

**Qualitative Action Research: Integrating Transformational Leadership within a  
Traditional Chinese International Department**

Derek J. Anderson

Dissertation Submitted to the Doctoral Program  
of the American College of Education  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Leadership

July 2023

**Qualitative Action Research: Integrating Transformational Leadership within a  
Traditional Chinese International Department**

Derek J. Anderson

Approved by:

Dissertation Chair: Julius Wynn, EdD

Committee Member: Crystal Neumann, DBA

Copyright © 2023

Derek J. Anderson

### **Abstract**

International schools aim to provide students with a multicultural experience, equipping students with a global-minded education to succeed in future higher educational or professional careers abroad. For students to succeed in international schools, native and international staff members should have a well-rounded knowledge of professional attributes from Eastern and Western cultures. The purpose of the qualitative study using action research was to explore teachers' knowledge, perceptions, and adaptability toward integrating elements of transformational leadership within a current paternalistic leadership style at a high school international department in Southern China. The problem was the uncertainty regarding the knowledge, application, or comfort level of Chinese staff members in implementing transformational leadership, as employees are accustomed to a hierarchical leadership approach, limiting collaborative and creative abilities. The study consisted of semi-structured interviews with eight native and eight international teachers from the international department. A data analysis spiral was used to facilitate the analysis process in locating, creating, explaining themes, developing interpretations, and creating a visual representation of the acquired data. The interview data was used to facilitate implementation involving issues and concerns using transformational leadership. The results displayed positive results with Chinese and international teachers in collaborative and communicative practices for locating organizational improvement. The study recommends ensuring Chinese leaders provide encouragement and motivation throughout transformational leadership practices to empower teachers with self-confidence and assurance of involvement within a shared decision-making environment.

*Keywords:* transformational leadership, paternalistic leadership, international schools, China, Chinese education

**Table of Contents**

List of Tables .....	8
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	9
Background of the Problem .....	10
Statement of the Problem.....	11
Purpose of the Study .....	11
Significance of the Study .....	12
Research Questions.....	12
Theoretical Framework.....	13
Definitions of Terms .....	14
Assumptions.....	15
Scope and Delimitations .....	16
Limitations .....	17
Chapter Summary .....	18
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	19
Culture and Society.....	19
Cultural Business Practices.....	20
Leadership Structure .....	20
Transformational Leadership in Chinese Culture.....	20
Literature Search Strategy .....	21
Theoretical Framework.....	21
Research Literature Review.....	23
Culture and Society.....	24
Cultural Business Practices.....	29

Leadership Structure .....	31
Transformational Leadership in Chinese Culture .....	37
Chapter Summary .....	41
Chapter 3: Research Methodology.....	44
Research Questions.....	44
Research Methodology, Design, and Rationale.....	45
Methodology .....	45
Design and Rationale .....	46
Role of the Researcher .....	46
Research Procedures .....	47
Population and Sample Selection .....	47
Data Instruments .....	48
Instrument Validation .....	49
Data Collection .....	49
Data Analysis .....	50
Reliability and Validity.....	51
Trustworthiness.....	52
Transferability.....	52
Reflexivity .....	52
Ethical Procedures .....	53
Chapter Summary .....	55
Chapter 4: Research Findings and Data Analysis Results.....	56
Data Collection .....	57
Semi-Structured Interviews .....	57

Data Analysis and Results .....	58
Reliability and Validity.....	64
Trustworthiness.....	64
Transferability.....	65
Reflexivity .....	65
Conclusion .....	66
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions.....	67
Findings, Interpretations, and Conclusions.....	67
Limitations .....	71
Recommendations.....	73
Implications for Leadership .....	74
Conclusions.....	75
References.....	78
Appendix A: Letter of Consent.....	88
Appendix B: Contact Site Permission Letter .....	94
Appendix C: Field Test Feedback Modifications .....	95
Appendix D: Recruitment Letter .....	98
Appendix E: Research Instrument .....	100

**List of Tables**

Table

1. The Data Analysis and Coding Process .....60

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This research study focused on integrating elements of transformational leadership within the paternalistic leadership style at an international high school department in Southern China. Since international and foreign staff members are involved within the organization, integrating transformational leadership elements can benefit organizational success, as Western and Eastern leadership styles are utilized for organizational success. In addition, students can be more adequately prepared for future overseas higher learning or professional endeavors by becoming more global-minded and establishing a more international perspective and multicultural understanding (Kaowiwattanakul, 2020).

Previous studies of businesses utilizing transformational leadership with organizations have identified increased initiative and organizational activities among employees in China (Liu, 2018). Additional research revealed a positive correlation between teacher efficacy and group competence for teachers and principals in Chinese public schools (Liu, 2021). Further research on international departments needs to be conducted as the schools contain international staff members and students. Practical reasoning for further studying the integration of transformational leadership elements within an international department promotes more effective working synergy among multicultural staff members, which can be utilized in daily classroom practices.

Essential components of the study are explained throughout the entirety of the chapter. The background and statement of the current issue of transformational leadership are also addressed. The problem statement and purpose of the study are detailed and accompanied by significance. Research questions and theoretical framework is detailed for research guidance throughout the study. The terms' definitions are listed for clarity, along with assumptions uncovered before the investigation. The research scope, delimitations, and

limitations are addressed within the research design, which may impact the investigative results. Finally, the chapter is summarized for overall clarity.

### **Background of the Problem**

The leadership styles between Eastern and Western cultures significantly contrast various facets of individual and organizational needs. In Western culture, several businesses utilize transformational leadership to gain a competitive edge in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century marketplace, as individual creativity, innovation, satisfaction, and trust are established within employees from leaders (Murari & Mukherjee, 2021). In China and throughout Eastern culture, paternalistic leadership is primarily used, which contains the elements of morality, benevolence, and authoritarianism (Lau et al., 2020). Leaders use paternalistic leadership to maintain subordinate and organizational productivity (Lau et al., 2020). Integrating transformational and paternal leadership can be highly effective in international high school departments in China. Both leadership styles contain the elements to further develop students and teachers into becoming more well-rounded and global-minded. In addition, a mixture of multicultural leadership styles can increase organizational and academic efficiency, as staff and students are from Eastern and Western Cultures.

Societal, traditional, and cultural aspects are integral to Chinese business culture. Confucian hierarchical beliefs, which paternalistic leadership follows, involves respect among leaders and employees, which is evident in Chinese work culture as individuals aspire to be model Confucian citizen (Lyu, 2020). Transformational leadership is a more recent leadership style within Chinese culture and has been more frequently utilized by organizations to gain a competitive edge in respective industries (Chen et al., 2021). Cultural, societal, and traditional practices may present obstacles when integrating transformational leadership within a Chinese international high school department.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem was the uncertainty regarding the knowledge, application, or comfort level of Chinese staff members in implementing transformational leadership, as employees are accustomed to a hierarchical leadership approach, limiting collaborative and creative abilities. The issue with transformational leadership implantation stems from historical beliefs of respecting elders and individuals in prominent leadership roles. Atherton (2020) explained how some Chinese businesses utilize Western business practices while others align business and Chinese cultural philosophies. Businesses keeping cultural practices experience issues in which subordinates or even individuals in leadership roles are hesitant to speak freely to a direct superior due to Confucian ethical work principles (Atherton, 2020).

The extent of reluctance in teachers is potentially helpful ideas, areas of improvement, or other matters of importance may need to be mentioned due to the fear of speaking freely. Paternalistic leadership contains benevolence and the development of strong relationships between leaders and employees (Qian & Walker, 2021). Authoritarianism within paternalistic leadership can limit an employee from speaking freely to leaders. The authoritarian element of paternalistic leadership can negatively correlate with teamwork, satisfaction, and intention to remain employed at an organization (Lau et al., 2020).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the qualitative study using action research was to explore teachers' knowledge, perceptions, and adaptability toward integrating elements of transformational leadership within a current paternalistic leadership style at a high school international department in Southern China. The qualitative data from the interviews located issues among staff members and leadership in the research study. An action research plan using the qualitative interviews focused on the issues located from the data will involve

transformational leadership elements to create solutions and develop self-confidence, courage, and motivation (Cobanoglu, 2021).

### **Significance of the Study**

Utilizing the transformational leadership framework can enable teachers to deliver a more significant educational experience for professional achievements and international students by equipping students with the ability to become future problem-solvers by developing intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, influence, and individualized consideration (Mbindyo et al., 2021). Research regarding transformational leadership in international schools in China needs to be completed. The results from the study will not only be available for international institutions but can serve as the groundwork for future research.

The research results and potential discoveries made provided leadership with criteria for the ongoing support of teacher improvement, including teacher development, student learning, teaching practices, and collaboration (Zhang et al., 2022). Ongoing support for teachers will include professional development (PD) workshops, collaborative, collaborative, professional learning communities (PLCs), and assessments to ensure teacher progress. Due to cultural backgrounds, several international institutions need help having multicultural staff and conducting effective collaborative and communicative practices. After the study, new methods and implemented practices were located to improve overall multicultural efficiency.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study to accomplish the purpose of the qualitative action research study:

Research Question 1: What are the main issues between managers and subordinates within the organization's current leadership style?

Research Question 2: How can transformational leadership be effectively implemented within a paternalistic leadership style?

Research Question 3: What problems arise with Chinese staff members when implementing transformational leadership?

Research Question 4: How could overall efficiency and communication improve between Chinese and international staff?

### **Theoretical Framework**

McClelland's (1965) need theory, Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, and Burns' (1978) transformational leadership were the theoretical framework throughout the research process. McClelland's need theory incorporates employees' needs for an employee's goal achievement, power, and an organizational sense of belonging (Rybnicek et al., 2019). Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory facilitates the production of instrumentality, expectancy, and valence within employees to establish the facets of motivation. Burns' (1978) transformational leadership theory inspires followers to raise to higher levels of motivation and morality from leaders. The framework of the three motivational-based theories served as guidance in determining work motivation, job performance, and expended effort. (Reinhardt & Wahba, 1975).

The study used qualitative interview questions for participants to speak freely in addressing issues and concerns. The goals of the motivation-based theories aligned with the research objectives are to achieve individual and organizational goals in recognizing opportunity growth, recognition, and an overall positive atmosphere (Chan & Ma, 2018). Integrating transformational leadership can inspire and encourage leaders to speak openly about issues, concerns, and potential changes that can benefit the organization and develop self-value for teachers.

### Definitions of Terms

The following terms were frequently used throughout the research study:

*Authoritarianism* is "a leader asserting strong authority and control over subordinates and demanding obedience" (Qian & Walker, 2021, p. 329).

*Benevolence* "implies a leader demonstrating an individualized, holistic concern for subordinates' personal and familial well-being" (Qian & Walker, 2021, p. 329).

*Confucianism* is defined as an ancient Chinese philosophy that contains the elements of "high power distance, collectivism, and emphasis on harmony, modesty, humility, and loyalty" (Park et al., 2019, p.93) and Confucius "principles are people should accept the inequality of power between group members to maintain societal stability and harmony" (Park et al., 2019, p.93).

*Hierarchy* is defined as "where members vary in level of power, influence, skill, or dominance." (Koski et al., 2015, p.1)

*Morality* is defined as "being broadly depicted as a leader behavior demonstrates superior moral character and integrity through acting unselfishly and leading by example" (Qian & Walker, 2021, p. 329).

*Paternalistic leadership* is defined as "combining strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence and moral integrity couched in a 'personalistic' atmosphere (Farh & Cheng, 2000, p. 84) which contains three constituent elements of paternalistic leadership (PL): authoritarianism, benevolence, and moral leadership" (Farh & Cheng, 2000, p. 84).

*Transformational leadership* is defined as the ability of "leaders and followers to make each other advance to a higher level of morality and motivation" (Liu, 2018, p. 3).

Additionally, transformational leadership “creates motivational, inspirational; innovative; and respectful organizational cultural environments” (Parmer, 2022, p. 2).

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions in qualitative research can be described as not having a guiding set of philosophical assumptions in any of the established methodologies related to qualitative research (Caelli et al., 2003). Poodry and Asai (2018) described the importance of not allowing assumptions to hold back researchers but providing insights into a better understanding of a dilemma or challenge. A common assumption concerns integrating Western cultural and educational practices within a Chinese school system. When students are enrolled in an international curriculum, an international experience is expected. Students, staff, and educators from Eastern cultures may struggle when utilizing or adapting to various facets of Western educational practices. However, He (2022) explained the improvement between Chinese and International exchange's cultural and practical value in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is vastly improving. The research study of integrating elements of transformational leadership instead of entirely changing to transformational leadership is to strengthen global-mindedness, innovative abilities, professional competence, and comprehensive capabilities, as aligned with the Chinese State Council's reform for teacher development (Li, 2022).

A critical assumption relates to Chinese teacher and staff members having the ability to achieve a proficient understanding and functionality of transformational leadership. Paternalistic leadership is the primary form of leadership used in East Asia and is primarily used in Chinese schools (Shi et al., 2020). Simply explaining transformational leadership may need clarification for educators to grasp concepts since transformational leadership is an approach that several Chinese staff members are not accustomed to more than a simple explanation may be required. When instructing transformational leadership to first-time

teachers, ongoing practice, professional development workshops, and assessments are critical for overall clarity and effective utilization.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope and delimitations relate to locating limits and boundaries of what will and will not be studied to improve validity and reliability by preventing the research results from reconstructing the results of the research purpose (Coker, 2022). The scope of the study focused on qualitative interviews with eight Chinese native and eight international teachers employed in the international department. Participants outside the department were omitted as outside experience is not relevant to current issues the international department is experiencing. The study aimed towards organizational improvement by integrating elements of transformational leadership rather than modifying the current paternalistic leadership within the international department rather than schoolwide.

Delimitations were associated with the limitations and boundaries set by researchers, so the research is possible to achieve (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Various institutions in China utilize a higher level of authoritativeness within the organization, which harms employee morale and makes employees reluctant to speak more openly to superiors (Lau et al., 2020). Institutions with a higher level of benevolence and lower mortality have been shown to increase overall positive work morale and productivity (Lau et al., 2020). The atmosphere of qualitative interviews was conducted using benevolence to make participants feel more at ease with potential responses. The questioning structure promoted improvement for teachers and the organization. To receive thorough and accurate information, each participant required at least two years of international teaching experience. The action research only addressed the issues and concerns in the qualitative interviews for overall improvement.

### **Limitations**

Limitations in research are related to potential weaknesses out of the researcher's control and can be associated with the research design, constraints with the statistical model, funding, or other external factors (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). Teachers' lack of experience and reluctance may become an issue when integrating transformational leadership. In Chinese culture, teachers are primarily accustomed to traditional Chinese practices, and the transition from hierarchical structures to collaborative approaches with shared leadership could be evident (Zhu & Caliskan, 2021). Teachers accustomed to the paternalistic leadership style could display reluctance as the leadership needs shared leadership qualities. Since paternalistic leadership contains moral elements, teachers may feel morally wrong as a new leadership style contains elements contrasting with the previous style.

Traditional Chinese cultural and Confucian practices strongly emphasize individuals having behavioral roles and societal expectations (Atherton, 2020). During the qualitative interview process, research participants needed to provide full disclosure. The feeling of being morally wrong may be going against traditional practices in discussing current issues and concerns related to the international department. Debriefing, thorough explanations, and appropriate comfort ensured participants could speak freely without repercussions.

A final limitation relates to how much transformational leadership could be implemented. Since China's primary leadership style is paternalistic, the organization may feel too much of a change in leadership style could affect the cultural and financial aspects of the organization. Burns (1978) describes transformational leadership as being used in more democratic regions and concerned with the end-values of justice, liberty, and equality. Although organizational improvement should occur to facilitate multicultural teachers,

students, and partnerships, shareholders may see a risk in such change. It could affect future business by utilizing more Western business practices instead of traditional practices.

### **Chapter Summary**

The primary purpose of the chapter was to introduce the qualitative action research study of integrating transformational leadership elements within a traditional Chinese paternalistic leadership style. Unlike paternalistic leadership, transformational leaders inspire staff members to increase deeper awareness, discover and value personal potential, and establish a mutual relationship between leaders and staff members (Layaman et al., 2021). Transformational leadership has been proven to improve teacher self-efficacy and student performance by promoting student initiatives and efforts (Parmer, 2022). A mixture between leadership styles and developing a shared leadership approach can provide overall positive productivity. It can further enhance collaborative practices among multicultural teachers and be utilized for student global-minded development, a feature parents and stakeholders expect when enrolling students into an international institution.

The next chapter examines the literature reviewed before researching to clarify Chinese traditional, cultural, social, and business practices. A more in-depth examination of paternalistic leadership is conducted to locate areas in which transformational leadership is utilized in organizations throughout China. The information gathered will guide further best practices and avoidances when conducting the research study.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Before implementing transformational leadership elements, gathering knowledge about Chinese social, cultural, and professional practices is critical, as they differ from Western practices. Examining these areas exposed the uncertainty regarding Chinese staff members' knowledge, application, and comfort level in implementing transformational leadership within the current paternalistic, hierarchical leadership style. A qualitative study using action research to explore teachers' knowledge from an international high school department in Southern China implemented the transformational elements. Implementing a transformational leadership approach in a paternalistic, hierarchical leadership focused on the cultural, social, and business practices between Eastern and Western cultures. By extensively researching Chinese and Western components, backgrounds, and cultural practices, sufficient knowledge was acquired to develop an implementation plan. The research outcome created an implementation plan for staff and organizational satisfaction. When conducting research, four major topics were identified concerning the study area.

### **Culture and Society**

The first topic concerns the differences between Chinese and Western culture and society. Whereas Western culture can be more expressive when trying to be precise (Chang, 2021), Chinese culture is often reserved and conservative (Zhang & Cao, 2021). In addition, employees tend to be more submissive and withhold opinions from higher authority figures based on Confucianism's influence (Zhang & Cao, 2021). Expectancy theory aligns with Chinese culture, as citizens have a particular structure of norms and values influenced by society for establishing values and expectations (Wong & Wong, 2005). Confucianism has been passed down for generations and is an integral aspect of Chinese traditional and cultural practices.

### **Cultural Business Practices**

The second topic concerns the difference between Chinese and Western business practices. In keeping with tradition, China uses a business practice called *guanxi*, which exchanges favors and network development for mutual gain (Atherton, 2020). As with McClelland's (1965) needs theory, transformational leadership implementation could interfere with *guanxi* business practices.

### **Leadership Structure**

The third topic was the different leadership structures between the two cultures. Jiang and Chen (2021) illustrate the importance of the different leaderships in knowledge sharing on authoritative and transformational leadership. McClelland's (1965) need theory and Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory support the research topic since transformational leadership will provide the three elements to reach employee and organizational goals. Each form of leadership has expectations and will provide the framework for employees for guidance.

### **Transformational Leadership in Chinese Culture**

The final topic is related to transformational leadership in China. Although the concept of transformational leadership is relatively new in Chinese culture, multiple businesses and professions have utilized transformational leadership with successful results. Although transformational leadership is a contrast in leadership styles compared to paternalistic leadership, Chinese organizations found transformational leadership to be highly beneficial to gain a competitive advantage in the increased economic globalization and ever-emerging 21<sup>st</sup>-century business world (Chen et al., 2021).

The structure of the literature review consisted of four sections. The first area focused on the literature search strategy, which includes the various search terms used in the literature

review for gathering information on related topics for the research study. The next area described the theoretical framework involving McClelland's (1965) need theory and Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory of motivation as guidance toward achieving individual and organizational goals throughout the research study. After the theoretical framework, the literature review contained the literary findings and limitations related to the four topics within the research study: Culture and Society, Cultural Business Practices, Leadership Structure, and Transformational Leadership in Chinese Culture. The final area summarized the significant themes, unknown areas, and discoveries within the literature review.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The following websites and databases were used in conducting research: Open Athens, Ebsco, and ERIC. Search terms included: *transformational, paternalistic, Confucianism, and China*. A combination of search terms included: *authoritarian leadership, benevolence, Chinese culture, Chinese international schools, Chinese society, Confucian leadership, Confucianism, Confucianism in China, guanxi, international schools in China, paternalistic leadership, paternalistic leadership in Chinese education, teacher motivation, transformational and Confucian leadership, transformational leadership, transformational leadership in China, and transformational leadership in Chinese schools*.

### **Theoretical Framework**

McClelland's (1965) need theory incorporates employees' motivation involving the need for affiliation, power, and achievement (Rybnicek et al., 2019). Concerning transformational leadership, McClelland's need theory influences individuals to produce and establish relationships and feel accepted, influence peers, or, as a whole, excel in achieving challenging tasks and meet all self-standards to the highest degree (Kovach, 2018). Chi-Ho (2015) explains the influence of Chinese and Confucian culture, which affects motivation on

organizational goals over personal needs. Western job motivation focuses on autonomy and individual independence, while Chinese job motivation focuses more on belonging as a top priority (Chi-Ho, 2015). Chan and Ma (2018) used McClelland's need theory to locate areas for motivational improvement by examining employee feedback. Recognition, opportunity growth, compensation, and a happy atmosphere were identified in the study, but only a few companies involved in the research utilized these needs (Chan & Ma, 2018). They continued to practice more traditional and cultural methods. McClelland's need theory aims to meet the Chinese cultural, societal, and individual needs throughout the transformational implantation process. By ensuring the accomplishment in these areas, cultural insensitivity can be avoided while facilitating individual and organizational needs and goals.

Reinhardt and Wahba (1975) described expectancy theory as a motivational theory determined by an individual with assumed outcomes. Vroom (1964) developed the theory known as the "expectancy theory of motivation," which produces instrumentality, expectancy, and valence. In expectancy theory, when employees know organizational rewards, such as promotion or pay, motivation is enhanced, and expectations become clear (Lee, 2019). Tse et al. (2018) facilitated an expectancy theory study involving transformational leadership with a Chinese joint-venture company with no prior transformational leadership experience with positive results. The authors located beneficial criteria of higher work outcomes, employee pride, and more creativity was promoted. Expectancy theory will locate employee motivation to enhance open-mindedness, creativity, efficiency, and individual self-value within the organization.

McClelland's need theory and expectancy theory are integral to implementing transformational leadership elements as they support purposeful results within an individual and the organization. McClelland's need theory will identify Chinese motivation within

individual and social influence (Chan & Ma, 2018). Expectancy theory served as a framework to ensure motivational achievements from transformational leadership for staff members are accomplished. McClelland's need and expectancy theory focuses on motivation. They will function as a hybrid framework to ensure goals are met by understanding the needs and expectations of employees and the organization while abiding by Chinese cultural, social, and traditional beliefs and guidelines.

### **Research Literature Review**

The primary focus of the literature review was to understand Chinese culture and society more clearly. The correlation between the current paternal hierarchical leadership practices became apparent by understanding the cultural and societal practices. In addition, as it pertains to transformational leadership integration, a better understanding of Chinese culture and society is critical to ensure the integration process will not violate cultural beliefs and practices. Transformational leadership is a Western business practice. While integrating new business practices can be critical in today's evolving business globalization (Hui, 2022), keeping traditional Chinese beliefs and practices must be considered to avoid violating professional and personal protocol. Since transformational leadership is still a relatively new leadership practice in China, the effectiveness results still need to be discovered.

The literature review focuses on culture and society, business practices, and leadership styles to gather information from multiple sources related to operations in past and present-day China. Since the research questions focus on teachers' perceptions, challenges, integration, and the effectiveness of transformational leadership, the research findings will uncover cultural sensitivity, past experiences, areas to avoid, and the value of transformational leadership in an international organization based in China.

## **Culture and Society**

China is one of the leading countries in today's international business market. Atherton (2020) discussed present-day China, whose roots go back 2,000 years. Confucianism is seen as reinforcing modern-day Chinese identity. Lau et al. (2020) stated that Confucian-oriented values make subordinates expect leaders to make all decisions and follow with obedience. In Western literature, authoritarian leadership is perceived negatively, but in Chinese culture and Confucianism, the working relationship is expected to have a vertical relationship between leaders and subordinates. An essential aspect of Chinese society is traditional Chinese philosophy. Chen (2019) addressed Chinese philosophy's ecological, scientific, and philosophical issues in the modern world. Confucian elements provide a framework for Chinese practitioners, including self-benevolence, introspection, self-discipline, and self-realization (Chen, 2019).

Western perspectives are influenced by Western culture and civilization, while Chinese culture and Confucianism influence Chinese culture (Chang, 2021). In traditional culture and society, respect is shown towards people, heaven, and work, which manifests in loyalty (Lyu, 2020). To show respect, individuals and employees can be reserved when speaking with elders or in prominent roles at work as they fear violating traditional beliefs and practices. In alignment with McClelland's (1965) need theory, achievement in Chinese society is to be a model Confucian citizen. Proficient knowledge of Confucian teachings successfully applies to all facets of Chinese professional and personal culture.

Confucianism focuses more on interdependence and conforming to others' behaviors and expectations than individual qualities (Lyu, 2020). In a study related to Chinese student adaptation to Western cultures by Fox and Bourgeois (2022), a participant used the analogy of basketball and the importance of communicating with teammates and discovering

leadership among members. The experience displays the interdependence used while respecting individuals in a leadership role. While respect for superiors is critical in a business atmosphere, the overgenerous amount of respect shown to leaders can become an obstacle. Individuals in a subordinate role may be reluctant to collaborate and share new ideas.

Another critical component in Chinese society is *Mian Zi*, which relates to *facings* or being seen as flourishing and having dignity. Hong and Yu (2018) explained how *Mian Zi* represents Chinese culture's traditional beliefs and practices. If one were to *lose face*, it would be detrimental to personal, professional, and academic careers (Hong & Yu, 2018). In other words, losing face will not only disrespect traditional and cultural beliefs, but it could damage one's future since Confucian culture teaches individuals to pay attention to righteousness, honesty, prosperity, and shame (Hong & Yu, 2018). Face issues in Chinese culture are critical, as Chinese citizens will be more reserved and less candid for fear of losing face. *Mian Zi* is a double-sided issue for societal needs and expectations. Citizens hope to achieve great success but can be afraid of taking the risk of experiencing shame which is detrimental to family and the community and can result in personal failure.

In recent decades, Chinese families turned to home-schooling Confucian values for children because of the stability they provide with structuring an individual's morality, solid family regulation, running the state, and maintaining peace throughout the world (Sheng, 2019). Confucius states that display how future leaders of the state need to learn the skills of maintaining control of families as the practice develops individual and societal characteristics (Sheng, 2019).

For students attending public schools, China started a 70-year development process in 2000 to satisfy the needs of teachers, implement technological resources, and incorporate innovation and integration (Liang et al., 2020). The ancient Chinese educational philosophy

includes establishing harmony between humanity and nature and the unity of doing and knowing (Chen, 2019). Although China is attempting reform, Chen (2019) explained the contrast between Chinese educational philosophy and modern Western practices, which contain improvements in the new reform. The reform encouraged teachers to attend professional development sessions, conduct teacher research meetings for best practices, and past study cases for improvement (Liang et al.). Using an authoritarian aspect of paternalistic leadership remains widespread in schools throughout China (Shi et al., 2020) and hinders teacher self-improvement. When schools use an authoritarian leadership approach, implementing the elements related to the reforms becomes hindered because teachers will feel reluctant to speak freely due to the respect shown towards leaders and fear of overstepping boundaries. For the reform to achieve the expectations of being effectively implemented, the People's Republic of China (PRC) needs to organize quality checks on schools throughout China to ensure the reform productivity is met while keeping traditional standards and practices.

Chinese culture and society do not remain strictly within borders. Zhou (2021) explained the global issues related to foreign policy and the effect on relations with the United States. A significant dilemma relates to China's constant struggle for power with the United States while failing to accept modern democracy and universal values (Zhou, 2021). As China attempts to globalize Chinese culture, which President Xi Jinping implemented in 2017, many foreigners still need more resources and literature (Zhou, 2021). The lack of cultural understanding leads to common stereotypes foreigners have about Chinese culture.

Based on the research, a multicultural dilemma arises as China is trying to promote Chinese culture throughout Western countries and needs to supply adequate and accurate information. Zhou (2021) stated how foreigners are open to learning about Chinese culture.

China was unwilling to accept Western cultural practices (Zhou, 2021). Since transformational leadership is based on Western practice, the government of the PRC could be reluctant to apply the practice since the PRC prefers to use traditional Chinese cultural practices. Hui (2022), for example, explained the recent adaptation of Confucian-Transformational leadership, which combines the wisdom achieved of Confucianism and the essence of transformational leadership. The current needs for both civilizations are to achieve cultural recognition. As each culture's expectations align with seeking recognition from one another, a compromise between civilizations in accepting both influences can be the solution.

Chinese society has recently experienced social transformations that impacted Chinese employees' values and attitudes (Li et al., 2020). Li et al. (2020) conducted a study based on the differences between Chinese and Western work ethics and the contents of the Chinese work ethic profile. The study revealed the difference in work culture, as Chinese work culture contained a heavy preference for authority in multiple areas (Li et al., 2020). The correlation between the Chinese work culture and Confucianism relates to the respect shown towards role models, elders, and individuals in leadership roles. Individuals in a subordinate role have the expectations of the leader's direction by being in a subordinate role. Implementing collaborative practices and taking initiatives are direct orders from someone in a prominent role; it could eliminate the societal barriers to collaborative and teamwork integration.

In viewing education in Chinese society, Peng (2019) explained that the Chinese School of International Relations (IR) theory, established over the last 30 years, involves a curriculum based on traditional Chinese teachings and eliminates Western theories. IR is used to develop Chinese characteristics and theories in creating non-Western alternative theories, including deep-rooted and culture-oriented Chinese theory (Peng, 2019). Although the IR

theory was thoroughly constructed and had numerous attempts for implantation, the movement needed meaningful scientific output, despite efforts to discover universal recognition and meaning for Chinese social and historical boundaries. When examining the ongoing movements in both society and education, the promotion of Chinese nationalism is evident. Furthermore, Western concepts should demonstrate Chinese society's values and benefits.

Since 2022, over 350,000 students from mainland China have opted to study in the United States at higher educational institutions (Zhao, 2020). While cultural integration and being global-minded are critical elements for Chinese international students to be successful, Zhao (2020) discussed the need for Chinese students to maintain cultural identity when studying abroad. Zhao conducted a qualitative study involving Chinese international students studying abroad and their experiences with cultural identity. In the study, the participants explained issues they experienced, including negative stereotypes, differentiation between country-specific questions asked during class to Chinese students, a sense of not belonging, and mistreatment due to media topics and misconceptions (Zhao). Some participants were surprised about how the U.S. is portrayed in the media as being highly urbanized, and students were surprised by the large rural parts throughout the country (Zhao). A valuable lesson learned from the participants is taking the ambassador role in creating awareness of cultural and societal differences (Zhao).

For international schools in China, students need a considerable amount of cultural and natural knowledge, but further education to help students become global-minded and have a deeper understanding of Western practices and theories for success. As several participants in the study conducted by Zhao (2020), students need to learn about Western cultural, social, and academic practices abroad. International students must take the initiative

and educate themselves to better prepare them for overseas educational endeavors. Chang (2021) described the differences in learning between China and the United States as citizens in China gaining knowledge through family members, friends, and colleagues. Due to cultural differences, Chinese students will feel more comfortable associating with Chinese-native individuals. Cultural differences make Chinese students feel isolated as teaching styles, language difficulties, and expectations can lead to classes with professors (Chang, 2021).

Chang (2021) implemented a highly yet flexible course design involving Eastern and Western perspectives, including collaborative and discussion activities, visuals, assignments, and recorded PowerPoints to prepare students for overseas learning. Most students found the course to be beneficial and convenient. From the literature they have examined, individuality within Chinese businesses and education is apparent. Chang found participants had mixed feelings about collaborative projects as they felt uncomfortable working with someone they did not know.

### **Cultural Business Practices**

Chu et al. (2020) identified the two primary business leveraging techniques in each culture. Western culture uses relational governance (rules and procedures to move forward in a business relationship) (Chu et al., 2020). In contrast, Chinese culture conducts a business practice called *guanxi* (connections bonded by mutual obligations and exchanging favors to build relationships) (Chu et al.). *Guanxi* is a practice assumed to be derived from Confucianism. Atherton (2020) formally explained how Confucianism has not formally recognized *guanxi* for 30 years.

Furthermore, several acts of *guanxi* can be unethical and corrupt, including bribes and payoffs to superiors and teachers (Fox & Bourgeois, 2022). All matters related to *guanxi* are

critical when implementing transformational leadership since guanxi can influence employees' well-being. Xu et al. (2020) studied the psychological effect on Chinese employees' well-being under guanxi human resource management practices. Results showed a decrease in occupational well-being. Transformational leadership can eliminate low morale and well-being from guanxi practices by providing self-motivation and pride in an employee's work. In addition, Atherton (2020) stated how Chinese businesses had been converging practices with successful international businesses to keep up with today's competition. Transformational leadership can prove beneficial for employee morale and success within the organization.

Ulusemre and Fang (2022) conducted a study involving foreign business associates and responses to experiences with the guanxi practice when conducting business in China using a social contracts theory approach to find moral validation in guanxi. Ulusemre and Fang noted several Chinese businesses feeling obligated to participate in guanxi practices, despite the ethical dilemma. The dilemma of certain guanxi practices being illegal in some countries can severely affect international business (Ulusemre & Fang, 2022). The results were separated between defensive guanxi and competitive guanxi.

Defensive guanxi involved assistance in obtaining permits that companies were entitled to possess, enforcing contractual obligations, obtaining or retaining operational business practices, counter extortion, receiving market intelligence, and obtaining bureaucratic and procedural knowledge (Ulusemre & Fang, 2022). Competitive guanxi involves permit obtaining and approval, exploitation of contractual parties, retaining and operating business to defeat the competition, engaging in extortion and coercion, trade secret theft, and receiving preferential treatment (Ulusemre & Fang). Although the study focused on Chinese sales practices, Ulusemre and Fang (2022) stated guanxi practices go beyond the

business world and can be found throughout Chinese culture. The primary issue in closely examining guanxi practices is for further education in areas where guanxi is conducted. These areas should be kept from interfered with, as they may cause issues between business and societal practices.

Another motivational concept used in Chinese businesses is Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). OCB contains multiple facets, including organization acknowledgment, interpersonal relationships and harmony, and the protection of organizational resources (Chi-Ho, 2015). Chi-Ho (2015) highlighted how OCB positively affected employee evaluation performance and recommendations for performance.

### **Leadership Structure**

In examining two different leadership styles for the research study, the current leadership style utilized at the institution is a Confucian-based hierarchical leadership style known as paternalistic leadership. Lin and Sun (2018) described a paternalistic leadership approach as a preference for contemporary Chinese employees. It incorporates the components of moral, benevolent, and authoritarian leadership. On the other hand, transformational leadership establishes a shared vision between leaders and employees, stimulating creativity among all staff members and leading to increased motivation and exceptional work outcomes (Chen et al., 2021). As these two leadership styles are examined, a paternalistic leadership approach has been proven successful in sales and overall business operations. Lin and Sun explained how Confucianism defines the obligations in paternalistic leadership with the accepted roles of superiors and inferiors. Inferiors show deference, loyalty, and obedience, while leaders treat inferiors with benevolence and kindness (Lin & Sun, 2018). In the education field, teachers are in the position of monitoring student development and efficiency within the international department in a greater capacity than the

leaders. Transformational leadership still displays mutual respect among leaders and subordinates. The leadership style has a different approach from conventional Chinese business practices, which may cause dilemmas with implementation procedures.

In a grounded theory research study on Chinese civil servants in Confucian work culture, Lyu (2020) concluded the participants in the survey displayed traditional Confucian characteristics. Included in the study were work engagement, initiative action, positive emotion, working relationship commitment, and mixed role priority (Lyu, 2020). The grounded theory was influential in locating motivations for engagement in internal and external motivation and self-determination in work engagement (Lyu).

When studying ethical leadership in Chinese culture, Wang et al. (2017) explained that unclarity between national and societal culture shapes ethical leadership behavior. Tourigny et al. (2019) stated higher moral and ethical standards became a more substantial focus due to increased industrialization and globalization over the past 20 years. In studying the effects on trust and organizational behavior, Tourigny et al. concluded more positive outcomes emerged from subordinates and leaders establishing mutual trust, which led to more risk-taking opportunities and the freedom to voice changes without fear of repercussions from leaders.

Atherton (2020) described the emergence of Chinese businesses borrowing Western leadership models and styles to gain a competitive edge in a particular respected marketplace. Others stay with traditional Chinese philosophies and teachings (Atherton, 2020). In a study by Wang et al. (2017) to determine the Chinese ethical leadership scale, Western and Chinese cultures usually promote appropriate conduct. Regarding subordinates, both focus on social learning, but Chinese culture focuses on role modeling (Wang et al., 2017).

In examining the needs and expectations for transformational leadership to be effective in Chinese culture, subordinates must become self-role models. Employee growth and value are critical elements for transformational leadership to be successful. In keeping with the focus on respecting and viewing leaders as role models, subordinates may need assistance to engage in collaborative practices. Subordinates suggesting improvements towards superiors may create the moral dilemma of disrespecting individuals possessing a higher role. Atherton (2020) and Wang et al. (2017) noted that changing times in Chinese business practices for accepting Western business models and establishing a clear set of ethics for gaining a global competitive edge is a strong possibility.

Park et al. (2019) examined various leadership styles associated with Confucian leadership. Participative leadership, which has a strong correlation with transformational leadership, is practiced in China and Japan and displayed positive outcomes in job performance, organizational commitment and citizenship behavior, and trust development (Park et al., 2019). In addition, Park et al. explained participative leadership increases employees' positive impact. The belief in participative leadership increased due to Confucianism's reduced influence as people, including younger generations, are shifting cultural views.

Supportive leadership, which contains transformational leadership, displays effectiveness in team cohesiveness, communication among co-workers, knowledge-sharing, and team outcomes (Park et al., 2019). Park et al. conducted a study to determine the elements which produce the most effective outcomes for leadership. The results displayed individual outcomes and effectiveness in Chinese leadership styles (Park et al.). Other Asian countries in the research included individual and group outcomes mostly related to team cohesiveness and group citizenship behavior (Park et al.). The dilemma arises between

Confucian leadership practices and the need to establish trust between co-workers in collaborative practices. Although Confucianism supports the practices of participative and supportive leadership in Chinese businesses, the researchers concluded the need for collaborative practices is evident. Collaborative practices with leadership could be due to the moral dilemma of showing inadequate respect towards individuals in a leadership role. Subordinates could be reluctant in fear of disrespecting leaders and Confucian practices.

One of East Asia's most prevalent leadership styles is paternalistic leadership (Shi et al., 2020). In contrast to a democratic or transformational leadership style, paternalistic leadership involves most of the leader's responsibilities. Paternalistic leadership contains three elements: moral, benevolent, and authoritarian leadership styles (Shi et al., 2020). Qian and Walker (2021) explained that leadership in China, such as paternalistic leadership, is used by principals in schools throughout China since the Confucian traditions of Chinese organizational behavior and thinking to resonate with paternalistic practices of establishing solid relationships with teachers. Qian and Walker stated a more critical factor of benevolence is having a close relationship between principals and teachers to establish trust or performance. In addition, benevolence in paternalistic leadership displays holistic and individualized concern for subordinates (Shi et al., 2020).

The authoritarian aspect of paternalistic leadership displays robust control and demands obedience from subordinates without question (Lau et al., 2020). A dilemma is created within paternalistic leadership between authoritarianism and benevolence. Teachers are encouraged to display abilities and ingenuity but may be reluctant due to strict obedience to the principles. Principles are given significant pressure from the Chinese educational reform to increase teacher responsibility, quality assurance, and accountability (Qian & Walker, 2021). Shi et al. (2020) studied teacher commitment and job satisfaction under

paternalistic leadership. They concluded how authoritarian leadership harmed job satisfaction and commitment, while moral leadership positively impacted it. Shi et al. concluded structure and individuals involved with hierarchical leadership need to be improved.

Due to teachers being accustomed to the authoritarian aspect of paternalistic leadership, the research found reluctance to adapt to transformational leadership could prove difficult since the strong affiliation with previous paternalistic practices could influence future implementation. Jiang and Chen (2021) explained the importance of trust dependency on implicit and explicit knowledge sharing within supportive, innovative, and bureaucratic cultures. Jiang and Chen described the authoritarian leadership element of educational behavior, which involves employee reprimands and criticism. Employees will often respond with obedience, respect, and fear. A critical element in paternalistic leadership, stated by Shi et al. (2020), relates to trust in leadership and its impact on student commitment and teacher job satisfaction. Both transformational and paternalistic leadership share a common component in establishing effective leadership efficiency.

Qian and Walker (2021) examined how principals establish emotional relationships with teachers using paternalistic leadership. Principals believed close relationships with teachers were well-received (Qian & Walker, 2021). The issue with the research pertains to only principals being the participants and not teachers. Participants not in a principal role could uncover issues unknown to superiors. Qian and Walker stated an authoritative approach in paternalistic leaders involves high expectations and punishes poor performance. The literature does note the severity of an authoritarian approach may differ between principals and individuals in a leadership role (Qian & Walker). The literature used for research is information related to the background and practices of paternalistic leadership. Data acquired from principals may need more reliability, as teachers are at the receiving end of paternalistic

leadership. Paternalistic leadership can handle the burden of being feared by leadership. Qian and Walker concluded that paternalistic leaders displayed empathy and a more personal approach toward teachers to establish trust and eliminate the fear associated with the authoritarian aspect of paternalistic leadership. In addition, the leaders were aware of teacher needs, as many teachers were at different career stages, by listening more to teachers and establishing dialogue (Qian & Walker). Having conversations with superiors is more common and acceptable in Western work cultures. Under paternalistic leadership in China, subordinates rarely initiate a work-related conversation with superiors, also known as employee silence.

Employee silence is divided into three categories. The first is acquiescent silence, in which an employee views personal input will not administer any change within the organization (Zhang & Cao, 2021). The second is defensive silence, in which employees keep opinions to themselves, as they do not want to affect interpersonal relationships (Zhang & Cao). Absolute silence is indifferent silence, in which individuals believe personal opinions will not matter due to a lack of identification within the organization (Zhang & Cao).

Charismatic leadership is a lesser-known form of leadership in China but is still used in various organizations and contains elements of transformational leadership. A key component of charismatic leadership is self-sacrificial leadership, including impartiality, empathy, empowering and serving followers, and community building (Zhang et al., 2015). Although businesses utilize self-sacrificial leadership practices, Zhang et al. conducted a quantitative study to determine the psychological safety of employee voice within self-sacrificial leadership. The study concluded a positive correlation between employee voice and self-sacrificial leadership and was mediated by psychological safety among Chinese employees (Zhang et al.). Furthermore, Zhang et al. concluded that self-sacrificial leadership

elements in Chinese practices benefit individual and organizational productivity. The study needed more qualitative data on which elements, in particular, proved most effective. Since self-sacrificial leadership contains several similarities to transformational leadership, a thorough understanding of the particular best self-sacrificial leadership practices from the study conducted by Zhang et al. would be beneficial for future studies.

Self-sacrificial and charismatic leadership are two forms of leadership that can demonstrate organizational and individual success if the collaboration and employee voice are evident. The study by Zhang et al. (2015) found a positive relationship between employee voice and psychological safety, while Zhang and Cao (2021) examined the elements related to breaking employee silence. The current literature gap relates to effective methods in breaking employee silence and proven ways to incorporate employee voice within Chinese work culture.

### **Transformational Leadership in Chinese Culture**

Although transformational leadership is quite common in Western culture, the leadership style is still a new concept in China. In Chinese academia, Peng (2019) described transformational leadership as having the ability to raise subordinates' and leaders' maturity and morality to a higher level. Chen et al. (2021) examined the use of transformational leadership in employee job satisfaction and employee relations between subordinate genders. The long-term effects of transformational leadership in China still need to be discovered, as sufficient literature still needs to be available. Liu (2018) explained transformational leadership in China is on the rise and displays improvements in organizational commitment, employee satisfaction, and leadership conscientiousness. In further examining the dynamics of transformational leadership in China regarding gender, males, and females experienced over 90% confidence in abilities and creativity (Chen et al., 2021). The study conducted by

Chen et al. did not contain data related to the interaction between the two variables. An examination based on gender roles in leadership is critical, as many Chinese businesses still conduct traditional practices containing males as more dominant figures in corporate and traditional society.

Transformational leadership is used to inspire creativity, innovative thinking, and self-value. Chan and Ma (2018) discovered Chinese employees prefer monetary rewards and bonuses from a study on inspiring creativity. In addition, Chan and Ma noted that creative organizations in China primarily use traditional practices, and few motivational methods are used. Chen et al. (2021) highlighted the goal of transformational leadership to have an employee-centered approach. As mentioned above, a preferred leadership approach in Chinese business is a hierarchical leadership style with a leader-centered approach. In a recent study, Tsang et al. (2022) examined the relationship between teacher burnout and psychological mediation per transformational leadership for teachers in China. In the research, Tsang et al. stated transformational leadership had been used in schools since education reforms started throughout China, and studies have shown teacher burnout needed to be alleviated. Arguments were made for transformational leadership being a leading cause of increased teacher burnout, but few studies have proven this valid (Tsang et al., 2022). The study concluded that transformational leadership alleviated teacher burnout and increased teacher meaningfulness, competence, and self-determination (Tsang et al.). The study was conducted using a quantitative approach using survey questionnaires. As the current research topic relates to transformational integration, a qualitative study would clarify why and how teachers inspire meaningfulness, established competence, and develop self-determination. A significant factor for further study relates to the leader-employee relationship. Although most

of the survey results displayed the positives for the employee relating to transformational leadership, more data on leadership effectiveness should be provided.

Zhang et al. (2021) conducted a quantitative study on transformational leadership and the perception of being overqualified for career growth opportunities. The study addressed the literature gap on leadership effects on an employee assuming overqualification (Zhang et al., 2021). Transformational leadership was found to reduce employees assumed overqualification, increasing opportunities for career growth (Zhang et al., 2021).

Effective leadership for generating desired organizational results is critical in the highly competitive business world. Liu (2021) conducted a quantitative research study on the effectiveness of transformational leadership in schools and teacher efficacy by administering 950 questionnaires throughout Northern Chinese secondary schools. The results showed a positive correlation among areas of efficiency, including individual development, organization redesign, and instructional program management (Liu, 2021). The study revealed ineffectiveness in setting directions concerning teacher efficacy. The researchers assumed schools could conduct direction settings and teachers could control the dimension of teacher efficacy (Liu, 2021). A critical component to consider relating to the survey results is the region in which the data was collected. Liu's study was conducted in a region in Northern China, whereas the research study will take place in Southern China. Various regions can have inconsistent results due to different regional business and cultural practices. Liu's research provided a solid framework for addressing potential needs and expectations of the outcomes for teacher productivity and acquiring additional skills for people development, redesigning organization, and managing instructional programs. Furthermore, although the setting direction dimension was revealed to be ineffective in transformational leadership, it

should still be considered as direction setting is one of many facets which successful transformational leaders utilize.

Due to several education reforms, the results of the study performed by Tsang et al. (2022), the use of transformational leadership is evident, as it facilitates teachers in identifying work values, enhances self-efficacy, and encourages teachers with greater autonomy in doing work. Hui (2022) researched the hybrid leadership approach of paternalistic and transformational leadership for multi-national enterprise (MNE) influence. Although many businesses tend to stay true to Chinese businesses and cultural practices, gaining the advantage and staying current with global trends, adaptation is critical for success. The study concluded that Confucian and transformational leadership are strongly compatible with idealized influence (Hui, 2022). Other compatibility traits revealed included intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration (Hui). The study was relatively informal and combined two different leadership approaches. Similar traits were discovered and worked to develop international business environments with the compatibility traits located by Hui related to inspirational stimulation and motivation, Tse et al. (2018) located the reasoning behind employee creativity from transformational leadership influence. Tse et al. sampled 240 middle managers and supervisors. The results included the promotion of creativity by administering the employees to have a high level of control over current work and outcomes over personal control. In addition, Tse et al. found results varied in a study on inspiring creativity in Chinese employees. Individuals with high levels of creativity can reduce leadership and personal control, and individuals with low levels can increase creativity and personal control. The study did not contain Confucian elements officially but did include inspirational motivation as it built confidence for employees in achieving desired outcomes.

Schenck and Waddey (2017) examined the implications of integrating transformational leadership and other democratic-based leadership styles. Most institutions have a hierarchical leadership approach (Schenck & Waddey, 2017). Chinese educational institutions explain the issue of having limited capacity for leadership strategies. Thus, the implementation of transformational leadership will cause interference with the established leadership modules (Schenck & Waddey). The research provided valuable insight related to the issues of Confucian and transformational leadership. The research conducted would be more suited for Asian countries that are more open to democratic practices. In addition, Schenck and Waddey provided areas of awareness that could be potential obstacles when attempting to integrate transformational leadership. To avoid potential obstacles, the success of previous articles in the literature review will highlight the effectiveness of transformational leadership while displaying the proper protocol for implementing transformational leadership in Chinese culture.

### **Chapter Summary**

When implementing a Western leadership practice in a Chinese organization, the literature proved the complexity of the process by considering cultural components that may be affected or violated. Liang et al. (2020) described the new China, which carried national pride and improved teaching quality for Chinese citizens to educate and instill Chinese characteristics of history, culture, and tradition. While patriotism and national pride benefit all nations, accepting globalization and being an active global citizen are equally critical. Zhou (2021) highlighted the issue of China and the distribution of Chinese culture and society but refused to accept democratic values. From the research analyzed, China is a proud country. China established its cultural identity from history and cultural practices to reach a high position in the global economy.

Chinese business practices conducted under the questionable Confucian practice of *guanxi* have an established place in business culture and throughout various aspects of Chinese civilization. In the articles examined, *guanxi* was mainly perceived negatively due to corrupt practices to gain competitive advantages. *Guanxi* was primarily established as the Chinese practice of establishing good relationships or improving personal relations (Xu et al., 2020). Regardless of whether *guanxi* is a Confucian practice, most Chinese organizations conduct a form of *guanxi*. Only some organizations operate using the review's unethical and immoral practices.

Chinese businesses and industries contain various leadership styles and practices. The most prominent form of leadership is paternalistic, which contains a hierarchical approach with limited versatility for subordinates. As highlighted by Atherton (2020), subordinates or individuals in prominent roles are reluctant to speak freely to the individual in a higher position for fear of punishment and cultural shame or losing face. Zhang et al. (2015) located the benefits of self-sacrificial leadership and employee voice in which employees were able and even encouraged to speak freely. Several businesses in China implement Confucian leadership practices with the elements of teamwork initiatives. In the study conducted by Park et al. (2019), the results of the teamwork initiatives were more focused on individual and leadership performance, as opposed to the teamwork atmosphere displayed throughout other Asian countries.

The literature and research studies in which transformational leadership was used in China all displayed beneficial results. In addition, Hui (2022) examined the current influence and positive outcomes of a hybrid leadership approach involving paternalistic and transformational principles. A limitation among the studies involved was that most were quantitative. While it is beneficial to understand the implementation of transformational

leadership is possible, qualitative data from employees and leaders could clarify the reasoning for the positive results and potential issues.

The literature provided informative knowledge of Chinese traditional, cultural, business, and leadership practices. The previous studies displayed the transformational effectiveness leadership can have on an organization in China. Since transformational leadership is still a relatively new practice, further research, and application will need to determine the effectiveness of the leadership style. In addition, due to cultural, societal, and governmental guidelines, proceeding with caution is critical to ensure individual and societal rights and beliefs are not violated.

The research displayed transformational leadership is used in businesses and educational facilities throughout China. The gap in the literature on transformational leadership within international schools in China needs to be addressed. The adaptation of transformational leadership in Chinese organizations with compliance with traditional and cultural practices was provided. The research study will use the literature for transformational leadership integration in Chinese international schools.

Chapter 3 examines the methods to be used throughout the research study. Extensive descriptions of the research methodology, design, rationale, researcher's role, procedures, data analysis, reliability, and validity are conducted. A thorough explanation and interpretation involving ethical procedures throughout the research process are included to protect participants' rights and conduct ethical research.

### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

The qualitative action research study aimed to improve student, teacher, and departmental efficiency by implementing transformational leadership elements within the current organization's paternalistic leadership style by developing an action plan from the data received from the qualitative interviews. Paternalistic leadership is a standard hierarchical leadership style predominately utilized and accepted throughout Chinese culture (Lau et al., 2020). While effectiveness is proven throughout Chinese businesses, international educational organizations utilize more collaborative practices, such as transformational leadership, to adequately prepare students to become more global-minded for future overseas educational endeavors. The proposed qualitative study used action research to explore teachers' knowledge of transformational leadership elements from China's international high school department. The problem was the uncertainty regarding the knowledge, application, or comfort level of Chinese staff members in implementing transformational leadership, as employees are accustomed to a hierarchical leadership approach, limiting collaborative and creative abilities. The purpose of the qualitative study using action research was to explore teachers' knowledge, perceptions, and adaptability toward integrating elements of transformational leadership within a current paternalistic leadership style at a high school international department in Southern China.

#### **Research Questions**

In order to accomplish the intended purpose of the qualitative action research study, the following research questions guided the study:

Research Question 1: What are the main issues between managers and subordinates within the organization's current leadership style?

Research Question 2: How can transformational leadership be effectively implemented within a paternalistic leadership style?

Research Question 3: What problems arise with Chinese staff members when implementing transformational leadership?

Research Question 4: How could overall efficiency and communication improve between Chinese and international staff members?

Chapter 3 closely examined the research methodology process proposed in the research study. Included in the process were the methodology, design, the role of the researcher, and the research procedures, which examined the population and sample selection. Finally, all ethical procedures, reliability, and validity were addressed and thoroughly explained.

### **Research Methodology, Design, and Rationale**

The research focused on gathering insights within the international department. McClelland's need theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, and Burns' transformational leadership theory aligned with the research objectives, providing motivation and a framework to achieve individual and organizational goals. The selected theories provided personal motivation to achieve an expected performance (Reinhardt & Wahba, 1975).

### **Methodology**

A qualitative approach was used in the research study to understand the "why's" and "how's" from multiple perspectives, creating a deeper level of thinking to encourage new solutions in addressing the current issues (Barnham, 2015). The qualitative data provided a framework for moving forward with plans of action for organizational improvement by addressing the current communicative issues between international and Chinese staff members and all staff members and leadership. Since the purpose of the research study was to

improve all areas within the department, individual responses from the qualitative data exposed undiscovered areas that were never brought to attention or issues of which leaders needed to be made aware. The potential discoveries made in this study were used to aid the global-minded preparation for students and organizational growth among all teachers and staff members.

### **Design and Rationale**

Action research was used to address a current issue in need of immediate results for improving practice (Worku et al., 2022). Action research was critical for providing innovative changes within the educational community to improve teacher and student success in international higher education (Hamada, 2019). The information from the qualitative data was used to guide implementation innovations within the department for immediate action plans to address both communicative issues and improve organizational efficiency.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As the current International Department Head (IDH) of the American program, the researcher for this action research study is responsible for operations and improvement within the program. Weekly leadership meetings are held between the IDHs and department directors for organizational improvement. The meetings should have included teachers or other staff members, so qualitative interviews with teachers are critical for organizational improvement. A few potential research participants work within the American Program and are familiar with all the remaining potential participants. All relationships are positive and even assist some potential participants when issues arise, or advice is needed. Although the potential participants are from different programs, the research study aims to establish overall efficiency and communication improvement throughout the department. In addition, the Academic Department Director (ADD) and the Director of International Department Director

(IDD) are aware of the research, have full support, and are anxious to implement transformational methods within the department.

### **Research Procedures**

The procedures for the research study included instrumentation relating to the study variables and research questions. The process followed a step-by-step procedure of data gathering and confidentiality components. Data preparation included analysis programs, formatting, and data organization. Finally, an analysis of the process regarding collected qualitative data is described.

### **Population and Sample Selection**

The target population was 16 teachers (eight native Chinese and eight international). All potential participants are current employees. Over 50 teachers are employed within the international department during the research study. All Chinese subject teachers have the prerequisite of achieving a six (a competent level of English) or higher on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS before employment in the international department. All research participants were requested if they would like to participate in the research study via e-mail. Research participants were informed the study is voluntary and no penalty or judgment was received if any participant declined. Participants were selected on a first-come, first-serve basis.

A recruitment letter was sent via e-mail to all potential research participants explaining the study and inquiring about participant interest. All e-mail addresses were accessed through the international department's e-mail network. Each international teacher had a work e-mail address which can be accessed through the international department's e-mail group. When the e-mail group option was selected, all international teachers in the department received the recruitment letter. The International Department Director (IDD) and

the ADD approved the e-mail to all teachers in the international department. If the participant responded via e-mail as interested, they were issued a consent form in person. The bilingual consent form was typed in English and Mandarin Chinese and was proofread by a professional interpreter (see Appendix A). All research participants speak fluent English. The Mandarin translation was for the participants' convenience in understanding the rules and guidelines for participating in the research study. The participant could take an adequate amount of time to read the consent form for the thoroughness of the research procedures and ask any potential questions. Upon signing the consent form participants arranged a convenient time for both parties to conduct the interview. The interview site was held on campus in the international department's conference room, as approved by the IDD and ADD (see Appendix B).

### **Data Instruments**

A semi-structured interview protocol with open-ended questions was used so participants would provide personal experiences and be encouraged to speak freely about current positive practices, concerns, and areas of improvement. The interview followed a scaffold protocol starting with general questions and conversations relating to the current working atmosphere to build rapport while keeping the participant on topic. The open-ended questions provided a more candid and conversational response in detail (Rabionet, 2011). Further into the interview, the questioning became more complex and precise regarding current leadership practices, collaborative issues between peers and leadership, and areas for improvement among organizational practices. Interviews were conducted in person and recorded using a mobile audio recording device.

### **Instrument Validation**

The semi-structured interview protocol consisted of original questions in alignment with the research study. Before research, three Subject Matter Experts (SME) supplied feedback on the interview questioning and the alignment of the research study. Included are e-mail and LinkedIn correspondence documentation and recommendations (see Appendix C). All SMEs had a Ph.D. or Ed.D. in leadership, education, or political science. Each SME had experience with coaching, leading, and training transformational leadership elements and had years of implementation experience in the international education field. An original protocol was used due to the uniqueness in which no previous study similar to transformational leadership being implemented within a paternalistic leadership style has been located or discovered. The feedback from the SMEs included being more thorough when explaining transformational leadership to individuals who need to become more familiar. In addition, the line of questioning should regard the participants' different cultural practices. Additional questions were added to facilitate cultural differences. SMEs suggested the feedback questionnaire to focus on locating issues over praise. Making the questions more open-ended will encourage participants to go into greater detail towards individual issues and concerns. Finally, ensuring the participants' perceptions were understood by thoroughly explaining the research purpose before the interview process is critical.

### **Data Collection**

After signing the consent form, the participant decided on a suitable time for conducting the interview. Before each interview started, a discussion occurred regarding all areas of the consent form, the purpose of the research study, a thorough explanation of transformational leadership and benefits with individual and organizational achievement, and time for any questions the participant would have. Once the discussion was completed,

participants were notified the interview will be audio recorded. After the participant gives verbal consent, the interview and recording will begin. After each interview, the interview was transcribed from the audio recording to a hard copy using Otter.ai. Qualitative research has transitioned toward digital data collection methods due to the advantages of the capabilities possessed by the capabilities of today's technological advances (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

The consent form, which all participants signed in person, ensured confidentiality and anonymity remained constant throughout the research. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study to ensure all ethical guidelines and procedures were thoroughly conducted. Since the research study was voluntary, participants could choose not to answer questions they may feel uncomfortable with or withdraw from the study altogether without repercussions. All interview data (audio recordings and typed transcripts) was stored in a password-encrypted folder on a personal external hard drive for three years, to which the researcher only has access. After three years, hard copy data will be shredded, and the files on the external hard drive will be deleted and destroyed. During the research process, all names or elements from an interview which may identify anyone on the data were removed. Participants were debriefed after the interview to ensure all data would remain secure and anonymity remained constant throughout the research process, per the informed consent agreement. Each participant received an e-mail of the interview transcript for member checking after the data had been collected and transcribed. Participants examined the transcript for accuracy and validity.

### **Data Analysis**

A data analysis spiral was used to facilitate the analysis process. A data analysis spiral is a multi-faceted method of data management and organization, including locating and

noting emergent ideas, explaining and creating themes for codes based on classification, analyzing and developing interpretations, and visualizing and representing the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After each interview was transcribed into a Word document, member checking was completed to ensure reliability and validity by the research participant, and coding and themes were developed. MAXQDA software was used when analyzing the research participants' data. MAXQDA was used for content analysis.

Upon completion of the transcription of each interview, the files were inputted into the MAXQDA software for data organization and management. Creswell and Poth's (2018) data analysis spiral were used to organize and manage data; the software coded the data by locating and manually grouping emerging ideas while adding notes and paraphrasing ideas derived from the interviews. MAXQDA located reoccurring ideas and themes when coding the interviews and classified each theme and idea for interpretation. Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended representing and visualizing data based on themes. After thoroughly analyzing the content, MAXQDA assisted in summarizing the coded segments in each document. A summary table was created displaying a compilation of determining topics.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Validity and reliability in qualitative research can always be a challenge as research participants may have a particular level of objectivity and bias, which can negatively impact when receiving the research results. Since the research study is focused on both Chinese and international staff members, Chinese staff members' responses could have been impacted due to fear of its impact on current employment. Chinese subordinates speaking candidly about upper management is not typically conducted culturally and socially. International staff members' bias toward Chinese co-workers and the current management style could be

regarded. The following methods were conducted throughout the research to ensure sufficient reliability and validity to combat these potential issues.

### **Trustworthiness**

Golafshani (2015) explained the critical element of establishing trustworthiness in research participants when ensuring reliability. Trustworthiness can often become an issue between the research participant and the researcher. Before each interview began, good rapport was established by engaging in casual conversation to alleviate any pressure, nerves, or untrustworthiness on behalf of the participants. Patton et al. (1983) explained the importance of being aware of factors that can undermine reliability. For example, a lack of familiarity or experience could lead to misinterpretation, leading to the participant being misled (Patton et al., 1983). Patton et al. suggested ample time during the interview to ensure clarity and a complete understanding.

### **Transferability**

As the research study was conducted using action research, a critical component was locating data from the interview results to modify best practices moving forward.

Transferability was used in this study to utilize the interview findings and locate research extensions in other contexts (Stahl & King, 2020). Stahl and King (2020) highlighted the importance of thick descriptions, including contextual information relating to the work site, detailed time frames for data collection, and the study's duration when conducting transferability in qualitative research. All areas of transferability were thoroughly detailed throughout the process.

### **Reflexivity**

Reflexivity involves the researcher's critical self-assessment associated with the areas of biases, paradigm, and preconceptions (Yadav, 2021). Since the research study contains

participants from Chinese and international backgrounds, the questioning and procedures of the research were examined by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) with extensive experience in international education and leadership styles from Eastern and Western cultures. The feedback provided by the SMEs addressed precautionary measures related to cultural sensitivity, multi-cultural adaptation, patience, compassion, and guidance with all research participants respectively.

### **Ethical Procedures**

When conducting research, the following ethical concerns were carried out during the qualitative research process involving research participants: confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent, as it could have a potential impact on participants if these procedures are not conducted (Sanjari et al., 2014). As illustrated in The Belmont Report: ethical principles and Guidelines for the Protection of human subjects of Research (2003), the ethical guidelines and principles to protect research participants, the fundamental ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice are the general judgments. The guidelines and principles are a fundamental justification for the various moral prescriptions and opinions of human actions. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) followed all ethical guidelines and procedures.

Before conducting the research, a site permission packet was compiled containing all documentation, ensuring all ethical areas and guidelines were covered. First, a permission letter was signed by the point of contact at the research site in person (See Appendix B). Second, each research participant was given a personal recruitment letter (See Appendix D). Third, all participants were given a bilingual consent form in both Mandarin and English in person (See Appendix A). The consent form contains all details explaining the procedures and reasoning for the research study and will be administered before the interview. In

addition, written and verbal assurance display anonymity was used for all participants participating in the study. Fourth, semi-structured interview instruments and with feedback from the SMEs were conducted (See Appendix C). All feedback modifications received from the SMEs and revisions were included.

During the interview process, names or particular statements which could identify the research participant were omitted or protected to ensure anonymity. All questioning aligned with the ethical standards and guidelines of the IRB and the People's Republic of China. Research participants were reminded in detail of anonymity. The research study received full approval and support from all directors and administrative staff in the department, and participants were encouraged to speak freely. Suppose any participant wished not to agree to or leave the research study at any time. Participants could do so without any consequences. All names were omitted from the research, and the data was located in password-encrypted software. Any third party will not share all data used. All research data was stored securely in a convenient location of the researcher for three years, as stated by OMB Circular A-110, after submitting the report to ensure record retention requirements for sponsors involved were thoroughly checked (Administrators and the Responsible Conduct of Research, n.d.). After three years, hard copy data will be shredded, and a secure paper destruction bin will be used for disposal (Administrators and the Responsible Conduct of Research, n.d.). Electronic data will be deleted from the password-encrypted external hard drive and crushed for security measures. The institution where the research was conducted was returned to its original state, with all research tools and data removed upon completion of the study (Administrators and the Responsible Conduct of Research, n.d.).

When the informed consent letter was delivered to the participant, all covered was explained simplistically yet thoroughly to ensure a complete understanding. Prior to signing,

time was taken for any questions by the participants. After explaining the guidelines, procedures, and participant safety, the participant signed the form and began the procedures.

### **Chapter Summary**

The qualitative action research study used a semi-structured interview protocol to locate and further understand communicative issues with international and Chinese teachers. After receiving the qualitative research data from participants, themes, unique perspectives, and other critical components uncovered were used in developing an action plan to facilitate the implementation of transformational leadership elements within the current paternalistic leadership style. All research participants' confidentiality and anonymity were thoroughly protected and followed the IRB's ethical procedures. Consent forms (See Appendix A) provided thorough descriptions of each participant's rights and safety, and ample time was utilized to ensure each participant understood the research procedures.

Chapter 4 examines the research study's results from the semi-structured interviews. The interviews' themes, new ideas, and issues were located from the qualitative interviews. Finally, each research question was individually analyzed and final themes were uncovered.

### **Chapter 4: Research Findings and Data Analysis Results**

The purpose of the qualitative study using action research was to explore teachers' knowledge, perceptions, and adaptability toward integrating elements of transformational leadership within a current paternalistic leadership style at a high school international department in Southern China. The problem was the uncertainty regarding the knowledge, application, or comfort level of Chinese staff members in implementing transformational leadership, as employees are accustomed to a hierarchical leadership approach, limiting collaborative and creative abilities. Employees are accustomed to a hierarchical leadership approach, limiting collaborative and creative abilities. The following research questions served as guidance throughout the research process to locate potential discoveries, themes, and additional vital information:

Research Question 1: What are the main issues between managers and subordinates within the organization's current leadership style?

Research Question 2: How can transformational leadership be effectively implemented within a paternalistic leadership style?

Research Question 3: What problems arise with Chinese staff members when implementing transformational leadership?

Research Question 4: How could overall efficiency and communication improve between Chinese and international staff members?

Ethical procedures involved with the data collection for the study are included in Chapter 4. The data analysis and results from the interviews were examined. Reliability and validity were conducted throughout the research process, to ensure credible, transferable, and dependable practices.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection for the qualitative action research were derived from semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews located themes, including perceptions, ideas, and other relevant information critical to the research study. The data acquired from the semi-structured interview, the framework of the research questions, and areas of transformational leadership were used to locate methods in which transformational leadership can be utilized within a paternalistic leadership style.

#### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

The qualitative interviews comprised 16 teachers (eight native Chinese teachers and eight international teachers) in the school's international department. Teachers were informed about the research study by a recruitment letter sent to all teachers in the international department (see Appendix D) via the school's email network, which the academic director granted permission to do. More than 16 responses were received, so participants were selected on a first-come, first-served basis. Each selected participant was given a letter of informed consent and explained the purpose of the research (see Appendix A), the consent form, and an opportunity to ask any questions. All participants signed the consent form two days after receiving it, and interviews were scheduled for the following week.

Each interview was conducted on campus in the international department's conference room, as permission was granted from the school's academic director (see Appendix B). Due to the Chinese Winter Holiday, participants were suggested to select interview times before January 6, 2023. Initially, participants were allowed to select a more convenient time. However, due to the short time frame, participants were influenced to suggest an interview time before the holiday vacation. All participants had no problems or concerns and chose to conduct the interviews on December 30-31. Each interview consisted of 12 questions (see

Appendix E). Interviews averaged around 30 minutes. The most extended interview was 52 minutes, and the shortest was under 15 minutes.

### **Data Analysis and Results**

A data analysis spiral, a multi-faceted method used for data organization and management, was used in the analysis process to locate emergent ideas, create, and explain themes occurring in the research, data classification, interpretations, and visual representations in the form of a coding system (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data analysis model used a step-by-step procedure to locate emergent words and phrases, coding and collapsing, and develop final themes within each research question. The procedure of the data analysis spiral included five steps:

1. The organization and management of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
2. Locating and memorizing emergent themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
3. Classifying the located codes into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
4. Assessing and developing interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
5. Presenting the data in a visualization (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The first step of the data analysis spiral involved the organization and management of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After all interviews, a data transcription program, Otter.ai, was used to transcribe the audio from the recording device to a word document. Additional formatting was conducted to separate the interviewer and the research participant. The interview transcript remained original and in its entirety.

The second step of the data analysis spiral was locating and memorizing emergent ideas that addressed the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All interview transcripts were uploaded to MAXQDA, a qualitative research software program for coding assistance. Each interview was read multiple times, and located issues, new ideas, and other information

related to the research questions were coded on the text for future reference. Emergent ideas were coded in the same color.

Classifying the located codes into themes was the next step in the data analysis spiral (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Each of the 12 interview questions was color-coded in the software by highlighting the participant's response and was labeled as the question for each title. Each color-coded interview question contained sub-labels of highlighted themes in each question. The theme received its own color and one-word description. Re-emerging themes were grouped together. After locating all themes, each code was analyzed regarding the frequency of appearance within all interviews, information addressing the research questions, and future effectiveness within the international department. The final themes located from the analysis process are the following: organizational achievement, multi-cultural integration, cultural adaptation, and collaborative improvement.

The fourth step in the data analysis spiral was assessing and developing interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants from both teacher groups responded similarly to transformational leadership issues based on cultural differences. Chinese teachers displayed difficulty being thorough in responses, as several explained needing more experience with transformational leadership. While both teacher groups expressed more collaborative activities, differences in work culture could present an issue as Chinese teachers expressed that individual work was a style most accustomed to Chinese work culture.

The final step in the data analysis spiral is presenting the data finding using a visualization (Creswell & Poth, 2018) (see Table 2). The table includes each research question, the emergent words and phrases, the coding and collapsing process, the final themes, and relevant findings quote.

**Table 1***The Data Analysis and Coding Process*

	Emergent Words/Phrases	Process of Coding and Collapsing	Final Theme	Relevant Quote
<p>Research Question 1:</p> <p>What are the main issues between managers and subordinates within the organization's current leadership style?</p>	<p>Workplace bias, more guidance needed, unfair work distribution, open communication, organizational leadership, employee achievement,</p> <p>problem-solver, empathy.</p>	<p>The emergent words/phrases were related to current issues with leadership and desired leadership traits. The end result is that eliminating the issues and incorporating the traits is an organizational achievement.</p>	<p>Organizational Achievement</p>	<p>"They know all the information, but sometimes they should listen to teachers' ideas because sometimes I ask many questions and good ideas, but they will answer none or one, but they won't explain me more about the details about the extension I want to ask or suggest."</p>
<p>Research Question 2:</p> <p>How can transformational leadership be effectively implemented within a paternalistic leadership style?</p>	<p>Time, Professional Development (PD), Not possible, acceptance, understanding its benefits, cultural differences, more collaborative activities, sufficient time.</p>	<p>Most responses involved ample time and understanding the differences between the two work cultures. The responses also included the methods listed with a collaborative effort between Chinese, international teacher groups, and leadership.</p>	<p>Multi-cultural Integration</p>	<p>"I would say the leader should be more open-minded and accept both cultures from Asian and from Western, while not just following or copying all the leadership styles in Asian countries; they should learn more leadership."</p>
<p>Research Question 3:</p> <p>What problems arise with Chinese staff members when implementing transformational leadership?</p>	<p>Leaders relinquishing power, Chinese work culture adaptation, Chinese traditional and cultural adaptation, no issues.</p>	<p>Chinese and international teachers agreed that Chinese leadership, business culture, and traditional culture would be the largest obstacle to overcome when implementing transformational leadership.</p>	<p>Cultural Adaptation.</p>	<p>"I see this like trying to train a lefty to write with their right hand while they're left. Imagine being 30 years old and left-handed, and then all of a sudden, you've been told that you have to start writing with your right hand."</p>
<p>Research Question 4:</p> <p>How could overall efficiency and communication improve between Chinese and international staff members?</p>	<p>Cultural immersion, language barrier, multi-cultural understanding, PD workshops, more teacher involvement.</p>	<p>Participants explained the issue is not with a multi-cultural staff. All teachers want more time to work with one another for professional and organizational achievement.</p>	<p>Collaborative Improvement</p>	<p>"So, I don't really think that there's a problem between Chinese teachers and foreign teachers, but I think that to get more collaborative stuff done, I think that there needs".</p>

**Research Question 1: What are the main issues between managers and subordinates within the organization's current leadership style?**

Themes from Chinese teachers related to workplace bias and receiving more workload than international teachers when interviewing participants regarding current issues between managers and subordinates. Both teacher groups mentioned additional themes

related to organizational leadership that needed to be conducted, including further guidance in achieving tasks, opportunities for communication with leaders, expectations for employee achievement, the introduction of problem-solving methods and strategies, and empathy towards teachers' daily responsibilities. Regarding improvement with the current leadership styles and achievement expectations, one international teacher stated, "It's important to also do follow-ups on applying what we need, so we can have a meeting saying that we need to do this. I would say we don't have those follow up to make sure that what we discuss, what we have told should be done, is actually done." Seven of the eight Chinese teachers expressed the need of leaders providing more support for individual and organizational success. One Chinese teacher stated, "I Hope that leaders can lead their own career development. In fact, today's leaders have it, because for individuals, in addition to their own independent development, the help of important others is also very important. They can pass on experience, provide method support, and provide spiritual guidance."

The themes identified for research question one mostly pertained to obstacles in achieving organizational goals. Whether the research participants described leadership being more interactive with teachers or teachers having more of a voice with current issues, all participants agreed that organizational achievement was an issue that needed to be further improved upon. The final theme derived from the located themes was an organizational achievement.

**Research Question 2: How can transformational leadership be effectively implemented within a paternalistic leadership style?**

Regarding methods for implementing transformational leadership, only some teachers believed transformational leadership elements would not be possible in a paternalistic leadership setting. One Chinese teacher explained, "Even the leaders say something like, you

can probably do the actions based on your personal preference, but they will just follow the leader's preference." Out of the 16 teachers interviewed, 12 teachers were more optimistic and suggested PD workshops or other collaborative activities, a thorough explanation and acceptance of transformational leadership, benefits for academic and organizational achievement, sufficient time, and integrating the cultural differences between Chinese and international work culture to achieve cohesive efficiency. Another Chinese teacher summarized the issue several teachers explained during the interviews, "I would say the leader should be more open-minded and accept both cultures from Asian and from Western, while not just follow or copy all the leadership style in Asian countries, they should learn more leadership." The themes identified in research question four expressed few concerns, but sufficient time in adapting the leadership style for Chinese teachers, due to the different concepts and methods transformational leadership possesses, is needed. Since the study is focused on integrating transformational leadership elements within a paternalistic leadership style, teachers from both cultural backgrounds working together for success is critical. The final theme for research question two is multi-cultural integration.

**Research Question 3: What problems arise with Chinese staff members when implementing transformational leadership?**

As transformational and paternalistic leadership are highly different styles, both teacher groups expressed a few problems that may occur when implementing transformational leadership elements. The emerging themes were related to Chinese work culture and traditional/cultural adaptation. Relating to the difference in work culture, one international teacher stated, "I see this like trying to train a lefty to write with their right hand while they're left. Imagine being 30 years old and left-handed, and then all of a sudden, you've been told that you have to start writing with your right hand." Four Chinese teachers

had similar responses as the international teacher's statement, but were open to the concept of implementing transformational leadership. Other problems identified by teachers included leaders willing to relinquish decision-making power, while only some teachers from both groups believed there would be no problems with the implementation process. Two Chinese teachers, however, were quite reluctant towards any use of transformational leadership. One teacher explicitly stated, "No transformational leadership. Just ask one leader to do everything. Just tell them what to do. That's okay."

The final theme derived from the emerging themes was cultural adaptation. International and Chinese teachers are aware of the difference in work culture as being an obstacle for integrating elements of transformational leadership. The emerging themes were related to elements of adaption in Chinese work and traditional culture to address the issues relating to Chinese teachers and transformational leadership.

**Research Question 4: How could overall efficiency and communication improve between Chinese and international staff members?**

Except for the language barrier and differences with Western slang terms or phrases, 14 of the 16 teachers welcomed opportunities for improving communication among Chinese and international staff members. According to one Chinese teacher, "I would probably organize more activities to kind of unite the teachers in my department. I just felt like the Chinese teachers don't really communicate with the foreign teachers very often. We need to create an environment for them to kind of communicate." Involving all teachers to communicate more during weekly meetings, conduct PD activities and workshops, and provide opportunities for both teacher groups to develop deeper multi-cultural understandings were emerging themes for improving communication and efficiency. A Chinese teacher stated, "I don't really think that there's a problem between Chinese teachers and foreign

teachers, but I think that to get more collaborative stuff done, I think that there needs to be more input from teachers to the leaders." As all themes were related to strategies and methods for creating improvement for organizational goals and multi-cultural communication, the final theme to address research question four is a collaborative improvement.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Ensuring reliability and validity before conducting a qualitative action research study was a critical component that must be included throughout the analysis. The most significant concern relating to reliability and validity was the level of honesty Chinese teachers would have throughout the interview process, as paternalistic leadership and cultural beliefs are not accustomed to allowing subordinates to speak openly and candidly towards or about superiors. Trustworthiness, transferability, and construct validity were three methods that served as guidelines throughout the analysis to ensure reliability and validity.

### **Trustworthiness**

Establishing trust and ensuring participants had complete familiarity with each area was understood so reliability could be maintained. Before starting each interview, a friendly conversation occurred with each participant. The conversations were informal and consisted of general topics. Conversations lasted around ten minutes. After the conversation, the interview guidelines were reviewed, the purpose of the interview was stated, and the assurance that all information was confidential. Suppose the participant did not want to answer specific questions; it was entirely the participant's choice. Once the participant approves, the interview will commence.

At times throughout the interview process, some participants would ask for reassurance that all information shared was anonymous before sharing truthful information. Research participants were reassured that all names would be redacted upon completion of

the data collection and elements from the interview that could potentially identify the participant would also be omitted. After the reassurance, participants would provide detailed information critical to issues needing to be addressed throughout the study. Some participants asked for further clarity relating to unclear questions. After thoroughly explaining, participants felt more at ease and shared their responses.

### **Transferability**

Throughout the interview process, Chinese and international teachers expressed concern regarding adopting transformational leadership elements in a paternalistic leadership environment due to the differences between Eastern and Western work cultures. However, collaboration was one area both teacher groups expressed as highly beneficial and critical for organizational and individual success. Transferability is a method to display findings from research in other contexts (Stahl & King, 2020). The PD workshop was a way for teachers of both work cultures to work collaboratively with leaders in a transformational setting successfully. Feedback from teachers after the workshop and the questionnaire displayed that the process could be more challenging and educational in presenting concepts that can be used in the classroom. The request for future PD workshops involving transformational leadership elements will occur within the institution monthly by request of the teachers.

### **Reflexivity**

The feedback questionnaires from the PD workshop served as an evaluation to effectively test measures. Since the questionnaire was an original research instrument, SMEs in transformational leadership and international education examined the research questions and research procedures. The SMEs gave feedback to achieve validity and be appropriate to administer.

### **Conclusion**

The data analysis involving the qualitative interviews uncovered several themes and was coded in developing four final themes: Organizational achievement, multi-cultural integration, cultural adaptation, and collaborative improvement. All information was critical in locating areas for transformational integration and departmental success. Each theme contained information provided by research participants to address each of the four research questions.

Each research participant was interviewed using the same questions. However, the contrast in responses were due to the difference in cultural backgrounds between Chinese and international teachers. While both backgrounds respect leadership and strive for organizational achievement, expressing concerns can be more reserved for Chinese staff members.

Transformational leadership is a relatively new concept in Chinese work culture. Six of the eight Chinese teachers were nervous and expressed concerns, yet willing to adapt the transformational leadership elements with the support and guidance from leaders to achieve the working concepts of transformational leadership. International teachers were more skeptical of Chinese teachers' integration due to the cultural differences. However, teacher from both cultural backgrounds and leadership are quite optimistic regarding future success of transformational leadership usage within the international department.

Findings, interpretations, conclusions, and limitations are discussed in chapter five. Recommendations for future studies and implementation are also examined. Finally, implications for leadership and a conclusion for critical points and new knowledge are summarized.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions**

The purpose of the qualitative study using action research was to explore teachers' knowledge, perceptions, and adaptability toward integrating elements of transformational leadership within a current paternalistic leadership style at a high school international department in Southern China. Research findings were uncovered from qualitative interviews with Chinese and international teachers from the international department. Four research questions were used as guidance in locating final themes for improving individual and departmental goals. The research questions were related to issues between managers and subordinates, effective methods for transformational leadership integration, concerns of transformational leadership for Chinese staff members, and methods for improved efficiency and communication between Chinese and international staff members. The final themes derived from each research question included Organizational achievement, multi-cultural integration, cultural adaptation, and collaborative improvement.

Further discussion and conclusions are examined in the final chapter of the research study. An in-depth analysis of findings, interpretations, and limitations is conducted to extend transformational leadership within a paternalistic leadership style. Recommendations for further research and implications for leadership are also explored. Finally, conclusions relating to critical findings, new knowledge, and crucial outcomes from the study will be summarized.

### **Findings, Interpretations, and Conclusions**

McClelland's (1965) need theory, Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, and Burns' (1978) transformational leadership theory were used in the study to locate ways to increase motivation and address organizational and individual needs. During the interviews, participants located three significant motivations for student success, money and personal

growth. Chi-Ho (2015) explained that a sense of belonging was a top priority in Chinese workplace motivation, while autonomy and individual independence pertain to Western job motivation.

In the literature review from chapter two, motivational theories were used to research components of Chinese culture and society, business practices, leadership styles, and the use of transformational leadership in Chinese work culture. The most significant difference between the two work cultures pertains to Chinese leadership utilizing a paternalistic approach. Paternalistic leadership is a hierarchical leadership style containing the elements of morality, benevolence, and authoritarianism to maintain organizational productivity and control over subordinates (Lau et al., 2020). Although benevolence develops relationships between leaders and subordinates (Qian & Walker, 2021), authoritarian elements can limit teamwork, employee satisfaction, and speaking freely (Lau et al.). The interviews from Chinese teachers confirmed teachers' reluctance in speaking openly due to being accustomed to an authoritarian leadership background. Chinese teachers did show reluctance at the start of the interview process and expressed how shared decision-making were new concepts in Chinese work culture. Mian Zi, or having dignity, as explained by Hong and Yu (2018) was a potential obstacle prior to the interview as Chinese citizens are afraid of taking risks and experiencing shame or personal failure. The research disconfirmed Mian Zi as being an obstacle for achieving results for the study due to anonymity being secured during the interview process.

Traditional Chinese culture focuses on Confucian ethical practices, which can limit employees from speaking freely to leaders based on respect and fear of losing face (Atherton, 2020). A Chinese teacher explained reluctance in speaking freely from a previous experience, as the teacher was heavily criticized by a former superior for speaking out of their role. The

interviews during the research study from Chinese and international teachers confirmed the differences between cultures, and difficulties adapting to a leadership style where employees can speak more openly could present several obstacles. Although the issue was addressed in the interviews, Chinese and international teachers suggested using minimal transformational leadership integration as a scaffold approach and providing encouragement and patience throughout the process.

Aside from paternalistic leadership, charismatic leadership is another form used in China that displays a positive correlation between employees and leadership, utilizing empowerment of employees, empathy, and impartiality (Zhang et al., 2022). Characteristics of charismatic leadership are similar to transformational leadership. From the interviews, two Chinese teachers were still reluctant towards a collaborative approach, stating that the teacher's main priority is to teach, and leaders are to lead. The remaining teachers high enthusiasm towards future PD workshops, collaborative practices during weekly meetings, and team building activities to strengthen individual well-being and a sense of belonging for all teachers and staff members of the international department. The elements of collaborative leadership in Chinese culture can prove successful, yet the research showed reluctance toward Chinese teachers accustomed to a paternalistic leadership style.

Regarding transformational leadership in China, Liu (2018) explained the style as a relatively new concept and is currently rising in Chinese organizations throughout China. While several studies produced positive results, including reducing teacher burnout and increasing teacher meaningfulness, self-determination, and competence (Tsang et al., 2022), a study by Liu (2021) unveiled negative coordination between transformational leadership and teacher efficacy as teachers were unable to take self-direction. The concerns about transformational leadership correlate with the statements from the interviews regarding

Chinese teachers being able to adapt to a new leadership involving all staff members working towards one goal. Since teachers have the full approval and encouragement from leaders regarding transformational leadership integration, leaders, Chinese, and international teachers can work efficiently and cooperatively in a stress-free environment to discuss and formulate new strategies to improve ongoing issues within the international department. The research study extended on the current literature conducted by Liu, as Chinese teachers can take direction. Feedback from five of the eight Chinese teachers felt confident in self-directed leadership if leadership is supportive and transformational leadership elements are consistently practiced through monthly workshops and bi-weekly meetings.

Regarding the teacher motivations of student success, money, and personal growth, transformational leaders influence trust among employees by focusing on motives and needs and providing support when needed for followers (Li, 2022). Chan and Ma (2018) explained the importance of monetary benefits and bonuses for encouraging successful transformational leadership. While 12 of the 16 teachers interviewed expressed money is the secondary motivator, 14 of the 16 teachers explained the importance of student success as the primary motivation. Out of the 16 teachers' interviews, 13 expressed interest in conducting ongoing meetings and evaluation to meet set goals by teachers, which can promote personal growth and potentially more significant opportunities.

The interpretations and inferences involved statements made by participants during the interviews. Chinese and international backgrounds equally expressed concerns about integrating transformational leadership within a paternal leadership style based on traditional Chinese culture and business. However, Chinese teachers felt more optimistic throughout the interview process and learned about the role leadership will take in providing motivation and

encouragement when implementing transformational leadership elements within the international department.

The study concluded that transformational leadership elements could be implemented within a paternalistic leadership style at an international high school department in China using minimal integration, extensive explanation to teachers of the importance of transformational leadership with detailed procedures, and support and encouragement from leaders throughout the process. Organizational achievement, multicultural integration, cultural adaptation, and collaborative improvement, guided expectations for successful transformational implementation were the foundational themes located by participants in the interviews. The themes will provide foundational guidance towards implementing transformational leadership elements within a multi-cultural working environment.

### **Limitations**

The research study was limited to 16 international and Chinese teachers in a Southern Chinese international high school department. The primary limitation was that Chinese teachers provided more subjective responses regarding transformational leadership based on Chinese culture and business practices that contrast with a transformational leadership style. In addition, international teachers expressed similar concerns regarding Chinese teachers during the interview process and not sharing true beliefs, viewpoints, and experiences based on cultural and business practices in being reserved with responses. Overall, most teachers from Chinese and international backgrounds provided responses containing thorough, rich, and original information from personal experiences. The use of reflexivity, trustworthiness, and transferability was used during the interview and workshop process to ensure validity and reliability were established while facilitating for potentially occurring limitations.

Transformational leadership integration conducted in the workshop was in the primary stage to determine its effectiveness. If further stages contained higher levels of intricacy, the results might not be as successful as the implantation used in the workshop. In addition, Chinese and international teachers stated from the qualitative interviews that no previous issues regarding communication among staff members, aside from the language barrier, were prevalent. Since the topic was related to organizational improvement, teachers and leaders could freely express current concerns and methods towards possible solutions, as all participants were working towards the same goal. The atmosphere before the research study displayed no issues among the multicultural staff, as an adequate level of trustworthiness was present.

Although the transferability of the implementation process was successful in the research study, the same results may differ from other organizations. Liu (2021) described transformational leadership as unsuccessful in previous studies due to leaders needing to develop skills in teacher professionalism and engaging in closer contact. The interviews conducted in the study highlighted minimal pressure for teachers when communicating with leaders. The support of leadership for transformational leadership is integral for success in China, as leaders utilizing a strictly paternalistic approach, primarily focused more on the authoritarian elements of paternalistic leadership, will hinder the progress of transformational leadership implementation and teachers' confidence in speaking freely to leaders.

Construct validity occurred during the workshop experience and the feedback received at its conclusion. As stated before, the results could vary in other organizations. The research study contained 16 participants who openly communicated with peers and leaders. The results could differ with a larger population or 16 participants needing more open communication with staff members. Additionally, Chinese staff members with a strictly

paternalistic leadership style may need help adapting or may be unwilling to adapt based on its complexity in being a far different leadership style the staff members may be accustomed to using.

### **Recommendations**

On a global scale, implementing transformational leadership can produce motivational traits for teachers in China to become more self-valued by presenting concerns or solutions towards issues of which leaders may need to be made aware of methods to increase efficiency, as demonstrated by the workshop activity. Chinese leaders may feel reluctant to utilize transformational leadership, as the feeling of altering the current paternalistic leadership style may be minimalized. Stating transformational leadership is not eliminating paternalistic leadership, but utilizing Eastern and Western leadership styles in a multicultural staff is critical.

After the interviews, research participants requested workshops and other collaborative and team building activities to be conducted in the future. While the request came from the participants, workshops should be conducted, as stated from the interviews regarding successful transformational leadership within the department in needing to be an ongoing practice. Transformational leadership differs from the style Chinese staff members are accustomed to following. If ongoing workshops and transformational leadership are not utilized, the elements could be difficult to grasp after a single activity and forgotten by staff members.

Liang et al. (2020) described current reforms regarding the Chinese educational system, encouraging teachers to conduct research for professional and organizational growth by incorporating more staff meetings, attending professional development workshops, and analyzing past data for areas of improvement. The use of transformational leadership

elements within international educational departments in China should facilitate a foundation for staff members to achieve the objectives contained in the new reform. Regarding 21st-century educational trends of education policies in China, Li (2017) describes the focus on lifelong learning, improving quality education, democratic decision-making, and establishing modern school systems. Transformational leadership encourages shared-decision making among staff members for organizational improvement and could provide support in facilitating the expectations regarding the current education policies in China.

The research study results can be used as guidance for international departments in China. The importance of implementing transformational leadership elements at international departments in China is to prepare students and teachers to become more global-minded since most students will continue higher educational endeavors abroad, staff members communicate and implement international standards, and multicultural integration occurs daily between Chinese and international staff members. However, additional adaptations or modifications may need to occur within each organization deciding to implement transformational leadership elements to achieve desired organizational success.

### **Implications for Leadership**

Integrating transformational leadership elements within a paternalistic leadership style relies on leaders encouraging and motivating teachers to develop shared decision-making capabilities and established self-value within the organization. Since paternalistic leadership contains authoritarian elements in a hierarchical approach, employees are often reluctant to speak openly in addressing issues or concerns based on societal practices in Chinese culture. The research study displayed success in a significant part due to leadership understanding the purpose for integrating transformational leadership, as leaders understand the critical element of providing encouragement and motivation towards teachers throughout the transformational

leadership integration process. Chinese leaders adapting towards transformational leadership practices by not involving the hierarchical and authoritative aspect of paternalistic leadership style can promote Chinese and international teachers to speak freely and not be concerned about repercussions for any statements made. Integrating leadership practices from Eastern and Western cultures in a multicultural working environment can create a solid foundation for leaders to become more effective by empowering employees and producing efficient outcomes.

Leadership is critical in all areas to ensure authentic transformational leadership can occur. Tan et al. (2021) described the increase in employee innovation from transformational leaders in promoting new practices, values, and norms that can promote increased levels of job performance. The elements possessed by transformational leaders can impact teachers to further empower students, peers, and community members with inspiration, idealized influence, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Tan et al., 2021).

The importance of utilizing transformational leadership within a paternalistic leadership style can have a beneficial impact on stakeholders. Atherton (2020) explained Western business practices within Chinese organizations while aligning cultural philosophies to maintain order and gain a competitive edge in the ever-competing marketplace. Utilizing Eastern and Western leadership practices within the international department can promote global citizenship, a critical element when parents decide on an international educational endeavor for future enrollment.

### **Conclusions**

In utilizing Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory for conscious decision-making, McClelland's (1965) motivation theory for driving motivators in teachers, and Burns' (1978) transformational leadership theory for inspiring leaders and followers to empower one

another, critical findings in the research study included student success, money, and personal growth. Although teachers from Chinese and international backgrounds expressed concerns during the interviews regarding the intricacies of implementing transformational leadership elements based on Chinese culture and business practices, the shared vision, collaborative practices, and teamwork atmosphere with leaders working aside teachers provided more confidence and optimism for Chinese and international teachers.

Before the study, previous studies regarding Chinese organizations utilizing transformational leadership contained mixed results as the leadership style is relatively new within Chinese work culture. The study unveiled that if Chinese teachers are open-minded and opportunistic towards a self-directed learning style, transformational leadership can be integrated with paternalistic leadership. Leadership is critical for implementing transformational leadership, as trust in leadership is at the forefront in Chinese work culture. Participation and collaboration encouraged by leaders is critical for teachers to display more positive outcomes. Aside from teachers understanding the importance of transformational leadership, leaders need to understand its positive impact on an international organization clearly and its benefits for individual growth and employee sense of value within the department.

International education is a vital part of Chinese education and its economy. Promoting a leadership style and incorporating Eastern and Western practices can be highly beneficial in achieving a competitive edge in the ever-emerging international education field. Equally important, the collaborative and self-motivational factors derived from transformational leadership in staff members can be instilled in students to develop a well-rounded sense of global citizenship, a critical element needed to succeed abroad in future higher educational endeavors.

Since transformational leadership is relatively new in China and understanding the differences in culture and business among Chinese staff members, a scaffold approach is recommended to provide a general understanding and outcomes. The study displayed positive outcomes due to each teacher and leader's thorough understanding and ensuring that all members work towards a common goal. Leaders still possess the leadership role but should provide more motivation and encouragement instead of an authoritarian approach contained in paternalistic leadership regarding transformational-based activities. While results may differ within each organization, consistent, ongoing transformational practices must be conducted to ensure that proper elements of transformational leadership are appropriately conducted. The result of the research study contained Chinese and international students requesting team-based and collaborative activities in the future as teachers and leaders located the self and organizational value for future transformational leadership integration within a paternalistic leadership style.

### References

- Administrators and the Responsible Conduct of Research. (n.d.). Retention of data.  
[https://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/rcradmin/topics/data/tutorial\\_11.shtml](https://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/rcradmin/topics/data/tutorial_11.shtml)
- Atherton, A. (2020). Does Confucian management exist in Chinese companies? An examination of the intersection between cultural influence and business practice in China. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 26(1), 21–31.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13602381.2018.1527005>
- Barnham, C. (2015). Quantitative and qualitative research: Perceptual foundations. *International Journal of Market Research*, 57(6), 837-854.  
<https://doi.org/10.2501/ijmr-2015-070>
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Caelli, K., Ray, L., & Mill, J. (2003). 'Clear as mud': Toward greater clarity in generic qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(2), 1-13.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690300200201>
- Chang, B. (2021). Incorporating Eastern and Western learning perspectives into a Western learning environment. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education*, 10(1), 16–40. <https://www.ojed.org/index.php/jise/article/view/2695>
- Chan, Y. K., & Ma, C. F. H. (2018). The perceived effective motivation methods in China's creative industries: The managerial perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Advanced Business and Social Studies*, 4(1), 363-370. <https://doi.org/10.25275/apjabssv4i1ss11>
- Chen, C., Ding, X., & Li, J. (2021). Transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction: The mediating role of employee relations climate and the moderating role of subordinate gender. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(1), 233-247. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19010233>

- Chen, X. (2019). Harmonizing ecological sustainability and higher education development: Wisdom from Chinese ancient education philosophy. *Educational Philosophy & Theory*, 51(11), 1080–1090. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2018.1501677>
- Chi-Ho, C. (2015). An exploration of the relationships between job motivation, collective benefit, target awareness, and organizational citizenship behavior in Chinese culture. *Comprehensive Psychology*, 4, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.2466/01.cp.4.14>
- Chu, Z., Lai, F., & Wang, L. (2020). Leveraging interfirm relationships in China: Western relational governance or guanxi? Domestic versus foreign firms. *Journal of International Marketing*, 28(4), 58–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069031X20963672>
- Cobanoglu, N. (2021). The relationship between the transformational leadership, the cultural intelligence of teachers and the skills of principals' diversity management. *European Journal of Educational Management*, 4(1), 35–49. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eujem.4.1.35>
- Coker, D. C. (2022). A thematic analysis of the structure of delimitations in the dissertation. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 17, 141–159. <https://doi.org/10.28945/4939>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (Fourth edition.). SAGE.
- Farh, J.-L., & Cheng, B.-S. (2000). A cultural analysis of paternalistic leadership in Chinese organizations. *Management and Organizations in the Chinese Context*, 84-127. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230511590\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230511590_5)
- Fox, B., & Bourgeois, J. (2022). Cross-culturalism and the application of leadership education in mainland China. *The Journal of Leadership Education*, 21(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.12806/v21/i1/r9>

- Golafshani, N. (2015). Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-606. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2003.1870>
- Hamada, H. (2019). Action Research to Enhance Quality Teaching. *Arab World English Journal* (1), 4-12. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/chief1.1>
- He, M. (2022). Evaluation and stratification for Chinese international education quality with deep learning model. *Computational and Mathematical Methods in Medicine*, 2022, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/9627116>
- Hong, Q., & Yu, G. (2018). The face view of China and foreign countries under cross-cultural communication. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, 8(10), 1324–1328. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0810.10>
- Hui, Y. (2022). The role of Confucian-transformational leadership in shaping and influencing Chinese MNEs. *Scientific Programming*, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/5839223>
- Jiang, D., & Chen, Z. (2021). Innovative enterprises development and employees' knowledge sharing behavior in China: The role of leadership style. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.747873>
- Kaowiwattanakul, S. (2020). Development of EFL student global mindedness through transformative learning in the literature classroom at a Thai university. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 18(4), 293–309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1541344620935417>
- Koski, J. E., Xie, H., & Olson, I. R. (2015). Understanding social hierarchies: The neural and psychological foundations of status perception. *Social Neuroscience*, 10(5), 527–550. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17470919.2015.1013223>

- Kovach, M. (2018). A review of classical motivation theories: Understanding the value of locus of control in higher education. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education*, 7(1), 34–53. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jise.v7i1.1059>
- Lau, W. K., Li, Z., & Okpara, J. (2020). An examination of three-way interactions of paternalistic leadership in China. *Asia Pacific Business Review*, 26(1), 32–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602381.2019.1674031>
- Layaman, L., Harahap, P., Djastuti, I., Jaelani, A., & Djuwita, D. (2021). The mediating effect of proactive knowledge sharing among transformational leadership, cohesion, and learning goal orientation on employee performance. *Business: Theory & Practice*, 22(2), 470–481. <https://doi.org/10.3846/btp.2021.13365>
- Lee, H.-W. (2019). Moderators of the motivational effects of performance management: A comprehensive exploration based on expectancy theory. *Public Personnel Management*, 48(1), 27–55. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026018783003>
- Liang, W., Lu, L., & Wang, H. (2020). The history, features, and prospects of the Chinese style teaching research system. *Chinese Education & Society*, 53(5/6), 255–273. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10611932.2021.1873700>
- Li, J. (2017). Educational policy development in China for the 21st century: Rationality and challenges in a globalizing age. *Chinese Education & Society*, 50(3), 133–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10611932.2017.1330992>
- Li, J., Huang, M., Hedayati, M. A., Wang, Y., & Yang, X. (2020). Development and validation of work ethic instrument to measure Chinese people's work-related values and attitudes. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 31(1), 49–73. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.21374>

- Lin, C.-H. V., & Sun, J.-M. J. (2018). Chinese employees' leadership preferences and the relationship with power distance orientation and core self-evaluation. *Frontiers of Business Research in China*, 12(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s11782-018-0027-9>
- Liu, P. (2018). Transformational leadership research in China (2005-2015). *Chinese Education & Society*, 51(5), 372–409. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10611932.2018.1510690>
- Liu, P. (2021). The relationship between teacher leadership and collective teacher efficacy in Chinese upper secondary schools. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 35(2), 394–407. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-07-2020-0361>
- Li, Y. (2022). A review of empirical research on transformational school leadership in China (2010-2019). *ECNU Review of Education*, 5(1), 156–184. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2096531120942242>
- Lyu, X. (2020). Work engagement in the context of Confucian culture: A case of Chinese civil servants. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.573146>
- Mbindyo, M., O'Connor, R. J., & Nandedkar, A. (2021). Linking transformational leadership theory to the practice of academic advising - A conceptual paper. *Journal of Higher Education Theory & Practice*, 21(12), 172–182. <https://doi.org/10.33423/jhetp.v21i12.4710>
- McClelland, D. C. (1965). Toward a theory of motive acquisition. *American Psychologist*, 20(5), 321–333. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0022225>

- Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 9–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091>
- Murari, K., & Mukherjee, U. (2021). Role of authentic transformational leadership for managerial excellence and sustainability. *Ilkogretim Online*, 20(4), 2592–2605. <https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2021.04.297>
- Park, S., Han, S. J., Hwang, S. J., & Park, C. K. (2019). Comparison of leadership styles in Confucian Asian countries. *Human Resource Development International*, 22(1), 91–100. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13678868.2018.1425587>
- Parmer, L. L. (2022). Student self-efficacy, student self-esteem, and the transformational leadership teaching style. *Journal of Higher Education Theory & Practice*, 22(11), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.33423/jhetp.v22i11.5406>
- Patton, M. Q., Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1983). Effective evaluation: Improving the usefulness of evaluation results through responsive and naturalistic approaches. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 54(3), 339–362. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1981810>
- Peng, L. (2019). Chinese IR Sino-centrism tradition and its influence on the Chinese school movement. *Pacific Review*, 32(2), 150–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2018.1461681>
- Poodry, C. A., & Asai, D. J. (2018). Questioning assumptions. *CBE Life Sciences Education*, 17(3), es7, 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.18-02-0024>
- Qian, H., & Walker, A. (2021). Building emotional principal–teacher relationships in Chinese schools: Reflecting on paternalistic leadership. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher (Springer Science & Business Media B.V.)*, 30(4), 327–338. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-021-00563-z>

- Rabionet, S. E. (2011). How I learned to design and conduct semi-structured interviews: An ongoing and continuous journey. *Qualitative Report, 16*(2), 563–566.  
<https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2009.2850>
- Reinharth, L., & Wahba, M. A. (1975). Expectancy theory as a predictor of work motivation, effort expenditure, and job performance. *Academy of Management Journal, 18*(3), 520–537. <https://doi.org/10.2307/255682>
- Rybnicek, R., Bergner, S., & Gutschelhofer, A. (2019). How individual needs influence motivation effects: a neuroscientific study on McClelland's need theory. *Review of Managerial Science, 13*(2), 443-482. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11846-017-0252-1>
- Sanjari, M., Bahramnezhad, F., Khoshnava Fomani, F., Shoghi, M., & Ali Cheraghi, M. (2014). Ethical challenges of researchers in qualitative studies: the necessity to develop a specific guideline. *Journal of Medical Ethics & History of Medicine, 7*(14), 1–6. <https://doaj.org/article/def7124fdcea400fa1b2eed33bf048e7>
- Schenck, A., & Waddey, M. (2017). Examining the impact of Confucian values on leadership preferences. *Journal of Organizational and Educational Leadership, 3*(1), 1-26.  
<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1161986.pdf>
- Sheng, X. (2019). Confucian home education in China. *Educational Review, 71*(6), 712–729.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2018.1471665>
- Shi, X., Yu, Z., & Zheng, X. (2020). Exploring the relationship between paternalistic leadership, teacher commitment, and job satisfaction in Chinese schools. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01481>
- Stahl, N. A., & King, J. R. (2020). Expanding approaches for research: Understanding and using trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Developmental Education, 44*(1), 26–28. <https://doi.org/10.2307/45381095>

Tan, A. B. C., Van Dun, D. H., & Wilderom, C. P. M. (2021). Innovative work behavior in Singapore evoked by transformational leaders through innovation support and readiness. *Creativity & Innovation Management*, 30(4), 697–712.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/caim.12462>

The Belmont Report: ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research. (2003). *Manual for Research Ethics Committees*, 126-132.

<https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511550089.028>

Theofanidis, D., & Fountouki, A. (2018). Limitations and delimitations in the research process. *Perioperative Nursing*, 7(3), 155–163.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2552022>

Tourigny, L., Han, J., Baba, V. V., & Pan, P. (2019). Ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility in China: A multilevel study of their effects on trust and organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 158(2), 427–440.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/45181047>

Tsang, K. K., Du, Y., & Teng, Y. (2022). Transformational leadership, teacher burnout, and psychological empowerment: A mediation analysis. *Social Behavior & Personality: An International Journal*, 50(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.11041>

Tse, H. H. M., To, M. L., & Chiu, W. C. K. (2018). When and why does transformational leadership influence employee creativity? The roles of personal control and creative personality. *Human Resource Management*, 57(1), 145–157.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.21855>

Ulusemre, T., & Fang, X. (2022). How do expatriate managers draw the boundaries of moral free space in the case of guanxi? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 176(2), 311–324.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04720-0>

- Vroom, V. (1964). *Work and motivation*. Wiley and Sons, New York.
- Wang, A.-C., Chiang, J., Chou, W.-J., & Cheng, B.-S. (2017). One definition, different manifestations: Investigating ethical leadership in the Chinese context. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 34(3), 505–535. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-016-9495-7>
- Wong, C., & Wong, K. (2005). Expectations and practice in social citizenship: some insights from an attitude survey in a Chinese society. *Social Policy & Administration*, 39(1), 19–34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9515.2005.00422.x>
- Worku, M. Y., Getahun, D. A., & Agonafir, A. M. (2022). Improving teachers' engagement in action research: A baseline study in primary schools of Bahir Dar City. *Systemic Practice & Action Research*, 35(5), 635–653. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11213-021-09586-5>
- Xu, J., Xie, B., & Tang, B. (2020). Guanxi HRM practice and employees' occupational well-being in China: a multi-level psychological process. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(7), 2403, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17072403>
- Yadav, D. (2022). Criteria for good qualitative research: A comprehensive review. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher (Springer Science & Business Media B.V.)*, 31(6), 679–689. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-021-00619-0>
- Zhang, H., & Cao, W. (2021). How can the silence be broken? Caring ethical climate and employee silence. *Social Behavior and Personality: an international journal*, 49(2), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.9970>
- Zhang, J., Huang, Q., & Xu, J. (2022). The relationships among transformational leadership, professional learning communities and teachers' job satisfaction in China: What do

the principals think? *Sustainability*, 14(4), 2362, 1-17.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/su14042362>

Zhang, M., Wang, F., Weng, H., Zhu, T., & Liu, H. (2021). Transformational leadership and perceived overqualification: A career development perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.597821>

Zhang, Y., Huai, M., & Xie, Y. (2015). Paternalistic leadership and employee voice in China: A dual process model. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26(1), 25–36.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2014.01.002>

Zhao, K. (2020). Made in contemporary China: Exploring the national identity of Chinese international undergraduate students in the US. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(12), 2451–2463. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1615046>

Zhou, J. (2021). Intention and objective of Chinese foreign policy: A perspective of Chinese culture and history. *Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations: An International Journal*, 7(3), 1191–1226.

<https://doaj.org/article/61a900b46e234989b70f0bd5979316fb>

Zhu, C., & Caliskan, A. (2021). Educational leadership in Chinese higher education. *Chinese Education & Society*, 54(5/6), 161–170.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/10611932.2021.1990616>

## Appendix A

### Letter of Consent

**Prospective Research Participant:** Read the consent form carefully and ask as many questions as possible before deciding whether you want to participate in this research study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research.

预期研究参与者：在决定是否参加本研究之前，请仔细阅读本同意书并提出尽可能多的问题。您可以在参与本研究之前、期间或之后的任何时间自由提问。

### Project Information

**Project Title: Qualitative Action Research: Integrating Transformational Leadership within a Traditional Chinese International Department**

项目名称：定性行动研究：将变革型领导融入中国传统组织

**Researcher: Derek Anderson**

**Organization: The American College of Education**

**Email:** derek.anderson4003@my.ace.edu   **Telephone:** 199-0227-2144

### Date of IRB Approval:

Please note the research study has been approved by the American College of Education Institutional Review Board. The IRB approved this study on \_\_\_\_\_ (insert date on ACE IRB approval letter). A copy of the approval letter will be provided upon request.

请注意，这项研究已获得美国教育学院机构审查委员会的批准。IRB 于 \_\_\_\_\_ 批准了这项研究（在 ACE IRB 批准信中插入日期）。将根据要求提供批准信的副本。

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Julius Wynn

E-mail: Julius.Wynn@ace.edu

### Introduction

I am Derek Anderson, a doctoral candidate at the American College of Education. I am doing research under the guidance and supervision of my Chair, Dr. Julius Wynn. I will give you some information about the project and invite you to be part of this research. Before you decide, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about the research. If you have questions, ask me to stop as we go through the information, and I will explain. If you have questions later, feel free to ask me then.

我是 Derek Anderson，是美国教育学院的博士生。我正在在我的主席 Julius Wynn 博士的指导和监督下进行研究。我将为您提供有关该项目的一些信息，并邀请您参与这项研究。在您做出决定之前，您可以与任何您对这项研究感到满意的人交谈。如果您有任何疑问，请在我们浏览信息时让我停下来，我会解释。如果您以后有问题，请随时问我。

### **Purpose of the Research**

The proposed qualitative study will use action research to explore teachers' knowledge from an international high school to properly implement elements of transformational leadership within a paternalistic leadership style. You are being asked to participate in a research study that will assist with providing valuable input to address current interdepartmental collaborative and communicative issues. This qualitative study provides the researcher with valuable input to enhance the best communicative and collaborative practices.

拟议的定性研究的目的是使用行动研究来探索国际高中教师的知识，以在家长式领导风格中正确实施变革型领导的要素。您被要求参加一项研究，该研究将有助于提供有价值的意见，以解决当前的部门间协作和交流问题。进行这项定性研究为研究人员提供了宝贵的意见，可以加强最佳的交流和协作实践。

### **Research Design and Procedures**

The study will use a qualitative methodology and an action research design. The study will comprise 16 participants who will participate in the international department. The study will involve a semi-structured interview conducted at the site most convenient for participants. After the interview, a debrief session will occur (OPTIONAL).

该研究将使用定性方法和行动研究设计。该研究将由 16 名参与者组成，他们将参加国际部。该研究将涉及在最方便参与者的现场进行的半结构化访谈。面试结束后，将举行一次汇报会（可选）。

### **Participant Selection**

You are invited to participate in this research because of your experience as an international teacher who can contribute much to the qualitative input, which meets the criteria for this study—participant selection criteria: International department member.

您被邀请参加这项研究是因为您作为一名国际教师的经验可以为定性输入做出很大贡献，这符合本研究的标准。参与者选择标准：国际部成员。

### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate. If you choose not to participate, there will be no punitive repercussions.

您参与这项研究完全是自愿的。是否参加是你的选择。如果您选择不参加，将不会受到惩罚。

**Right to Refuse or Withdraw**

Participation is voluntary. If you wish to end your participation in the research study, you may send me an e-mail explaining that you are opting out of the study. There will be no repercussions for leaving the study.

参与是自愿的。您可以随时向我发送一封电子邮件，说明您选择退出该研究。离开研究室不会有任何影响。

**Procedures**

We are inviting you to participate in this research study. If you agree, you will be asked to answer questions related to current strengths, issues, and areas for improvement related to leadership, co-workers, and other areas in which you currently see an issue.

我们诚邀您参与这项研究。如果您同意，您将被要求回答一系列与当前优势、问题和需要改进的领域相关的问题，这些问题与领导力、同事以及您当前认为存在问题的其他领域有关。

**Duration**

The interview portion of the research study will require approximately 30 minutes. If you are chosen to be a participant, the time allotted for you will be selected in the international department's conference room. Before an interview, you will be asked to provide permission to have the interview recorded to have accurate transcripts for data. A follow-up debriefing session will take \_\_\_\_ (OPTIONAL).

调查研究的访谈部分大约需要 30 分钟才能完成。如果您被选为参与者，分配给您的时间将在参与者方便的地点和时间选择。在面谈之前，为了获得准确的数据记录，您将被要求提供记录面谈的许可。后续汇报会需要\_\_\_\_（可选）。

**Risks**

The researcher will ask you to share personal and confidential information, and you may feel uncomfortable discussing some topics. You do not have to answer any questions or participate in the discussion if you do not wish to do so. You do not have to give any reason for not responding to any question.

研究人员会要求您分享个人和机密信息，您可能会因为谈论某些话题而感到不舒服。如果您不想这样做，您不必回答任何问题或参与讨论。您不必给出不回答任何问题的任何理由。

**Benefits**

While there will be no direct financial benefit to you, your participation will help us learn more about improvement within the international department. The potential benefits of this study will aid the global-minded preparation for students and organizational growth among all teachers and staff members.

虽然不会给您带来直接的经济利益，但您的参与可能会帮助我们更多地了解国际部门的改进情况。这项研究的潜在好处将有助于为学生和所有教师和工作人员的组织发展做好全球化的准备。

### **Confidentiality**

I will not share information about you or anything you say with anyone outside the researcher. During the defense of the doctoral dissertation, the data collected will be presented to the dissertation committee. The data collected will be kept in a locked file cabinet or encrypted computer file. All interview data (audio recordings and typed transcripts) will be stored in a password-encrypted folder on a personal external hard drive for three years, to which the researcher only has access. After three years, hard copy data will be shredded, and the files on the external hard drive will be deleted and destroyed. During the research process, any or all names which may identify anyone on the data will be removed. Participants will be debriefed after the interview to ensure all data will remain secure and anonymity will remain constant throughout the research process, per the informed consent agreement. Each participant will receive an e-mail of the interview transcript for member checking after the data has been collected and transcribed. Participants will examine the transcript for accuracy and validity. Any information about you will be coded and will not have a direct correlation, directly identifying you as the participant. Only I will know what your number is, and I will secure your information on a password-protected external hard drive.

我不会与研究人员以外的任何人分享关于您的信息或您所说的任何事情。在博士论文答辩期间，收集的数据将提交给论文委员会。收集到的数据将保存在上锁的文件柜或加密的计算机文件中。所有访谈数据（录音和打字记录）将在个人外部硬盘驱动器上的密码加密文件夹中存储三年，只有研究人员可以访问。三年后，硬拷贝数据将被粉碎，外置硬盘上的文件将被删除和销毁。在研究过程中，任何或所有可能识别数据中任何人的名字都将被删除。根据知情同意协议，参与者将在采访后接受汇报，以确保所有数据将保持安全并且在整个研究过程中保持匿名。在数据收集和转录后，每个参

与者都会收到一封采访记录的电子邮件，供会员检查。参与者将检查成绩单的准确性和有效性。关于您的任何信息都将被编码，不会有直接关联，直接将您识别为参与者。只有我知道您的电话号码，并且我会将您的信息保存在受密码保护的外部硬盘驱动器上。

### **Sharing the Results**

At the end of the research study, the results will be available for each participant. It is anticipated to publish the results so other interested people may learn from the research.

在研究结束时，每个参与者都可以获得结果。预计将公布结果，以便其他感兴趣的人可以从研究中学习。

### **Questions About the Study**

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact Derek Anderson. This research plan has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the American College of Education. This committee's role is to protect research participants from harm. If you wish to ask questions about this group, e-mail [IRB@ace.edu](mailto:IRB@ace.edu).

如果您有任何问题，您可以现在或稍后提出。如果您想稍后提出问题，您可以联系 Derek Anderson。本研究计划已经美国教育学院机构审查委员会审核通过。这是一个委员会，其职责是确保研究参与者免受伤害。如果您想向该小组提问，请发送电子邮件至 [IRB@ace.edu](mailto:IRB@ace.edu)。

### **Certificate of Consent**

I have read the information about this study, or it has been read to me. I acknowledge why I have been asked to be a participant in the research study. I have been provided the opportunity to ask questions about the study, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study.

我已经阅读了有关这项研究的信息，或者它已读给我听。我承认为什么我被要求成为研究的参与者。我有机会就这项研究提出问题，任何问题都得到了我满意的回答。我证明我至少年满 18 岁。我自愿同意成为这项研究的参与者。

Print or Type Name of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I confirm that the participant was allowed to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily. A copy of this Consent Form has been provided to the participant.

我确认参与者有机会就研究提出问题，并且参与者提出的所有问题都已尽我所能回答。我确认个人没有被强迫同意，并且同意是自由和自愿的。本同意书的副本已提供给参与者。

Print or type the name of the lead researcher:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of lead researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE KEEP THIS INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR YOUR RECORDS.**

请保留此知情同意书以作记录。

## Appendix B

### Contact Site Permission Letter

Contact Site Permission Letter

November 30, 2022

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

My name is Derek Anderson, and I am a doctoral candidate at the American College of Education (ACE) writing to request permission to interview teachers in the conference room of the international department. This information will be used for my dissertation research on integrating elements of transformational leadership within a paternalistic leadership style. The purpose of the qualitative study will be action research to strengthen the collaborative practices among teachers and leaders to align with the organization's vision of equipping students with the global-minded knowledge needed to be successful in today's 21st-century marketplace.

Important Contacts for this study include:

Principal Investigator: Derek Anderson  
E-mail: derek.anderson4003@my.ace.edu  
Phone: 199-0227-2144

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Julius Wynn  
E-mail: Julius.Wynn@ace.edu

Thank you for your attention to this issue and prompt response. I appreciate your time and consideration of my request.

Regards,

Derek Anderson



Point of Contact for  
Research Site:

## Appendix C

### Field Test Feedback Modifications

6:00 AM

Hi Derek,

Please, feel free to send me your work, and I shall do my best to support your research.

Best,

11:45 AM

Dear Derek,

The document has been received. I shall give you some feedback in the morning through email.

Best,

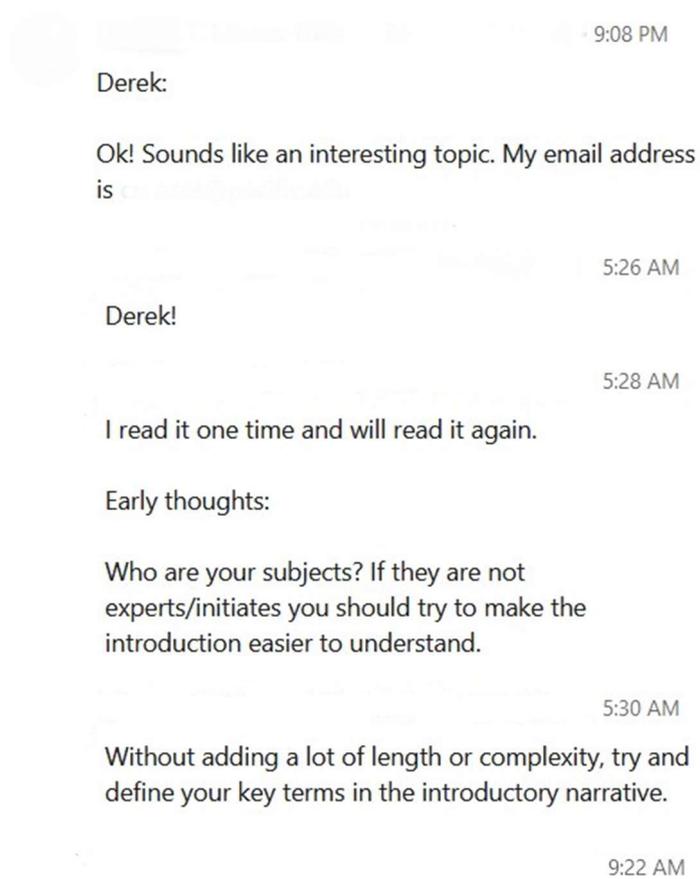
1:44 PM

Hi Derek,

The tool you use is a good one to investigate interviewees' perceptions. Of course, I have no authority in your research to approve or not a research tool as an appropriate one to gather data. Rather your supervisor/tutor will have more of a say into this.

From my perspective, I can state that it is well structured and that I appreciated the level of narrative in building the questions asked.

Best wishes,



9:22 AM

Of course Derek... it is my pleasure..  
Hoping I can be helpful 🙏

My email is

10:37 PM

Dear Derek,

Good day to you ☀️

I had checked your Research questions well, and I find them excellent... regarding a subjective research only ... and that is fine.

But if your objective is to extend that to another level of CULTURE change inside the institution... we can add some other questions concerning the employees & teachers current culture..and how it can be modulated to a more transformational & cooperative one, without devastating the Chinese original paternalistic authoritarian culture . This issue ofcourse starts with convincing the leaders about more collaborative style & in the same time needs some engagement strategies to encourage adding-value among all the institutional members.

To summarise, I totally agree with the current questions & suggest adding 1 or 2 more questions on Culture & strategies to needed to include some transformational style without conflicting with the current Chinese culture.

## Appendix D

### Recruitment Letter

Date:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

My name is Derek Anderson, and I am a doctoral candidate at the American College of Education. I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a research study.

我叫 Derek Anderson，是美国教育学院的博士生。我写信是为了让您知道参加研究的机会。

The research study focuses on implementing transformational leadership. This leadership style strengthens communication and collaboration between Chinese and international staff members and leadership within the current paternalistic leadership style used at the school. For your participation, I would like to conduct a semi-structured interview of around 30 minutes inquiring about current issues and experiences within the department.

该研究的重点是在学校目前使用的家长式领导风格中实施变革型领导，这是一种加强中国和国际员工与领导层之间沟通与协作的领导风格。为了您的参与，我想进行一次半结构化的面试，大约 30 分钟，询问部门内当前的问题和经验。

Your participation in the study will be voluntary. If you wish to withdraw from the research at any time, you may contact me using the information below.

您参与研究将是自愿的。如果您想随时退出研究，您可以使用以下信息与我联系。

I may publish the results of this study; however, I will not use your name nor share identifiable data you provided. Your information will remain confidential. Please contact the following if you would like additional information about the study.

我可能会公布这项研究的结果；但是，我不会使用您的姓名，也不会分享您提供的可识别数据。您的信息将保密。如果您想了解有关该研究的更多信息，请联系以下人员

**Candidate Contact Information:**

If you meet the criteria above, are interested in participating in the study, and would like to be included in the potential participant pool. Please review and accept the additional informed consent letter attached to this form.

如果您符合上述标准，有兴趣参与该研究，并希望被纳入潜在参与者池。请查看并接受附于本表格的额外知情同意书。

Principal Investigator: Derek Anderson

E-mail: [derek.anderson4003@my.ace.edu](mailto:derek.anderson4003@my.ace.edu)

Phone: 199-0227-2144

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Julius Wynn

E-mail: [Julius.Wynn@ace.edu](mailto:Julius.Wynn@ace.edu)

Thank you for your attention to this issue and prompt response. I appreciate your time and consideration of my request.

感谢您关注此问题并及时回复。感谢您的时间和考虑我的要求。

## **Appendix E**

### **Research Instrument**

#### **Qualitative Semi-Structured Interview: Integrating Transformational Leadership**

##### **Elements Within a Paternalistic Leadership Style**

### **Introductory Script**

“Thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview today and returning the consent form to me. Before we begin, what questions can I answer?”

Today's interview will be recorded. May I start the recording?

So now that recording has started, may I confirm with you that I have your consent for the recording?

Let me tell you a little about my study. As an international department located in China, the department's vision is to equip our students to be global-minded and thrive in today's 21<sup>st</sup>-century marketplace. For students to become well-rounded global citizens in today's international marketplace, an understanding of transformational leadership needs to be established. Transformational leadership contains the elements of collaborative practices, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and charisma, to name a few. In other words, they create a team atmosphere within the organization, where leaders provide support and motivation to achieve your goals. In most businesses throughout China and the current organization, a

paternalistic leadership style is utilized, focusing on morality, benevolence, and authoritarianism. This means that the company is more focused on individual performance and hierarchical leadership structure. In speaking with the current director of the international department, the use of transformational leadership elements within the current paternalistic leadership style has been approved.

This research aims to locate issues between international and Chinese staff members, staff members, and leadership. Since paternalistic leadership has more of a top-down hierarchal approach, the department lacks collaborative practices among staff members and leadership. By successfully implementing transformational leadership elements within the department, staff members will be familiar with best collaborative practices in the classroom. Thus, meeting the department's vision of best equipping students with a well-rounded global-minded perspective.

I have developed a list of questions that addresses the current topic and its relation to our current organization. If there are any questions that you want to avoid answering, we may skip the question. If you would like to withdraw from the interview at any time, you may certainly do so, and there will be no judgment or penalty. The interview should last around 30 minutes.

Before we start the interview, please tell me about yourself.”

### Interview Questions

1. Based on your experience, what areas do you feel are the most significant differences in work culture between Chinese and foreign staff members?
2. How comfortable do you feel working in a team (collaborative) atmosphere with a co-worker of a different nationality? What barriers besides language are present?
3. As a teacher, please share your top five motivations for going to work and explain why you chose each motivation.
4. What do you feel are the strengths and weaknesses of the current leadership style?
5. What problems arise within the workplace as it relates to different cultures?
6. What would you change when having the weekly meetings if you were the leader?
7. If you have an issue and need to speak with one of the directors, how confident do you feel in speaking freely? Why?
8. What do you feel is the biggest disengagement between teachers and leadership currently?
9. If the department implements transformational leadership elements, what concerns (if any) would you have?
10. In comparing the current, paternalistic, and transformational leadership styles, which do you feel is better for organizational efficacy and student learning outcomes? Why?
11. What expectations do you have for anyone in a leadership role in this department? Why?
12. Suppose you were in a leadership role within the department. How would you create more of a collaborative working environment?

### **Closing Script**

"Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview with me. Before I turn off the recording, do you have any additional information that might be helpful to me? Do you have any questions you would like to ask me about the study?..."

Again, thank you. You have my contact information if you need to reach me later. I will e-mail you a copy of our interview transcript for your review in the next couple of days. You can correct any errors in the transcript you see."