

Influence of Lecturer's Transformational Leadership Skill Enhancement on University Students' Academic Culture, Kenya

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Abstract

This study aimed at examining university lecturers' transformational leadership impact on students' career planning and Academic culture, with the enhancement of their leadership skills as the overall goal. Student participants in the study were from the second year at five public universities in Kenya. Using the Qualtrics Platform, the researcher identified a sample of 354 from a total population of 4436 as appropriate for the actual research. The study findings, based on the study parameters and research problems, indicated that lecturers' transformational leadership strongly influences students' academic culture and career planning. Besides facilitating resource management and resilience in overcoming academic-related obstacles, it also brings clarity of direction, integrity, and the development of academic skills, while fostering interdisciplinary abilities and self-discipline through guidance and mentorship. Transformational leadership further facilitates students' adaptation to diverse academic environments and promotes academic exchange among themselves. The study recommends that, to build on the effectiveness of the transformational leadership dimensions highlighted, universities should invest in leadership development programs for educators and prioritize implementing culturally responsive practices. Besides, they need to ensure students from diverse demographic backgrounds can access leadership development initiatives.

Keywords: *Academic culture, development initiatives, leadership skills, transformational leadership*

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1. Introduction

Educational leadership plays a pivotal role in organizing educational institutions, promoting ongoing enhancements, and achieving the objective of delivering high-quality education. Managing a school requires crafting a long-term vision, ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities, coaching educators in leadership skills, refining the curriculum and learning experiences, addressing areas of weakness, assigning duties to foster better leadership, and championing reform. Kenneth Leithwood, as cited by Hinson (2018), stresses the importance of influential leaders in revitalizing struggling schools, with transformational leadership recognized as more effective in driving positive change than authoritarian approaches.

In the past, higher education primarily focused on knowledge transfer, with teachers seen as the disseminators of knowledge and learners as passive recipients (Feraco, Resnati, Fregonese, Spoto & Meneghetti, 2023). However, this traditional teaching model is considered suitable

for meeting today's societal needs. As observed by Robinson VM, Lloyd CA, and Rowe (2008), the requirements for talent in modern society have undergone fundamental changes, requiring not only a solid academic foundation but also the ability to innovate, collaborate, and lead. Therefore, education nowadays does not solely focus on imparting knowledge but has shifted to cultivating students' leadership skills and comprehensive literacy (Xue, 2022).

Education experts believe that subordinates' high-level needs have the power to stimulate transformational leadership as they make staff always aware of the significance of their daily tasks by establishing a conducive work environment and a favorable atmosphere of mutual trust amongst themselves and between them and their employer (Han, Ni, Deng, Zhu, 2023). In this way, subordinates are intrinsically encouraged to make individual sacrifices for the benefit of their organization or company, thus surpassing their original expectations. Li (2019) and others also advocate that the important value of transformational leadership lies in making subordinates clearly understand the important value of fulfilling their functions, creating a mutual trust atmosphere within the organization, so that it can coordinate and handle the relationship between organizational interests and personal interests, thereby achieving higher expectations and goals. Becker (2018) pointed out that leaders can serve as society's unified moral standards and maintain its values. At the same time, leaders can propose appropriate and effective organizational goals, lead organizational members to work toward them, and help make the organization more united (Liu & Hardy, 2023).

Leng (2022) elaborates on the important role of learning enthusiasm in human learning, the cultivation of it in the teaching process, the cultivation methods for students, and the cultivation methods for the desired learning enthusiasm. Zhang (2022) emphasizes cultivating students' enthusiasm for learning, reflecting a people-oriented teaching philosophy that is conducive to the formation of students' positive and proactive learning attitudes, the realization of students' creative potential, and the harmony of the teaching process. Allen and Mever (2022) further divide organizational commitment into three aspects: firstly, emotional commitment of the employee, which mainly refers to his or her sense of responsibility towards the company or organization and identification with the organization's values in their work; The second is employee's normative commitment, which is a description of the employee's level of participation in organizational activities and the degree of acceptance by the organization; The third is employees' continuous commitment and their level of engagement in the company or organization itself and which therefore has a close relationship with the rewards given to them for working hard at their places of work as well as their career (Hardy, & Liu. 2022).

A research study conducted by Safdar (2018) sought to establish the impact of transformational leadership on employee creativity through organizational commitment, examining the influence of transformational leaders on their employees' creativity in Pakistan's organizational environment. The study findings indicated that leaders could adopt transformational leadership styles to enhance employees' ability to innovate. A transformational leadership style will help leaders increase their subordinates' commitment to the organization (Wang & Wang, 2023). In Kenya, the number of college graduates has increased significantly in recent years, and the employment problem for college students is also becoming increasingly prominent. The fundamental method is for college students to improve their overall quality to actively respond to the fierce competition in society, as observed by Antera (2022).

Currently, many universities in Kenya do not place enough importance on cultivating leadership among college students. For example, the curriculum is insufficient: it lacks systematic courses or modules for leadership development. Not enough is placed on leadership

development, and not enough is placed on this aspect. Teaching methods are crucial for cultivating leadership. Some universities primarily use traditional teaching methods that do not incorporate teamwork, practical projects, or case studies to cultivate leadership. Besides, they don't attach sufficient importance to the cultivation of leadership, as observed by Qi, Zhang, & Arshad (2025). College students are in a critical period of forming their values, and cultivating leadership values and developing leadership skills are conducive to shaping their personality and improving their overall quality. Lecturers who are carriers of classroom knowledge significantly influence their students through transformational leadership (Wang, Arshad, & Arshad, 2025). The improvement of leadership skills among students themselves is a long-term process, and thus, lecturers' transformational leadership is of great significance for students' academic culture and career planning (Wang, Arshad, & Arshad, 2025).

The study researcher serves as a lecturer of career planning courses at a university. Prior to this, he participated in national career-related training. As the course lecturer, through feedback in the classroom and communication with various students, he felt that lecturers' transformational leadership significantly impacted students and considered lecturers to be important guides in the acquisition of leadership skills, as affirmed by Khan WA, Hassan, Arshad, and Kashif (2020). The primary aim of this study was to examine the impact of transformational leadership on students' academic culture and planning to enhance their leadership skills. In the education field, favorable outcomes such as learner involvement in the learning process and extracurricular activities are achieved through transformational leadership exhibited by educators, who, in most cases, are lecturers, as observed by Bass (2018).

Education scholars have observed that individuals under the guidance of transformational leaders experience reduced role conflicts, improved performance on various tasks, and thus achieve greater satisfaction in their responsibilities when compared to those who work under non-transformational leadership (School of Education Blog 2019). Based on the above discussion, this study sought to achieve the following three main research objectives: To examine the significant relationship between lecturers' transformational leadership and students' academic culture; to examine the significant relationship between students' Career Planning and their Academic Culture; and to examine the mediating role of career planning between lecturers' transformational leadership and students' academic culture.

2. Literature Review

University lecturers' transformational leadership and students' career planning are the study's key interrelated factors that adversely affect students' academic culture, especially in the light of Expectancy Theory. Students are encouraged by transformational lecturers through high expectations, a belief in achievement, individual attention, the valuing of perceptions of academic achievement, and the enhancement of students' expectancy (Ossiannilsson, 2022). It is noted here that leadership style is, in most cases, particularly effective in educational and resource-constrained settings. Simultaneously, proper career planning for students enables them to endure the difficulties they encounter while pursuing their academic programs at their respective universities. Besides, they tend to develop flexible coping strategies and can thus sustain long-term academic commitment. Studies conducted in the past have clearly shown that strong students are capable of achieving more in their academic programs and that career planning mediates the connection between transformational leadership and academic achievement. In this way, transformational leadership contributes to the academic culture directly and indirectly by fostering students' resilience, a psychological tool that preserves

engagement, motivation, and adaptability across various educational and cultural environments (Awais, Fu, Jones, 2024).

2.1 Career Theory Perspective

The study is anchored in Career Theory, which was propounded by Frank Parsons in the United States of America in the year 1908. The world's first career counselling bureau which is named as – Boston Local Career Bureau and which was established by Frank Parsons who is regarded as the "father of career guidance, aimed at addressing the situation of many youths who were losing their jobs. After proposing the Concept of "career counselling in 1908, he published his groundbreaking work entitled "Choosing a Career" the following year and went a head to develop a detailed and complex system, which started to systematize career guidance. Afterward, psychologists, sociologists, economists, and educators have been trying to further understand the processes and ways in which people make career choices and solve career problems. The knowledge they accumulate can be regarded as a discipline or a set of knowledge systems.

Career development and planning themselves are issues of individual career development. However, this issue is closely related to organizational competitiveness, which has led to the emergence of career management. A recent study conducted in China yields parallel results, extending to distinctive observations in international results. For example, a study by Liu (2018) in rural Chinese secondary schools found that principals' transformational leadership contributed to higher student achievement (as measured by standardized test scores) indirectly, first increasing teachers' commitment and fostering a collaborative school culture. This suggests that, at the school level, transformational leadership trickles down, motivating teachers and improving the learning climate, thereby ultimately benefiting student performance (Lim & Moon, 2024). Based on the above discussion, it can be hypothesized that: H1: Transformational leadership has a significant relationship with students' Academic Culture.

Students' Career Planning affects academic culture, yet this relationship depends on how other psychological elements influence the connection. According to Frank Parsons, academic self-efficacy functions as a mediator between career planning and academic culture. Students who demonstrate resilience in career planning tend to have higher self-efficacy, which strengthens their motivation and enhances their study behaviors and capacity to sustain academic challenges. The interaction between career planning and resilience is key, with emotional intelligence as a significant factor. According to research, students in Nigeria who showed higher resilience levels achieved higher emotional intelligence scores, and this emotional intelligence partially mediated the relationship between student resilience and their academic achievements. Research conducted in Chinese higher education institutions indicates that academic engagement, as a vital behavioral outcome, is associated with career planning and resilience, demonstrating a positive association. This discussion, therefore, supports the researcher's development of the following hypothesis: H2: Student Career Planning has a significant relationship with students' Academic culture. Notwithstanding, students' academic culture improves when lecturers use transformational leadership, as this strategy helps students build self-resilience. The academic success of students increases when they demonstrate resilience, as it enables better engagement, persistence, and adaptability. The preceding discussion enables the researcher to formulate the following prediction: H3: Student Self-Resilience mediates the relationship between the lecturer's transformational leadership and Students' Academic Culture.

2.2 Significance of the study

Lecturers: This study is beneficial for improving lecturers' teaching and leadership skills and enhancing their academic and cultural levels. Academic culture is the core of higher education, and establishing an academic atmosphere requires the active guidance of lecturers. By influencing the construction of academic culture through transformational leadership, we can optimize the university's academic environment (Burns, 2021). It can not only enhance lecturers' leadership but also create a positive academic atmosphere and improve lecturers' comprehensive level in this process.

Students: This study is beneficial for academic motivation and the cultivation of interest, stimulating students' desire to explore knowledge. This incentive helps students to participate more deeply in academic activities and cultivate lasting academic interest. Besides, it enables learners to develop problem-solving skills as they hone their innovative thinking, making them more creative when facing challenges in life (Fiorilli, Benevene, De Stasio, Buonomo I, Romano, Pepe, Addimando, 2019). It is also possible to enhance team collaboration and leadership skills through group discussions, project collaboration, and other means. Apart from helping students develop a clearer, more focused understanding of their career goals and build reasonable career plans, the study findings will also enable them to face life's challenges more confidently and, more importantly, cultivate self-awareness and self-affirmation.

University administrators: The research results are beneficial to university administrators, as they provide a deeper understanding of the roles and influence that lecturers' transformational leadership has on learners in lecture theatres. Further, it could help them to develop more targeted management strategies and stimulate lecturers' enthusiasm and creativity. Managers of higher learning institutions can give encouragement to lecturers so that they can use more innovative teaching methodologies, improve the quality of their teaching as they enhance students' learning outcomes (Khan, Salleh, Javaid, Arshad, Saleem, Younas, 2023), promote interdisciplinary cooperation among lecturers, and further expand the teaching and research fields of the school. It can also provide a basis for campus administrators to formulate educational policies and plans. These policies and plans can better promote the development of lecturers and the overall progress of campuses.

Curriculum maker: It is hoped that the findings of this study can lead to a better understanding of the characteristics and needs of leadership among university lecturers and students, and is also expected to help curriculum designers to design courses more accurately, therefore making them more aligned to the needs and interests of leaders in our contemporary society. Curriculum developers can learn which teaching methods are more helpful in cultivating leadership. They can introduce methods in the curriculum to enhance students' leadership potential. Curriculum developers can incorporate practical elements, such as social internships and project management, to enable students to exercise leadership skills in real-world situations.

Future Researchers: Researchers who intend to carry out similar studies in the future are expected to develop a deeper comprehension of key factors in the educational environment, including teaching methods, student needs, academic culture, and more. This helps researchers better understand the operation of the education system and provides strong support for educational reform and improvements in educational quality. This type of research contributes to the forefront of academic exploration and can also make a substantial and impactful contribution to improving the educational environment and developing students' transformational leadership skills.

2.3 Definition of terms

Transformational leadership: This term in leadership refers to intellectual stimulation and charismatic leadership. Besides, it is not only used to refer to personalized care by a leader in an institution or company to make employees aware of the importance of their responsibilities and tasks, but also to maximize their potential to achieve the highest level of performance and to stimulate their higher-level needs. In the teaching profession, Transformational leadership is a form of leadership exhibited by instructors that aims to instill desired leadership skills in learners in a lecture theatre. Lecturer transformational leadership, therefore, is used to refer to guidance methods used by lecturers to instill intellectual stimulation and show learners personalized care whose intention is to make students realize the importance of learning, stimulate their correct value beliefs, guide them to go beyond personal interests, and pursue goals that can enable them to better achieve their own values.

Transformational leadership includes four dimensions: intellectual stimulation, vision, motivation, lecturer charm, and personalized care. While Intellectual stimulation refers to lecturers encouraging students to challenge new assumptions and solve problems with innovative methods, Vision motivation refers to lecturers explaining goals that are of value to students and encouraging them to pursue and achieve them. The charm of a lecturer is a convincing way for students to identify with the lecturer and set them as an example, while Personalized care refers to lecturers paying attention to the needs of each student, that is, listening to their ideas and suggestions.

Academic culture: Campus academic culture refers to the values, spiritual pursuits, and behavioral norms that universities develop through academic activities, as well as their external manifestations in regulations, methods, and material facilities. It is guided by certain academic values and concepts, carried by university academic activities, and formed through the integration of diverse cultures. University academic culture comprises four elements: academic concepts, academic environment, academic spirit, and academic ethics. Academic culture, as the core content of university education, is of great significance, especially in promoting the development of university culture and enhancing universities' competitiveness.

Career planning: This is a continuous, systematic process undertaken by an individual, which, in most cases, includes three elements: goal setting, channel design, and career positioning. From the onset, it is important to understand that the quality of an individual's career planning may affect his or her entire life process. In the teaching profession, or even in other professions, career planning has three main elements: External environmental factors, Personal intrinsic factors, and Business value elements. While External environmental factors include the organization where an individual works, the macro industry, his or her family, and other prevailing aspects, such as what the environment supports him or her to do, Personal intrinsic factors, on the other hand, include one's professional values, his or her professional personality, and interests, among others. Finally, Business value elements include acquired knowledge, experiences gathered over the years, skills acquired so far, and connections already made. To summarize, in career planning, one determines the most suitable career development direction through a thorough and comprehensive analysis and then implements the most effective and reasonable arrangements, plans, and efforts to achieve the goals he or she has already set.

Stimulating enthusiasm. This refers to a leader's ability to present a clear vision to his or her employees and have well-established goals that his or her workers can identify with, while also fostering a willingness to perform their tasks and responsibilities above the expectations of their employer. In the teaching profession, transformational Leaders, who in this case are

lecturers, always have very high expectations of their students. To meet these expectations, lecturers motivate students to join desired teams and become part of those that share their dreams. While it is common practice for leaders to use team spirit and emotional appeal to unite students' efforts toward achieving desired team goals, it should be noted that the performance achieved is much higher than that of employees who prioritize their own needs and self-interests.

Role models. This refers to those leaders who become objects of learning and imitation for their employees. In the teaching profession, lecturers may earn the trust and admiration of their students, especially those who emulate their teaching behaviors. In this way, lecturers become their students' role models as they gain recognition and respect, and students' trust in them increases. For students to emulate their lecturers and treat them as great role models, the lecturers themselves must adopt high ethical and moral standards and be charismatic in their approach to leadership, embodying transformational roles to the extent that every student will agree with and support their vision and plan, which they will work selflessly to achieve.

Intelligent stimulation: In the education field, to intelligently stimulate means to encourage employees or workers to use their personal divergent abilities to make judgments and use their creativity to make sure they achieve set common personal and organizational goals. In the teaching profession, therefore, intelligent stimulation means encouraging students to become more creative as they challenge themselves in diverse environments. This is also used to refer to the attempts by transformation lecturers to instill new ideas in their students while inspiring them to express new insights. Lecturers encourage students to apply new methods to solve new problems or challenges they encounter in their workplaces. While stimulating leaders may intelligently stimulate students and significantly change their consciousness, values, and beliefs, individualized consideration, on the other hand, refers to giving personal care to someone by establishing personal relationships between you, as a leader, and your employees. It is further used to mean taking care of every student, valuing their personal needs, desires, and abilities, as you patiently and meticulously listen and guide each student according to their diverse situations and varied needs. At this point, transformational leaders in the teaching profession are assumed to work and act as coaches or advisors who help students grow and confidently face their day-to-day challenges.

Academic motivation and objectives: Academic research motivation is the driving force and purpose that guides researchers in their work. Research motivation can include personal interests, social needs, and scientific exploration. The establishment of academic research motivation is of great significance for promoting the development and progress of academic research. Academic objectives refer to the goals we pursue in learning and research. Academic objectives can include improving one's academic performance, delving deeply into a field, or obtaining academic honors and awards.

Academic exchange and cooperation: This refers to the journey an academic or learner takes deliberately to explore, argue, and conduct research-based activities on a specified topic while interacting with other researchers and learners from relevant majors. These explorations, as observed by Pounder (2018), aim to exchange knowledge, share gathered experience, and jointly analyze and discuss solutions to persistent problems that bedevil society. This can be conducted through organized forums, speeches, discussions, experiments, face-to-face presentations, and presentation of research-based reports. Academic exchange therefore is the exchange of valuable information with the overall purpose of communicating and exchanging scientific information, viewpoints and ideas (Marimuthu, Chethiyar, Arshad, Devarajah,

Damodaran, Arshad, 2023): Through reflecting on the main purpose and understanding the role of academic exchange and cooperation, educationists and more so transformational leaders believe that the overall goal of academic exchange is to get new academic ideas and innovation (Zheng, 2022). Researchers authoritatively point out that the most essential significance of academic exchange is to foster intrinsic motivation and enlightenment. Academic collaboration is the gathering of qualified academic personnel to address challenging, meaningful problems.

Academic culture values: Academic values are concepts and principles grounded in moral, ethical, and other norms within the academic community. They refer to the value judgments and understandings held by the academic community regarding knowledge, research, academic achievements, and other aspects. In the academic community, adherence to academic values is fundamental, and behaviors that violate them require correction and punishment. Firstly, honesty and reliability are the most fundamental academic values. Honesty and reliability refer to the need to maintain academic integrity in research and to avoid acts such as forgery, tampering, or plagiarism.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Instruments

Lecturers' Transformational Leadership Scale

In this study, the researcher applied the Transformational Leadership Scale to conduct a thorough evaluation of teacher leadership, drawing on Bass and Avolio's Transformational Leadership Theory. The researcher developed a 15-item questionnaire to effectively measure lecturers' ability to establish ethical leadership and student respect, or idealized influence, as well as their capacity to inspire motivational vision, which he also refers to as inspirational motivation. The researcher also used the scale to measure the methods lecturers used to promote creativity and critical thinking, as well as their personalized support for individual student needs. In this regard, the study observes that, through the instrument, lecturers can measure their transformational leadership strength using a Likert rating system ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". This system provides higher scores for stronger leadership abilities, and the tool is known to have established reliability and validity, according to Bass, making it an effective instrument for measuring teacher leadership behaviors.

Student Career Planning Scale

To measure students' career Planning, the researcher used a 5-point Likert scale with an 18-item questionnaire, adapted from Smith (1 = not at all to 5 = very true). The researcher used this questionnaire to rate seven components, including positive worldview and positive self-view, organization and proactivity, and focus and flexibility. The overall career planning level is measured through assessment, and stronger career planning is indicated by higher score points. This scale, therefore, exhibits stronger psychometric properties, as previous research has shown both internal consistency and construct validity.

Student Academic Culture Scale

To measure Students' Academic Culture, the researcher used a 13-item scale based on the Eccles expectancy-value theory, which assesses academic motivation across two dimensions: students' academic ability and capability beliefs. Besides, the instrument also evaluates the importance of academic tasks and students' perceived benefits. The researcher ensured that each Likert scale item in the questionnaire ranged from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," thereby generating higher scores when students indicate stronger motivation and alignment with academic success. The instrument's validity and reliability, as documented in

Eccles, create a standardized method for assessing motivational factors known to drive student achievement in their study culture.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

To obtain data from 354 second-year level students of the five public universities who participated in the study, the researcher used systematic procedures that required the following sequence of steps:

(i) The researcher-initiated contact with each of the five public universities in Kenya which participated in this study; (ii) Through Deans of Students' Offices, he requested for cooperation from the institutions to acquire student data; (iii) The researcher then directly communicated with the Chairpersons of Departments and Coordinators responsible in all the five universities; (iv) He then distributed questionnaires through chairpersons of departments and their coordinators who further sent them to students who were selected through simple random sampling criteria. This methodology provided representation of second-year students from the five public universities in every department.

It is also important to note that, after contacting the officers in charge of the departments, the researcher distributed additional questionnaires, slightly above the required 354 sample size, to address cases of missing or incomplete responses by respondents. The researcher reached out to student affairs offices at all five (5) public universities because these offices manage student activities and those of organizations. The researcher scheduled meetings with the student affairs office's elected leaders to explain the research objectives before asking them to facilitate his contact with sport-active students. Besides that, the researcher established constant communication with club leaders of sporting groups, student committees, and their student councils. Upon the researcher's express guidance, student leaders used simple random sampling to distribute questionnaires to the participant group. This, in turn, ensured fairness and adequate student representation. Data collection process, therefore, involved the distribution of 400 questionnaires to the target respondents, 400 in total, of whom 358 were duly returned, translating to an initial response rate of 89,5%. Upon close examination, the researcher identified that four (4) of the returned questionnaires were not duly completed; hence, they were not suitable for analysis. The four (4) questionnaires were then excluded from the dataset, leaving the researcher with 354 duly completed questionnaires, which constituted the required sample of respondents and were then used for the study's statistical analysis. This guarantees the accuracy and reliability of the research findings.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Sample Size Estimation

The study's statistical power analysis revealed that we needed only 354 valid responses to provide assurance to the researcher that significant outcomes could be identified from our multi-dimensional research model. This section presents the results of the analysis, together with their interpretation, in a single table. The study's drawn conclusions presented in this section are purely a manifestation of a statistical analysis done using SPSS version 27. Table 1, given below, describes the socio-demographic indicators of the 354 individuals who completed research questionnaires, including gender and age.

Table 1: Respondents' Profile

Profile		Frequency	Percent
Age	18	20	5.60%
	19	181	51.10%
	20	93	26.30%
	21	40	11.30%
	22	20	5.60%
Total		354	100%
Gender	Male	142	40.10%
	Female	212	59.90%
Total		354	100%
Major	Economics and Management	35	9.90%
	Law, Philosophy, & History	70	19.80%
	Education	140	39.50%
	Literature and Arts	66	18.60%
	Science, Engineering, Medicine & Agronomy	43	12.10%
Total		354	100%

Table 1 showcases the demographic profile of the respondents. Regarding age, respondents span 18 to 22 years, with a notable concentration at 19 years old. In terms of sex, the majority are female, a common trend within educational institutions. Furthermore, the predominant academic background stems from the education department, highlighting a rich academic diversity. Consequently, this diversity underscores a range of perspectives in the investigative endeavor.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

The researcher in this study used SmartPLS 4, a leading graphical software tool for partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM). This software offers an intuitive drag-and-drop interface that simplifies the estimation, construction, and evaluation of complex path models. Research studies using SMART-PLS have reported measurement model results with solid psychometric properties, as shown in Table 2. Notably, all constructs achieve satisfactory indicator loadings, thereby confirming the reliability of their respective items.

Table 2: Measurement Model Results

Constructs	No. of Items	Indicator Loadings (Range)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Transformational Leadership	15	0,721 – 0,832	0,890	0,540
Student Career Planning	17	0,652 – 0,839	0,915	0,575
Student Academic Culture	13	0,711 – 0,8,11	0,810	0,517

In this regard, the 15-item scale, which focused on Transformational Leadership, yielded loadings of 0,721 to 0,832, while CR was 0,890 and AVE reached 0,540. The researcher found that Student Career Planning demonstrated acceptable measurement properties using 17 items, with loadings ranging from 0,652 to 0,839, a CR of 0,915, and an AVE of 0,575. Besides that, Student Academic Culture, which was measured by 13 items, yielded loadings ranging from 0,711 to 0,811, a CR of 0,810, and an AVE of 0,517. This analytical assessment establishes the correct indicator loading values and clearly demonstrates how CR exceeds 0,70 and how AVE reaches and surpasses 0,50. It is worth noting that the study's construct evaluation results provide positive evidence of construct internal consistency when combined with construct convergent validity. As shown by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) square root values on the diagonal and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios in the off-diagonal cells, the study constructs further showed their correlations, as witnessed in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlations, Square Roots of AVE, and HTMT Ratios

Constructs	Transformational Leadership	Student Career Planning	Student Academic Culture
Transformational Leadership	($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$) 0,735	0,416 (0,432)	0,352 (0,399)
Student Career Planning		($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$) 0,766	0,473 (0,531)
Student Academic Culture			($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$) 0,829

For Transformational Leadership, the square root value of AVE was 0,735, while also demonstrating higher similarities with other constructs than its links to Student Career Planning (0,416) and Student Academic Culture (0,352). In correspondence, the HTMT ratios were 0,432 and 0,399 which showed that the values for Student Career Planning fulfilled the criterion used, as they demonstrated a square root AVE of 0,766 and, a relationship of 0,473 with Student Academic Culture, and an HTMT ratio of 0,531. The measurements upheld discriminant validity because all constructs had square root AVE metrics that exceeded their correlations with other investigated variables. The study notes that all HTMT ratios presented, between 0,399 and 0,531, fell below the recommended limit of 0,85, thereby affirming the uniqueness of the constructs. Table 3 indicates the measurement model's suitability for further analysis, as it shows robust data validity.

As shown in Table 4 below, the study indicated, through Hypothesis H2, that Students Career Planning (SCP) directly impacted Academic Culture (SAC) at 0.090 ($p = 0.009$). ($p = 0,009$). This effect demonstrated positive associations between Student Career Planning levels and academic culture achievement. Students need to develop career planning skills because they are crucial to academic achievement.

Table 4: Summary of Structural Model

Measure	O	STDEV	T	P	2,50 %	97,50 %	Value
H1: TL → SAC	0,146	0,042	3,476	0,001	0,133	0,023	
H2: SCP → SAC	0,090	0,034	2,626	0,009	0,026	0,161	
H3: TL → SCP → SAC	0,056	0,021	2,656	0,008	0,017	0,098	
R ² for SCP							0,382
R ² for TL							0,488
f ² : TL → SAC							0,026
f ² : SCP → SAC							0,034
f ² : AIEWP → AILES							0,565

The table shows structural model findings supporting all theoretical relationships not tested in this study. The results from Hypothesis H1 demonstrate that Transformational Leadership (TL) significantly and positively influences Students' Academic Culture (SAC), with an effect size of $O = 0,146$ ($p = 0,001$). This finding shows that SAC grows when TL receives increased attention. The obtained results demonstrate that a particular style of executing transformational leadership positively affects students' performance in this context. SCP plays a significant role in bridging the gap between TL and SAC, acting as a meaningful mediator with an effect size of $0,056$ ($p = 0,008$).

Results from mediation analyses indicate that the positive impact of TL on academic achievement diminishes as students develop greater self-resilience. The proposed model successfully accounted for important construct variances through determination coefficients of $0,382$ for SCP and $0,488$ for SAC. The direct relation between TL and SAC measured an effect size of $0,026$ while SCP to SAC showed an effect size of $0,034$. The research findings show that student Career Planning serves as a vital intermediary factor, explaining how transformational leadership produces academic outcomes through moderate-effect-size mechanisms. These study results establish a solid basis for understanding how leadership principles combine with student career planning to affect academic culture and achievement.

5. Conclusion

This research offers a comprehensive understanding of the intricate interplay among demographic characteristics, transformational leadership dimensions, perceptions of academic culture, and their implications for students' career planning. The demographic analysis reveals a diverse respondent profile, indicating a rich academic milieu that fosters varied perspectives.

The transformational leadership dimensions exuded in this study reflect effectiveness, as evidenced by mean scores indicative of positive impact across stimulating enthusiasm, role modeling, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

There is universality in the teachers' leadership traits, as evidenced by non-significant test results from rigorous statistical analyses using the Mann-Whitney U Test and the Kruskal-Wallis Test.

6. Recommendations

The study recommends that institutions prioritize implementing culturally responsive practices by recognizing and valuing diverse backgrounds and students' perspectives. By recognizing culturally relevant content, teaching methods, and support services, institutions can create an inclusive yet conducive learning environment that resonates well with all students. It is important to note that culturally responsive practices not only enhance student engagement and academic success but also contribute to a richer academic milieu by acknowledging and celebrating diversity. Additionally, such practices can better prepare students for future career endeavors in increasingly diverse workplaces.

To build on the effectiveness and dimensions of transformational leadership highlighted in the research, learning institutions need to invest heavily in leadership development programs for educators, including lecturers. By equipping educators with these leadership competencies, institutions can foster a positive learning environment conducive to student engagement and academic success.

It is further recommended that institutions ensure all leadership development initiatives are accessible and inclusive for individual students from diverse demographic backgrounds. Institutions can achieve this by implementing strategies such as targeted outreach efforts, scholarships or funding opportunities for underrepresented groups, and creating supportive environments for leadership skill development.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that he has absolutely no conflict of interest in the conduct of this study or in its subsequent publication.

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