

The Effect of Organization Development Interventions (ODI) on Transformational Leadership to Enhance Employee Engagement and Employee Creativity: An Action Research in Focal College

PATTARADA RUNGRUANG
ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY
E-mail: rpattarada@gmail.com

Abstract

Studies reveal that it is truly important that the leadership is one of the main factors that generate competitive advantages for organization to survival and sustain in fast changing times. This reasearch investigated the effects of organization development interventions (ODI) on transformational leadership to enhance employee engagement and employee creativity among top and middle level leaders at the focal college. The organization development interventions (ODI) mainly used processes such as: creating awareness of the organization system, raising consciousness of organizational culture in positive constructive design for change and utilizing Whole Brain Literacy (WBL) with Appreciative Inquiry (AI) for transformative learning and change to shift mindset leading to transformational leadership. These processes were within an action research design frame. The ODI activities were conducted with top and middle level leaders. Hypotheses were tested using data from an attitude survey questionnaire conducted with 26 leaders at top and middle level management and 58 respondents at subordinate level at pre-ODI and post-ODI stage. The questionnaire was designed to gather data on Employee Engagement (in terms of extra effort, commitment and job satisfaction), and on employee creativity (in terms of problem solving, creativity self-efficacy and suggest useful idea). Quantitative data were analyzed by sample t-test, correlation, and ANOVA, while content analysis was used for qualitative data.



The study has indicated an improved level of transformational leadership, employee engagement and employee creativity at post-ODI. This indicates that ODI significantly create effects on these variables. There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership, employee engagement and employee creativity. Recommendations on the effect of transformational leadership on employee engagement and employee creativity can be shared with other private higher education institutes. In addition, the key results of the study are the best practices of focalcollege on leadership style which the higher education institutions and refer to as a model.

Keywords: Organization Development Intervention (ODI), Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Employee Engagement, Employee Creativity

Introduction

Now, people in the world of work and relations live in an era where the pace and scope of change are uncertain. It is inevitable that individuals, groups and organizations especially those in the educational sector are affected and influenced by the massive changes in information technology, communication pace and explosion/implosion of knowledge. A commercial business school cannot remain in the traditional mode of teaching and learning under a conventional mindset of leadership. What is historically known about commercial business has been completely changing. Leaders who do not see these changes or fail to rapidly adapt to them would be left behind in the highly competitive environment (Manning, 2004). Taking a close look at impacts of overall change, similar to other business sectors, education industry is confronted with the same change and demand the study of Ford (1996) consistently supported that education providers face the challenges of building educational system which is equipped to meet society needs in the 21st century. Therefore, he strongly emphasizes the urgent need to education providers to response positively and rapidly to the change. Furthermore, the study of Wilkenson,

Fourie, Stydom, van der Westhuizen and van Tonder (2004) point out potential changes in the next century including the significant increase on economic knowledge and the newly introduced communication and technology. They consistently support that education industry needs to adaptively change by reforming their mission and better utilizing their intellectual resources in order to meet challenges. Coaldrake and Stedman (1999) suggested five areas of change that significantly impact employee performance in education environment; rapid growth within the industry, the shift of financial source from government to students, increasing interaction between knowledge (researchers) and demand (users) for synthesis, industrialization and its policy, and transformation in information technology and transformation of teaching and learning. These outlined changes have fallen on the university system. Those universities choose to remain in traditional form may be badly out of balance and move forwardly to disequilibrium stage (Clark, 1998) For those want to survive, the fundamental change in thought processes about the governance and management of the organization are necessity (Ford, 1996). In other words,

Ford emphasized the shift on paradigm which commonly creates impacts on every aspect of organization. One significant aspect that is affected by this paradigm shift is the approach to leadership. Studies consistently support that leadership is the key to effective educational reform (Bass, 1998a; Clark, 1998; Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999; Green & Fisher, 1991; Harker & Sharma, 2000), but the appropriate leadership style to effectively manage transformation and change is rarely identified. Zeffane (1996) suggested that the implementation of strategic transformation and change would be achieved by blending of empowered leaders with new technology and improving business processes. This is made through effective transformational leadership model. To reassure the achievement on organizational performance, the organization initiates talent management policy including employee engagement. Having engaged employees are crucially important in a time where organizations look to employees to take initiative and creative, bring innovation to today needs. Transformational leaders play a fundamental role in the organization. They do more than just motivate employees but enable them to fulfill basic needs but meaningful in their activities. Consequently, transformational leaders positively affect employee performance by way of increased engagement and creativity which, in turn, can have a determinant effect in organizational performance (Stevens, 2010)

Purposes

The main purpose of this study is to determine the impact of Organization Development Interventions (ODI) on transformation leadership and its influence on employee engagement and employee creativity.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

Ho: There is no significant difference between pre-ODI and post-ODI on Transformational leadership.

Ha: There is a significant difference between pre-ODI and post-ODI on transformational leadership.

Hypothesis 2

Ho: There is no significant difference between pre-ODI and post-ODI on employee engagement.

Ha: There is a significant difference between pre-ODI and post-ODI on employee engagement.

Hypothesis 3

Ho: There is no significant difference between pre-ODI and post-ODI on employee creativity.

Ha: There is a significant difference between pre-ODI and post-ODI on employee creativity.

Hypothesis 4

Ho: There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 5

Ho: There is no significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity.

Ha: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity.

Conceptual Framework

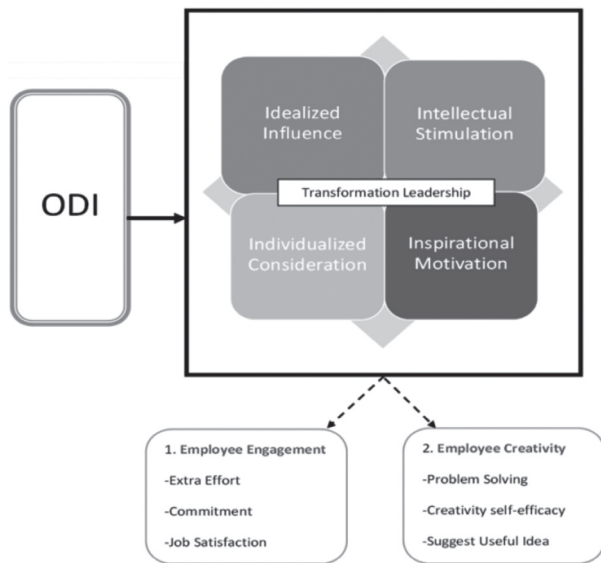


Figure 1 The Figure 1 below is the conceptual framework of this research

Benefit of Research

Several empirical studies have been carried out on the concept of transformational leadership, which concluded that transformational leadership is considered to be a significant factor in providing numerous benefits to an organization performance and have a positive relation with employee engagement and employee creativity.

Top management and middle management would adapt their self of leadership behavior to leading subordinate and organization. The effect of this study and interventions include the following:

The first, the organization as focal system benefits from the study on The Effect of Organization Development Intervention (ODI) on transformational leadership to enhance employee engagement and employee creativity. It is mainly focused on identifying the effective of ODI on transformational leadership (management team and knowledge provider) and to consider the relationship of transformational leadership

with employee engagement and creativity. The study would highly guide and assist in both long term and short term development plans of the organization. This study would help and improve top management and middle management as well as increase and change leadership behavior and in order to, it would increase employee engagement and employee creativity to create high organization performance and high innovation solution for organization in the future.

The second, the top and middle management are able to obtain the benefits from the study. Top management and middle management would gain and develop more useful and effective leadership style as their thinking, leading, and empowering subordinates for surviving and developing organization with new view and create long term growth of the organization. New leadership style and perspective would create new dynamic, innovation, and new idea to support and create the plan of organization and connect with subordinates. Moreover, the change and progress would help management to more understanding their subordinate limitation and concerns in the work place in real situation and help them to be able to create the solution, to lead and to delivery more success and creative the organization performance. From several reports say that transformational leadership have impact to empower and motivation their subordinates. (Jung and Sosik, 2002). The responsibility of management, management must select and deselect if necessary and develop their employees for success; create a motivation and robust, open system in work place; and encouraging or influenced employee to complete the job. Employee engagement and empowerment gives an organization to competitive advantage to

succeed in the business. (Piersol, 2007)

Anyways third, the customers or students and society would get benefit from the change of leadership, employee engagement, and employee creativity in organization by getting new and better of education program, plan, and good governor from management team, better management and flow from staff of college. The college would be able to sustain and growth the college and create or attract more student or other for enrollment credit and non-credit program.

Four, this study would add new knowledge for higher education business in Thailand because there are limited published studies area on transformational leadership relation to employee engagement and employee creativity in top management and middle management in private higher education business in Thailand.

Fifth, the researcher would explore and expand understanding of the business constraints and change processes of management leadership styles. In order to be able support the organization to sustain, growth, and achieving organization goal and create the better plan for our staff and organization.

Research Process

Presents the research design, methodology, the ODI processes, tools and levels of analysis. The researcher used quantitative methods to test the hypotheses by using surveys of both pre-ODI and post-ODI. In-depth Interview and observation are qualitative method of data collection and the most widely used technique in OD. Additionally, ODI activities are examined.

The researcher to design and develop the ODI process to effect the needed change in focal

college. This assertion was supported by studies earlier cited that the leadership behavior of the leader in changing environment demonstrates the transformational leadership where a leader closely works with subordinates in order to identify needed change, create a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and using the change in association with committed employee. However, from gathered data and observations obtained at pre-ODI clearly indicated such leadership styles relative to the strategic concerns within focal college. One critical concern was the lack of the most appropriate competent transformational leaders at middle and top management level. In addition, the understanding how transformational leaders influentially impact level of employee engagement and employee creativity was rare.

This action research comprises 3 steps; action planning, action taking and action evaluation which were implemented in this study with the aim to answer research questions and test research hypotheses.

Action Research Design

The action research design in this study was in three phases. It was intended to compare the pre-ODI and post ODI data on the variables whether there was a difference after intervention. The action research approach was appropriate for this study since it allowed the creation of knowledge during the interventional process, which could lead to the desired outcome of the study. The three phases were pre-organizational development intervention, the OD intervention, and post-organizational development intervention.



1. Pre Organization Development Intervention (ODI)

There were two primary purposes of this stage. First, it was to assess and analyze the current situation of focal college purposely to address concerns of leadership, employee engagement and employee creativity in relation to organizational performance. Second, it was to set and create intervention activities in order to implement them through ODI process. The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data collection tools were a questionnaire, in-depth interview and observation by the researcher.

At pre-ODI, the assessments to participants were conducted as follow:

1. In-depth interview, there were interview questions to 6 participants from different six position which were Officers, head of office, teacher, head of department, dean of faculty, vice president.

2. There were two sets of questionnaire

- 2.1 Questionnaire on Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X-Short): Leader form were distributed to 26 participants from top and middle management.

- 2.2 Questionnaire on measure level of employee engagement and creativity were distributed to 58 respondent from a subordinate level that had direct report line to those 26 participants at top and middle management.

2. Organization Development Intervention (ODI)

This stage was to plan an action in order to improve focal college concerns addressed from the pre-ODI stage. The course of action was designed after data gathering at the pre-ODI.

The objectives of developed activities were to

improve and develop behaviors and management skills of leaders at Top and middle management level in order to develop them the skills do demonstrate the transformational leader's behavior. The length to execute interventions took six months. Each set of objectives and activities were formulated and carried out in Response to Issues.

There were 5 stages of effective change management used to undergo the OD change Process. These steps started from the foundation for managing change to sustain the momentum of change in the organization. The steps below provided insight into how to manage change effectively in focal college:

Step 1: Motivating change

This stage was requires attention to two related tasks: creating readiness for change and overcoming resistance to change.

The activity was a meeting and learning in order to create a sense of urgency for change to participants with Whole Brain Literacy (WBL) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) tools were chosen for this step to participants and using invitation letter from the president to get the attention to motivating change.

Step 2: Creating vision

Vision describes the core values and purpose that guide the organization as well as an envisioned future toward which change is directed. The vision could energize commitment to change.

Transformational leadership workshop was an activity that gives the idea and basic information of the transformational leadership and the way of think and understands themselves with Whole Brain Literacy (WBL) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI). It was an activity in a role play that enable them to understand more and feel comfortable with new information and inspiration on the vision of

focal college that could stir them more action in real work place and could energize all situation to change.

Step 3: Developing political support

Managing the political dynamics of change includes activities that enjoin participation and develop team spirit for political or broad base support.

The ODI created the activity for sharing experience of transformation leadership with the group of top and middle management and each group of subordinate. This was the way to expanding and sharing more the information for everyone and can be more practical to practice how to lead with transformational leadership and eliminate the barrier for being transformed from before and after. The researcher would get together all the top and middle management to have a dialogic and interactive meeting to arrive at common understanding as well as consensus on the development initiatives.

Step 4: Managing Transition

Implementing and managing organizational change involving the process of moving from the existing organization state to the desired future state.

The activities to mobilize the participants and focal college as a whole to implement the changes were coordinated and communicated in a well-planned process. Activities included focal college outing, which involved key people and groups whose experience of the impact from intervention was needed for change to occur and formulating a strategy for gaining their support and continuous the transition.

Step 5: Sustain momentum

Make the new culture strike and providing

resources for change, building a support system for change agents, developing new competencies and skills, reinforcing new behaviors, and staying the course.

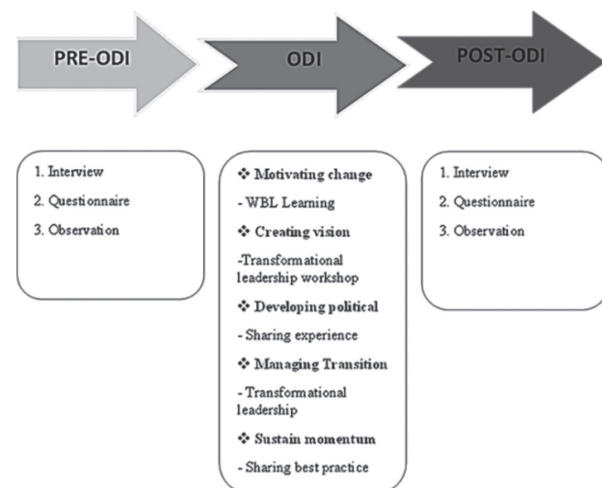
Activity for new coming leader would be check point within paper evaluation for transformation leadership or continue communication with human resource.

Continuous communication and sharing internal best practices is a good way to improve top and middle management performance by replicating successes throughout an organization. Initiatives that promote focus on what top and middle management are doing right for the focal college.

Develop and create the structure of organization that supports the new style of leadership.

3. Post Organization Development Intervention (ODI)

The same qualitative and quantitative approaches at pre-ODI were used purposely to assess data of interrelationship between transformational leadership and the level of



The Figure 2 below is the summary “three phases” as objective and activity of ODI



employee engagement and employee creativity at focal college. Also, this was to compare the level of employee engagement and employee creativity during pre and post ODI. In addition, this was to determine the effectiveness of interventions between pre-ODI and post-ODI.

Population and Sample

The selected participants consisted of two group of management in top and middle level of management while the respondents were the subordinate employees who reported to executive management. First group consisted of top and middle management group of 26 managements and 1 observer. The management team has two levels as the top level included president, vice president, assisted president, dean, and deputy dean, while middle management included head of department and chief of office. All participants were at work and on deck remaining in their current position for more than 6 months to ensure the management' leadership perception to the study. While, the respondents were 58 subordinates who are under the supervision of and were to report to the Top and Middle management in this study. The respondents were asked to answer the survey questionnaire before (pre-ODI) and after intervention (post-ODI).

Instruments

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect and analysis data in both pre and post-intervention stages of this study. The questionnaires are used for data collection in both the pre-ODI and post-ODI stages. In order to avoid errors in the data collection, the questionnaires were testing of reliability result (Cronbach Alpha) and translated into the Thai language for participant and respondent. Some of the questionnaires as interventions evaluation form were in Thai while the questionnaires created for this study were reviewed by peers and others professionals. The qualitative research were used for data collection of sharing the theoretical assumptions and assessed the information of the interpretative and perception of individual in organization.

Data Analysis

The summary of findings on transformational leadership (Individualized consideration, Intellectual stimulation, Inspirational motivation, and Idealized Influence), employee engagement (extra effort, commitment, and job satisfaction) and employee creativity (problem solving, creativity self-efficacy, and suggest useful idea) at pre-ODI and post-ODI is presented in three table below comparison

Table: 1. Comparison between the Pre-ODI and Post-ODI of Transformational leadership

Transformational Leadership	N	Pre- ODI Mean	Post-ODI Mean	% Improvement
Idealized Influence (II)	25	3.12	3.56	14.10
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	25	3.48	3.86	10.92
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	25	3.16	3.64	15.19
Individualized Consideration (IC)	25	3.19	3.62	13.48
Overall- TCL	25	3.24	3.67	13.27

between the pre and post-ODI of each variable. Table 1 shows the data of comparison between the pre and post-ODI of transformational leadership.

The Table 1 summarizes each the data collection from variables of transformational leadership, the pre-ODI and post-ODI of organization. All variables had improved after the ODI. The greatest improvement in transformational leadership was for Intellectual Stimulation (IS) as 15.19%, while Inspirational Motivation (IM) prevention improved the least as 10.92%.

The Table 2 summarizes, the greatest improvement in employee engagement was for commitment as 5.23% and Job satisfaction as 3.98%, while extra effort improved the least as 1.30%. On employee engagement, the greatest improvement was for commitment while extra effort improved the least.

The Tables 3 summarize employee creativity, suggest useful Idea as 5.57% or new produce the highest improvement and creativity self-efficacy the lowest. On employee creativity, suggest useful Idea has the highest improvement and creativity

self-efficacy has the lowest. During the six months of interventions, the researcher observed that those leaders who participated in the process were more confident and known how to manage their subordinates to encourage better performance in enhancing employee engagement and greater creativity in work and life.

There are two major parts relationship in explaining after change of transformational leadership. The first, it explores the overall dimensions of employee engagement and employee creativity that relate to transformational leadership and secondly it discusses relationship on ideation level and execution level.

Transformational leadership and its influence on employee engagement and employee creativity presented in the findings were revealing a positive relation of employee engagement and employee creativity to transformation leadership.

At the ideation level the p value is more than 0.05 in all dimensions (out of 6 dimensions) in both employee engagement and employee creativity; Job satisfaction, Extra effort, commitment, suggest

Table 2. Comparison between the Pre-ODI and Post-ODI of Employee engagement

Employee Engagement	N	Pre- ODI Mean	Post-ODI Mean	% Improvement
Job satisfaction	58	3.27	3.40	3.98
Extra effort	58	3.85	3.90	1.30
Commitment	58	3.25	3.42	5.23
Overall - Employee Engagement	58	3.46	3.57	3.18

Table 3. Comparison between the Pre and Post-ODI of Employee Creativity

Employee Creativity	N	Pre- ODI Mean	Post-ODI Mean	% Improvement
Suggest useful Idea	58	3.23	3.41	5.57
Creativity self-efficacy	58	3.47	3.56	2.59
Solving more problem	58	3.13	3.23	3.19
Overall – Employee Creativity	58	3.28	3.40	3.66

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Test between Transformational Leadership and Employee Engagement

Variable – Employee Engagement		Transformational Leadership	Result
Job satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	0.458	Moderate
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.099	Correlation
	N	58	
Extra effort	Pearson Correlation	0.179	Very Weak
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.178	Correlation
	N	58	
Commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.577	Moderate
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.075	Correlation
	N	58	
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	0.066	Strong
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.624	Correlation
	N	58	

useful Idea, creativity self-efficacy, and solving more problem, anyway the level of person correlation is a positive level. Transformational leadership in relation to employee engagement and employee creativity

As can be seen from the descriptive statistics of the correlation test shown in table 4, employee engagement; job satisfaction ($r = .458, p > 0.05$), extra effort ($r = .179, p > 0.05$), and commitment ($r = .577, p > 0.05$) have a significant relationship with transformation leadership.

The r value correlations for employee engagement in terms of job satisfaction, extra effort, and commitment showed r value correlations of

- Job satisfaction $r = 0.458$ which indicates that job satisfaction has “moderate correlation with transformational leadership,

- Extra effort $r = 0.179$ which indicates that extra effort has “very weak correlation” with transformational leadership, and

- Customer treatment $r = 0.577$ which indicates that customer treatment has “moderate correlation” with transformational leadership,

This can be described that among three dimension of employee engagement that were used in this research, customer treatment has positive correlation effect size to transformational leadership.

As can be seen from the descriptive statistics of the correlation test shown in Table 5, employee creativity; suggest useful idea ($r = .516, p > 0.05$), creativity self-efficacy ($r = .780, p < 0.05$), and solving more problem ($r = .570, p > 0.05$), have a significant relationship with employee creativity.

The r value correlations for employee creativity in terms of suggest useful idea, creativity self-efficacy, and solving more problems:

- suggest useful idea $r = 0.516$ which indicates that suggest useful idea has “moderate correlation” with transformational leadership,
- Creativity self-efficacy $r = 0.780$ which indicates that creativity self-efficacy has “strong correlation” with transformational leadership,
- solving more problem $r = 0.570$ which indicates that solving more problem has “moderate correlation” with transformational leadership,

This can be described that among three dimensions of suggest useful idea, creativity self-efficacy, and solving more problems has positive correlation effect size to transformational leadership.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from hypothesis testing, the conclusions were drawn as follows

Hypothesis1: Accepted Ha: There is a significant difference between pre-ODI and post-ODI on transformational leadership. Research findings reveal that transformational leadership was significantly improved after ODI implementation. After implemented OD interventions, transformational leadership shows overall statistical improvement of 13.27%, with its improved behavior of Intellectual Stimulation (IS), Idealized Influence (II), Individualized Consideration (IC) and Inspirational Motivation (IM) at 15.19%, 14.10%, 13.48% and 10.92% respectively.

These statistical improvements are consistently supported by the researcher’s observation during OD interventions. And by interviews to participants after OD interventions was completely implemented.

Hypothesis2:

Accepted Ha: There is a significant difference between pre-ODI and post-ODI on employee

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Test between Transformational Leadership and Employee Creativity

Variable – Employee Creativity		Transformational Leadership	Result
Suggest useful Idea	Pearson Correlation	0.516	Moderate Correlation
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.087	
	N	58	
Creativity self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	0.78	Strong Correlation
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.037	
	N	58	
Solving more problem	Pearson Correlation	0.57	Moderate Correlation
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.076	
	N	58	
Employee Creativity	Pearson Correlation	0.014	very Strong Correlation
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.918	
	N	58	



engagement. Research findings showed that employee engagement was significantly improved after ODI implementation. After implemented OD interventions, employee engagement showed overall statistical improvement of 3.18%, with its improved components of job satisfaction (3.98%), extra effort (1.30%) and commitment (5.23%) respectively. Consistently to qualitative study, the subordinates feel more committed to their work and enjoy going to the college:

Hypothesis3: Accepted Ha: There is a significant difference between pre-ODI and post-ODI on employee creativity. Research findings showed that employee creativity was significantly improved after ODI implementation. After implemented OD interventions, employee creativity show overall statistical improvement of 3.66%, with its improved components of suggests useful Idea (5.57%), creativity self-Efficacy (2.59%) and solving more Problems (3.19%) respectively.

Consistently to qualitative study, the subordinates evidently approach problems with new and practical ideas in order to get problem solved.

Hypothesis4: Accepted Ha: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement. The finding of the study also confirmed that transformational leadership has a positive association with subordinates' engagement. The correlation coefficient (r) is to 0.624, which signifies that there is a positive correlation between transformational leadership and employee engagement and

Hypothesis5:

Accepted Ha: There is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee creative. The finding of the study also confirmed

that transformational leadership has a positive association with subordinates' creativity. The correlation coefficient (r) is to 0.918, which signifies that there is a positive correlation between transformational leadership and employee creativity. In conclusion, the leaders showed their abilities to encourage their subordinates to be innovative and creative on their responsible work. They apparently act as subordinates' role models via "leading by example", they consistently promote strong commitment to team/department's goal aligning to focal college's. Regarding individual team members, they sincerely pay attention on subordinates' needs. They are obviously a mentor or coach rather than a boss or manager. They foster the professional development and personal growth of subordinates. Taking into action, leaders are very supportive to subordinates' successes via motivation. This means, to inspire subordinates to be even greater extent than they can be.

Recommendation

This research was carried out in a limited of time and with a group of the top and middle leaders in the organization, to ascertain the impact of the ODI on transformational leadership to enhance employee engagement and employee creativity. The focal organization is a mid-sized of high-level education business; hence it would be beneficial to apply the same ODI with all the leaders among either mid-sized or big-sized education businesses as a family business. Since this research is initiated the case study on mid-sized education as family businesses, so some suitable guidelines are already stated for those families who also run the education business. It is no need to be only the high-level education, but standard or

technical level of education that interested could also conduct the same ODI.

In addition, other business types can consider duplicating this model and design test that demonstrated in this research. Based on further analysis and findings in this research, transformational leadership has been improved even though this cannot be claimed as a direct impact of the ODI.

However, further research should focus the opportunity to enhance this study in relation to employee engagement and employee creativity which could be beneficial to other organizations, especially education providers or education-related servicesectors.

Future studies might be conducted in relation to this topic utilizing all number of the leaders in the organization to ensure whether there is a relationship between the ODI and transformational leadership to enhance employee engagement and employee creativity.

The limitation of this study is that it was conducted within the family education business under a certain period of time. However, effective quantitative research is recommended to provide deeper understanding in the change of behavior resulted from transformational leadership

which leading to the enhancement of employee engagement and employee creativity. Moreover, researcher would suggest digging deep in the relationship between transformational leaderships that enhances the employee creativity towards the environment of education business as family business.

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