



**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A CATALYST FOR ENHANCING
ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

A positive organizational climate is one of the essential elements in creating a productive, collaborative, and innovative work environment, especially in higher education institutions. However, many higher education institutions face challenges in maintaining a conducive organizational climate due to internal and external dynamics, such as policy changes, work pressure, and the complexity of relationships between individuals. This study explores how transformational leadership improves a positive organizational climate in higher education environments. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method involving lecturers and staff from several universities as respondents. Respondents were selected using the purposive sampling method based on specific criteria, with a sample size of 154 out of 250 total population. The study results show that transformational leadership significantly influences a positive organizational climate, including creating a collaborative work atmosphere, increasing work motivation, and encouraging innovation and adaptability. Data analysis indicates that the dimensions of charisma and intellectual stimulation contribute the most to the organizational climate. At the same time, individual considerations play a role in strengthening interpersonal relationships within the team.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Organizational Climate, Higher Education, Charisma, Intellectual Stimulation.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational climate is the primary key to creating a conducive and productive university work environment. The organizational climate reflects the work atmosphere formed from the pattern of relationships between individuals, leadership systems, values, and work culture in the institution. (Samyoga and Surya 2024). In the context of higher education, a healthy organizational climate not only impacts the performance of lecturers and staff but also contributes to the student learning experience. (Huang et al. 2022). A favorable climate can encourage morale, increase collaboration, and strengthen the commitment of all members of the organization to the achievement of the vision and mission of the institution (Maharani et al. 2021).

The importance of the organizational climate in higher education lies in its role as a foundation that supports academic development, research, and community service. A harmonious and transparent work environment allows lecturers to focus more on carrying out the three dharma tasks of higher education (Mayastuti et al. 2022). Likewise, students who are in a positive campus atmosphere will be more motivated to learn and develop (Fahad AlMulhim 2023). Therefore, universities need to continue to evaluate and improve their organizational climate through inclusive leadership, effective communication, and providing development opportunities for the entire academic community. Thus, a good organizational climate creates work comfort and becomes the main driver in realizing a superior and competitive university.

However, not all organizational environments have a supportive climate. Many factors contribute to a poor organizational climate, including a lack of leadership support, ineffective

communication, and a lack of innovation and collaboration. Lack of support from leaders can cause employees to feel unappreciated, which ultimately lowers their morale (Maharani et al. 2021). In addition, unclear communication between management and staff often causes confusion and dissatisfaction, resulting in the formation of an adverse organizational climate (Putra 2022).

Another factor that also affects is the low level of innovation and collaboration, which can hinder the organization's development and create an uncondusive work atmosphere. (Azmi et al. 2019). In the context of higher education, this challenge is further exacerbated by the decline in the number of students due to the institution's poor reputation. This adds to the pressure on staff and management and worsens the overall organizational climate. This instability can threaten the institution's sustainability, create uncertainty, and increase employee stress (Lorensius et al. 2021).

As a real impact of the poor organizational climate, one of the consequences is the revocation of campus operational permits. Based on data from (Dandy Bayu, Bramasta Sari 2023), A total of 52 universities received sanctions from the Ministry of Education and Culture, with 23 having their operational permits revoked. Reports from (Daruwaskita 2024) 84 private universities in Indonesia are threatened with revocation of their licenses due to unclear management, including those related to students and lecturers who are not registered or properly recorded.

Some of the main reasons for the revocation of this license include the failure of universities to meet the set higher education standards, fictitious learning practices, buying and selling diplomas, irregularities in the provision of scholarships for the Indonesia Smart Lecture Card (KIP-K), to disputes within the organizing body that disrupt the learning process (Irawan 2023). Conditions like this not only reflect the weak management of the organization but also show how important it is to build a healthy organizational climate to ensure the sustainability and credibility of higher education institutions.

Recent research highlights the importance of creating a conducive organizational climate through transformational leadership. This leadership style can motivate employees, increase engagement, and create a work atmosphere that supports collaboration and innovation (Mach et al. 2022). For example, research by Ardianto et al. (2020) Demonstrate that transformational leadership significantly influences the formation of a positive organizational culture, promoting productivity and efficiency. Studi lain oleh Velarde et al. (2022) Reinforcing the findings by stating that transformational leadership improves the organizational climate and influences job satisfaction and employee commitment.

Furthermore, research by Brimhall (2021) Identify that transformational leadership components such as ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention directly impact the perception of an organization's climate. This is reinforced by Cooper et al. (2020), underlining that transformational leaders can create an environment that supports trust, open communication, and appreciation of individual contributions. However, not all studies have found a significant relationship. Studies in the industrial sector by Skar et al. (2022) For example, it shows that while transformational leadership positively affects certain aspects of an organization's climate, its impact can be reduced if there are external factors such as economic uncertainty or organizational instability.

Although previous research has emphasized the importance of leadership in creating an organizational climate, there is still a gap in understanding how transformational leadership explicitly affects the organizational environment in higher education. Some studies focus on corporate, primary, and secondary education or specific industries. At the same time, the college context has unique characteristics such as complex organizational structures, diversity of academic functions, and the need to integrate various interests between lecturers, students, and

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education staff. Therefore, this study aims to explore the influence of transformational leadership on organizational climate in universities. This research will analyze how transformational leadership can create a conducive environment for collaboration, innovation, and academic productivity and identify factors that can strengthen or weaken those relationships. Thus, the results of this research are expected to make an empirical and practical contribution to developing effective leadership strategies in the higher education environment.

METHODOLOGY

The research method used is a quantitative survey. The sample in this study is lecturers and staff at Buddhist colleges, as many as 154 out of 250 total population. The data collection technique was carried out through a questionnaire to measure respondents' perceptions of transformational leadership variables and organizational climate. The Likert scale consists of five answer choices, namely strongly disagree to strongly agree, to ensure that the data produced is measurable and valid. The sampling technique uses the purposive sampling method, where respondents are selected based on specific criteria, such as a minimum of two years of work experience at a Buddhist university.

Data analysis was carried out using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the characteristics of respondents and data distribution. In contrast, inferential analysis tests the influence between transformational leadership variables as independent variables and organizational climate as dependent variables. The validity and reliability test of the instrument was carried out first to ensure that the questionnaire used was feasible and consistent in measuring the research variables. Furthermore, to support the quantitative results, an analysis was carried out in the form of a hypothesis test with a significance level of 0.05 using SPSS statistical software. This research is designed to make an empirical contribution to understanding how transformational leadership affects the organizational climate in Buddhist colleges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistical table presents an overview of the research data of transformational leadership variables and organizational climate. This is presented with a descriptive statistical table.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Transformational Leadership	154	20	50	35,23	5,12
Organizational Climate	154	30	60	45,67	6,78

Based on the results of descriptive statistics presented in Table 1, 154 respondents were involved in measuring the variables of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Climate. For the Transformational Leadership variable, the minimum score obtained is 20, while the maximum score is 50, with an average of 35.23 and a standard deviation of 5.12. This shows that the transformational leadership level generally is around a value of 35.23 with a relatively small variation, namely 5.12. Meanwhile, for the Organizational Climate variable,

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the minimum score obtained is 30, and the maximum score reaches 60, with an average of 45.67 and a standard deviation of 6.78. This average shows that the perception of organizational climate tends to be around 45.67, with slightly more significant data variation than the transformational leadership variable. This data indicates that both variables have a relatively centralized distribution of values around their respective averages.

2. Homogeneity Test

Table 2. Homogeneity Test

Variable	Levene Statistic	Sig. (p-value)	Conclusion
Transformational Leadership Organizational Climate	1,234	0,245	Homogen ($p > 0,05$)

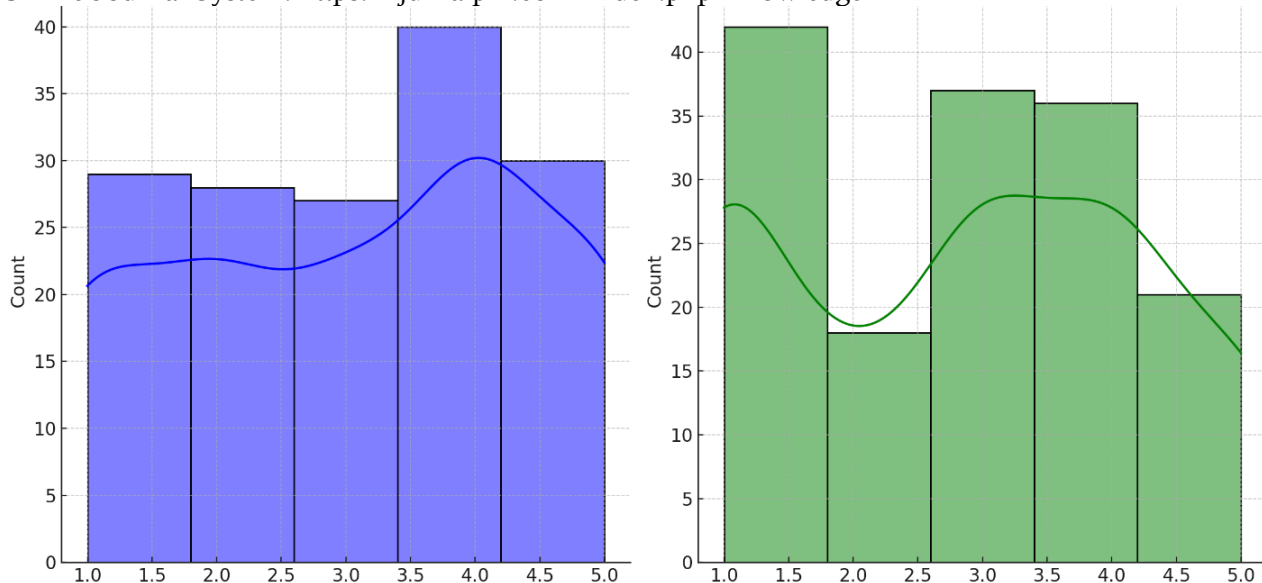
Based on the homogeneity test results shown in Table 2, the variable Transformational Leadership on Organizational Climate has a Levene Statistic value of 1.234 with a Sig. (p-value) value of 0.245. Since the p-value is more significant than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data variance of both variables is homogeneous. The homogeneity of variance shows that the data from the variables Transformational Leadership and Organizational Climate have a similar distribution in variance between groups. This means that the homogeneity assumption is met so that the statistical analysis results can be considered reliable.

3. Normality Test

Tabel 2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test

Variable	Statistician Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Sig. (p-value)
Transformational Leadership	0,085	0,200 (normal)
Organizational Climate	0,076	0,200 (normal)

Based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test results presented in Table 2, it can be concluded that the distribution of data for both variables, namely Transformational Leadership and Organizational Climate, meets the normality assumption. A Sig indicates this. (p-value) value of 0.200 for both variables. Since the p-value (0.200) is greater than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) stating that the data is usually distributed cannot be rejected. Thus, both variables have a normal data distribution and can be used for advanced statistical analysis that requires the assumption of normality. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical values also show that the data deviation from the normal distribution is slight, i.e., 0.085 for Transformational Leadership and 0.076 for Organizational Climate, respectively. The following is a visualization of the distribution of the two variables in this study.



Picture 1. Transformational Leadership Distribution and Organizational Climate

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression Test Results

Model	Coefficient	t	Sig. (p-value)	Conclusion
Constant	12.345	-	-	-
Transformational Leadership - Organizational Climate	0.765	7.8920	0.000	Significant

Regression equations: $Y = 12.345 + 0.765X$

Based on the simple linear regression test results shown in Table 3, transformational leadership (independent variable) influences organizational climate (dependent variable). The regression coefficient of 0.765 shows that every increase in one unit in transformational leadership will increase the organizational environment by 0.765 units. A constant of 12,345 indicates the value of an organization's climate when transformational leadership is zero.

The significance test produced a t-value of 7.892 with a p-value (Sig.) of 0.000. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, these results show that the influence of transformational leadership on organizational climate is statistically significant. Thus, the regression model obtained can be declared valid to describe the impact of transformational leadership on the organizational environment. The regression equation is $Y = 12.345 + 0.765X$, where Y is the organizational climate, and X is transformational leadership.

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Climate

The results of this study support many previous findings that show the significant influence of transformational leadership on organizational climate. Transformational leadership, characterized by the leader's ability to inspire, give individualized attention, and drive innovation, has long been considered the most effective leadership style in creating a conducive organizational climate. Studies Cavazotte et al. (2020) explain that transformational leadership creates a positive organizational culture through idealistic influence and inspirational

motivation, which increases morale and collaboration within the organization. These findings are also reinforced by Phungsoonthorn and Charoensukmongkol (2019), which confirms that transformational leaders can strengthen trust between members of the organization and motivate them to contribute more to a common goal.

In higher education, transformational leadership is vital in creating a work atmosphere that supports academic productivity. A healthy academic environment depends on physical resources and the interpersonal interactions built by leaders. Research by Kim and Park (2020) shows that leaders in the education sector who adopt a transformational leadership style can encourage lecturers and staff to work collaboratively to achieve the institution's vision and create a conducive learning environment for students. This study found that transformational leadership has a strong positive influence on organizational climate. This means that when leaders provide inspirational motivation and pay attention to individual needs, the perception of the organizational environment also increases significantly. These results align with the study by Brimhall (2021), which found that transformational leadership consistently correlated with job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and a positive work climate.

College Context and Supporting Factors

In this study, the context of Buddhist colleges is the main focus, providing a unique perspective on how transformational leadership styles are applied in environments with specific spiritual and cultural values. Buddhist colleges face typical challenges, such as limited human resources and pressure to maintain operational sustainability amid competition from higher education institutions. In this situation, transformational leadership can be key to driving innovation and collaboration (Deng et al. 2023). In addition, a positive organizational climate is determined by leadership style, structural support, and organizational culture. Bravo Rojas et al. (2023) emphasized that a supportive climate should include transparent policies, effective communication, and respect for individual contributions. These factors can amplify the impact of transformational leadership, especially in creating a harmonious working atmosphere and encouraging the performance of lecturers and staff.

From a practical perspective, this study guides universities in improving the organizational climate through applying transformational leadership. College leaders should focus on developing leadership skills that involve attention to individual needs, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. These measures can create a collaborative, innovative, and sustainability-oriented work environment. Theoretically, this study expands the understanding of the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational climate by providing a specific context to the higher education sector. By integrating Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass and Avolio 1994) and Organizational Behavior Theory (Potter and Starke 2022), This research provides a conceptual framework that clarifies how emotional and structural aspects in an organization influence each other to create a conducive work climate.

Dimensions of Transformational Leadership and Its Influence on Organizational Climate in the Context of Higher Education

1. Ideal Influence

In higher education, the ideal influence dimension relates to how leaders, such as rectors or deans, are role models for lecturers and staff. Leaders who demonstrate high spiritual values, integrity, and commitment to the institution's vision can create respect and trust among members of the organization. Lorensius et al. (2021) It shows that leader behavior consistent with organizational values can build a work culture supporting collaborative teams. In this

study, the ideal influence that is operationalized is the ability of leaders to show examples, increase the trust of organizational members, and ensure that institutional values are practiced in strategic decision-making.

2. Inspirational Motivation

The dimension of inspirational motivation is operationalized as the ability of leaders in higher education to provide a clear vision, for example, related to the direction of academic development or the contribution of institutions to society. Leaders who can communicate their vision in an inspiring and optimistic way can increase the morale of lecturers and staff. Teoh et al. (2022) noted that inspirational motivation contributes to a positive organizational climate, increasing member involvement in achieving common goals. In this study, inspirational motivation includes how leaders inspire lecturers and staff to work productively and build a sense of pride in the institution.

3. Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation in this research is operationalized as an encouragement to leaders to lecturers, and staff to think critically, explore new ideas, and develop innovations in academic and administrative processes. Fahad AlMulhim (2023) shows that leaders whose creativity supports them can create an open organizational climate for change and adaptation. In the context of higher education, leaders who encourage lecturers to develop innovative teaching methods or solve administrative problems creatively will support a dynamic and adaptive environment.

4. Individual Considerations

Individual considerations are operationalized as the leader's attention to lecturers' and staff's personal and professional needs. Hartati et al. (2022) emphasizing that leaders who understand each individual's unique needs, such as supporting career development or providing training opportunities, can create an inclusive work environment. In college, attention to individual needs includes recognition of faculty contributions, support for work-life balance, and mentoring for new staff. This is believed to strengthen positive working relationships and increase the perception of the organization's climate.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the influence of transformational leadership on the organizational climate in higher education is seen through four main dimensions: ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. Each of these dimensions is applied in how university leaders, such as the chancellor, dean, or head of a study program, influence lecturers and staff to work collaboratively, innovatively, and productively. With this approach, the research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the role of transformational leadership in creating an organizational climate that supports academic development and institutional aspirations.

CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes the importance of transformational leadership in creating a positive organizational climate in higher education. However, implementing this leadership requires the support of inclusive organizational policies and a work culture that supports innovation. Universities are advised to develop leadership training programs for lecturers and staff and improve internal communication to strengthen trust and engagement between members of the organization. Thus, the results of this study are not only theoretically relevant

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