

**THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL
LEADERSHIP ON STAFF MORALE WITH
MOTIVATION AS A MEDIATOR IN COLLEGES
OF TECHNOLOGY, OMAN**

ANWAR NASSER ABDULLA AL ISHAQI

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OF TECHNOLOGY, OMAN**

by

ANWAR NASSER ABDULLA AL ISHAQI

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DEDICATION

To: My only daughters

Taleen & Lateen

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	Al Musanna College of Technology
CoTs	Colleges of Technology
DGVT	Directorate General of Vocational Training
ELC	English Language Center
FM	Faculty Motivation
FPs	Foundation Programs
GED	General Education Diploma
HCT	Higher College of Technology
HEAC	Higher Education Admission Center
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HoCTM	Head of Curriculum and Teaching Methods
IbriCT	Ibri College of Technology
ICT	Ibra College of Technology
IV	Independent Variable
MLQ	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoM	Ministry of Manpower
NCT	Nizwa College of Technology
OAAA	Oman Academic Accreditation Authority
POO	Purdue Teacher Opinionaire
QAU	Quality Audit Unit
SCT	Salalah College of Technology
ShCT	Shinas College of Technology
SMQ	Teaching Staff Morale Questionnaire

SP	Teaching Staff Morale
TL	Transformational Leadership
TM	Top Management
UTAS	University of Technology and Applied Sciences

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**PENGARUH KEPIMPINAN TRANSFORMASI TERHADAP MORAL STAF
DENGAN MOTIVASI SEBAGAI MEDIATOR DI KOLEJ-KOLEJ
TEKNOLOGI, OMAN**

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti pengaruh kepemimpinan transformasi sebagai variabel bebas terhadap moral tenaga pengajar sebagai pembolehubah bersandar. Ia juga bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti peranan motivasi sebagai mediator antara kepemimpinan transformasi dan moral tenaga pengajar. Walau bagaimanapun, Kepimpinan transformasi telah menjadi sama pentingnya dengan pengaruhnya yang signifikan terhadap staf moral. Berdasarkan beberapa kajian empirikal dalam konteks pendidikan Oman, didapati bahawa staf moral boleh dipengaruhi oleh amalan pemimpin dan faktor lain. Dengan menggunakan reka bentuk kaedah campuran, kajian ini melibatkan 427 tenaga pengajar yang dipilih melalui persampelan rawak berstrata daripada tujuh kolej teknologi di Oman. Selain itu, 9 tenaga pengajar telah dipilih untuk temu duga melalui persampelan mudah. Data kuantitatif dikumpulkan melalui soal selidik yang merangkumi skala kepemimpinan transformasi, motivasi, dan staf moral. Manakala data kualitatif dikumpul berdasarkan temu bual separa berstruktur untuk menghuraikan dan menjelaskan lebih lanjut tentang dapatan kuantitatif. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan IBM SPSS 24 dan SmartPLS4 yang mana min dan sisihan piawai digunakan untuk menganalisis data pada tahap deskriptif. Analisis inferensi menggunakan regresi linear, manakala analisis mediator menggunakan regresi berganda hierarki. Data kualitatif dianalisis menggunakan perisian Atlas.ti. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kepemimpinan transformasi secara signifikan mempengaruhi semangat guru, manakala motivasi memainkan peranan dalam

perhubungan ini. Tepatnya, dapatan penyelidikan kuantitatif mendedahkan tahap kepimpinan transformasi yang tinggi dan semangat kakitangan merentas semua dimensi yang berkaitan. Ia juga mendapati bahawa pemarkahan motivasi intrinsik adalah lebih tinggi daripada motivasi ekstrinsik. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat hubungan positif antara kepimpinan transformasi dan motivasi dalam kolej teknologi di Oman. Penemuan penyelidikan kualitatif menyokong fenomena yang dijelaskan dan diserlahkan oleh keputusan kuantitatif bahawa amalan kepimpinan transformasi dan faktor motivasi mempunyai pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap semangat tenaga pengajar dalam konteks kolej teknologi di Oman. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian masa depan harus merangkumi semua 13 kolej Universiti Teknologi dan Sains Gunaan dan meneroka faktor tambahan yang mempengaruhi semangat kakitangan. Akhir sekali, penemuan penyelidikan ini bukan sahaja menyediakan panduan praktikal untuk penambahbaikan organisasi tetapi juga memperkaya pemahaman teori kita tentang kepimpinan transformasi dan dinamik motivasi dalam konteks pendidikan. Dengan memanfaatkan cerapan ini, kolej teknologi di Oman boleh menggunakan persekitaran yang lebih menyokong dan memotivasikan, yang akan menggerakkan kolej teknologi ke peringkat yang lebih tinggi dan menjadikan semangat tenaga pengajar lebih berkesan di tempat kerja.

**THE INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON STAFF
MORALE WITH MOTIVATION AS A MEDIATOR IN COLLEGES OF
TECHNOLOGY, OMAN**

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the influence of transformational leadership as an independent variable on teaching staff morale as dependent variable. It also aims to identify the role of motivation as a mediator between transformational leadership and teaching staff moral. However, transformational leadership has become as important as its significant influence on staff morale. Based on some empirical studies in Omani educational context, it was found that morale of the staff can be affected by the practices of the leaders and other factors. By using sequential explanatory mixed method design, the study involved 427 teaching staff who were selected through stratified random sampling from seven colleges of technology in Oman. Additionally, 9 teaching staff were selected for interviews through convenience sampling. The quantitative data was collected through questionnaires that include transformational leadership, motivation, and staff morale scales. Whereas qualitative data was collected based on semi-structured interview to elaborate and explain more about the quantitative findings. Quantitative data was analysed using IBM SPSS 24 and SmartPLS4 by which mean and standard deviation was employed to analyse the data at a descriptive level. Inferential analysis utilized linear regression, while mediation analysis employed hierarchical multiple regression. The qualitative data were analysed using Atlas.ti application. The findings show that transformational leadership significantly influences teaching staff morale, while motivation plays a mediating in this relationship. Precisely, the quantitative research findings revealed a high level of

transformational leadership and staff morale across all the related dimensions. It also found that intrinsic motivation scoring notably higher than extrinsic motivation. However, there was a positive relationship between transformational leadership and motivation within colleges of technology in Oman. The qualitative research findings supported the phenomenon explained and highlighted by quantitative results that transformational leadership practices and motivational factors has a significant influence on teaching staff morale in the context of the colleges of technology in Oman. However, future studies should include all 13 colleges of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences and explore additional factors affecting staff morale. Finally, these research findings do not only provide practical guidance for organizational improvement but also enrich our theoretical understanding of transformational leadership and motivation dynamics within educational contexts. By leveraging these insights, colleges of technology in Oman can apply a more supportive and motivating environment, that would move the colleges of technology to higher levels and to make teaching staff morale even more effective at the workplace.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Recent trends call for transformative changes in educational management and leadership within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), focusing on digital transformation, data-driven decision-making, and flexible learning models to enhance development and resilience (Deloitte, 2023; EDUCAUSE, 2023). These shifts are crucial for addressing economic pressures and evolving student needs. Thus, there is a need of change as well as a source of knowledge and experience in a form of high and professional leadership capacities for the development to occur (Aziah, 2018).

According to Nahavandi (2002) and Seibert et al. (2011), HEIs are shaped by the desired educational contexts and leadership styles which lead to more effective and productive outcomes. Moreover, the recent well-known description of the leadership concept is that which unifies the mission, vision, policies, principles, ethics, objectives and perceptions among the leaders, staff and learners (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

In this study, the researcher will be focusing on the influence of transformational leadership on teaching staff morale. Whereas intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors will be acting as the mediator between transformational leadership and teaching staff morale. Transformational leadership is the independent variable of this study which will be of the fundamental focal point of discussions throughout the study. On the other hand, the main dependent variable will be teaching staff morale. Bass and Bass (2009) emphasized that it has been noticed that whatever outcomes found by the end of the assigned tasks, it reflects the leadership practices

and motivation factors used to generate the target level of performance by the employees.

However, according to George (2003) who stated that there is an extreme demand to have leaders who can make the change needed taking in consideration the importance of the visions and missions of the organizations that they are leading and to be aware of the staff development and the possible services available that assist them meeting the expectations. Overall, for better production, expectations and future outcomes to any educational institution, there is a need for a satisfying work environment that encourages whoever involved in such development.

However, this chapter will discuss the various aspects respectively as follows: background of the education and colleges of technologies in Oman, research variables, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, research hypotheses, significant of study, limitations of the study and operational definitions.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Higher Education in Oman

Decades ago, higher education in the Sultanate of Oman has seen the light starting from human resources development to the facilities and services offered as well as to the promising outcomes expected to gain by the time. However, Sultan Qaboos University was the first public institution in the Sultanate of Oman since 1984. Few years later, many public and private educational institutions started to be certified right after the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education in 1994 by the Royal Decree 1994/2.

More specifically, higher educational institutions (HEIs) in the Sultanate of Oman have been exposed to such assessment and evaluations by the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA), to ensure the importance of the visions and missions of HEIs and at least the minimum strategies and standards are achieved. However, those institutions are yet to be measured at least for the purpose of the research variables because there were only few numbers of research have been done to track the concept of transformational leadership in the higher educational colleges and universities in Oman.

However, in relation to the variables of this research, according to a local researcher Al-Balushi (2012) who said that there is a need to cope with world developmental cycle in education regardless of what other issues like the political and economic matters that might appear on the way to achieve the targeted levels of education. So, for such institutions to be a well-known and rise their level of qualities, they should at least find the best practices of leadership positions where leaders are supposed to be the key of aimed paths. According to DeSOT (2015), it is being stated that theoretical workshops are not good enough to train the staff in comparison to what the actual situation requires from the staff being trained to perform, that means those theoretical sessions must be followed with the practical session to guarantee that these training workshops make effective and qualified staff.

To give an example, one of the Colleges of Technology called Ibra College of Technology (ICT) held a training session for its staff as a response to a report by the private sector saying that there is a gab in the outcomes by the graduates of higher educational institutions which needed to be filled up with the possible solutions. Some interpretations of the gab found is that the Colleges of Technology's graduates are facing some challenges related to knowledge and skills in their actual workplace

(Fatma Nasser & Nor'Aini, 2016). Therefore, it ensures the presence of the gap before the outcomes are being seen and that is immediately referring to how the work is done which is totally relied on the leaders and their teaching staff morale.

This study also could help in formulating the future trends of educational leadership. It is worth mentioning that these two latter studies were conducted in the context of the private sector only. However, this study concerns only about the public educational institutions to identify the transformational leadership in the Colleges of Technology and its influence on the teaching staff morale as well as the motivational factors that might lead to high or low level of performance.

1.2.2 History of Colleges of Technology

Colleges of Technology (as they used to be called recently) were under the name on the Vocational Training Centres since 1979 which were scattered all over the country, Oman. Those centres targeted the families with low incomes by educating and training them professionally for future jobs. Few years later, in 1993, all seven vocational centres were upgraded to Technical Industrial Institutions and then to Colleges of Technology in 2000/2001. However, the same Colleges of Technology and other colleges of Applied Sciences have been merged and upgraded again to a university level (University of Technology and Applied Sciences, UTAS) in 2021.

However, it is worth mentioning that this study started before the merging process, and it only included the Colleges of Technology as the study site.

Because of the recent advancement occurred to the Colleges of Technology, they started to receive a huge number of students every year. According to the annual report by the university, the new intake of the academic year 2021/2022 was 11402

students in all 12 branches including the seven Colleges of Technology. On the other hand, the overall graduated students in the same year were 12415 graduates. This indicates that this university (UTAS) has ranked the upper levels of development.

To justify, choosing the Colleges of Technology only from all Higher Education Institutions in the Sultanate of Oman is because these colleges of technology used to be operated by the Ministry of Manpower, before the new Royal Decree 76/2020, which having its own policies and strategies although they are undertaken to the same evaluation from Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA). Another justification is that these colleges have the same employment and recruitment policies. That is some of the teaching staff are recruited by the governmental direct contracts and others are through the third-party companies. While in the other institutions the process is totally different.

1.2.3 Transformational Leadership

Leadership practices play an important role in shaping teaching staff morale (Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). In addition to that, Burns (1978) has shown a great importance to the capacities of the leaders and staff at work that would hit the goals of the organization and increases its values and status.

Moreover, the leadership practiced is seen to be of high impact to the teaching staff morale and that means the goals of the organization are also affected (Mohammadi et al., 2012). As crucial role that leadership plays as extremely nominated to be the only thing that makes a move in either way that determines in what condition and position an organization is standing at (Altbach, 2011).

However, transformational leadership is basically one kind of leadership that is defined as the process of leading and cooperating with those surrounding leaders in the educational community that share the same goals (Bass, 1985). The style of transformational leadership aims to make things done as a unity by the whole parties at work (Northouse, 2004). In contrast, transformational leadership is a key to any success in such organization and the vice versa (Anand & UdayaSuriyan, 2010).

In this regard, some researchers have thought of having the leadership style into practice would help to identify the right theory that should be implemented (Wang & Berger, 2010). According to Martin and Stella (2007) transformational leadership is one of the most effective styles in the educational context. Thus, this style of leadership assumes to be used by lots of modern educational institutions where it is anticipated that it would encourage and motivate staff to perform much better than before with passion and loyalty (Northouse, 2004).

Javidan et al. (2006) have claimed that leaders must be conscious enough to many aspects related their staff that would assist them for better understanding and interpretation like staff background, culture, level of education, skills, and experience. Furthermore, according to Chhokar et al. (2013), cultural differences may influence the leaders' perceptions especially in a multicultural working environment. In this regard, Bass (1999) has stated that one of the main trends of leadership is that it gets affected by the culture where it is observed. Therefore, Randeree and Ninan (2011) indicated that they dedicated some time to find out if there is any massive influence for the culture in the educational leadership or not. So, the study showed a correlation between the leadership style and the culture in the educational context.

In addition, some recent studies have shed light on the leadership in the Asian institutions and the Arab institutions and they found that leadership styles are practiced but there weren't any common leadership styles used in Hong Kong (Fatma Nasser & Nor'Aini, 2016). However, Al-Faleh (1987) and Badawy (1980) have found that in the Arab world, most of the educational institutions are influenced by Arabs' culture in leading these institutions. Their leadership practices are integrated with their lifestyle and that was obviously seen by in the latter studies.

Furthermore, some recent studies have been conducted in the Gulf Countries in the Arabian Peninsula to identify the features of leadership styles and they found that these countries are sharing almost the same features and style of leadership in most of the educational institutions because they are sharing almost the same culture, language, climate, educational systems and so forth (Kemp et al., 2015). As an evidence, these countries are having something called Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) where they discuss and decide on any issues related to any field all together.

According to Baeler and Bhanugopan (2014), their study has concluded that there is a huge gap among the United Arab Emirates (UAE), United States (US) and Europe in the leadership styles. They found that in UAE leaders are more concerned about using their authorities only without any consideration to other possible reasons which would lead fair judgments and that is totally different in the US and Europe. Based on the perception of Common (2011), as flexible as the leader's traits are, transformational leadership can be exhibited to suit the vision and mission of the educational institutions. Thus, the Sultanate of Oman is one on the GCC countries and because of its rabid development in education and many other fields, it is expected to be able to cope with the other international leading educational institutions along with the GCC countries (Fatma Nasser & Nor'Aini, 2016).

However, transformational leadership theory by Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) is implemented in this study as it is highly important and beneficial to the future vision and mission of the higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman. However, Leithwood and Jantzi's model has seven dimensions namely vision and mission, intellectual stimulation, individual support, values of professions and practice, decisions making, organizational support and observing school-related activities.

1.2.4 Motivational Factors

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors are some of many other motivational factors in educational institutions which may have unstable effects and they sometimes lead to an extreme success or failure. So, they play an important role in building the structure and real shape of the organizations. They also have a great influence in the level of teaching staff morale which determines how much productivity is being observed in a certain period (Tella et al., 2007). However, motivational factors are sometimes controlled by the practices of the leadership involved (Battaglio, 2010).

Moreover, these factors of motivation vary in their ability to make changes among the stakeholders and the results can be different. One of the attempts to define the concept of motivation says that it is the energy that the leaders may own to help them organizing and managing whatever approachable at work to make it more productive, effective, and cooperative working place (Nurul Jalilah, 2013). She elaborated that motivational factors can be determined by the individuals' needs and work requirements. That is, if the needs are found the leaders can use this advantage on their side to motivate staff to work harder by showing how quick their needs will be fulfilled once they finish their assigned tasks. Regardless of whether some

individuals like the way of communication or not but they still need to accomplish their duties as long as they are at least in the organization (Nurul Jalilah, 2013).

Although this study is mainly focusing on the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of motivation, but according to Kappen (2010) and Eyal and Roth (2011), four types of motivational factors were discussed which are intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, social motivation, and self-efficacy motivation. However, the first motivational factor is mainly focusing on the desire of the individual to do their work towards a high level. While the extrinsic motivational factor is what an individual does for his or her work after it comes to their knowledge that they will be awarded once the mission is completed perfectly. In addition, the social motivational factor basically means the ability of an individual to exchange the knowledge, skills, and experiences with others in the same community which says that those who are willing to do so they feel more satisfied and motivated more than other who don't do so. According to Chua (2012), self-efficacy motivational factor depends on an individual's ability to prove to himself or herself that they can meet the targets by whatever capacities they own that help them finishing their tasks.

However, having these four motivational factors is extremely recommended for the educational institutions as much as possible because they can rise the status of those institutions to the highest level (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Anyways, this study is essentially including the most two observable factors namely the intrinsic motivational factor and the extrinsic motivational factors respectively. There would be a lot of benefits focusing on the motivational factors which influence the staff in both directions and knowing the positive one is essential in this study. In this study, the researcher intends to mainly focus on the two-factors theory, the intrinsic and extrinsic factors, by Altindis (2011).

1.2.5 Teaching Staff Morale

Level of morale of teaching staff mainly depends on many internal and external factors. However, they are playing a crucial role in polishing, enlightening, educating, softening stakeholders personal and professional skills for a better future, so if they are not appreciated by their heads or supervisors, they might decide to leave their place in the organization and that will distort the reputation of the organization. However, Siddique et al. (2011) claimed that certain staff are more concerned about such rewards like the monetary one which is less valued to other staff as they believed that they are receiving their monthly salary, but what is of much value to them is low load of work and administrative duties. That does not mean that the financial reward is not crucial to the staff, but they are hoping to have balanced rewards and promotions (Siddique et al., 2011). According to Mckeachie (1997), teaching staff are satisfied when they are involved in such new developmental workshops which are more likely to enhance their knowledge and sharpen their skills. To add, successful educational institutions are those of much more of concerned about appreciation of human values rather than their positions or any other considerations (Tella et al., 2007).

Teaching staff morale is identified by many internal and external factors. It can be seen at a high or low level depending on the stimulation received by the other individuals in the community. However, Bentley and Rempel (1980) have defined teaching staff morale as “the professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation” (p. 2). This shows the important role of the relations and needs among individuals in an identical group of people who are sharing the same goals. However, a high level of teaching staff morale can be seen when individuals’ needs are met. That means morale is what individuals feel towards their work and it can be affected by external

factors. Anderson (1999) indicated that teaching staff morale has something to do with some of the psychological aspects of teachers themselves which are basically generated by what they encounter on their way to achieve the goals of such an educational institution.

Thus, the quality of the teaching staff at the Colleges of Technology depends on the follow-up evaluations. This is to say that staff are playing a role model of making a change and even to the stakeholders (Cotton, 2003). For instance, English Language Center (ELC) heads are following some procedures all over the seven colleges to maintain awareness and even develop the level of performance. In addition, the administration of ELCs uses forms of evaluations in various areas, at least they are important to be mentioned here to give an overview on how teaching staff morale and other administrative issues are dealt with, which are; teacher's portfolio, induction program, substitution form, staff appraisal, teacher's assessment report and annual staff appraisal. Therefore, by conducting this study, it would be easy to figure out the usefulness of the practices and means used with teaching staff morale evaluation in all departments and centres at the Colleges of Technology.

However, the teaching staff morale model used for the study is by Anderson (1999). This model has five dimensions namely administrative issues, student and classroom experience, workload and demands, anticipated outlook of job satisfaction and teacher's autonomy and influence.

1.3 Problem Statement

Teaching staff morale is the main concern of this study, and it seems to be very crucial to leaders as it determines the level of profession displayed by the staff towards the vision and mission of the organization (Certo & Fox, 2002). However, there are

many factors that can be seen as causes behind low level of teaching staff morale such as, lack of support needed, lack of teaching staff autonomy and influence, dissatisfactory compensations and expectations and insufficient academic development (Kalbers & Cenker, 2008). In an international study, teaching staff are found to have job turn-over intention right after their start to work due to unsuitable work environment and career choice (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

In comparison, it is being observed that those who decided not to leave are found to be stuck, impassionate and with low level of morale. Teaching staff are imposed to many challenges and obstacles due to work stress by the stakeholders' behavior and workload and additional administrative duties that would decrease teaching staff morale at work (Bobbitt et al., 1991). Even more complicated internal and external factors can lead to a certain teaching staff morale level by which it is intensively influenced through such inappropriate settings and lack of institutional support (Ingersoll, 2007).

The current situation observed is that teaching staff approach most of the tasks individually which led to a maximum level of misleading that basically requires a great effort in a later stage of manipulation to settle things down to its normal level (Ash & Persall, 2000). That means staff are recommended to do things cooperatively which simply help staff to exchange experiences and give immediate feedback on the current problems (Bohlander et al., 2001).

Based on the nature of teachers' workplace and teaching process in classroom, they encounter various situations daily that requires immediate reaction in solving the problems. Where the study is conducted, however, culture and experience of staff play a vital role in controlling any situation encountered (Lieberman & Miller, 2008).

Although it seems that the linear process of teaching and learning is as two faces for the same coin, but the teachers are the focal point in it and any influence on them might lead to low or high morale. In the current setting of this research, teaching staff are not given the priority at work so that their interests are identified for better achievement and development. Rather the academic matters are left behind and the last thing to be discussed in the official institutional meetings (Mulford & Silins, 2005).

Due to the details on teaching staff morale above, it was suggested by Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) to make the possible change at work by implementing the transformational leadership theory through which teachers are expected to change the way of thinking while their morale starts to increase. Thus, the presence of the transformational leadership practices in such educational institutions are essential for the sake of change (Bush, 2007). Hence, this demanding of change on teaching staff morale is assumed to be dependent on both leaders' practices and staff beliefs. According to Cheung and Chan (2008), if staff believes in change first and then in themselves as well as in their direct and indirect influencers, level of teaching staff morale would be at a satisfying condition. So, high level of productivity and commitment would be observed at workplace.

It is generally assumed that the major indicator for any successful educational institution is measured based on academic outcomes obtained (Dessler, 2011). Those outcomes are dependent on the quality of teaching and teaching staff morale. Thus, any increase in the ability of staff teaching would positively influence and reflect the desired outcomes (Beletskiy, 2011). Since teaching staff morale is the dependent variable, it relies on the transformational leadership which is expected to play an important role in encouraging the best practices in teaching abilities through teaching staff morale. Staff perception towards their leaders' practices and other administrative

matters would reduce any misunderstanding and indirectly influences staff psychologically (Oluremi, 2013; Horn-Turpin, 2009).

In the literature review of this research, the only study which was conducted on teaching staff morale in the Omani educational context was by Alhajri (2014). In this study, teaching staff morale was found to be at its lower levels in many schools due to many internal and external factors. However, it also shows that teaching staff morale can also be affected by other moderating and mediating variables. By conducting this study, the researcher tends to introduce the change required through transformational leadership theory. To say, leadership practices are seen to play an essential role in the level of teaching staff morale. Moreover, the current study carries out only the mediation variable which is motivation alone with the two main variables which are transformational leadership as an independent variable and teaching staff morale as the dependent variable. However, by conducting this study, the researcher would try to shed lights on the gap in the literature and how transformational leadership would contribute to make the change needed towards different levels of teaching staff morale at Colleges of Technology in Oman.

To conclude, the problem stated here is that teaching staff morale can be influenced by various factors which are the main gap of the study: In an international study, teaching staff are found to have job turn-over intention right after their start to work due to unsuitable work environment and career choice (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Locally, besides the study by Alhajri (2014), the study by Al-Balushi (2012) resulted in low levels of morale in higher educational institutions. To add, in several empirical studies, including one by Al Shukaili (2019), have highlighted the challenges faced by teachers in Oman, such as high workloads, stress, and administrative burdens. It was found that 68% of teachers reported that their workload was "high" or "very

high," contributing significantly to stress. These factors contribute to low morale and job dissatisfaction. Teachers often report feeling overburdened with non-teaching tasks, which affects their teaching effectiveness and overall morale. In a study by Al-Khalidi et al. (2021), teachers reported spending an average of 20-25 hours per week on non-teaching tasks (e.g., administrative work, meetings, extracurricular activities), leading to lower level of morale. In addition, a study by Al-Hinai (2020), it was found that 57% of teachers stated that their heavy workload affected their work-life balance, contributing to lower morale and higher stress levels.

Moreover, due to internal factors for the low teaching staff morale, there are two types of contracts: direct contracts with the government and indirect contracts through private companies. This would lead to low or high level of morale among the teaching staff as they are working in the same field and next to each other due to salaries differences. Second, the teaching staff are from 18 different nationalities, along with being away from their origins which may lead to unstable level of staff morale. So, by conducting this study, the researcher tends to introduce the change required through transformational leadership theory along with the motivational factors.

1.4 Research Objectives

In this study, the first four research objectives are quantitative research objectives, and the last research objective is qualitative research objective.

- 1) To find the level of transformational leadership, motivation and teaching staff morale in colleges of technology in Oman.
- 2) To identify the influence of transformational leadership on teaching staff morale at colleges of technology in Oman.
- 3) To identify the influence of motivation on teaching staff morale at colleges of technology in Oman.
- 4) To investigate the influence of transformational leadership on motivation at colleges of technology in Oman.
- 5) To investigate the role of motivation as a mediator between transformational leadership and teaching staff morale at colleges of technology in Oman.
- 6) To further explain the phenomenon of the quantitative results underlying the relationships identified in research questions 2,3 and 4 at colleges of technology in Oman.

1.5 Research Questions

Here are the research questions based on the research objectives:

- 1) What is the level of transformational leadership, motivation and teaching staff morale in colleges of technology in Oman?
- 2) Does transformational leadership significantly influence teaching staff morale at colleges of technology in Oman?
- 3) Does motivation significantly influence teaching staff morale at colleges of technology in Oman?
- 4) Does transformational leadership significantly influence motivation at colleges of technology in Oman?
- 5) Does the role of motivation significantly mediate between transformational leadership and teaching staff morale at colleges of technology in Oman?
- 6) What are the explanations for the phenomenon of the quantitative results underlying the relationships identified in research questions 2,3 and 4 at colleges of technology in Oman?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses are formulated from the research questions as follows:

- H₁ There is a significant influence of transformational leadership on teaching staff morale at colleges of technology in Oman.
- H₂ There is a significant influence of motivation on teaching staff morale at colleges of technology in Oman.
- H₃ There is a significant influence of transformational leadership on motivation at colleges of technology in Oman.
- H₄ There is a significant role of motivation as a mediator between transformational leadership and teaching staff morale at colleges of technology in Oman.

1.7 Significance of Study

This study shed lights on the weaknesses and strengths of transformational leadership in educational context in form of leaders of different departments and centres namely, Engineering Department, Business Studies Department, Informational Technology Department and English Language Centres at seven Technical Colleges in Oman. Due to the important role of leaders in making a change by themselves regardless of what the rules and regulations are, conducting this study would help in such a way to figure out the best leadership practices that can be implemented in the Technical Colleges in Oman and will look at what makes a good leader. However, the more significant notion is how such a leadership style, as in this study, the transformational leadership, would influence teaching staff morale. In consequence, once the correlation is found between the independent and dependent variables, means the institutional success can be directed to the right path.

Moreover, conducting this study will not only benefit the Colleges of Technology but rather it would help revising the current policies and standards implemented in them and it might be circulated and generalized to most of the private and public colleges and universities in the Sultanate of Oman. In addition to that, in case the findings of this study are convenient it would be appreciated by the University of Technology and Applied Sciences where Colleges of Technology belong to and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation as this research is partially sponsored by the Research Council (RC) of Oman. So, it is being followed and the results of this study would also help reasoning why such gaps were found in between Higher Educational Institutions generally and Colleges of Technology specifically (Al-Balushi, 2012).

For instance, because of the study conducted by Al-Balushi (2012) to indent the level of teaching staff morale at the higher education institutions as well as the correlation between leadership styles and teaching staff morale, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation has taken serious decision which led to change previous leaders with new qualified ones in many of its related institutions. Thus, both the private and public educational institutions are expected to benefit a lot from this study as they are responsible for educating the people of Oman. This is ensuring the need of cooperation in handling all matters in relation to the leadership which is basically the key to productive teaching staff morale.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Although this study has shed lights on various aspects in relation to transformational leadership, motivation, and teaching staff morale at the Colleges of Technology, still it has some limitations whereas it was conducted only at the level of

the Technical Colleges excluding the Colleges of Applied Sciences which were all merged and upgraded to a university level recently after the researcher has almost finished this study. This will leave a floor for other researchers in the future studies to involve the whole population at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS).

One limitation of this study is that it was focused on one of the public higher educational institutions in the Sultanate of Oman due to the gap of the study which the research intended to improve whereas further research studies may give more attention to the other public educational institutions as well as the private ones by applying this kind of study in different context and settings.

Moreover, the intention of this study was to find out some reasons to the phenomenon of the high or low morale among the teaching staff at UTAS. Other administrative and technician staff, for example, were not involved. This would limit the findings of the study to certain group of people in the same institution and put some boundaries for making inappropriate generalizations.

To say, by keeping these limitations into consideration, they assisted the researcher to be on the right track and to be conscious enough to keep track of the research questions and find answers for them.

1.9 Operation Definitions

Here are the operationalized definitions for the terms related to my study for the sake of measurements. Therefore, the key terms of this study are transformational leadership, motivational factors, and teaching staff morale. They are explained below respectively.

1.9.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership theory is a theory that works out things to make positive changes on the individuals of such an organization (Northouse, 2004). According to Bass (1985) claimed that transformational leadership is what an individual does to encourage his followers to accomplish the tasks assigned to them even before the deadlines. Moreover, in a transformational leadership position, the leaders are expected to put into practice several factors that would assist remaining the fundamental concepts to the organization. This makes better results and increase the productivity of the organization.

In addition, Burns (1978) stated that personal skills and knowledge as well as the constructive experiences can generate a suitable atmosphere of satisfaction which led to a great influence on the stakeholders. For this research, transformational leadership means by Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) as one of the leadership styles that relies on the important role of leaders in leading any organization in a way that involves all parties in a particular teamwork where they share and cooperate with each other to meet the overall outcomes. However, in this study, transformational leadership is measured by Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) through their main seven dimensions and with 34 items which are defined below:

1.9.1(a) Vision and Mission

The vision of such educational institutions is to be one of the best in the region that provide up to date education to stakeholders while the mission is to provide a high level of qualities and capacities (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

1.9.1(b) Intellectual Stimulation

It is the practice the leader is doing to stimulate other colleagues in the institution for better performance that rise the quality of productivity that ensures the goals and objectives are met and accomplished (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). According to Bass and Avolio (1997) it is being simply defined as the positive power used by the leaders to make the followers thinking out of the box for the sake of finding solutions to any dilemma.

1.9.1(c) Individual Support

This kind of support is shown basically by the leader to fulfil the needs of the teachers whenever possible and it comes in a form of respect even before the official duties (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). This support might go beyond the services and facilities that the teachers might get. The leader may consider the social and career difficulties and tries to solve them.

1.9.1(d) Values of Profession and Practice

Leaders are as a role model in many ways (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). That means, if they are professional in approaching any task, others will act the same way. Spreading the typical work ethics would help to make a better work environment. In addition, encouraging participation in or outside workplace in any related fields enriches the knowledge of the participants.

1.9.1(e) Decisions-Making

Leaders intend to share or involve some colleagues from the same place of work to take decisions in curtain issues (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). These chances

leave a good feeling of involvement to the colleagues. They feel like they belong to the institution, and they are part of it. However, a transformational leader supports teachers' autonomy in any related issues that do not need any administrative support and they can be solved immediately without referring to the leader (Ingersoll, 2007).

1.9.1(f) Organizational Support

Teachers need as much support as possible so that they can be helped working harder and achieve the institutional goals (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). This can be handled by such leaders who put their great efforts to satisfy their colleagues. Teaching can be more effective as long as teachers are supported by the needed facilities and materials that help them accomplish their tasks and duties (Alhajri, 2014). Moreover, monitoring teaching staff activities and practices guarantees the qualities offered to hit the targets.

1.9.1(g) Observing School-Related Activities

Leaders at any institutions are expected to be in person monitoring the activities that are going on there (Leithwood, 1994). This would ensure the importance of the activities implemented. However, teachers are always happy by the presence of their leaders wherever the activities take place (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

1.9.2 Motivational Factors

Motivation plays an important role in moving the sense of creativity towards employees and leads to high level of productivity and commitment in such educational institutions (Herzberg et al., 1999). By motivation, teaching staff get stimulated to act out in a certain way to achieve the goals planned (Tella et al., 2007). In this study,

motivation as a mediator is measured by Herzberg et al. (1999) and modified by Altindis (2011) via two factors. They are measured with a total of 29 items. However, the two factors are explained below:

1.9.2(a) Intrinsic Factor

Intrinsic factor is found in the workplace environment including the promotions, workload, peers' relations, job satisfaction, management cooperation, professional development, etc (Altindis, 2011). The use of those values positively by the leaders may cause a huge difference in the organization (Siddique et al., 2011).

1.9.2(b) Extrinsic Factor

Extrinsic factor is about certain related sub-factors that come from an organization itself (Altindis, 2011). That is including the monthly income, incentives, and job recruitment (Rowley, 1996). In short, these factors are not under the control of the leader him/herself but there is a possibility where the leaders can leave an impact on whatsoever happened to the employees as they are committed to give the appraisal form to each one of them.

1.9.3 Teaching Staff Morale

Teaching staff morale can be seen in its higher-level once morale at workplace is receiving ample attention by the transformational leaders. Morale can be defined as the feeling possess by individuals whether positive or negative that lead to certain results. Thus, leaders play a great role in guiding their staff toward achieving the objectives of the institution (Anderson, 1999). In this study, the dependent variable can be affected by several factors. This effect might result in huge difference between