

The Affect Mechanism of Learning Leadership on Teachers' Extra Effort in China and Thailand

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Abstract

In the post-pandemic era, learning leadership is the key to successful education reform and meeting the challenges that lie ahead. And learning leadership is closely related to teachers' convergent behavior. Therefore, research objective of this study is to examine the direct and indirect (mediating) roles of both learning leadership and teachers' extra effort, and organizational attachment is used as a mediator. This study collected data from teaching staff at 6 colleges in Nanchang, China, and Bangkok, Thailand, between October and November 2022. Employing purposive sampling and electronic questionnaires, it ultimately received 359 valid responses from China (response rate: 89.75%) and 679 valid responses from Thailand (response rate: 84.87%). Employing a quantitative research methodology, this study utilized the learning leadership, extra effort, and organizational attachment scales. Hypotheses were tested through statistical analyses, including correlation, and mediation.

The results show that learning leadership has a significant positive relationship with teachers' extra effort, and organizational attachment, and organizational attachment had a mediating effect in China and Thailand. Finally, the findings of this study also offer fresh insights and lessons for future research. In the post-pandemic era, higher education institutions in both China and Thailand must prioritise developing leadership that integrates motivation and learning. This will enable more targeted policy support for teaching staff, enhance the future practice of learning leadership, and better address the reforms required in the post-pandemic landscape. Moreover, higher education institutions in both nations should prioritise developing diverse programmes designed to improve teachers' behavioral and affective

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experiences, particularly by integrating teachers' extra effort and organizational attachment into enhancement initiatives.

Keywords: Post-Pandemic; China and Thailand; Learning Leadership; Extra Effort; Organizational Attachment

Introduction

In the wake of the pandemic, COVID-19 has posed immense challenges to the global education sector. Conversely, the crisis also presents an opportunity for reform. The current priority lies in navigating against the current, proactively pursuing reforms, and exploring sustainable pathways for advancing educational transformation (Zhao & Xie, 2020). As Zhao and Xie (2020) observes, in the post-pandemic era, educational administration can only address crises through continuous and persistent change. The capacity-building characteristic inherent in learning leadership serves as the core for schools to establish sustainable reform and resolve crises (Liu et al., 2016). Learning leadership is defined as the process whereby school leaders consciously strive to guide, mentor, support, and engage teachers in learning to enhance their professional knowledge, ultimately promoting student learning and school effectiveness. It can foster teachers' professional learning, knowledge-sharing behaviors, and build trust (Liu et al., 2016). As Hallinger et al. (2019) assert, variations in learning leadership capacity significantly impact teachers by creating environments that motivate, engage, and sustain their professional growth.

The TALIS (2020) report indicates that during the COVID-19 period, approximately 60% of teachers worldwide lacked awareness of digital responsibility; students' emotional and psychological health issues also raised concerns. Therefore, beyond enhancing their sense of responsibility toward education, another critical task for teachers is to exert greater effort in addressing students' emotional and psychological well-being and providing necessary support (Tian et al., 2020). Extra effort is defined as the intrinsic desire or willingness to invest additional time and energy to achieve organizational goals (Webb, 2007). Kurland and Gilad (2015) contend that teachers who are willing to go beyond their job requirements contribute to the successful implementation of educational reforms. Conversely, if teachers are unwilling to exert effort beyond minimum expectations, the likelihood of reform failure increases significantly. Research indicates that transformational leadership has

a positive influence on extra effort (Webb, 2007). Moreover, in both traditional and non-traditional cultures, positive leadership effectively motivates individuals, representing the highest value within hierarchical systems. Furthermore, Clarke and O'Donoghue (2017) emphasize that research can only advance through cross-societal comparisons. While prior studies confirm that positive leadership motivates teachers to exert extra effort, it does the learning leadership related to extra effort in post-pandemic contexts and across different nations?

In the post-pandemic era, people widely experience a lack of security and support, a phenomenon particularly pronounced within large university populations. This situation urgently calls for capable school leaders to cultivate and enhance this emotional awareness. In psychology, organizational attachment is defined as an individual's enduring and stable emotional bond with their organization (Chen & Chen, 2017). Little et al. (2011) posited that organizational attachment enables more effective utilization of physical, emotional, and cognitive resources while increasing extra-effort performance. Research confirms that organizational attachment significantly influences both prosocial and deviant behaviors (Little et al., 2011). Conversely, low levels of organizational attachment tend to evoke negative reactions and lead to emotional instability (Chen & Chen, 2017). Another study indicates that transformational leadership is a significant predictor of organizational attachment styles (Popper et al., 2000). It promotes the achievement of organizational goals and motivates personal growth, transcending higher-order motivations and self-interest objectives (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2016).

Organizational attachment is closely linked to both leadership and extra-effort performance (Little et al., 2011). Often defined as an individual's enduring and stable emotional bond with an organization (Chen et al., 2015), this study similarly posits it as a vital bridge connecting organizations and individuals across levels in the post-pandemic era. Furthermore, both China and Thailand are traditionally characterized as “top-down” societies (Hallinger et al., 2019). The resulting negative leadership styles and distinct localized characteristics are also viewed as barriers to reform, necessitating enduring and stable traits to sustain motivation and initiative (Liu et al., 2016). This is because teachers' sustained extra effort significantly impacts students (Kurland & Gilad, 2015). Nevertheless, no research has yet explored the mediating role of organizational attachment between learning leadership and extra effort in the post-pandemic era and within the China and Thailand contexts. Therefore, a research

question is formed: Does organizational attachment moderate the relationship between learning leadership and extra effort in the post-pandemic era and within the China and Thailand contexts?

In addition, according to cognitive resource theory, learning leadership characterized by strong capacity building exert positive effects on outcomes related to cognitive resources and psychological factors. This theory explains how differences in individual cognitive resources are influenced during the process by which competent leaders affect individual outcomes. Therefore, cognitive resource theory effectively explains the positive role of individual differences in cognitive resources like organizational attachment in facilitating positive leader-member exchange processes. Consequently, it is inferred that learning leadership will play a significant role in fostering individual extra effort. Simultaneously, organizational attachment will serve as an important connecting factor between the two.

Meanwhile, this study will conduct an in-depth analysis of the antecedents and mediating factors influencing teacher extra effort in China and Thailand. This will provide students with additional necessary support, fill existing research gaps, and furnish a basis for subsequent research on teacher extra effort. Furthermore, the findings will aid both nations in gaining a deeper understanding of the causes underlying teacher extra effort, thereby facilitating the formulation of recommendations and strategies to address related issues, this holds significant importance for enhancing students' emotional and psychological well-being.

Therefore, this study's objectives aim to investigate China and Thailand teachers' perceptions of learning leadership in the post-pandemic era, their levels of perceived extra effort, and the mediating effect of affective organizational attachment on these relationships. Clarifying these relationships and differences can help schools in both countries identify key factors for establishing sustainable reforms within the post-pandemic environment, thereby providing substantive support for school transformation.

Research Objectives

1. To exploring the relationship between learning leadership and teachers' extra effort in China and Thailand.
2. To exploring the relationship between learning leadership and teachers' organizational attachment in China and Thailand.

3. To exploring the relationship between organizational attachment and teachers' extra effort in China and Thailand.

4. To analyze the mediating effect of organizational attachment between learning leadership and teachers' extra effort.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

This empirical study employs cognitive resource theory to examine the relationship between learning leadership and effort among teachers, with organizational attachment serving as a mediating variable in China and Thailand. Findings aim to propose effective strategies and policy improvements for enhancing learning leadership, teacher extra effort, and organizational attachment in China and Thailand.

This study is an empirical investigation that will employ statistical analysis methods, including reliability and validity, correlation, and mediation, to present data and test hypotheses.

2. Population and Sample

The survey was conducted from October to November 2022 using purposive sampling. A total of 359 Chinese college teachers (response rate: 89.75%) and 679 Thai college teachers (response rate: 84.87%) college teachers (self-reported) were obtained from six universities in Nanchang, China, and Bangkok, Thailand.

3. Research Instruments

The research instrument comprised a structured questionnaire employing a 5-point Likert scale (1–5 denoting strongly disagree to strongly agree), encompassing 3 concepts.

Post-Pandemic Era, learning leadership scale: Developed by Liu et al. (2016), comprising 4 dimensions establishing a learning vision, providing learning support, managing learning initiatives, and modeling learning with 25 items in total ($\alpha=0.965$). Extra effort scale: Developed by Ramamoorthy and Flood (2002), comprising 3 items ($\alpha=0.89$). Organizational attachment scale: Developed by Chen and Chen (2017), comprising 15 items across 2 dimensions: organizational security and attachment ($\alpha=0.905$). This study selected gender, age, years of teaching experience, and academic degree as demographic variables.

4. Data Collection Procedures

This study collected samples from teaching staff at six higher education institutions in China and Thailand between October and November 2022, employing purposive sampling and electronic questionnaires. Respondent surveys were completed with the assistance of university administrators, and all participants provided prior consent to the research.

Results

1. Distribution of Population Characteristics

In the China and Thailand samples, female teachers constituted the largest proportion (284, 79.11%; 463, 68.19%); young teachers aged 23–30 were the most numerous (201, 55.99%; 258, 38.00%); teachers with 5–6 years of experience were relatively numerous (161, 44.85%; 282, 41.53%); China had the highest proportion of teachers holding bachelor's degrees (234, 65.18%), while Thailand had the highest proportion of teachers holding doctoral degrees (431, 63.48%); The distribution of foreign teachers showed China (0, 100%) and Thailand (107, 15.76%). Comparative analysis reveals significant disparities, with Thailand's higher education institutions exhibiting substantially higher levels and numbers of teachers' degrees than their Chinese counterparts. This may stem from the sampling locations: Nanchang City, Jiangxi Province, China, and Bangkok Province, Thailand. Additionally, Bangkok's higher education institutions demonstrate greater internationalization, where hiring foreign teachers is commonplace. As shown in Table 1:

Background variables	Category	China(N=359)		Thailand(N=679)	
		N	%	N	%
Gender	Male	284	79.11	463	68.19
	Female	75	20.89	216	31.81
Age	23 ~ 30	201	55.99	258	38.00
	31 ~ 40	93	25.91	257	37.85
	41 ~ 50	51	14.21	102	15.02
	51 and above	14	3.90	62	9.13
Years of teaching experience	1 ~ 4 years	137	38.16	107	15.76
	5 ~ 6 years	161	44.85	282	41.53
	7 ~ 9 years	28	7.80	188	27.69
	10 years and above	33	9.19	102	15.02

Background variables	Category	China(N=359)		Thailand(N=679)	
		N	%	N	%
Degree	Undergraduate	34	9.47	0	0
	Master	232	64.62	248	36.52
	Doctoral	93	25.91	431	63.48
Foreign teacher	Yes	0	0%	107	15.76
	Not	359	100.00	572	84.24

Table 1 Distribution of population characteristics

1. Correlation Analysis

The correlation matrix indicates significant positive associations among learning leadership, organizational attachment, and extra effort in both China and Thailand, supporting the first 3 hypotheses: H1ab: Learning leadership positively correlates with extra effort (0.471***, 0.515***, $p < 0.001$); H2ab: Learning leadership positively correlates with organizational attachment (0.379***, 0.564***, $p < 0.001$); H3ab: Organizational attachment positively correlates with extra effort (0.563***, 0.506***, $p < 0.001$). Comparing the correlation coefficients between learning leadership and extra effort, and organizational attachment, reveals higher values in Thailand than in China. However, comparing the correlation coefficients between organizational attachment and extra effort shows slightly higher values in China than in Thailand, with no significant difference.

Variable	China					Thailand				
	M	SD	1	2	3	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Learning leadership	3.51	0.83	0.797			3.43	0.59	0.756		
2. Organizational attachment	3.55	0.78	0.379***	0.764		3.22	0.53	0.564***	0.783	
3. Extra effort	3.60	0.96	0.471***	0.563***	0.791	3.32	0.75	0.515***	0.506***	0.808
α			0.902	0.912	0.907			0.888	0.943	0.876
CR			0.839	0.808	0.839			0.863	0.882	0.888
AVE			0.635	0.584	0.627			0.613	0.571	0.653

Table 2 Correlation analysis

2. Mediating Effect Analysis

Mediation analysis indicates that the direct effects of learning leadership on extra effort in China and Thailand are 0.328 and 0.298, respectively, with 95% confidence intervals [0.244, 0.411; 0.225, 0.371], which do not include 0, indicating a significant direct effect. The indirect effects are 0.113 and 0.140, with 95% confidence intervals [0.072, 0.162; 0.104, 0.180], which did not include zero, indicating a significant indirect effect. This suggests that organizational attachment mediates the relationship between learning leadership and extra effort in China and Thailand. Finally, the total effects were 0.441 and 0.438, with 95% confidence intervals [0.359, 0.522; 0.371, 0.505], which do not include zero, indicating a significant total effect. Therefore, research hypothesis H4ab is supported. Comparing the total effects, China and Thailand show values of 0.441 and 0.438, respectively, with Thailand slightly higher than China, though no significant difference was observed. This may be attributed to Thailand experiencing a more severe pandemic compared to China in the post-pandemic era. In addition, the presence of numerous foreign teachers in Thailand universities fosters a stronger emotional attachment to the institutions. This aligns with the findings of Hallinger et al. (2019) and the expectations of this study. The minimal difference may stem from both countries sharing top-down traditional cultures and being similarly impacted by the pandemic.

Path	Effect	SE	t	p	Bias Corrected (95%)	
					LLCI	ULCI
Direct effect (China)	0.328	0.043	7.685	0.000	0.244	0.411
Total effect (China)	0.441	0.042	10.602	0.000	0.359	0.522
Indirect effect (China)	0.113	0.023	5.140	0.000	0.072	0.162
Direct effect (Thailand)	0.298	0.037	8.005	0.000	0.225	0.371
Total effect (Thailand)	0.438	0.034	12.768	0.000	0.371	0.505
Indirect effect (Thailand)	0.140	0.019	6.924	0.000	0.104	0.180

Table 3 Mediating effect analysis

Discussion

This study examines perceptions of learning leadership within traditional cultural contexts regarding teachers' extra effort, along with the mediating effect of organizational attachment between these variables in China and Thailand. Results

indicate that learning leadership in both China and Thailand positively correlates with teachers' extra effort. The research findings are consistent with the conclusions drawn by Webb (2007). Thus, in the post-pandemic era, proactive learning leadership in these countries appears crucial for fostering positive perceptions of teacher-directed behaviors. This is vital for enhancing reform success rates and breaking through traditional cultural constraints. Learning leadership, as a positive new concept within leadership theory, serves as a key pathway to elevate and motivate teachers' cognitive engagement. Conversely, it also reduces negative emotional experiences. As Webb (2007) pointed out, one factor organizations must address to enhance individual extra effort is managing and developing positive leadership behaviors, as these can foster such efforts. Therefore, schools should establish and develop positive leadership behaviors to support increased teacher extra effort (Webb, 2007). Therefore, Learning leadership can effectively enhance teachers' extra effort levels through the construction and encouragement of various learning activities.

Research findings also indicate that learning leadership positively correlates with teachers' organizational attachment in both China and Thailand. The research findings are consistent with the conclusions drawn by Chen et al. (2015). This explains why, even during the pandemic, exemplary learning leadership remains effective in enhancing teachers' perceived commitment within higher education institutions. This may stem from learning leadership's capacity to create and foster harmony between learning activities and emotional experiences, thereby increasing teachers' positive emotions and experiences. Guidance and support can be perceived as valuable work resources. Conversely, resources provided by leaders can also shield teachers from negative emotions. Such positive work resources in learning leadership play a significant role in reducing negative emotions, with enhanced motivation, guidance, and support serving protective and enhancing functions. Leadership behaviors focused on capacity building can improve emotional experiences and act as a preventive or protective mechanism, effectively countering negative emotions. As Chen et al. (2015) pointed out, if teachers integrate the positive cognition derived from support received through leadership behaviors into their work, it elevates their level of organizational attachment.

Research findings also confirm that among teachers affected by the pandemic, organizational attachment positively correlates with extra effort in China and Thailand. The research findings are consistent with the conclusions drawn by Popper et al.

(2020). Teachers' experiences of school security and attachment positive emotional states can enhance their emotional strength. Conversely, it can also reduce the occurrence of negative behaviors. Specifically, organizational attachment, as a persistent and stable psychological state of emotional attachment, significantly influences teachers' positive behavioral tendencies. This is because when teachers feel secure and attached in their work, it fosters positive subjective emotional experiences, thereby effectively reducing their intentions toward negative behaviors. As Chen et al. (2015) pointed out, this occurs because organizational attachment provides teachers with a pathway where heightened emotional experiences can ignite enthusiasm while mitigating negative affect.

The results further indicate that organizational attachment fully mediates the relationship between learning leadership and extra effort. The research findings are consistent with the conclusions drawn by Huang et al. (2020). Specifically, organizational attachment serves as a mechanism explaining why teachers exhibit higher levels of cognitive engagement in their work under capacity-building leadership. This occurs because learning leadership fosters a harmonious blend of motivation and learning, thereby enhancing teachers' positive emotional experiences. This, in turn, more effectively increases their propensity for extra effort. This occurs because motivation and learning can be viewed as a work resource. Conversely, resources provided by leaders shield teachers from negative cognitive experiences. As Huang et al. (2020) pointed out, as a positive work resource, learning leadership plays a crucial mitigating role in both negative cognition and emotional experiences, with motivation and learning serving protective and enhancing functions. Competent leadership can leverage exceptional capacity-building behaviors as a preventive or protective work resource, thereby more effectively addressing post-pandemic crises and enhancing the success of school reforms through teachers' extra effort.

New Knowledge

This study, drawing upon cognitive resource theory, found that learning leadership in China and Thai universities positively correlates with teacher extra effort and organizational attachment. Furthermore, organizational attachment exhibits a mediating effect. Moreover, educators in both Chinese and Thai institutions demonstrate high levels of recognition towards learning leadership in relation to teacher extra effort and organizational attachment. Consequently, these higher

education institutions require targeted reforms and policies that address learning leadership alongside teacher extra and organizational attachment. By establishing robust leadership and fostering positive affective experiences, the intrinsic motivation for university staff to dedicate additional time and energy towards achieving organizational goals can be further enhanced, thereby effectively elevating their commitment.

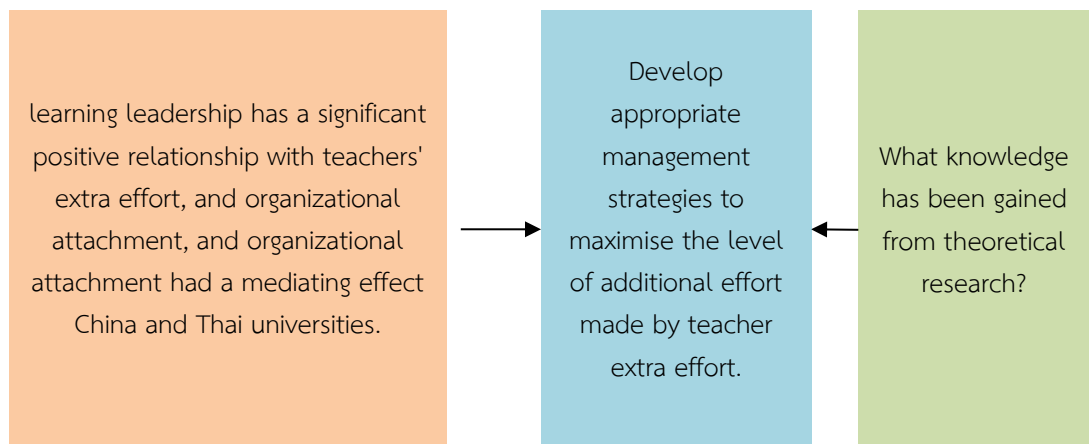


Figure 1 New Knowledge

Conclusion and Suggestion

Results indicate that in both China and Thailand, learning leadership correlates positively with teacher extra effort (0.471***, 0.515***) and organizational attachment (0.379***, 0.564***). Organisational commitment correlates positively with teacher extra effort (0.563***, 0.506***), with organizational attachment mediating this relationship [0.072, 0.162; 0.104, 0.180]. This suggests that higher education institutions should actively cultivate and promote the development of learning leadership and organizational attachment to effectively enhance teacher extra effort in China and Thailand. Consequently, it can be demonstrated that learning leadership and organizational attachment are key antecedent variables for teacher extra effort, while organizational attachment serves as a crucial mediating mechanism.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed: Higher education institutions in China and Thailand should focus on implementing reforms and optimizations for teacher extra effort, rather than limiting themselves to theoretical understanding. Targeted development policies are required to enhance teaching commitment by fostering proactive learning leadership and positive

emotional experiences. Furthermore, targeted development of proactive leadership behaviours and psychological functions characterised by robust constructive capabilities should be incorporated into specialised training programmes within higher education institutions to more effectively enhance teacher extra effort. Consequently, institutions should prioritise these areas to assist faculty in better managing and amplifying their intrinsic motivation to invest additional time and effort towards achieving organizational objectives. This suggests that leadership, which is under the grip of the pandemic, requires both an emotional and experiential connection between teachers' sense of school security and retention to adequately enhance teachers' extra effort in China and Thailand.

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