later.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL3	Regardless of personal gains and losses, work hard.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL4	Ability to sacrifice personal interests for the benefit of the department/unit.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL5	Ability to put one's own interests ahead of those of the group and others.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL6	Don't take the fruits of other people's labor as your own.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)



TL7	Able to share joys and sorrows with employees.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL8	Will not wear small shoes for employees and engage in retaliation.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL9	Allow employees to understand the development prospects of the	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL10	Allow employees to understand the business philosophy and development goals of the	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL11	Will explain to employees the long-term significance of what they are doing.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL12	A dreamy future is depicted to everyone.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL13	Can point out the goal and direction for employees to strive for.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL14	Frequently analyzes with employees the impact of their work on overall	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL15	In the process of dealing with employees, the actual situation of individual employees	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL16	Willing to help employees solve difficult problems in life and family.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL17	Can often communicate with employees to understand their work, life and family	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL18	Teach employees patiently and answer questions for employees.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL19	Care about the work, life and growth of employees, and sincerely provide	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL20	Focus on creating conditions for employees to develop their strengths.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL21	Strong business ability.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL22	Open-minded, with a strong sense of innovation.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL23	Love their work, have a strong sense of professionalism and enterprising spirit.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL24	Very dedicated to work and always maintain a high degree of enthusiasm.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)

TL25	Can continue to learn to enrich and improve themselves.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)
TL26	Dare to grasp and manage, good at dealing with difficult problems.	Li Chao ping,Shi Kan(2005)

**Scale Source:** Li Chaoping, Shi Kan. The Structure and Measurement of Transformational Leadership [J]. Acta Psychologica Sinica, 2005(06):97-105.

### 2.2 Structure and measurement of employee engagement

In terms of the elements and measurement of employee engagement, Kahn (1990) pointed out that corporate employees present their engagement through three basic dimensions: cognition, emotion, and physical and mental dimensions. Schaufeli et al. conducted an in-depth discussion of its structure and compiled a The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-17) includes three dimensions: vitality, dedication and concentration. Among them, vitality means that individuals have abundant energy and good psychological toughness, are willing to work hard without getting tired easily, and can persevere in the face of difficulties; dedication means that individuals have a strong sense of meaning, pride and full enthusiasm for work. , be able to devote yourself wholeheartedly to work and have the courage to accept challenges at work; concentration means that an individual is fully focused on his or her work and can take pleasure in it, feeling that time flies by and is unwilling to detach from work. UWES-17 remains stable in different occupational groups and has good reliability and validity. Therefore, this scale has become the most widely used measurement tool. In view of the differences in culture and social environment at home and abroad, Gan Yiqun (2005) constructed a Chinese version of the Work Engagement Scale (Chinese version of UWES,  $\alpha$  coefficient is 0.9) with good reliability, including vitality, Three dimensions of dedication and concentration, 17 elements, are used to measure employee engagement in Chinese organizational context. Schaufeli streamlined the test items, forming a streamlined version of UWES containing only 9 items. Gan Yuanyuan, Yang Huagang, Tian Jinting and others conducted a systematic analysis of the data using the multivariate generalization theory on the basis of testing 310 primary school teachers using the Work Engagement Scale (Chinese version of UWES). The results show that the Chinese version of UWES work engagement scale has high overall measurement reliability. It can be used for both norm-referenced tests and criterion-referenced tests. Its three dimensions also have high measurement reliability. Each of the work engagement scale the factor score ratio is more appropriate. In test scenarios with slightly lower reliability requirements, the simplified version of the UWES work engagement scale can be used as an alternative measurement of work engagement. This study used this scale for data analysis and modeling.

**Table 2 Employee Engagement (EE)**

Employee Engagement (EE)		
Item Code	Item	Adapted from

EE1	At work, I feel myself radiating energy	Gan Yuanyuan, Yang Huagang, Tian Jinting, etc (2011)
EE2	I am passionate about work	Gan Yuanyuan, Yang Huagang, Tian Jinting, etc (2011)
EE3	I feel strong and full of energy when I work	Gan Yuanyuan, Yang Huagang, Tian Jinting, etc (2011)
EE4	Work inspires me	Gan Yuanyuan, Yang Huagang, Tian Jinting, etc (2011)
EE5	When I wake up in the morning, I want to go to work	Gan Yuanyuan, Yang Huagang, Tian Jinting, etc (2011)
EE6	I feel happy when work is stressful	Gan Yuanyuan, Yang Huagang, Tian Jinting, etc (2011)
EE7	I am proud of the work I do	Gan Yuanyuan, Yang Huagang, Tian Jinting, etc (2011)
EE8	I'm immersed in my work	Gan Yuanyuan, Yang Huagang, Tian Jinting, etc (2011)
EE9	I get lost in my work	Gan Yuanyuan, Yang Huagang, Tian Jinting, etc (2011)

Gan Yuanyuan, Yang Huagang, Tian Jinting, etc. The Chinese version of the "work input volume list" analysis of the measurement trust -based on the diversified theory and the survey data of 310 teachers [J]. 12 (03): 62-65.doi: 10.13331/J.CNKI.JHAU (SS) .2011.03.017.

### 3.0 RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Some scholars have researched the impact of transformational leadership on engagement. Scholars' research has found that transformational leadership aims to create a working atmosphere of mutual trust, satisfy employees' high-level motivations and needs, pay attention to the establishment of organizational goals and visions, and have a unique influence on employees, thereby increasing their commitment to work. , thereby improving engagement. Transformational leadership has a positive impact on employee engagement (Xu Yan, 2019) and has a direct positive prediction effect on employees' work engagement. Transformational leadership can affect the work enthusiasm of members within the organization Wang Jiakun (2020).

Transformational leaders are leaders with high moral standards and dedication. They can not only provide individualized care and visionary encouragement to subordinates, but also have



excellent leadership charisma, making employees feel the heavy responsibility they bear and motivating them. Higher-level needs motivate employees to increase their work input for the benefit of the organization and the collective, thereby obtaining results beyond original expectations. They often play the role of friends and coaches in organizations, encouraging employees to use innovative and new methods to effectively solve problems, take responsibility, improve organizational innovation performance, and then achieve corresponding goals. Transformational leaders also need to provide them with task-related information and resources, help them obtain corresponding innovative ideas, pay attention to the needs of subordinates, and become the main driving force of innovation. In the special cultural context of China, transformational leadership is a four-factor structure, including vision inspiration, leadership charisma, moral conduct and personalized care. According to social exchange theory, the relationship between transformational leaders and employees is essentially a social exchange process based on the principle of reciprocity. In this process, both parties need to make certain contributions and therefore both receive certain benefits. That is, employees exchange their hard work, dedication and loyalty for corresponding remuneration, rewards and recognition. Transformational leaders break the original model of management and being managed, and are no longer a cold mechanized model in the enterprise. Leaders have the ability to inspire employees and lead them to realize the corporate vision, have the courage to take responsibility at work, and are able to pass Their own personality charm can motivate employees and have a positive impact on their work. Leaders actively pay attention to the needs of subordinates and create more opportunities to promote employee development. Employees receive more support at work as a way to meet their needs. In response, subordinates will work more actively and harder and make higher contributions to the enterprise.

Comprehensive previous research by scholars believes that transformational leadership affects employees to generate more engagement through dimensions such as virtue modeling, vision motivation, personalized care, and leadership charisma in the process of leading teams and managing enterprise operations, so as to jointly achieve goals and visions. .

#### **4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Most of the current research on transformational leadership is as a whole, studying the influence of leaders on subordinates through various forms or means, generally speaking, in order to achieve the dynamic process of organizational development. If this dynamic management process is focused on managers, it is not only necessary to consider the actual situation, but also to explore in detail the impact of transformational leadership behavior on employees' work attitudes from specific dimensions.

There are relatively few research results related to engagement. A review of scholars' research on engagement shows that early research on engagement focused on conceptual definition, dimension division, and scale development in different eras. In recent years, more and more studies have focused on exploring the influencing factors of engagement. and effect results, mainly including demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education, and working years, corporate social responsibility, high-performance work systems, human resource practices, leadership style, organizational support, job satisfaction, etc. The main scope is around the general Enterprises, very few small and medium-sized enterprises.

In research on the impact of transformational leadership on employee engagement, scholars have explored the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement from different angles and levels. Most research shows that transformational leadership has a positive impact on employee engagement, can stimulate employees' work enthusiasm and commitment, and improve employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, some scholars have pointed out that the effectiveness of transformational leadership is affected by situational factors, such as organizational culture, personality traits of leaders and employees, etc. Therefore, future research can further explore the boundary conditions of the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement, and can further explore how transformational leadership affects organizational performance through employee engagement. How transformational leadership affects organizational performance through employee engagement, and can further explore the different mediating roles of transformational leadership through employee engagement. Below, how transformational leadership works through employee engagement. In addition, attention can also be paid to the applicability and differences of transformational leadership in different cultural contexts to provide a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding.

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