

A Study on the Relationship between Employees' Perception of Transformational Leadership and Self-Efficacy in Yun'An Industrial College, China

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the situation and relationship between employees' perception of transformational leadership and their self-efficacy, as well as to analyze the significant differences under employees' demographic factors at Yun'An Industrial College, Yunnan, China. A total of 301 valid questionnaires were collected for data analysis for the study. The researcher used descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA, regression analysis, as well as Pearson correlation method to analyse the questionnaires. It was found that employees' perception of transformational leadership and their self-efficacy were at the moderate levels; and there was a significant correlation between employees' perception of transformational leadership and their self-efficacy. Finally, Discussions and recommendations were provided for the organization.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Self-Efficacy, Perception, Relationship

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I. Introduction

In today's increasingly dynamic and competitive business landscape, effective leadership plays a pivotal role in steering organizations toward sustained success. Among the various leadership paradigms, transformational leadership stands out as a key approach that fosters organizational growth by inspiring and empowering employees to transcend their self-interests for the collective good (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This leadership style emphasizes vision, motivation, and individualized consideration, making it highly relevant for modern organizations navigating complex challenges. Concurrently, employee self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks and achieve goals, has been recognized as a critical determinant of job performance, motivation, and psychological well-being (Bandura, 1997). High levels of self-efficacy contribute to greater resilience, adaptability, and overall job satisfaction, further reinforcing the importance of this construct within organizational settings.

The present study aims to explore the interplay between transformational leadership and employee self-efficacy, focusing on their combined impact on both organizational outcomes and personal development. Specifically, this research seeks to investigate how employees' perceptions of transformational leadership influence their sense of self-efficacy, and whether this relationship varies across different demographic groups. Understanding this dynamic is crucial, as it provides insights into how leadership strategies can be tailored to enhance employee motivation and performance, ultimately driving organizational success.

To address these objectives, the study focuses on the employees of Yun'An Industrial College, located in Yunnan, China. The following research questions guide this investigation:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of employees at Yun'An Industrial College, including their gender, length of service, and job categories?
2. What is the current level of employees' perception of transformational leadership within the organization?

3. How do employees perceive their own self-efficacy, and what are the prevailing trends in this regard?

4. Are there statistically significant differences in employees' perceptions of transformational leadership and self-efficacy based on demographic factors such as gender, years of service, and job category?

5. Is there a significant positive correlation between employees' perception of transformational leadership and their self-efficacy at Yun'An Industrial College?

Based on these research questions, the following hypotheses have been formulated to guide the statistical analysis:

H1: There are significant differences in employees' self-efficacy across different demographic variables, such as gender, length of service, and job category.

H2: Employees' perceptions of transformational leadership significantly differ based on demographic factors.

H3: There is a positive and significant correlation between employees' perceptions of transformational leadership and their self-efficacy.

This research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between transformational leadership and employee self-efficacy, with the ultimate goal of identifying strategies that can enhance both individual and organizational performance. By examining the specific context of Yun'An Industrial College, this study contributes to the broader literature on leadership and employee development, offering valuable insights for practitioners and researchers alike.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Transformational Leadership

Leadership includes changing the thinking and behavior of followers, the behavior of their groups, and the relationship between leaders and followers. Effective leadership is the key to organizational success (Bass & Avolio, 2002).

Bernard M. Bass expanded on Burns' work and conducted extensive research on transformational leadership. In his book "Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations," Bandura (1977) identified four core elements of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

2.2 Employee Self-efficacy

Employee self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their own abilities to successfully perform specific tasks and meet job-related challenges. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is a central construct within social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the role of cognitive processes in human behavior. Self-efficacy beliefs are task-specific and context-dependent, reflecting an employee's confidence in their capacity to execute necessary actions, skills, or behaviors required to achieve desired outcomes in the workplace (Wang, 2014). It goes beyond mere self-confidence and incorporates the belief that one possesses the requisite skills, knowledge, and experience to effectively perform their job responsibilities (Bass & Avolio, 2002). The concept of employee self-efficacy highlights its impact on various work-related outcomes.

The concept of employee self-efficacy consists of several dimensions. These dimensions represent different aspects of an individual's beliefs in their own capabilities to perform successfully in the workplace. Chen et al. (2001) concluded four primary dimensions of employee self-efficacy. Task-specific self-efficacy: This dimension refers to an individual's belief in their ability to perform specific tasks or job-related activities effectively. It focuses on the confidence an employee has in their capacity to accomplish the necessary skills and meet the demands of their job. This dimension was mentioned in the studies of Wang (2014). General self-efficacy reflects a broader belief in one's overall competence to handle various situations and challenges in the workplace. It pertains to an individual's belief in their ability to cope with novel or uncertain situations and adapt to changing circumstances (Judge & Bono, 2001). Self-regulatory efficacy: Self-regulatory efficacy relates to an individual's belief in their capability to manage their own behaviors, thoughts, and emotions effectively. Collective self-efficacy refers to the shared belief within a group or team regarding their collective ability to perform tasks successfully. It can influence teamwork, collaboration, and overall group performance. These dimensions of employee self-efficacy are interrelated but capture different aspects of an individual's beliefs about their capabilities (Parker, Williams & Turner (2006).

2.3 Conceptual Framework

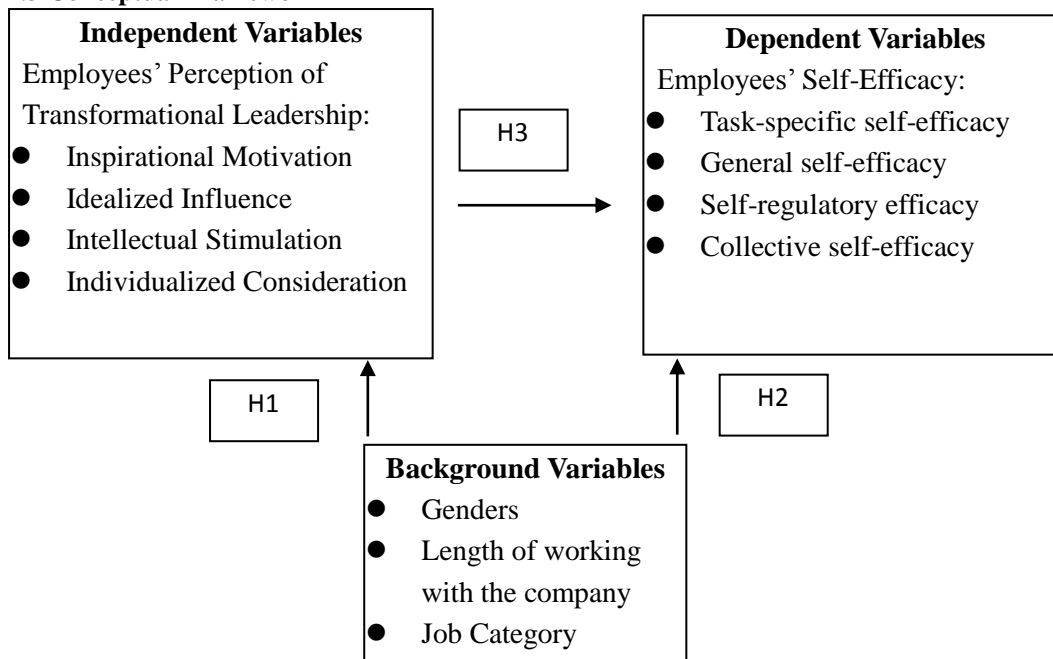


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

III. Research Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative method by using questionnaire survey to collect data. The dependent variable of this study is self-efficacy, and the independent variable is transformational leadership. The population for this study is the employees who work in Yun'An Industrial College, Yunnan, China. According to its human resource department, there were 325 employees who work for the college in the area, which is the population size for the study. Since the population itself is not large, the sample size for this study is also set as 325, which takes all the employees as research objects.

The questionnaire part of this study mainly included three parts: the first part was the demographic background of the participants, mainly including the genders, lengths of working, working category. The second part was about employee self-efficacy, which included 12 questions. The questionnaire of this scale was based on the study of Chen et al. (2001). The third part was about transformational leadership, which included 12 questions. The questionnaire of this scale was based on the study of (Bass & Avolio, 2002). These questions can help assess the level of employee self-efficacy and there proceeded to transformational leadership. The questionnaire will be designed on a 1-5 Likert scale, where 5= strongly agree 4= agree 3= neutral 2= disagree 1= strongly disagree.

In the study, structured questionnaires would be used to collect data. Questionnaires were distributed and collected through the Wechat online community of Yun'An Industrial College, Yunnan, China in September 2023.

A related pilot test was conducted with 30 participants involved. The overall reliability coefficient of the questionnaire is 0.918, which is greater than 0.8. Therefore, the overall credibility of the pretest of this questionnaire is extremely high. the KMO value was 0.768, which was greater than 0.7, indicating that the scale in this questionnaire was suitable for further analysis.

This study collects data through the scale design and used SPSS 26 to process the questionnaire. First, it makes descriptive statistics on the effective data, and reports the information of the questionnaire participants, including the mean value and standard deviation. The study used independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA to test the difference of demographic variables on both transformational leadership and employee self-efficacy. This study used Pearson correlation analysis and regression analysis to test the relationship between transformational leadership and employee self-efficacy.

IV. Research Findings

4.1 Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

The first demographic factor was gender. According to Table 4.1, 35.2% of the respondents are male and 64.8% were female. The second demographic factor was working years, it shows that 19.6% of the respondents have worked in Yun'An Industrial College, Yunnan, China for less than 2 years. Most people (47.8%) have worked

in the organization for 2-4 years. 17.6% of them stayed there for 5-10 years. Another 15% worked there for more than 10 years. The third demographic factor was the work category. According to Table 4.1, 60.1% of the respondents were doing teaching related jobs. 22.3% of employees were doing administration and marketing related job, and 17.6% were doing other types of jobs.

Table 1 Distribution of Employee' Demographic Factors

Demographic Factors	Group	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	106	35.2
	Female	195	64.8
Working Years	Less Than 2 Years	59	19.6
	2-4 Years	144	47.8
	5-10 Years	53	17.6
	More Than 10 Years	45	15.0
Teaching Subjects	Teaching Related	181	60.1
	Administration and Marketing Related	67	22.3
	Other	53	17.6
Total		301	100

4.2 Statistical Analysis Results

According to Table 2, the mean values of the four dimensions of employee self-efficacy were between 4.08 and 4.39, which meant that employees' self-efficacy reached a moderate level. Among the four dimensions, the average value of Collective self-efficacy was the highest, with a mean value of 4.39 and a standard deviation of 1.250. The second was the Self-regulatory efficacy, with a mean value of 4.36 and a standard deviation of 1.141. The third is the Task-specific self-efficacy, with a mean value of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 1.212. The mean value of General self-efficacy was the lowest 4.08, and the standard deviation was 1.184.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Employees' Self-Efficacy

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Task-specific self-efficacy	4.16	1.212	Moderate
General self-efficacy	4.08	1.184	Moderate
Self-regulatory efficacy	4.36	1.141	Moderate
Collective self-efficacy	4.39	1.250	Moderate
Overall	4.25	1.197	Moderate

It can be clearly seen from Table 3 that the mean value of the four dimensions of perceived transformational leadership was between 4.51 and 4.93, which meant that perception of transformational leadership was also at the level of moderate. Among the four dimensions, the average value of Individualized Attention was the highest, with the mean value of 4.93 and the standard deviation of 1.599. The second place was Idealized Influence, with a mean value of 4.73 and a standard deviation of 1.102. The third place was Intellectual Stimulation, with a mean value of 4.54 and a standard deviation of 1.581. The lowest mean value of Inspiring Motivation was 4.51, and the standard deviation was 1.403.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistical Analysis of Employees' Transformational Leadership

Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Idealized Influence	4.73	1.102	Moderate
Inspiring Motivation	4.51	1.403	Moderate
Intellectual Stimulation	4.54	1.581	Moderate
Individualized Attention	4.93	1.599	Moderate
Overall	4.68	1.421	Moderate

4.3 Hypotheses Test Results

4.3.1 Hypotheses Test Results of H 1

H1-1: There are significant differences in employees' self-efficacy with different genders. This study used independent samples t-test to compare differences of demographic factors on the four dimensions of employees' self-efficacy. Because the P value are lower than the standard 0.05 except self-regulatory efficacy, it can be concluded that employees of different genders have significant differences in their self-efficacy. So H1-1 is accepted in this study.

Table 4 Differences in Employees' Self-efficacy with Different Genders

Dimension	Group	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Task-specific self-efficacy	Female	106	4.20	0.979	17.577	.000
	Male	195	4.14	1.324		
General self-efficacy	Female	106	4.14	0.875	13.176	.000
	Male	195	4.04	1.323		
Self-regulatory efficacy	Female	106	4.24	0.974	2.438	.120
	Male	195	4.42	1.220		
Collective self-efficacy	Female	106	4.36	1.044	8.827	.003
	Male	195	4.41	1.351		

H1-2: There are significant differences in employees' self-efficacy with different working years. This study used one-way ANOVA to test this hypothesis. As shown in Table 5, P-values for the four dimensions of self-efficacy were all 0.000, which indicated there were significant differences in employees' self-efficacy with different working years. So H1-2 is accepted in this study.

Table 5 Differences in Employees' Self-efficacy with Different Working Years

Dimension	Group	N	Mean	SD	F	P
Task-specific self-efficacy	Less Than 2 Years	59	3.86	1.148	19.783	.000
	2-4 Years	144	4.51	1.061		
	5-10 Years	53	4.43	1.264		
	More Than 10 Years	45	3.14	1.031		
General self-efficacy	Less Than 2 Years	59	3.39	1.160	27.829	.000
	2-4 Years	144	4.48	0.995		
	5-10 Years	53	4.48	1.118		
	More Than 10 Years	45	3.22	0.997		
Self-regulatory efficacy	Less Than 2 Years	59	3.79	1.195	9.782	.000
	2-4 Years	144	4.66	0.997		
	5-10 Years	53	4.42	1.385		
	More Than 10 Years	45	4.09	0.839		
Collective self-efficacy	Less Than 2 Years	59	3.45	1.333	33.382	.000
	2-4 Years	144	4.88	0.873		
	5-10 Years	53	4.74	1.432		
	More Than 10 Years	45	3.65	0.850		

H1-3: There are significant differences in employees' self-efficacy with different working categories. This study used one-way ANOVA to test this hypothesis. The test results were shown in Table 6. The results showed that the p-values of all the dimensions of employees' self-efficacy were 0.000, so it indicated there were significant differences in employees' self-efficacy with different working categories. So H1-3 was accepted in this study. Since H1-1, H-2 and H1-3 were accepted, it proved that employees with different demographic factors had significant differences in their self-efficacy. Therefore, H 1 was accepted.

Table 6 Differences in Employees' Self-Efficacy with Different Working Categories

Dimension	Group	N	Mean	SD	F	P
Task-specific self-efficacy	Teaching Related	181	4.38	1.218	15.419	.000
	Administration and Marketing	67	3.47	1.061		
	Other	53	4.30	1.059		
General self-efficacy	Teaching Related	181	4.39	1.004	43.194	.000
	Administration and Marketing	67	3.03	1.259		
	Other	53	4.33	0.877		
Self-regulatory efficacy	Teaching Related	181	4.60	1.150	19.436	.000
	Administration and Marketing	67	3.65	1.260		
	Other	53	4.43	0.239		
Collective self-efficacy	Teaching Related	181	4.62	1.223	16.568	.000
	Administration and Marketing	67	3.66	1.459		
	Other	53	4.52	0.483		

4.3.2 Hypotheses Test Results of H 2

H2: There are significant differences in employees' perception of transformational leadership with different background variables. This study used independent samples t-test to compare differences of demographic factors on the four dimensions of employees' perception of transformational leadership. Table 7 showed that employees of different genders have no significant differences in their perception of transformational leadership. So H2-1 was declined in this study.

Table 7 Differences in Employees' Perception of Transformational Leadership with Different Genders

Dimension	Group	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Inspirational Motivation	Female	106	4.85	1.036	.819	.366
	Male	195	4.67	1.134		
Idealized Influence	Female	106	4.64	1.283	2.159	.143
	Male	195	4.44	1.463		
Intellectual Stimulation	Female	106	4.43	1.492	.468	.494
	Male	195	4.59	1.628		
Individualized Consideration	Female	106	4.92	1.143	3.010	.084
	Male	195	4.65	1.495		

H2-2: There are significant differences in Employees' Perception of Transformational Leadership with different working years. This study used one-way ANOVA to test this hypothesis. The test results were shown in Table 8. The results showed that p-values of all the dimensions of employees' perception of transformational leadership was .000, which indicated there were significant differences in employees' perception of transformational leadership with different working years. Among them, employees who had worked for 2-4 years generally gave high scores in all dimensions of perceived transformational leadership perceived, while employees who worked less than 2 years generally gave the lowest scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that H2-2 was accepted in this study.

Table 8 Differences in Employees' Perception of Transformational Leadership with Different Working Years

Dimension	Group	N	Mean	SD	F	P
Inspirational Motivation	Less Than 2 Years	59	4.13	1.384	16.493	.000
	2-4 Years	144	5.05	0.846		
	5-10 Years	53	4.98	1.085		
	More Than 10 Years	45	4.20	0.928		
Idealized Influence	Less Than 2 Years	59	3.29	1.473	57.246	.000
	2-4 Years	144	5.23	0.949		
	5-10 Years	53	4.82	1.176		
	More Than 10 Years	45	3.46	1.043		
Intellectual Stimulation	Less Than 2 Years	59	3.31	1.412	35.044	.000
	2-4 Years	144	5.28	1.391		
	5-10 Years	53	4.52	1.336		
	More Than 10 Years	45	3.78	1.247		
Individualized Consideration	Less Than 2 Years	59	3.68	1.610	36.006	.000
	2-4 Years	144	5.32	1.006		
	5-10 Years	53	5.11	1.021		
	More Than 10 Years	45	3.89	1.287		

H2-3: There are significant differences in employees' perception of transformational leadership with different working categories. This study used one-way ANOVA to test this hypothesis. The test results were shown in Table 9, which indicated that p-value was smaller than .05. Therefore, H 2 was accepted.

Table 9 Differences in Employees' Perception of Transformational Leadership with Different Working Categories

Dimension	Group	N	Mean	SD	F	P
Inspirational Motivation	Teaching Related	181	5.07	0.921	29.242	.000
	Administration and Marketing	67	3.99	1.501		
	Other	53	4.53	0.248		
Idealized Influence	Teaching Related	181	4.88	1.125	21.326	.000

	Administration and Marketing	67	3.66	1.965		
	Other	53	4.35	0.811		
Intellectual Stimulation	Teaching Related	181	4.97	1.366	20.684	.000
	Administration and Marketing	67	3.66	1.877		
	Other	53	4.18	1.315		
	Teaching Related	181	5.21	1.004	31.324	.000
Individualized Consideration	Administration and Marketing	67	3.92	2.049		
	Other	53	4.21	0.571		

4.3.3 Hypotheses Test Results of H 3

H3: There is a significant positive correlation between employees' perception of transformational leadership and employees' self-efficacy. The hypothesis of this study was tested by using correlation. In this study, Pearson correlation (the significant level of correlation is 0.01) was adopted, which analyzed the correlation between variables. All the correlation coefficient values greater than 0.3 proved that there was a significant positive correlation between employees' perception of transformational leadership and their self-efficacy. Therefore, H3 was accepted.

Table 4.10 Pearson Correlation Analysis between Employees' Perception of Transformational Leadership and Employees' Self-Efficacy

Perceived Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Employees' Self-Efficacy			
		Task-specific self-efficacy	General self-efficacy	Self-regulatory efficacy	Collective self-efficacy
	Inspirational Motivation	.610**	.802**	.892**	.828**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Idealized Influence	.513**	.707**	.754**	.879**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Intellectual Stimulation	.374**	.649**	.788**	.768**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Individualized Consideration	.488**	.662**	.790**	.844**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This study also used linear regression to analyze the relationship of four dimensions of employees' self efficacy (Dependent Variable) and the four dimensions of their perceptions of transformational leadership (Independent Variable). Table 11 shows the linear regression model between employees' self efficacy (Dependent Variable) and the four dimensions of employees' perceptions of transformational leadership (Independent Variable). The result indicated that employees' perceptions of transformational leadership had a positive and statistically significant impact on employees' self efficacy. Thus, H3 was accepted.

Table 4.11 Linear Regression Analysis between Employees' Perception of Transformational Leadership and Employees' Self-Efficacy

Dependent Variable: Self-efficacy	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Inspirational Motivation	.415	.069	.366	6.053	.000
Idealized Influence	.859	.084	.964	10.263	.000
Intellectual Stimulation	.161	.052	.203	3.116	.002
Individualized Consideration	.203	.097	.225	2.081	.038

$R^2 = 0.818$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.815$, $F = 331.966$, $Sig. = 0.000$

Based on all the above statistical analysis tests and results, Table 12 summarized the results of the research hypothesis test.

Table 12 Summary of Test Results of Research Hypotheses

	Research Hypothesis	Result
H1	There are significant differences in employees' self-efficacy with different background variables.	Accepted
	H1-1: There are significant differences in employees' self-efficacy with different genders.	Accepted
	H1-2: There are significant differences in employees' self-efficacy with different working years.	Accepted
	H1-3: There are significant differences in employees' self-efficacy with different working categories.	Accepted
H2	There are significant differences in employees' perception of transformational leadership with different background variables.	Accepted
	H2-1: There are significant differences in employees' perception of transformational leadership with different genders.	Declined
	H2-2: There are significant differences in Employees' Perception of Transformational Leadership with different working years.	Accepted
	H2-3: There are significant differences in employees' perception of transformational leadership with different working categories.	Accepted
H3	There is a significant positive correlation between employees' perception of transformational leadership and employees' self-efficacy.	Accepted

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight the substantial role that transformational leadership can play in enhancing employees' self-efficacy. Given the positive correlation, organizations should consider implementing strategies that promote transformational leadership to foster higher levels of self-efficacy among employees. However, it's crucial to acknowledge the limitations of this research, as it was confined to a specific region and may not be universally applicable across different contexts within China.

1. Sharing Best Practices:

Organizations should systematically capture and share best practices from teaching-related work roles that have successfully uplifted self-efficacy levels. These practices can serve as benchmarks and be adapted for different departments to enhance overall employee confidence and performance.

2. Fostering a Supportive and Inclusive Leadership Culture:

Creating a leadership culture that is both supportive and inclusive is essential. Transformational leaders who empower employees, recognize their contributions, and foster an environment of trust can significantly enhance self-efficacy. Organizations can conduct regular workshops and training sessions to instill these values in their leadership teams.

3. Promoting Cross-Functional Collaboration and Learning:

Encouraging collaboration across different functions within the organization can lead to a more cohesive and integrated work environment. Cross-functional teams can bring diverse perspectives and skills, which not only enhance problem-solving capabilities but also boost individual self-efficacy through shared learning and achievements.

4. Developing Mentoring Programs:

Mentoring programs can be highly beneficial, especially for employees who are new or less experienced. Pairing them with seasoned mentors can provide guidance, support, and a sense of belonging. Mentors can model transformational leadership behaviors, thereby helping mentees to develop their self-efficacy and leadership skills.

5. Leadership Training:

Investing in leadership training programs for employees at all levels can help cultivate transformational leaders throughout the organization. These programs should focus on key transformational leadership skills, such as effective communication, emotional intelligence, and strategic thinking. By equipping employees with these skills, organizations can create a pipeline of leaders who can drive positive change and enhance self-efficacy among their teams.

6. Implementing Feedback Mechanisms:

Regular feedback mechanisms can help leaders understand the impact of their leadership style on employee self-efficacy. Surveys, one-on-one meetings, and 360-degree feedback can provide valuable insights into areas of improvement for leaders. This continuous feedback loop ensures that leadership practices remain aligned with the goal of enhancing self-efficacy.

7. Tailoring Approaches to Cultural Contexts:

Given the cultural specificity of this study, organizations should consider tailoring their approaches to fit the cultural contexts of their employees. Understanding local values, beliefs, and work dynamics can help in

designing more effective leadership development programs that resonate with employees and enhance their self-efficacy.

While the positive correlation between transformational leadership and employee self-efficacy is encouraging, organizations must carefully consider the limitations of this study. By implementing the recommended strategies and continuously adapting to the unique needs of their workforce, organizations can create an environment that fosters both transformational leadership and high levels of self-efficacy.

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