

# THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE, PROACTIVE PERSONALITY AND JOB COMMITMENT ON THE JOB PERFORMANCE OF FACULTY MEMBERS AT VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITIES

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the relationship between the dependent variable: job performance (HSCV) of faculty members at Vietnamese universities, and the independent variables: transformational leadership style (LDCD), job commitment (CCCV), and proactive personality (TCCD). The research is based on primary data collected through surveys of 316 faculty members from various universities in Vietnam, conducted from February to April 2024. EFA analysis results indicate that all three independent variables, LDCD, CCCV, and TCCD, positively and significantly impact faculty job performance at the 1% significance level. Specifically, transformational leadership style and job commitment are the primary drivers of job performance, while a proactive personality contributes the least to improving work performance.*

• **Keywords:** *job performance, transformational leadership style, proactive personality, job commitment.*

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## 1. Introduction

Proactive personality is a personality construct that has been extensively studied and applied in education and economics. Over the past few decades, research has shown deep interest in the impact of proactive personality on individual work performance. This personality construct is one of the most widely researched in management and behaviour. It is considered a relatively stable disposition of an individual that changes their work performance. Proactive individuals have the potential and ability to overcome their career limitations by taking initiative, exploring available opportunities, and persisting until meaningful changes occur. They are described as pathfinders, discovering new ways to solve problems. The literature on proactive personality has growing value in predicting various behavioural outcomes, such as job crafting, information and feedback-seeking, accountability (Fuller & Marler, 2009), voice behaviour, and communication effectiveness. Additionally, other evidence indicates that proactive personality affects job satisfaction and engagement, job performance, extra-role behaviour, and career success (Converse et al., 2012).

Proactive personality is a critical factor in enhancing individual creativity within organizations, and organizations that emphasize proactivity can achieve more tremendous success if they attract individuals with these traits. Highly proactive individuals defined as those who take planned actions to influence themselves and their environment (Grant & Ashford, 2008) are more likely to act in advance and engage in change-oriented, focused, and meaningful actions to alter themselves, others and the communities or organizations in which they reside. While existing literature has significantly contributed to understanding the benefits of proactivity in organizations, this topic has yet to be systematically integrated, particularly regarding its relationship to transformational leadership and employee training in the academic profession.

According to leading career models in today's career research, academics must demonstrate proactivity and self-direction to succeed in their careers. In higher education, services are created through personal interactions between faculty and students, highlighting the importance of a proactive personality in this field. That is, the

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personality traits of faculty members are key factors determining the quality of their relationships with students and student satisfaction (Ekinici & Dawes, 2009). Proactive faculty members are more likely to align with the organization and their job when the work involves high levels of specialization (e.g., scientific research, curriculum development, teaching). These roles also encourage proactivity, a fundamental trait required for those who lead others. The increasingly important role of creativity and job commitment in achieving and maintaining high levels of competitiveness and work performance among faculty members has prompted the need to focus on the relationship between proactive personality creativity, and job commitment work performance. Research on this issue helps better understand the role of proactive personality in the work performance of faculty members.

This study is structured into five main sections. Section 1 introduces and provides the study's rationale, scope, contributions, and uniqueness. Section 2 offers a literature review through a summary of related studies. This section will discuss the theoretical framework used in this research and the concepts related to the variables in the research model, leading to the development of research hypotheses. Section 3 discusses the research model, data collection methods, and methodology. Section 4 interprets the empirical research results. In Section 5, the study's findings will be discussed in-depth, and theoretical and managerial implications will be proposed.

## 2. Literature review

Performance is a category widely used across all economics, engineering, and social sciences fields. In economics, performance is the degree of success that production units achieve in allocating input resources to optimize output, reflecting the efficiency in using resources (human, financial, material, and capital) to meet specific objectives. Work performance represents the correlation between the results obtained and the total costs incurred to achieve those results, reflecting the quality of activity the more significant the difference between these two quantities, the higher the performance (Pietro & Luca, 2014).

Theoretical arguments also suggest that a proactive personality influences work performance through job crafting and awareness. This idea aligns with Thompson (2005), who pointed out

that individuals with proactive personalities perform well because they take personal initiative and engage in networking. Previous studies have demonstrated a positive, direct relationship between proactive personality and work performance, and thus, this direct connection is incorporated into the study's theoretical model. The study expects that transformational leadership and job commitment will also impact work performance.

There are several reasons engaged employees perform better than disengaged ones (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010), but one of the most compelling arguments is that engaged employees tend to experience positive emotions, including happiness, joy, and enthusiasm. These resources may include physical resources (e.g., physical skills, health), social resources (e.g., friendships, social support networks), intellectual resources (e.g., knowledge, executive control), or psychological resources (e.g., self-efficacy, optimism). These personal resources can be used to meet job demands and perform well. The number of studies showing a positive relationship between employee engagement and work performance is increasing. For instance, Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) showed that among American employees, their closest supervisors and colleagues across various industries and professions, engagement with work significantly contributed to explaining differences in work performance after controlling for job attachment factors. Salanova et al. (2005) conducted a study among employees working in restaurants and hotels in Spain. Frontline employees (N = 342) from 58 hotel receptions and 56 restaurants provide information about organizational resources, engagement, and service environment. Additionally, these units' customers (N = 1140) provided information on employee performance and customer loyalty. Structural equation modelling analyses supported the full mediation model in which organizational resources and job engagement predicted the service environment, predicting employee performance and customer loyalty.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Model

#### *Hypothesis*

A proactive personality recognizes opportunities, takes action, and persists until a significant change is achieved (Crant, 1995). These individuals are also seen as taking the initiative to improve or create new

conditions (Crant, 1995). Nowadays, innovation-driven companies create conditions that encourage, evaluate, and reward proactive behaviours among employees. Recruiting proactive personalities or enhancing employees' proactivity are two ways to foster creativity and commitment in the workplace, thereby increasing employee performance. In the study by Greguras and Diefendorff (2010) involving 165 employees and supervisors, it was shown that proactive personality predicts job performance and organizational citizenship behaviours (e.g., altruism, courtesy, and sportsmanship) through need satisfaction. Seibert et al. (2001) used a data design from 180 full-time employees and their supervisors. Among other findings, they discovered that a proactive personality at Time 1 was positively related to innovation and career initiative at Time 2. According to Crant (2000), proactivity positively impacts employees' attitudes and behaviours because proactive individuals identify or create opportunities, facilitating improved individual or team performance.

*H1: Proactive personality positively impacts the job performance of university faculty members in Vietnam.*

Transformational leadership is the exchange relationship between leaders and their subordinates based on contingent rewards. Transformational leaders are defined as those who positively envision future scenarios for the organization, mainly engage in boosting employees' confidence by helping them recognize their potential, communicate the organization's achievable mission and vision to employees, and work with them to meet their needs. While traditional leadership focuses on the exchange relationship between leaders and subordinates, transformational leadership goes beyond these immediate personal benefits. Transformational leadership emphasizes the leader's symbolic behaviours (e.g., inspirational messaging, vision, and values) instead of economic transactions between the leader and employees. Transformational leaders focus employees' attention on the long-term goals of the group or organization and instil a sense of higher purpose. Employees internalize the leader's values and perceive their work as aligning with their self-concept. Some perspectives suggest that transformational leadership can elevate employees beyond their self-interests by changing their spirit, ideals, interests, and values, motivating them to perform better than initially expected (Pieterse et

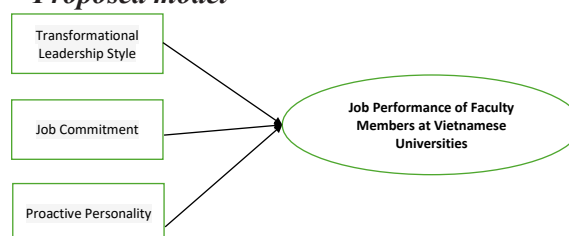
al., 2010). Thus, good leadership is essential for optimal employee performance and for promoting positive employee behaviours.

*H2: Transformational leadership positively impacts the job performance of university faculty members in Vietnam.*

Job commitment is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind characterized by dedication and enthusiasm. In essence, job commitment reflects how workers experience their jobs: it is stimulating, energizing, and something they genuinely want to devote their time and effort to (vigour component); as a significant and meaningful pursuit (dedication); and as something they are fully absorbed in (Bakker et al., 2012), thereby enhancing job performance. Qualitative studies have revealed that engaged employees are competent individuals with solid self-efficacy and exemplary job performance. Employees who optimize their job demands and resources can be expected to work in a challenging and resourceful environment. Several studies have indicated that such environments facilitate job engagement, enhancing job performance.

*H3: Job commitment positively impacts the job performance of university faculty members in Vietnam.*

### Proposed model



Source: Author's proposal

### 3.2. Methodology

The research employs appropriate analytical tools for processing primary data, including reliability testing of the measurement scale and hypothesis testing through the least squares method model. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is used for each variable to ensure that observed variables measuring the same latent variable load onto the correct factor, without cross-loading, and to remove any unsuitable measurement criteria to avoid multicollinearity among latent variables. Specifically, reliability is assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with a requirement of  $\alpha > 0.6$  and an item-to-total correlation  $> 0.3$ , ensuring reliability. The study conducts linear regression analysis based

on the following regression equation:

$$HSCV = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LDCD + \beta_2 CCCV + \beta_3 TCCD + \varepsilon$$

The dependent variable HSCV, represents the job performance of lecturers at Vietnamese universities. The independent variables are as follows: LDCD represents the transformational leadership style variable; CCCV is the job commitment variable; TCCD is the proactive personality variable;  $\varepsilon$  refers to the standard deviation error in the regression model.

### 3.3. Data

The research is based on primary data collected through surveys conducted between February 2024 and April 2024. The author sent 350 online surveys via email (Google Forms) to lecturers at Vietnamese universities. After excluding 34 invalid responses, 316 valid samples were collected for formal analysis. According to Bolen (1989), at least five observations should be per estimated parameter (5:1 ratio). With 16 observed variables, the minimum sample size required by this method is  $16 \times 5 = 80$ . The study's sample size 316 ensures reliability and high representativeness for the population.

## 4. Results

**Table 1. Results of reliability testing for the measurement scales in the model**

| Factor | Scale mean if item deleted | Scale variance if item deleted | Corrected item-total correlation | Cronbach's alpha if item deleted | Cronbach's alpha |
|--------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| LDCD1  | 10.14                      | 3.308                          | .577                             | .739                             | 0.784            |
| LDCD2  | 10.10                      | 3.219                          | .573                             | .740                             |                  |
| LDCD3  | 10.09                      | 3.197                          | .565                             | .745                             |                  |
| LDCD4  | 10.15                      | 2.902                          | .650                             | .700                             |                  |
| CCCV1  | 9.50                       | 3.203                          | .635                             | .797                             | 0.831            |
| CCCV2  | 9.39                       | 3.076                          | .661                             | .785                             |                  |
| CCCV3  | 8.88                       | 2.792                          | .720                             | .757                             |                  |
| CCCV4  | 8.77                       | 2.974                          | .624                             | .803                             |                  |
| TCCD1  | 10.21                      | 3.459                          | .657                             | .810                             | 0.842            |
| TCCD2  | 10.22                      | 3.598                          | .679                             | .799                             |                  |
| TCCD3  | 10.22                      | 3.517                          | .685                             | .796                             |                  |
| TCCD4  | 10.28                      | 3.687                          | .691                             | .795                             |                  |
| HQCV1  | 10.14                      | 4.609                          | .791                             | .886                             | 0.910            |
| HQCV2  | 10.05                      | 4.829                          | .747                             | .901                             |                  |
| HQCV3  | 10.16                      | 4.784                          | .784                             | .888                             |                  |
| HQCV4  | 10.13                      | 4.621                          | .866                             | .859                             |                  |

Source: Calculated results from SPSS 25 software

Table 1 shows that all observed variables have Cronbach's alpha coefficients greater than 0.8, indicating high reliability of the measurement scales. Additionally, all observed variables have item-to-total correlation coefficients greater than 0.3, so all observed variables are accepted.

After Component 3, the total accumulated variance ratio reaches 65.515%, indicating that the first three components account for a large portion of the variation in the data. Three factors were

extracted through exploratory factor analysis, with an Eigenvalue of 1.851 ( $>1$ ). The KMO value is 0.797, close to 1, indicating the data is suitable for factor analysis. Bartlett's test for data suitability provides a p-value of 0.000, rejecting the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) and confirming that the data is appropriate for factor analysis.

**Table 2. Total variance explained**

| Component | Initial eigenvalues |               |              | Extraction sums of squared loadings |               |              |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|           | Total               | % of variance | Cumulative % | Total                               | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1         | 3.686               | 30.715        | 30.715       | 3.686                               | 30.715        | 30.715       |
| 2         | 2.325               | 19.375        | 50.090       | 2.325                               | 19.375        | 50.090       |
| 3         | 1.851               | 15.424        | 65.515       | 1.851                               | 15.424        | 65.515       |
| 4         | .683                | 5.693         | 71.208       |                                     |               |              |
| 5         | .603                | 5.024         | 76.232       |                                     |               |              |
| 6         | .533                | 4.438         | 80.670       |                                     |               |              |
| 7         | .491                | 4.095         | 84.765       |                                     |               |              |
| 8         | .436                | 3.630         | 88.395       |                                     |               |              |
| 9         | .395                | 3.290         | 91.685       |                                     |               |              |
| 10        | .370                | 3.084         | 94.769       |                                     |               |              |
| 11        | .338                | 2.814         | 97.583       |                                     |               |              |
| 12        | .290                | 2.417         | 100.000      |                                     |               |              |

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy: 0.797; df: 66; Sig.: 0.000

Source: Calculated results from SPSS 25 software

**Table 3. Rotated component matrix**

|       | Component |      |      |
|-------|-----------|------|------|
|       | 1         | 2    | 3    |
| LDCD1 |           |      | .753 |
| LDCD2 |           |      | .765 |
| LDCD3 |           |      | .762 |
| LDCD4 |           |      | .811 |
| CCCV1 |           | .780 |      |
| CCCV2 |           | .808 |      |
| CCCV3 |           | .854 |      |
| CCCV4 |           | .782 |      |
| TCCD1 | .798      |      |      |
| TCCD2 | .822      |      |      |
| TCCD3 | .811      |      |      |
| TCCD4 | .818      |      |      |

Source: Calculated results from SPSS 25 software

The rotated component matrix shows a clear structure with three main components identified. Component 1 relates to the variables TCCD1, TCCD2, TCCD3, and TCCD4, with high loadings (ranging from 0.798 to 0.822). Component 2 includes the variables CCCV1, CCCV2, CCCV3, and CCCV4, with loadings ranging from 0.780 to 0.854. Component 3 contains the variables LDCD1, LDCD2, LDCD3, and LDCD4, with loadings from 0.753 to 0.811.

**Table 4. Regression model testing results**

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | T    | Sig.   | Collinearity Statistics |      |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------|--------|-------------------------|------|
|       | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |      |        | Tolerance               | VIF  |
| 1     | (Constant)                  | -.453      | .275                      |      | -.1650 | .100                    |      |
|       | LDCD                        | .436       | .059                      | .354 | 7.423  | .000                    | .952 |
|       | CCCV                        | .469       | .062                      | .368 | 7.623  | .000                    | .927 |
|       | TCCD                        | .277       | .056                      | .242 | 4.907  | .000                    | .891 |

Durbin-Watson: 1.708

Sig.: 0.000; Adjusted R Square: 0.422

Source: Calculated results from SPSS 25 software

The results show that the Adjusted R Square value is 0.422, meaning the independent variables can explain approximately 42.2% of the variation in work performance. This is a good indicator, showing that the regression model has good explanatory power.

The Durbin-Watson value is 1.708, falling within the range of 1.5 to 2.5, indicating no severe autocorrelation in the errors.

All VIF values are below 2, indicating no multicollinearity issues.

**First**, transformational leadership style (LDCD) significantly influences HSCV, with a regression coefficient 0.436. This indicates that lecturers' work performance increases accordingly as transformational leadership improves. Leaders with this style typically inspire and motivate employees, fostering a more positive work environment, thus accepting hypothesis H1.

**Second**, job commitment (CCCV) also strongly impacts HSCV, with a coefficient of 0.469. High commitment from lecturers helps them focus on their work and enhances their sense of responsibility and attachment to the organization, thereby improving work performance and accepting hypothesis H2.

**Lastly**, proactive personality (TCCD) has a regression coefficient of 0.277, indicating that proactive lecturers can better manage and improve their work performance. Although the effect of TCCD is smaller than the other two variables, it still contributes to improving work performance, underscoring the importance of encouraging lecturers to develop a proactive personality, thus accepting hypothesis H3.

## 5. Conclusion

The study examines the relationship between the dependent variable, HSCV (work performance of lecturers at Vietnamese universities), and the independent variables: LDCD (transformational leadership style), CCCV (job commitment), and TCCD (proactive personality). The results indicate that transformational leadership style (LDCD), job commitment (CCCV), and proactive personality (TCCD) all have positive and significant impacts on the work performance of lecturers at Vietnamese universities at a 1% significance level. Specifically, transformational leadership style and job commitment are the main factors driving performance, while a proactive personality

makes the most negligible contribution. These findings highlight the importance of a supportive work environment encouraging lecturers' personal development. From these results, the study proposes several policy implications:

**First**, enhancing leadership training. Universities should organize leadership training programs for managers to develop transformational leadership styles. This improves leadership capacity and creates a positive working environment that encourages lecturers to maximize their potential.

**Second**, developing job commitment programs. Policies encouraging job commitment should be established, including opportunities for promotion, rewards for outstanding lecturers, and team-building activities.

**Third**, promoting a proactive personality. Universities should encourage lecturers to develop proactive personalities through personal development programs and promote self-learning. This could include providing learning resources, organizing workshops, and soft skills courses.

**Fourth**, evaluating and tracking performance. Universities should establish regular performance evaluation systems to adjust policies and training programs to meet practical needs and improve lecturers' work performance. By implementing these policies, universities will improve lecturers' work performance and contribute to the sustainable development of the entire education system.

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