



Exploring the Relationships Between Perceived Leadership Style, Job Satisfaction, and Academic Service Quality Among Cambodian Public University Staff

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: This study aims to investigate the current self-perceptions of public university staff in Cambodia regarding transformational leadership components, job satisfaction, and academic service quality.

Methodology: This study employs the quantitative research design. A sample of 336 staff from three selected public universities located in Phnom Penh completed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure transformational leadership (TRL) dimensions, the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) to measure the level of job satisfaction (JOS), the Service Quality (SERVPERF) to measure academic service quality (ASQ), and a demographic survey. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Main Findings: The study found that public university staff in Cambodia perceived TRL, JOS, and ASQ were at high levels. Ranking from the highest to the lowest mean scores were TRL, JOS, and ASQ, respectively. It was also revealed that there were favorable correlations between TRL dimensions, JOS, and ASQ. This indicates that the TRL dimensions exhibited stronger positive relationships. Every correlation was statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Novelty/Originality of this Study: Through this study, the significance of transformative leadership behavior and its connection to job satisfaction and academic service quality were better understood. The findings of this study offer empirical research on this subject in higher education, which advances the field of leadership studies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Global development and positive living depend on the spread of human knowledge. Academic institutions are used to spread knowledge. Interest in assessing the education sector's offerings grew as the industry expanded. Staff job satisfaction is one of the major factors influencing the quality of academic services [1]-[3]. Academic service quality is significantly influenced by job satisfaction, and the connection between the two has drawn a lot of attention recently [2], [4]. Any educational institution should place a high premium on client satisfaction and service excellence. Like other service groups, academic organizations have goals and objectives.

Providing outstanding instruction and performance is one approach for an academic institution to accomplish its objectives.

To be successful in the education market, academic leaders must make their institution competitive. The competitive atmosphere of higher education presents leaders with a number of difficulties [2]. Greater education must become more accountable and of greater quality for institutions to be popular and competitive, which further strains the academic community [2], [3], [5]. Service quality is currently a top focus in the vastly expanded field of service-marketing literature [6]. Important facets of higher education include leadership, work satisfaction, and service quality [7], [8].

Higher education services are becoming vital in Cambodia as the nation seeks to enhance its socioeconomic development and integrate into the global economy [2]. The increasing population of youth seeking to enhance their livelihoods has led to a heightened need for access to quality higher education that provides the necessary skills and knowledge for the contemporary workforce. Furthermore, as Cambodia shifts from an agriculture-centric economy to one that incorporates industry, technology, and services, the significance of higher education in cultivating proficient professionals, analytical thinkers, and inventive leaders becomes increasingly vital. Universities and institutions are therefore anticipated to furnish academic qualifications while also advancing research, innovation, and national capacity development [3]. In this scenario, investing in higher education has transitioned from a luxury to a requirement for Cambodia's sustainable development and regional competitiveness [9], [10]. One reason causing this is population expansion. Another is the increasing demand, driven by newer, continuously developing technology, for more sophisticated instruction and training. If people are unable to grow their skills and learn new things to adjust to the shifting demands of the market, they may suffer [9], [10]. Eventually, society as a whole might also suffer. People also think that the secret to success is education. They are aware that education is essential to improving their social status. Without education, economic security is likely to disappear in a knowledge-based society [2], [3], [9]. More educational institutions are needed to meet the market's growing expectations [9], [10].

Prior studies have examined the correlation between transformative leadership and job satisfaction across many contexts [3], [11], [12]. Nevertheless, scant academic focus has been directed towards a thorough examination that incorporates academic service quality as a fundamental element of the leadership-satisfaction relationship, especially in the realm of Cambodian higher education. Most existing study tends to separate leadership and job satisfaction, neglecting the potential mediating or correlational role of academic service quality within this triadic relationship. Moreover, the Cambodian public university system has not been adequately studied on the impact of institutional leadership practices on staff morale and the perceived quality of services provided. This knowledge gap highlights the necessity for a comprehensive and contextually relevant study that encompasses all three variables, transformational leadership, work satisfaction, and academic service quality, in a unified model.

This study is innovative in its methodology by concurrently analyzing the components of transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and academic service quality within a unified empirical framework. Although numerous overseas studies have examined these variables individually, few have integrated them within the context of Cambodian public institutions. This research is urgent due to the rising demand for enhanced governance and accountability in Cambodian higher education institutions, especially regarding national development objectives and worldwide educational standards. This study offers empirical data pertinent to the Cambodian environment, thereby informing policy, improving institutional performance, and facilitating leadership development programs customized to local requirements. Thus, there are two research objectives for the current study as follows.

1. To find out the self-perceived transformational leadership components, job satisfaction, and academic service quality as perceived by the public university staff in Cambodia.
2. To determine the relationship between the transformational leadership components, job satisfaction, and academic service quality among public university staff in Cambodia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is unique among leadership theories because of its methods for giving people a clear vision and its dedication to building a strong relationship between leaders and followers. In turn, transformational leadership promotes follower happiness, which aids organizational leaders in accomplishing their objectives. Through innovative problem-solving and idea generation, transformational leadership inspires and motivates people in extraordinary ways. Scholars from both academia and industry have been closely examining transformative leadership since the early 1980s [13].

The goal of transformative leadership is to enhance an organization's performance. By taking initiative and communicating effectively, they impact their following, which stems from their capacity to motivate others. [14] asserts that leaders can improve their transformational leadership style by prioritizing the team and business,

helping followers succeed, and appreciating the importance and worth of desired results. Transformational leadership is a popular approach because it allows leaders to reproduce current practices, adapt to organizational change, and develop strong relationships with people around them [15].

[16] used the MLQ Form 5X, factor analyses, observations, interviews, and descriptions of a follower's ideal leader to determine the elements of transformational and transactional leadership. As stated by [17], "the distinctive components of transformational leadership are idealized influence (attributed and behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration" (p. 208).

2.2. Job Satisfaction

A key component of a successful institution's overall operation is job satisfaction. Staff sentiment about their institutions and occupations is reflected in this. The two-factor theory of [18] and [19]'s hierarchy of needs can both be used to determine what drives workers, encourages their productivity, and raises their level of job satisfaction. Leaders must take into account and meet the needs of their employees if they hope to see their job thrive in the future. Relatively, it is more intriguing that the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)'s 20-item abbreviated version includes two subscales for internal and external pleasure. This study used the MSQ short form to measure faculty members' work satisfaction.

Twenty components make up the instrument, which asks respondents to rate their level of job satisfaction. The MSQ follows [20]'s two-factor theory, which includes motivation factors (achievement, growth, recognition, advancement, responsibility, and work itself) and hygiene factors (supervision, pay, working conditions, coworkers, conditions, policies, job security, status, and personal life). The MSQ is a well-known tool that has shown consistency and dependability throughout time and is frequently used in the literature [21].

2.3. Academic Service Quality

To comprehend and properly describe services, one must take into account their qualities. Five major problems were found in the ten service quality metrics that [22] suggested. Effective communication, security, competency, politeness, responsiveness, and customer knowledge are among the ten dimensions. Following their definition and description of service quality, [22] created the Performance-only Service Quality Questionnaire (SERVPERF) scale to gauge how customers felt about it. The ten elements were eventually distilled into five dimensions: tangibles, assurance, responsiveness, empathy, and reliability [23].

The first SERVQUAL survey was created to evaluate businesses and organizations in the service industry [22]. In order to evaluate the five elements of service quality, tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and dependability questionnaire had twenty-two questions, each of which was asked twice: once about performance and once about expectations. The total number of articles was forty-four. SERVQUAL respondents rate the quality of the services they received using a 7-point Likert-type scale, where 1 indicates strongly disagree and 7 indicates strongly agree [24].

1.4. Conceptual Framework

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) theory [14] is used to gauge transformational leadership characteristics, and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) [21] is used to gauge faculty staff satisfaction. The Performance-only Service Quality Questionnaire (SERVPERF) [25] is used to measure academic service quality from the perspective of faculty staff.

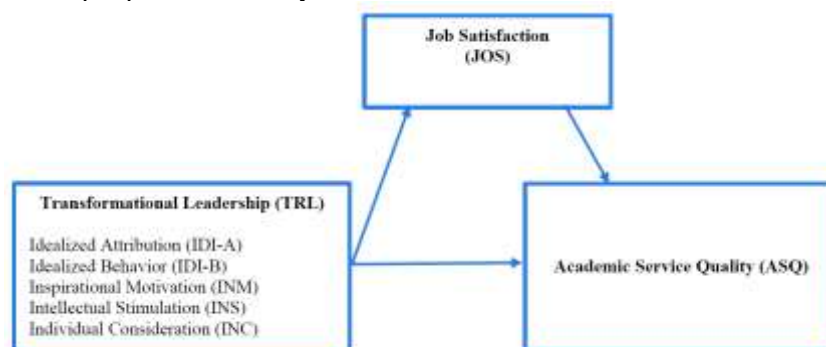


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

3. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1. Design

This study exemplifies the quantitative method, employing a correlational approach to data collection. Quantitative research is the most efficacious research methodology now available [26]. Quantitative research

approaches utilize measurable numerical data to aid in addressing research problems. The quantitative technique encompasses the steps of collecting, assessing, and interpreting study outcomes, along with documenting them [27].

3.2. Research Instrument

The survey questionnaire is the primary tool utilized in this study. The survey questionnaire is divided into four sections: (1) Demographic information was collected from the research samples using a researcher-developed demographic characteristic; (2) faculty staff members' self-perceptions of transformational leadership style were assessed using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) [17], in both Khmer and English; (3) faculty staff members' job satisfaction was assessed using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) [21], in both Khmer and English; and (4) academic service quality as perceived by faculty staff members was assessed using the Performance-only Service Quality Questionnaire (SERVPERF) [25].

3.3. Validity and Reliability

Back translation was done on the research questionnaire. After the Khmer translation, the survey's content validity was determined by four specialists who reviewed and analyzed it. Theoretically, four experts were chosen using [28]'s recommendations. Practical instructions serve as the basis for the back-translation procedure of the instrument employed in this investigation [28].

High validity and reliability were ensured by conducting a pilot study [27]. According to [27], piloting entails testing and adjusting the questionnaire in response to respondent feedback to improve its validity and reliability. [27], [28] state that the initial version of the questionnaire must be utilized for the pilot study before being sent to a few questionnaire design specialists for revision and editing.

Table 1. The Value of the Coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha of the Surveyed Questionnaire

Core Factor	Target Samples	
	No. of Factor	Cronbach's Alpha
Transformation Leadership (TRL)	20	0.86
Idealized Attribution (IDI-A)	4	0.88
Idealized Behavior (IDI-B)	4	0.85
Inspirational Motivation (INM)	4	0.87
Intellectual Stimulation (INS)	4	0.90
Individual Consideration (INC)	4	0.83
Job Satisfaction (JOS)	20	0.83
Academic Service Quality (ASQ)	20	0.87

3.4. Research Sample Size

McRoy and Gibbs [5] defined a sample as a collection of items, occasions, or individuals selected by researchers to gather information for the study. In order to avoid gathering data from the complete population, sampling is utilized [27]. Because of its importance, 336 university employees who teach and administer at the three public institutions in Phnom Penh that were chosen for the 2023–2024 academic year made up the research samples for this study. In order to generalize the findings, this study was surprisingly based on a random probability sample. Because probability sampling aims to be representative of the population, it is useful [27]. Stratified sampling was used by the researcher to manage a naturally occurring group of individuals who were chosen at random from a huge population.

Table 2. Samples' Personal Information

Classification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	217	64.78
Female	118	35.22
Age		
25-35	84	25.08
36-45	128	38.20
46-55	91	27.17
56-60	32	9.55
Current Position		
Professor	35	10.44
Associate Professor	88	26.27
Assistant Professor	145	43.29
Lecturer	67	20.00

Experience in Position		
Less than 3 Years	135	40.30
3-6 Years	123	36.71
More than 6 Years	77	22.99
Total	335	100

Table 2 presents the personal information of 335 respondents. The bulk of participants were male (64.78%), while females comprised 35.22%. The predominant age group was 36–45 years (38.20%), followed by 46–55 years (27.17%), 25–35 years (25.08%), and 56–60 years (9.55%). The majority of respondents currently hold roles as Assistant Professors (43.29%), followed by Associate Professors (26.27%), Lecturers (20.00%), and Professors (10.44%). Regarding experience in their current roles, 40.30% possessed less than three years, 36.71% had from three and six years, and 22.99% exceeded six years.

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

Using the survey questionnaire created for this study, which has been updated and verified in light of reliability and validity findings, the researcher gathered data. The researcher asked the three chosen university employees who were the subject of the questions and targeted to fill out a demographic questionnaire. The survey asks demographic questions and includes further instructions. The questionnaire was handed out in person. The university administration that was surveyed received a copy of the survey in Khmer along with a letter asking them to participate. The next week, a phone follow-up was done to increase the answer rate. Any technique for gathering data must be approved by the university's highest management. Research samples were not paid or awarded for participating in the study, and there was no dishonesty involved.

3.6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22 was used as a data analysis tool for descriptive analysis, and weighted Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) were computed, frequencies and percentages were assessed, and the frequency, percentage, means, and standard deviations of each of the five dimensions of transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and academic service quality instruments were examined. Person correlation and regression analyses were also conducted to measure the relationships and effects of the variables being studied. It is important to note that before performing the mentioned statistics, data normal distributions were checked before employing the parametric tests in the study. Even though the data were a little bit abnormal, it is still acceptable. The details were explained thoroughly in Table 7. The data for the study were collected using a 5-point Likert-type scale questionnaire [29], [30].

Table 3. The 5-level Likert Scale for Attitude Interpretation

Value of Mean Range	Attitude Interpretation
1.00 – 1.79	Very Dissatisfied/Strongly Disagree
1.80 – 2.59	Dissatisfied/Disagree
2.60 – 3.39	Neither
3.40 – 4.19	Satisfied/Agree
4.20 – 5.00	Very Satisfied/Strongly Agree

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was the primary data analysis tool utilized to assess the theories at a significance level of 0.01. A significance level of 0.01 was chosen based on the researcher's belief that the influence observed in the current sample truly exists at the population level. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the linear regression model indicates the extent to which the variable (x) accounts for the variation in the response variable (y). R^2 was defined as the ratio of the independent variables (components of transformational leadership) to the variance of the dependent variables (job satisfaction and academic service quality).

3.7. Ethical Consideration

It is important to consider ethics in any research that relies on human data collection. When conducting research, researchers need to think about things like confidentiality, getting access to people, and getting agreement [27]. The University of Cambodia (UC) received an application from the researcher seeking ethical approval. Top management at the UC granted final approval to start collecting data. The informed consent form included the present study's goal and other pertinent information, such as the study's voluntary nature and the confidentiality of research samples. Additionally, research participants may decline to participate in the study at any moment.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Perceived QLO, MSO, and SERVPERF among the University Staff

Self-perceptions of the five aspects of the TRL, JOS, and ASQ instruments were assessed among the staff of public universities in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. There were 335 staff from the three universities who were chosen as research samples. MLQ, MSQ, and SERVPERF were among the survey questionnaires that the researcher modified and used as the primary study tools. The findings, as shown in Table 5, revealed that the averages for idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavior), intellectual stimulation, motivating others, and personalized attention were 3.94, 3.97, 3.95, 3.75, and 3.48, respectively, with standard deviations of 0.92, 0.88, 0.87, 0.96, and 0.97. The TRL component's mean score of 3.82 and standard deviation of 0.79 revealed how university staff perceived their leaders' transformational leadership style.

Table 5. The Means and Standard Deviations for Each Instrument Dimension

Instrument	No. of Items	Mean	S.D.
TRL	20	3.82	0.79
IDI-A	4	3.94	0.92
IDI-B	4	3.97	0.88
INM	4	3.95	0.87
INS	4	3.75	0.96
INC	4	3.48	0.97
JOS	20	3.66	0.72
ASQ	20	3.49	0.78

The results indicated a favorable and significant correlation among transformational leadership, job happiness, and academic service quality among public university staff in Phnom Penh. The findings corroborate and enhance previous research, confirming that transformational leadership, through its fundamental dimensions, including idealized influence (both attributed and behavioral), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, significantly influences positive workplace attitudes and perceptions of service quality [31]-[33]. When university leaders exemplify visionary and ethical leadership, stimulate and intellectually engage their staff, and exhibit authentic concern for individual development, they cultivate a work environment that enhances employee satisfaction and promotes a deeper commitment to providing quality academic services.

The results also revealed that public university personnel in Phnom Penh generally regarded the academic service quality at their institutions as merely moderate. This indicates an immediate necessity for university administrators to rigorously evaluate internal processes, leadership strategies, and staff engagement methodologies. Enhancing service quality in higher education transcends infrastructural advancement; it necessitates the empowerment of academic and administrative staff through supportive leadership that fosters trust, motivation, and innovation. Transformational leadership should be regarded not only as a management method but as a strategic instrument for human capital development and organizational excellence.

The results then underscore the significance of reciprocal communication and relational interaction between leaders and followers. Transformational leaders who solicit input, recognize accomplishments, and offer constructive feedback are more inclined to cultivate a culture of psychological safety and collective accountability. This consequently leads to heightened staff productivity, improved team cohesion, and eventually, superior academic service quality. In light of the changing requirements for higher education institutions in Cambodia, particularly among globalization, digital transformation, and increased accountability, embracing and institutionalizing transformational leadership methods is essential. Aligning leadership behaviors with the needs and goals of university staff enables institutions to establish a robust basis for sustainable quality enhancements and institutional efficacy.

4.2 Relationships of TRL, JOS, and ASQ among the University Staff

This section aims to determine how the three chosen public university staff in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, perceive the linkages between the five TRL characteristics, JOS, and ASQ. For each subscale tested in the surveys, Table 6 presents a summary of descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, 95%, and the lowest and highest total scores. The results show that the three selected public university staff located in Phnom Penh, as perceived towards TRL, JOB, and ASQ, were at high ($M = 3.82$, $M = 3.66$, $M = 3.49$, and $SD = 0.79$, $SD = 0.72$, $SD = 0.78$, respectively).

Table 6. The Mean, Standard Deviation, Minimum, and Maximum of Each Instrument

Instrument	M	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		S.D.	Min	Max
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
TRL	3.82	3.71	3.88	0.79	1.15	4.95

IDI-A	3.94	3.81	4.01	0.92	1	5
IDL-B	3.97	3.86	4.04	0.88	1	5
INM	3.95	3.83	3.82	0.87	1	5
INS	3.75	3.62	3.59	0.96	1	5
INC	3.48	3.38	3.88	0.97	1	5
JOS	3.66	3.57	3.71	0.72	0.70	4.92
ASQ	3.49	3.40	3.56	0.78	0.76	4.91

The results of the normality and homogeneity assessments are displayed in Table 7, employing the Shapiro-Wilk and Levene's statistics. Levene's test was utilized to evaluate the assumption of homogeneity of variances among groups. The *p-value* from Levene's test surpassed the 0.05 barrier, confirming the premise of homogeneity and suggesting that the variances among the groups were statistically equivalent. The Shapiro-Wilk test results indicated that the data were not regularly distributed, as demonstrated by *p-values* below 0.05. It is commonly recognized in statistical literature that with large sample sizes, even small deviations from normality can provide statistically significant Shapiro-Wilk results. Nonetheless, parametric tests like Pearson correlation and regression analysis are resilient and suitable under these circumstances, especially when the sample size is sufficiently large. Parametric approaches are typically robust against normality violations, particularly when the data distribution lacks significant skewness or kurtosis. Consequently, the choice to undertake parametric analyses in this study is warranted.

Table 7. The Test Results of Normality and Homogeneity

	Shapiro-Wilk		Levene Statistic	
	Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.
TRL	0.953	< 0.001	0.289	0.833
IDI-A	0.924	< 0.001	0.690	0.559
IDL-B	0.925	< 0.001	0.504	0.680
INM	0.917	< 0.001	1.261	0.288
INS	0.943	< 0.001	0.971	0.407
INC	0.961	< 0.001	1.484	0.219
JOS	0.979	< 0.001	1.524	0.208
ASQ	0.983	< 0.001	0.796	0.497

Table 8 displays the correlation coefficients among the five dimensions of transformational leadership (TRL), idealized influence attributed (IDI-A), idealized influence behavior (IDI-B), inspirational motivation (INM), intellectual stimulation (INS), and individualized consideration (INC), alongside job satisfaction (JOS) and academic service quality (ASQ). The findings demonstrated consistently robust and affirmative interconnections among the TRL components, with all correlations achieving statistical significance at the 0.01 level. The correlations among the aspects of transformative leadership varied from $r = 0.566$ to $r = 0.780$, signifying moderate to high relationships. All variables in the analysis exhibited significant and positive correlations, with values ranging from $r = 0.477$ to $r = 0.780$. The most significant association was seen between idealized influence (behavior) and inspiring motivation ($r = 0.780$), indicating a high conceptual alignment between these two leadership traits. The weakest, however statistically significant, link was observed between idealized influence (behavior) and academic service quality ($r = 0.477$), signifying a comparatively smaller, albeit pertinent, association. These findings corroborate the theoretical premise that transformational leadership approaches are interrelated and jointly enhance job satisfaction and service delivery within the academic setting.

Table 8. The Relationships among the Five Dimensions of TRL, JOB, and ASQ

Variables	IDI-A	IDI-B	INM	INS	INC	JOS	ASQ
IDI-A	1						
IDL-B	0.753*	1					
INM	0.699*	0.780*	1				
INS	0.621*	0.691*	0.749*	1			
INC	0.597*	0.574*	0.566*	0.695*	1		
JOS	0.587*	0.564*	0.619*	0.592*	0.609*	1	
ASQ	0.515*	0.477*	0.520*	0.495*	0.513*	0.640*	1

Note: * Significant at $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

The results demonstrate a robust, positive link between academic service quality (ASQ) and job satisfaction (JOS), evidenced by a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.640$ at the 0.01 significance level. This significant correlation indicates that increased job satisfaction among public university staff correlates with

enhanced perceptions and delivery of academic service quality. Contented personnel are more inclined to exhibit passion, enthusiasm, and attentiveness in their professional duties, thereby immediately improving the quality of academic services provided to students and stakeholders.

This discovery is supported by previous studies [34]–[36], which repeatedly indicated that job satisfaction is a significant predictor of service quality in educational environments. The psychological well-being of employees, typically cultivated through supportive leadership, acknowledgment, equitable remuneration, professional development opportunities, and a conducive work environment, underpins good attitudes and behaviors in service delivery. This is in line with [37]. Content employees exhibit greater engagement, enhanced motivation to maintain institutional norms, and a propensity to exceed the basic expectations of their positions.

This highlights for university managers the necessity of perceiving job satisfaction as a strategic tool for enhancing institutional quality, rather than only a human resource issue. Implementing policies and procedures that bolster staff morale can result in quantifiable enhancements in academic service performance, including responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, all of which are essential components of the SERVPERF model. Moreover, in the Cambodian higher education landscape, where public universities encounter increasing demands to enhance competitiveness, transparency, and student satisfaction, cultivating job satisfaction is of paramount importance. Ensuring employee well-being is not just an ethical obligation but also a practical necessity for attaining service excellence and institutional efficacy.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

The institutional service quality was rated as moderate by staff members of the chosen public universities in Phnom Penh. This implies that university administrators should pay more attention to the wants and needs of their employees to improve teamwork and, ultimately, the overall quality of academic services. More specifically, leaders can use mutually beneficial connections and interactions to increase their followers' output, efficacy, and job satisfaction.

This is the first study of its kind conducted at a public university in Cambodia. In particular, the results of this study may help leaders in public universities and other higher education institutions plan and manage strategies that will help them achieve their objectives and achieve greater success. The results of this study indicate that transformational leadership affects both work happiness and the quality of academic services. To accomplish their organizational goals, university policymakers must therefore consider this.

University leadership can utilize the study's findings as a roadmap to increase the efficacy of leadership at the institution. In order to achieve high performance, top management leaders may find this useful in developing tactics that enhance university leaders' transformational leadership. The key finding and suggestions of the study is the significance of transformative leadership for both managers and academics. These findings may contribute to the body of knowledge already accessible in the field of education in general and among leaders in particular.

5.2 Recommendation

The study's findings suggest that public university leaders in Cambodia should implement and enhance transformational leadership approaches. Leaders ought to exemplify essential transformational attributes, including inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, customized consideration, and idealized influence. These actions are crucial for cultivating a supportive and visionary workplace that motivates employees to excel. Institutions ought to allocate resources towards leadership development programs that augment these competencies and guarantee that leadership practices are congruent with the purpose of academic excellence and institutional advancement.

Moreover, enhancing employee engagement and work happiness has to be a strategic objective. The strong association between job happiness and academic service quality indicates that when employees perceive value and support, they are more inclined to provide high-quality academic services. Consequently, university administrators ought to prioritize the establishment of inclusive, stimulating, and equitable work environments. Initiatives may encompass recognition and reward systems, avenues for professional development, transparent promotion procedures, and strategies to manage workloads efficiently.

The study emphasizes the necessity to improve the quality of academic services, which workers at the selected public universities in Phnom Penh regarded as moderate. Universities should conduct regular service evaluations and establish feedback systems that engage both staff and students. Enhancement initiatives should focus on certain areas of deficiency, including responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy, essential facets of academic service provision. Improving these elements will enhance institutional reputation, student satisfaction, and overall educational results.

Moreover, university authorities ought to utilize these findings to formulate strategic frameworks that include transformational leadership principles into institutional planning and governance. Leadership techniques must be integrated within the overarching aim of enhancing institutional performance, staff retention, and

academic excellence. Aligning leadership development with organizational objectives is essential for attaining sustained institutional success.

This inaugural study within the Cambodian public university system underscores the necessity for continuous research and oversight. Longitudinal studies and comparative research across other institutions or areas might be important in corroborating and expanding the existing findings. Frequent evaluations of leadership efficacy, employee satisfaction, and service quality yield essential insights that facilitate evidence-based decisions and adaptive institutional governance.

It is advised that the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and pertinent higher education stakeholders integrate transformational leadership training into national educational policies and reform initiatives. Support at the national level for institutional capacity building and leadership training will enhance individual universities and further the overall advancement of Cambodia's higher education sector, following national objectives and regional integration initiatives.

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