

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NURSING STUDENTS' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE AND THEIR SELF-REGULATION AT ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY IN THAILAND

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Abstract: This study aimed to investigate the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Self-Regulation based on nursing students' perceptions at Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand. This study was conducted with 72 nursing students in the academic year 2020 – 2021. Three main objectives were included in this study. The first objective was to determine the level of nursing students' Transformational Leadership Style. The second objective was to determine the level of nursing students' Self-Regulation. The third objective was to determine if there is a relationship between nursing students' Transformational Leadership Style and their Self-Regulation at Assumption University. The findings showed that the perceptions of nursing students toward Transformational Leadership presented at a high level, and the perceptions of nursing students towards Self-Regulation presented at a moderate level. The results demonstrated a moderate positive correlation, for the (r) value was .495** at the significant level of 0.000, which was less than 0.05 level, in the perceptions of nursing students.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership; Self-Regulation; Assumption University;

Introduction

In today's health care world, which is commonly accompanied by highly educated and talented nurses, Collins and Jackson (2015) conducted one study and found that when self-regulation is low, leaders may unconsciously engage in aggressive or hostile behavior that has nothing associated with constructive leadership. At the same time, this research also proposed that transformational leadership was a new kind of construction leadership, and transformational leadership has a relationship with Self-Regulation. Self-regulation has a close

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association with nursing students; the reason is that nursing students are engaged in nursing work, have a large number of patients, have rich clinical experience, and have a large number of courses, which determine that they have a high level of self-regulation ability for both study and practice nursing experience (Hannigan & McAllister, 2019). Nursing requires quick and accurate decision-making, and nursing leaders work in stressful environments, even among patients and their relatives. Such dynamic instability and harsh conditions require effective leadership (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007). The need for leaders to promote clear communication and effective collaboration between nurses is determined by the nurse's work environment and job requirements (Cummings et al., 2010). Transformational leadership has also been characterized as encompassed, visionary, and charismatic. Nursing students' insufficient understanding of themselves and their cognition of nursing specialty needs to be improved (Nibbelink & Brewer, 2018). At Assumption University, Su (2013) conducted one study to show that there is a significant relationship between nursing students' perceived role discrepancy and their attrition. Nursing students perceived more role discrepancies; perhaps part of the reason was the level of nursing students' transformational leadership, and their self-regulation was not high. Nursing students also feel heavily pressured by present and future expectations. A. Patra Phuekphan presented research on "Stressors and Coping Strategies among AU nursing students" at the Silver Jubilee International Conference of the Christian University of Thailand (2009) found that academic stressor, interpersonal stressor, and environmental stressor were the main stressor among AU students.

Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine nursing students' Transformational leadership Style at Assumption University in Bangkok, Thailand.
2. To determine the level of nursing students' Self-Regulation at Assumption University in Bangkok, Thailand.
3. To determine if there is a relationship between nursing students' Transformational Leadership Style and their Self-Regulation at Assumption University in Bangkok, Thailand.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership Style

Transformational leadership style plays an important role in improving the organizational climate and effectiveness (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership aims to meet the needs of employees and positively promotes the

working atmosphere of employees in the organization. It is an effective leadership style (De Cremer, Van Dijke, & Bos, 2007). Avolio and Bass (2004) have developed five dimensions of a transformational leadership style.

Idealized Influence (Attributes)

Leaders will be respected and recognized by their subordinates and become their role models. The premise is that the leader has high moral value, a positive work attitude, and excellent personal charm. Baba (2017) at the University of Kashmir and the University of Jammu found that Transformational Leadership affected the university libraries of J&K positively, and Idealized attributes also showed a high level among librarians.

Idealized Behaviors

Transformational leaders influence employees' thinking through their influence and charm and inspire employees to solve problems to achieve organizational goals and achievements (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003).

Inspirational Motivation

Transformational leaders can use certain rewards and support to motivate employees and the whole work team, but not necessarily financial rewards. Instead, they can create an organizational culture with an organizational sense of accomplishment and team spirit to enhance subordinates' self-esteem and sense of self-worth (Murphy & Drodge, 2004).

Intellectual Stimulation

Transformational leadership is often the employee's output of new ideas and new positions to dig up the potential of their employees and encourage the use of employees to work towards a new method or new ideas to identify their problems, create innovative thinking, and guide subordinates on how to bear risk and failure. It also encourages sufficient attention and information support to promote the organization's sustainable development (Bass et al., 2003).

Individualized Consideration

Koveshnikov and Ehrnrooth (2018) concluded that Individualized Consideration was the most influential Transformational Leadership behavioral dimension in terms of its effects on followers. Leaders guide different employees and conduct purposeful communication with them according to their needs and different characteristics to promote their personal development and make them feel the value of their existence.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

Self-regulation encompasses a sequence of psychological sub-functions that can bring about self-directed change by the method of development and motivation (Bandura, 1986); the constituent sub-functions include three parts: self-monitoring sub-function, judgment sub-function, and self-reactive influences (Bandura, 1991). People can manage their motivation and behavior well only when they pay full attention to their behavior, their immediate and distal effects, and the conditions under their behavior (Bandura, 1991). Lewin (1926) conducted one research and found that if people carry out the plan in a timely, he or they can facilitate the achievement of goals. Gollwitzer and Brandstätter (1997) demonstrated that the key to achieving the goal is whether the goal has intentions or not. It is not accidental that people achieve positive results through their reactions. Still, it is inseparable from constantly monitoring their behaviors, reflecting on them, setting different goals for themselves, and trying to achieve them (Bandura, 1986).

Previous studies on the relationship between Leadership Style and Self-Regulation

Sosik, Potosky, and Jung conducted a study on the relationship between the superiors of focal managers' leadership style and their self-regulation (Sosik, Potosky, & Jung, 2002). Self-supervision is positively correlated with five kinds of leadership behaviors. The performance was positively correlated with transformational leadership behavior and negatively correlated with passive, exceptional management behavior and contingent incentive behavior (Sosik et al., 2002). The study by Lackey (2014) examined the impact of self-regulation and resilience-building training on healthcare nursing and non-nursing executives from the following perspectives: improved self-regulation, self-awareness, and psychological resilience. In the recommendation part, he revealed that Transformational leadership's relationship would formulate a high-performing healthcare organization.

Conceptual Framework

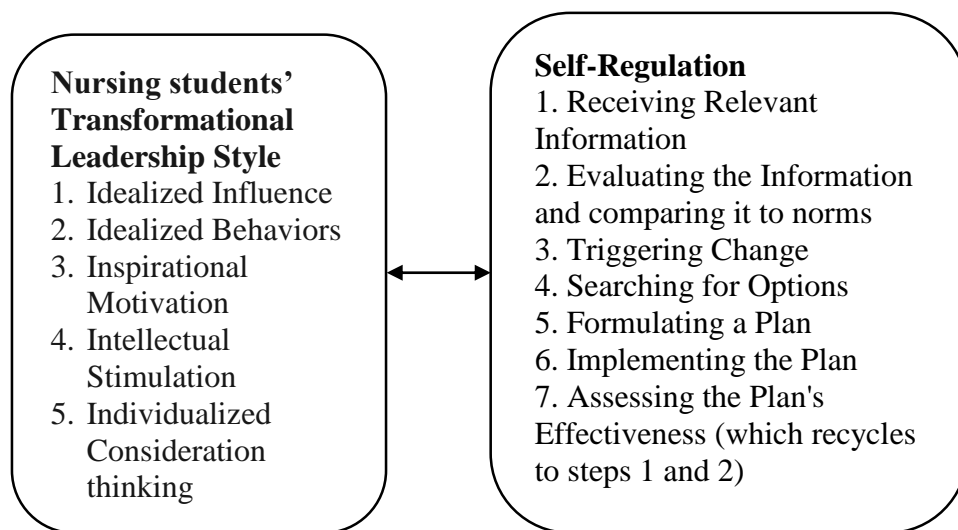


Figure 1. *The Conceptual Framework of this Study.*

Method

The study was conducted as quantitative research to find a relationship between Transformational Leadership and Self-Regulation based on the perceptions of nursing students at Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand. The questionnaire used in this study had three parts to investigate research questions 1, 2, and 3. Part I, the participant's demographic profiles. Gender, Age, and Years of nursing experience were collected. Part II, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, was adopted from Bass and Avolio (1995) with 20 questions. Part III, the Self-Regulation Questionnaire, was adopted from Brown, Miller, & Lawendowski (1999) with 63 questions. Permission from the Dean of Nursing Science Faculty was requested in July 2020. The questionnaires were distributed to 72 nursing students at Nursing Science Faculty two weeks after passing the thesis proposal. The survey was conducted with the help of the Nursing Science Faculty and collected shortly after.

Findings

From the analysis of data, the findings were as follows:

Research Objective One

To determine the level of nursing students' Transformational leadership Style at Assumption University in Bangkok, Thailand.

Table 1. *The Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of Transformational Leadership*

Five Dimensions of Transformational Leadership	M	SD	Interpretation
Idealized Attributes	3.61	.77	High
Idealized Behavior	3.66	.84	High
Inspirational Motivation	3.76	.87	High
Intellectual Stimulation	3.71	.89	High
Individualized Consideration	3.80	.79	High
Total	3.71	.74	High

Table 1 shows that the summary of means and standard deviation of transformational leadership of five dimensions consisted of 20 items. The summary of the results has shown a 3.71 means score which is interpreted as high for nursing students' Transformational Leadership. As a result of this finding, each dimension revealed its mean score. The Individualized Consideration dimension had the highest mean score of 3.80, while *Inspirational Motivation*, *Intellectual Stimulation*, and *Idealized Behavior* had a mean of 3.76, 3.71, and 3.66, respectively. It was noted that the dimension of *Idealized Attributes* attained the lowest score and perceived nursing students in that dimension as slightly weak. Therefore, it can be a good sign for their developmental process of Transformational Leadership.

Research Objective Two

To determine the level of nursing students' Self-Regulation at Assumption University in Bangkok, Thailand.

Table 2. *The Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of Self-Regulation*

Seven Dimensions of Self-Regulation	M	SD	Interpretation
Receiving Relevant Information	3.26	.46	Moderate
Evaluating the Information	3.33	.49	Moderate
Triggering Change	3.33	.43	Moderate
Searching for Options	3.62	.50	High
Formulating a Plan	3.39	.52	Moderate
Implementing the Plan	3.25	.58	Moderate
Assessing the Plan's Effectiveness	3.54	.48	High
Total	3.39	.39	Moderate

Table 2 indicates the summary and overall score of means and standard deviation in Self-Regulation. The overall score was 3.39 at a moderate level of nursing students' feelings toward Self-Regulation at Assumption

University. Overall, the results showed that the lowest score of means was Implementing the Plan dimension, which received 3.25. Nursing students felt that the Searching for Options dimension received the highest degree of perception because it had the highest means score, which was 3.62. Thus, it can be a good sign for their developmental process and Self-Regulation.

Research Objective Three

To determine if there is a relationship between nursing students' Transformational Leadership Style and their Self-Regulation at Assumption University in Bangkok, Thailand.

Table 3. *Pearson Correlation Between the Level of Nursing Students' Perceptions Towards Transformational Leadership and Self-Regulation*

		Self-Regulation	Conclusion
Transformational Leadership	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	.495**	There was a significant relationship
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

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

Table 3 presents the result of the finding. The two variables, Transformational Leadership and Self-Regulation, were correlated, $r(71) = .495, p < .01$. It shows there was a significant relationship between the two variables of Transformational Leadership and Self-Regulation. Therefore, the researcher accepted and rejected the null hypothesis in this study. As mentioned regarding the standard statistical interpretation, the significant correlation identifies as a positive relationship between two variables due to the (r) value (.495**), not (-.495**). Thus, it could be interpreted that because the Transformational Leadership variable increased, the variable of Self-Regulation also increased since these two variables had moved in the same direction.

Discussion

Based on the results of Transformational Leadership, the overall score was obtained at a high level. In addition to this score value, the researcher found that among five dimensions, the lowest score was the *Idealized Attributes*, in which four questions were composed under theoretical concepts. Though the interpretation was still high, it demonstrated a sense of power and confidence – this was considered moderate. In *Idealized Attributes, I demonstrate a moderate sense of power and confidence; consequently, nursing students' confidence* was moderate when they were in a leadership role. Similar to the previous research of Baba (2017) at the University of Kashmir and University

of Jammu, it was found that Transformational Leadership affected the university libraries of J&K positively, and Idealized attributes also showed a high level among librarians. However, in this study, it was demonstrated that a sense of power and confidence was moderate. Therefore, this research was different from the study by Baba (2017). The researcher realized that to enhance the *Idealized Attributes* dimension of nursing students, the nursing teachers needed to act more in encouraging nursing students to be confident and proud of themselves, sharing a climate that is devoted to a group's well-being, and asking nursing students to find more of their strengths. Moreover, the nursing educator may inculcate trust in nursing faculty members, act as a role model, and encourage nursing students to take risks. Through such activities of nursing teachers and leaders, the researcher believed that the nursing students at Assumption University would be more active in their daily work and study and obtain a higher level of transformational leadership in a future nursing setting.

The researcher found that among each of the five dimensions, the highest score was the *Individualized Consideration*, in which four questions were composed under theoretical concepts. In this dimension, the Item *I treat others as people rather than just as members of the group* gained the highest score. This finding is supported by previous research by Kovesnikov and Ehrnrooth (2018), which concluded that *Individualized Consideration* was the most influential Transformational Leadership behavioral dimension in terms of its effects on followers. In this study, they also found that *Individualized Consideration* behavior affected followers' self-concepts and organizational identification, which also presented a significant relationship between them.

As a result of the findings, it was found that Self-Regulation included seven dimensions in this study, and the total mean score was obtained being interpreted as a moderate level. Yet, among such dimensions, the lowest means score was *Implementing the plan* composed of nine items. Specifically, *I gave up quickly*; items' scores were lower among nine items of *Implementing the plan*. This finding is supported by previous research by Lewin (1926), who conducted one research and found that if people carry out the plan promptly, he or they can facilitate the achievement of goals. Based on his finding, Gollwitzer and Brandstätter (1997) conducted studies to demonstrate that the key to achieving the goal is whether the goal has intentions or not. In his research, he deduced that *Implementation intentions* should be a very effective Self-Regulatory strategy when it comes to alleviating the problems of getting started on one's goals through the experiment. Despite this, in this study, the dimension of *Implementing the Plan* was moderate. Therefore, this current research made different from the study of Gollwitzer and Brandstätter (1997).

The researcher realized that to enhance the *Implementing the Plan* level of nursing students, the nursing teachers needed to break down complex tasks or programs into simple steps or tasks and permeate a supportive atmosphere to improve students' confidence levels. While at a similar time, nursing teachers could also modify the evaluation mechanism, which tends to evaluate the process of completing the task rather than the result of the outcome. All these activities will be conducive to improving the enthusiasm of students to perform the task.

It was found that the rate of nursing students' perceptions at the dimensions of *Searching for options* was shown at the highest rating. It is believed that nursing students can find solutions to problems and be involved in an essential program for nursing students who got a high level of rating in nursing students' perceptions at Assumption University. Muraven, Tice, and Baumeister (1998) conducted four studies in their research; they found that after people exercised self-regulation, they were subsequently less capable of regulating themselves, at least for a short time. To improve their level of self-regulation, they will resort to other means, such as distracting themselves from fatigue and other ways. Therefore, according to the theory of Self-Regulation, it might be said that nursing students at Assumption University have received psychological or individual Self-Regulation by themselves.

Furthermore, based on the perceptions of nursing students at Assumption University, both variables of overall scores had at least a moderate level of rating. Therefore, the more transformational leadership does things, such as giving directions for individual care and improving students' self-confidence, stimulating intellectual of nursing students frequently, and providing pedagogical needs in university, the more nursing students feel they have attained psychological and behavioral Self-Regulation.

The study by Lackey (2014) examined the impact of self-regulation and resilience-building training on healthcare nursing and non-nursing executives from the following perspectives: improved self-regulation, self-awareness, and psychological resilience. In the recommendation part, he revealed that Transformational leadership's relationship would formulate high-performing healthcare organizations. Therefore, this article deduced that Transformational Leadership and Self-Regulation had a direct or indirect relationship. This is why this current study approves that nursing students feeling about their Self-Regulation and Transformational Leadership behaviors are interconnected and indirectly and directly affect each other.

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