

Transformational Leadership Practices and Teachers' Self-Efficacy in the Peer Coaching Program at SJKC Johor Bahru

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Abstract

Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in motivating teachers and improving their performance through peer coaching programs, particularly in Chinese national-type schools (SJKC) in Johor Bahru. This study aims to evaluate the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' self-efficacy, as well as to identify how peer coaching programs influence teachers' confidence and performance. These findings are essential for enhancing teaching practices and supporting the professional development of teachers. The study provides practical insights into how leadership approaches can impact educational success and improve school performance.

A quantitative approach was used in this study, with a questionnaire as the primary instrument. Data were collected from teachers at SJKC in Johor Bahru and analyzed using correlation and regression. The findings reveal a positive and significant relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' self-efficacy. Peer coaching programs were also found to improve teachers' confidence and teaching competencies. This study fills a gap in the literature by demonstrating that transformational leadership not only boosts motivation but also strengthens self-efficacy through peer support. The study's implications suggest that school administration should reinforce peer coaching practices and promote transformational leadership to enhance teaching quality and learning outcomes in schools.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Teacher Self-Efficacy, Peer Coaching Program, Professional Development, Educational Leadership, Primary Education, Teacher Motivation.

Introduction

Transformational leadership is gaining increased attention in education due to its potential to transform school culture and improve teaching performance. This type of leadership emphasizes four key elements: charismatic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Zakaria et al., 2021). Through this leadership style, teachers are not only motivated to achieve higher performance but are also encouraged to innovate continuously in their teaching methods and classroom management (Adarkwah & Zeyuan, 2020). In Malaysia, particularly in Chinese national-type schools (SJKC) in Johor

Bahru, transformational leadership plays a crucial role in strengthening teachers' professional development through approaches such as peer coaching.

In addition to focusing on leadership practices, teachers' self-efficacy is also a critical element in ensuring the success of the teaching and learning process. Self-efficacy refers to teachers' confidence in their ability to effectively perform teaching tasks and manage classrooms productively (Alexander, 2020). Teachers with high self-efficacy are more likely to seek creative solutions to challenges and consistently strive to improve their practices (Abdullah et al., 2022). Conversely, teachers with low confidence may face difficulties adapting to changes and may be less willing to try new teaching techniques.

However, teachers in Malaysia often face challenges such as time constraints, heavy workloads, and a lack of administrative support (Amzat et al., 2021). These situations can negatively affect teachers' motivation and confidence, thereby impacting their performance. To support teachers and enhance their confidence, peer coaching programs have been introduced as a strategy to strengthen self-efficacy. Through peer coaching programs, experienced teachers share best practices and provide constructive feedback to colleagues, fostering a collaborative and supportive environment (Nguyen & Ng, 2022).

This study examines the interaction between transformational leadership, teachers' self-efficacy, and the effectiveness of peer coaching programs in SJKC schools in Johor Bahru. Special emphasis is placed on the role of transformational leadership in influencing the confidence and performance of teachers involved in these coaching programs. Literature reviews suggest that transformational leadership not only increases motivation but also helps build stronger professional relationships between teachers and school leaders (Serin & Akkaya, 2020). Peer coaching programs, on the other hand, offer teachers the opportunity to learn from peers in a supportive atmosphere, free from the pressure of formal administration (Geletu, 2024).

This study has three main objectives:

1. To identify the level of transformational leadership among teachers leading peer coaching programs in SJKC schools in Johor Bahru district.
2. To determine the level of teachers' self-efficacy involved in peer coaching programs in SJKC schools in Johor Bahru district.
3. To explore the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' self-efficacy in peer coaching programs in SJKC schools in Johor Bahru district.

The study is conducted in SJKC schools in Johor Bahru, as these schools provide a unique context for understanding the relationship between leadership and teachers' professional development. These schools also face distinct challenges in maintaining high educational standards and supporting teachers' professional growth. This study employs a quantitative approach, with data collected through questionnaires and analyzed using correlation and regression techniques. These methods aim to identify the relationship between transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and the effectiveness of peer coaching programs.

This study is expected to make significant contributions to the educational literature by addressing gaps in knowledge regarding the interaction between transformational leadership

and peer coaching. It will also provide practical guidance for school administrators and policymakers in designing effective strategies to enhance teachers' professional development and the quality of education. By emphasizing the importance of peer coaching, the findings of this study will help schools build a collaborative culture that supports continuous teacher development (Liu et al., 2021).

This article is organized into several key sections. The first section discusses the literature review related to transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and peer coaching. The second section explains the research methodology and data collection process. The third section presents the study's findings, followed by a discussion of the implications of the results and practical recommendations. Finally, the article concludes with the main findings and suggests directions for future research.

Literature Review

Background Studies

Previous studies have shown that transformational leadership positively impacts teachers' self-efficacy and the effectiveness of peer coaching programs. Transformational leadership, which encompasses charismatic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, has been proven to play a significant role in boosting teachers' confidence and performance. For example, a study by Aini and ST (2021) revealed that teachers led by transformational leaders exhibited greater enthusiasm and confidence in their teaching tasks. Leaders with charismatic influence are able to capture teachers' attention and motivate them to achieve higher goals, while inspirational motivation instilled by the leaders fosters strong commitment and enthusiasm among teachers to excel in their roles.

Furthermore, intellectual stimulation provided by transformational leaders encourages teachers to think critically and creatively during the teaching process. Teachers exposed to intellectual stimulation tend to seek innovative and effective teaching approaches, thus enhancing the quality of classroom learning (Wilson & Conyers, 2020). Individualized consideration, another critical component of transformational leadership, involves personalized attention given by leaders to the needs and development of each teacher. Studies indicate that teachers who receive personalized guidance and support from their leaders feel more valued and motivated to realize their full potential (Zhang et al., 2021).

A study by Prilop et al. (2021) demonstrated that peer coaching programs improve teachers' professional skills and self-efficacy through support and guidance from colleagues. Peer coaching provides a platform for teachers to share best practices and offer constructive feedback, helping to enhance their pedagogical skills and self-confidence. The study found that teachers involved in peer coaching programs experienced significant improvements in teaching and classroom management skills. They also felt more confident in making decisions related to teaching and learning and were more willing to experiment with innovative teaching methods.

Overall, previous studies provide strong evidence that transformational leadership and peer coaching programs play a vital role in enhancing teachers' self-efficacy and performance. By understanding and implementing the principles of transformational leadership and offering

adequate support through peer coaching programs, schools can create a conducive environment for effective professional development and learning. This is crucial to ensuring high-quality teaching and learning in schools and ultimately improving student performance (Biggs et al., 2022).

Transformational Leadership

The concept of transformational leadership is rooted in Bass's model, which emphasizes leaders inspiring followers by extending their interests beyond personal gains, fostering acceptance of a shared vision, and motivating them to work towards collective goals (Litz & Blaik-Hourani, 2020). In the context of education, transformational leadership involves school leaders influencing teachers by encouraging alignment between personal goals and the broader mission of the school, promoting a shift from individual interests to group well-being, boosting teachers' confidence, and serving as role models for expected behaviors within the school community.

Based on Bass's framework, transformational leadership operates through four main components: Idealized Influence, where leaders act as role models; Inspirational Motivation, by articulating a clear and compelling vision; Intellectual Stimulation, encouraging teachers to think critically and embrace new approaches; and Individualized Consideration, where leaders support and develop teachers based on their unique needs and potential (Shrestha, 2020).

Research shows a positive relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' performance (Purwanto, 2022). Leaders exhibiting these characteristics build supportive environments that promote professional growth, strengthen school-staff relationships, and empower teachers to actively engage in school development (Kilag et al., 2023). This leadership style is also linked to increased teacher self-confidence, where elements such as conditional rewards and effectiveness are strong predictors of teachers' confidence in their abilities (Lumanug II & Dimla, 2021).

Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Teachers' self-efficacy is defined as individuals' beliefs or perceptions of their ability to successfully perform specific tasks (Hussain et al., 2022). Teachers' self-efficacy refers to their belief in their capability to influence students' learning and achieve desired outcomes in the teaching and learning process, even when faced with various challenges (Lin et al., 2022). Teachers with high self-efficacy possess sufficient subject knowledge, are prepared to achieve their career aspirations, create a positive learning environment using diverse teaching methods, and continuously explore the most appropriate and engaging teaching strategies for their students (Ortan et al., 2021). Additionally, teachers with high self-efficacy provide more effective learning experiences to students compared to those with low self-efficacy.

Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory is highly relevant in the educational context, particularly in understanding and enhancing teachers' self-efficacy (Lazarides & Warner, 2020). According to Bandura, mastery experiences, where teachers achieve success in their teaching practices, are critical because they build confidence and competence (Lawrent, 2024). Observing peers successfully implement teaching strategies (vicarious experiences) can also boost teachers' confidence in their teaching abilities. Verbal persuasion in the form of positive feedback from

colleagues, mentors, and administrators can further strengthen teachers' belief in their skills. Additionally, teachers' physiological and emotional states, such as stress levels and emotional well-being, significantly impact their sense of efficacy (Xiyun et al., 2022). When teachers effectively manage these states, they feel more competent and in control, enhancing their overall self-efficacy.

Understanding these sources can enable educational institutions to better support teachers through targeted professional development, mentorship programs, and supportive work environments, all aimed at improving effective teaching practices.

Research indicates that teachers' self-efficacy is significantly related to their well-being (Ortan et al., 2021), including positive indicators like satisfaction, commitment, and reduced turnover rates, as well as negative indicators such as burnout and stress. Teachers with high self-efficacy are more confident in teaching, more open to introducing innovative teaching approaches, and more adept at implementing effective classroom management strategies.

The Relationship Between Peer Coaching and Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Peer coaching programs positively impact teachers' self-efficacy by providing a structured platform for sharing best practices and experiences. Teachers involved in such programs report increased confidence and motivation, especially when receiving positive feedback from peers (Kalaivani & Azlin, 2018). Collaboration through peer coaching not only promotes professional growth but also offers opportunities for teachers to analyze their strengths and weaknesses in teaching (Sancar et al., 2021).

In the context of SJKC (Chinese Vernacular Schools), peer coaching is particularly relevant, as teachers often face diverse curriculum requirements and challenges in multilingual teaching. Support from peers enables teachers to adapt more effectively and overcome constraints in their daily teaching practices (Lee & Kuo, 2019). Studies indicate that these programs not only improve teaching performance but also help reduce stress and burnout among teachers (Nurul Husna & Jamalullail, 2021).

Moreover, a study by Ali et al. (2021) found that social interactions and ongoing support within peer coaching programs strengthen teachers' emotional well-being, making them more resilient in facing work challenges. This aligns with the findings of Kamaruddin and Ishak (2021), which show that collaboration among teachers enhances intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction, ultimately contributing to more positive and effective teaching experiences.

Research Gaps

Despite extensive studies on transformational leadership and self-efficacy, several gaps remain unexplored. Most studies focus on secondary schools, while research on the impact of these leadership approaches in primary schools, particularly in SJKC, is still limited (Zainal & Mohd Matore, 2021).

Further studies are also needed to explore demographic factors influencing teachers' perceptions of transformational leadership, such as teaching experience and cultural background. Additionally, longitudinal research is required to assess the long-term impact of peer coaching programs on teachers' professional development and student outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

This study's conceptual framework employs Bass's (1985) transformational leadership model, encompassing four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The model aligns with peer coaching principles that emphasize continuous reflection and feedback for teachers' professional development. By integrating these two approaches, this study will evaluate how transformational leadership and peer coaching enhance teachers' self-efficacy in SJKC schools.

Sampling

Target Population and Research Context

The target population for this study consists of teachers from Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina (SJKC) in the Johor Bahru district. The unit of analysis focuses on the individual teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and the effectiveness of peer coaching programs implemented in these schools.

The sampling frame includes teachers from various SJKCs in Johor Bahru. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure that all subgroups within the population—such as gender, teaching experience, and subject specialization—had an equal probability of being selected (Dhivyadeepa, 2015). This method ensures a representative sample and minimizes bias, thereby increasing the reliability and generalizability of the findings (Polit & Beck, 2010). The sample size was set at 385 participants based on a statistical power analysis to ensure a sufficient number of respondents for detecting statistically significant effects (Ellis, 2010). The required sample size was calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 \cdot (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{3.8416 \cdot 0.25}{0.0025} = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384.16$$

For the demographic breakdown, the sample represents the general teacher population in SJKCs in Johor Bahru. The demographic distribution of respondents is as follows: 39.3% male and 60.7% female. Regarding age, 25.0% are aged between 20–30 years, 39.1% are 31–40 years, 24.7% are 41–50 years, and 11.2% are over 50 years old. Teaching experience varies, with 23.4% having less than five years, 39.6% having 5–10 years, 21.9% having 11–15 years, and 15.1% having more than 15 years. In terms of academic qualifications, 20.1% hold a diploma, 44.3% a bachelor's degree, 27.9% a master's degree, and 7.8% a Ph.D.

This diversity reflects the broader population of SJKC teachers, contributing to the robustness of this study. The data collected offers valuable insights into how transformational leadership influences teachers' self-efficacy and how peer coaching programs support their professional development. The diverse sample ensures a wide range of perspectives, aiding in understanding these dynamics in the context of Chinese primary schools in Johor Bahru.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was piloted using a stratified sample of approximately 30 teachers from SJKCs in Johor Bahru. A small-scale pilot study was conducted to identify potential biases in sampling and survey questions. The questionnaire was then refined based on the feedback received.

For the main study, data were collected over two months, specifically from September to October 2024. The primary method was an online survey using Google Forms, distributed to primary school teachers via social media groups. Multiple platforms were utilized to reach a diverse set of participants and to minimize selection bias, with incentives offered and a user-friendly design adopted to encourage participation.

Measurement Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of 36 Likert-scale items scored on a 5-point scale, with responses ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Table 1 outlines the variables assessed during reliability analysis and shows Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each variable. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyze data from the pilot study and generate a detailed evaluation report, including reliability assessments.

Table 1

Pilot Study Results

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Charismatic Influence	3	0.823
Inspirational Motivation	3	0.857
Intellectual Stimulation	3	0.789
Individual Consideration	3	0.811
Teaching Self-Confidence	3	0.840
Classroom Management Competence	3	0.796
Student Engagement Capability	3	0.800
Professional Self-Confidence	3	0.830

The results indicate a high level of reliability for all variables, as reflected by Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.7. This confirms the internal consistency of the measurement instrument, ensuring that the collected data are both valid and reliable for further analysis.

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