

# THE CORRELATIONS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND STUDENTS PERFORMANCES

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**Abstract:** Student's performance is measured in many ways such as the cumulative point average (CGPA), time management, test competence and academic competence. Student's performance may have been related to the transformational leadership behavior of the class lecturers whom the students interact with on a day-to-day basis. Knowing that, this study aimed to find if there is any correlation between transformational leadership behaviors with time management, test competence, academic performance and CGPA. Sixty college students voluntarily participated in this study. A quantitative method was applied where participants completed a previously validated questionnaire of transformational leadership, time management, test competence and academic competence constructs. The study revealed a significant relationship between transformational leadership and academic competence. The elements of transformational leadership especially the inspirational motivation showed strongest significant relationship with academic competence. However, this study found no correlation between transformational leadership with time management and test competence. It is suggested that a much larger survey would need to be conducted in order to provide appropriate and solid results.

**Keywords:** Transformational leadership, student's performance, test competence, time management, academic competence

## 1. Introduction

Academic performance is usually indicated based on the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) student's scored by the end of their study years. Many colleges set certain minimum CGPA that students should maintain in order to be recognized as excellent performer in study. Many factors could become an obstruction for students to attain high CGPA that reflects their overall academic performance. Qualities such social skills, communication skills, conflict management, team capabilities, and leadership are also important in the academic environment. Colleges could develop approach to improve student's learning by strategizing to improve those qualities as well. Students who are equipped with those skills are said to perform efficiently in their tasks (Lust & Moore, 2006).

The study in the area of leadership has gone way back long time ago. The contemporary leadership theory development has taken into consideration of transactional and transformational leadership which was widely used in research recently. Due to its highly searched and studied by others, Bass & Avolio had prepared and developed a comprehensive model of leadership that take accounts the leadership behaviors especially the transformational and transactional leadership (1990). Transformational leadership is one of the most studied on organization and research (George, 2000). With that into consideration, this study is to examine the relationship between the transformational leadership behavior and student's performance in terms of managing time, academic performance and test competence.

## 2. Literature Review

Leadership is defined as leader's effective behavior, conduct and tactic in influencing others (Northouse, 2007) and persuading others to achieve individual and organization's goals and objectives (Schermerhorn et al., 2008). Good leader should make use different types of leadership behaviors when dealing with different types of situations (Goleman, 1998). Transformational leadership and transactional leadership has been studied currently in determining commitment and performance of employees (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Burns presented a model of transformational and transactional leadership and claimed that both are different in the ways leaders manage, motivate and inspire people under them (Burns, 1978). Burns distinguishing transformational leaders as someone who enthuse and motivate others whereas transactional leaders are more concern with achieving and get things done effeciently and effectively (1978).

Student's academic competence is usually linked with the ability to manage study load, study materials, and test competence (Kleijn et al., 1994). In the study, Kleijn et al. stated that the study materials should be interesting enough to grab student's attention, and enjoyable for students to learn (1994). According to Kleijn et al., test competency reflect how students cope with the amount of study materials for exam (1994). Study by Trockel et al., found that those who study less than seven hours perweek perform better in test (2000). This may due to the fact that those who addicted to study developed unhealthy situation psychologically (Womble, 2003). Students with better academic competence and test competence will perform better in performance (Kleijn et al., 1994). Time management is identified as the student's ability to allocate time for leisure and study for test and examination (Kleijn et al., 1994) also necessary factor to determine student's performance (Powell, 2004). Kirschenbaum & Perri defined time management as a cluster of behavioral skill sets which incorporate the activities such as planning, scheduling, pre-preparation and prioritizing work (1982).

### **3. Methodology**

The sample comprised of students who attend one of the community college in Johor, Malaysia. 60 students voluntarily participated in the study. Forty-six (76.6%) of respondents were male and fourteen (23.3%) were female. The respondents study hours and revisions allocation is at the mean score of six hours per week, and the mean for CGPA is at 3.06. Approximately, 50% of the respondents claimed to joined less than two student's organization clubs and another 50% joined more than two clubs at present. A questionnaire survey was used to obtain the data. The survey instruments used in this study contained established instruments of transformational leadership and student's performance measurement.

Leadership items were adapted from House (1998) and Podsakoff et al. (1990) which were used in study by Rafferty & Griffin (2004). The 15-items transformational leadership dimensions include the communicating vision, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, supportive leadership and personal recognition. The respondent were asked to rate their class lecturer whom they interact with on daily basis using a 5-point Likert scale where 1 represented "Strongly Disagree" and 5 represented "Strongly Agree". The dimensions reported a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.82 to 0.96 (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). The student's performance construct of test competence, time management and academic competence are measured using previously reported validated scales from Lust & Moore (2006) and Kleijn et al. (1994). All variables reported a Cronbach's Alpha value of more than 0.70.

### **4. Findings and Discussion**

To check on the reliability of the measurement scales, Cronbach's Alpha test was done for all variables of transformational leadership and student's performance. The 15-items transformational leadership's reported a Cronbach's Alpha at 0.805, test competence at 0.716, academic competence at 0.701, and time management at 0.733. To measure the sampling adequacy, the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) test was conducted and all variables reported an exceeding the minimum KMO's values of 0.6. Each of the items in the variables showed a minimum factor loading of 0.40 to 0.90, hence, the variables are acceptable (Table 1). According to Hair et al., (2006) 0.40 is the minimum factor loading score for it to be acceptable. Therefore, the loadings showed that each of the factors is unique, consistent and distinctive.

Table1: Validity and Reliability Test

Variables	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	KMO	Factor Loading
Transformational Leadership	15	.80	.70	.42-.79
Test Competence	4	.71	.61	.54-.90
Academic Competence	5	.70	.70	.55-.89
Time Management	5	.73	.60	.53-.84

To find the relationship between the transformational leadership and student's performance (CGPA), test aptitude, academic competence, and time management, correlation tests were conducted. The results showed that there are no significant correlations between the construct of transformational leadership with CGPA and student's performance. However, there is a significant correlation between transformational leadership with student's academic competence ( $r=.46$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The dimensions of transformational leadership showed some correlations to academic competence but not to test competence and time management (Table 2).

Transformational leadership elements showed no correlations with test competence and time management. However, transformational leadership has shown significant correlation with academic competence. Academic competence showed strongest correlation with inspirational motivation ( $r=.526$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), intellectual stimulation ( $r=.379$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), personal recognition ( $r=.383$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Supporting leadership showed no significant correlation on any of the academic performance. Lecturers are suggested to give out more exercises and do more coaching roles instead of just teaching in class.

This result may have been caused by the culture where this study was conducted. Students usually struggled and concentrated on final examination only. The academic competence becomes the benchmark for students to score well in their performance. Other than that, the systems of awarding the students at the end of their study years also may have impact the results. Students do not give emphasis on monthly tests or managing time earlier, but final (comprehensive) examinations.

Table 2: Correlations between Transformational Variables and Student's Performance

VARIABLES	CGPA	Academic Competence
Gender	.263* .042	
Inspirational Motivation		.526** .000
Intellectual Stimulation		.379** .003
Personal Recognition		.383** .003
Transformational Leadership		.466** .000

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Correlation test was also carried out to find the correlation between gender and CGPA, where the result revealed a significant correlation between gender and CGPA ( $r=.263$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) though the result was rather weak. Surprisingly, the academic competence, test competence and time management are not significant to CGPA. This contradicts with findings from Sujit et al., (2006). This may due to the student's study style in the community college which is different than university level.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the relationship between transformational leadership and student's performance revealed a mix of outcomes that may allow more research questions to be developed. This study focused on the relationship of transformational leadership with student's performance. Specifically, the factors concentrated in this research are the academic competence, test competence and time management. While there is a relationship between some of the elements in variables, it was rather weak. Further research and other factors such as culture, anxiety test, and other intelligence quotients may be included in the study. Understanding the needs of students may enhance their performance in study and in life. Support from colleges staffs and lecturers are fundamental for the students achievement in study and in life overall.

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