

## Transformational leadership: demonstrated effects on the Thai Millennial cohort

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### Abstract

In the face of fierce global economic competition, human resources among organizations have become pertinent in boosting competitiveness. Success in both human resources and organization management relies on leadership skills. Transformational leadership is notable for its ability to approach and engage the follower's motivation differently astreams and individually, along with adaptability in uncertain situations. Thailand, as one of the developing countries in Southeast Asia, needs to investigate the leadership style that fits in its national context. As millennial workers become crucial players with their distinct characteristics, it is essential to investigate a way to attract, train, and retain this cohort since they should soon enter the arena. Therefore, this study aims to contribute in the areas of transformational leadership by considering how effective transformational leadership reflects on Thai Millennial workers in regard to their intrinsic motivation and working environment. By conducting the research through quantitative data collected from the survey, the results show that transformational leadership has been well-performed in Thai workplaces and has a significant positive relationship with mediators; intrinsic motivation, and the working environment.

**Keyword:** Transformational leadership, Intrinsic Motivation, Working Environment, Thailand

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## Introduction

In today's hypercompetitive environment, it brings in a variety of innovation and growth development which further acquires high demand of expectation and creates unpredictable changes. Human resource or workforce is the most principal mechanism of all organizations to organize job procedures, make goods and services, track efficiency, allocate financial resources, and market products and services, which are critical to organizational success. Along with its importance, it is necessary to have effective and practical practices in human resource management among employees (Shrouf et al., 2020) and organizational management which moderate through leadership skills (Korejan & Shahbazi, 2016).

As of present, transformational leadership is through of as a method to lead followers with the emphasis that leaders openly communicates with followers to inspire goal-related motivation in order to bring out the best from followers (Bass & Riggio, 2010). Such methods of leadership have become more popular than ever before as the Millennial generation enter the workforce. Given the advancement of society and technology, this particular group of employees is towards goal orientation, competent collaborations with others, and self-awareness in terms of skills and expertise of theirs. Indeed, they are also highly optimistic, idealistic, conventional, and tend to have high expectations of themselves (Chen & Choi, 2008), very independent, self-confident, self-expressive (Gursoy et al., 2008). Thus, they require supportive and nurturing environment, which through the characteristics of transformational leadership is able to provide for this cohort(Sandeen, 2008).

This can be visualized in the ways which such a style of leadership can influence, including the provision of freedom of thought and give opinions, training, and feedback in a way to intrinsically motivate their followers. Moreover, it enhances intrinsic motivation by challenging and working as a team, visualizing accurate tasks in a sense of followers can successfully commit, and being supportive in every situation(Chaudhuri, 2019). Indeed, the sense of relatedness linked to working in teams benefits the individual on a personal level as it fulfills needs such as social interaction and affiliation(Khawama et al., 2017). This then drives motivation of employees from the within and enables an open channel of communication where employees can

freely express their ideas of work-related matters with leaders. This then creates a positive working environment for the cohort. As more and more of the cohort enters the workforce, there is a necessity to study and visualize the impact of transformational leadership on the creating motivation from the within of employees and the building of character for workplace environment.

Therefore, this study aims to study the effects of transformational leadership on millennial employees to visualize the behaviours of the cohort, its effectiveness, and the impacted working environment. It aims that the study would hold implications for workplaces in Thailand regarding creating the most optimal working arrangements in response to the wants and needs of the cohort as they are gradually integrating into the working environment of the present.

## Literature review

### *Transformational Leadership*

Transformational leadership, first explored by James MacGregor Burns, is a leadership perspective which emphasizes how leaders can transform a team or the organization as an entirety through open communication and goal-related motivation. Bass & Riggio (2010) further develop Burn's idea by extending the component in the conceptualization of leadership and identifying four components of transformational leadership:

1. Idealized influence (II), or charisma, is shown when the leaders have been trusted and respected by subordinates as they effectively visualize an accurate sense of missions with a high standard of ethical conduct.
2. Intellectual stimulation (IS) refers to the effort of leaders to encourage and motivate innovation and creativity to be more adaptive and follow new technical approaches which differ due to changing circumstances.
3. Inspirational motivation (IM) is a leadership attitude that motivates and visualizes subordinates to commit to the goals by building confidence and providing straightforward feedback.

4. Individualized consideration (IC) can be described as support from leaders to each subordinate which can be defined as training, coaching, advising, and allocating tasks according to an individual's ability.

Indeed, by proving moral exemplars of working towards the benefit of the team and organization (Robert, 1985), a clear vision of raising the spirits of transformational leaders through approaches to their followers based on awareness, a sense of belonging, and the ability to provide support, and encouragement, help them reach their full potential (Suyanto et al., 2019). Transformational leaders can create a group value by clearly visualizing the goals and delivering full support to engage and build strong teamwork to be trusted and seen as role models by their followers.

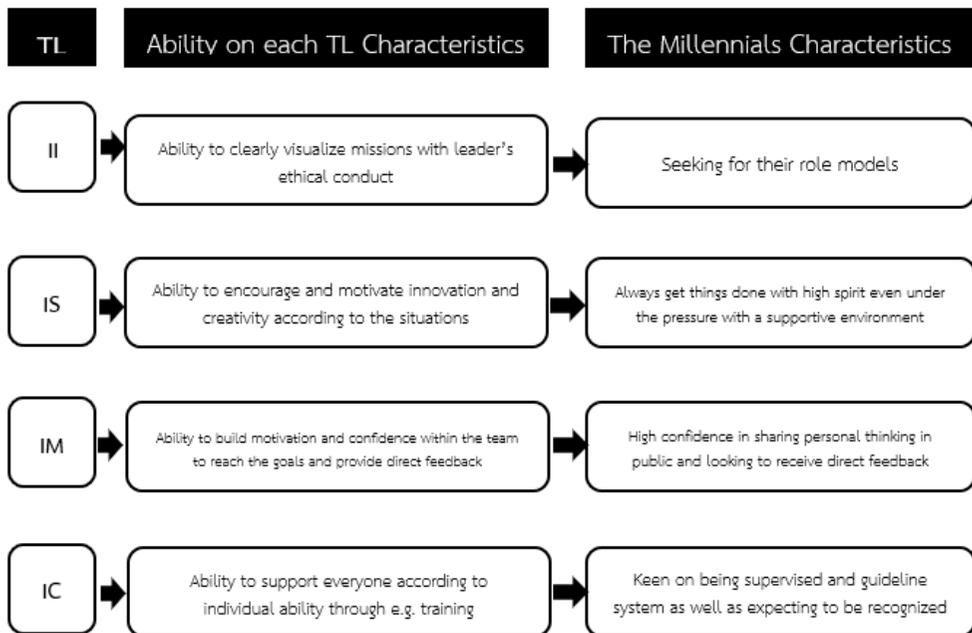
In a fast-changing environment and unceasing development which increases competition and unpredictable changes, transformational leadership is one of the most influential leadership approaches in this period of uncertainty associated with many anticipated and desired outcomes (Pourbarkhordari et al., 2016). Through the contribution of leaders and followers in the group work, transformational leaders support and encourage their followers by envisioning the goals and providing a clear guideline to help their followers clearly understand the tasks and visualize the feasibility of future situations to work towards common goals. In this case, followers are encouraged to be more involved in the working process, including sharing their ideas. In this regard, followers will have opportunities to learn and develop physically and mentally in each step, which creates an in-depth understanding of work.

### ***Millennial workers of today and transformational leadership***

According to Gursoy et al. (2008), the Millennial cohort was born between 1981 and 2000. The Millennials can be described as Internet Generation since it has established in 1982 in the early period Millennials were born (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). The technological advancement in this era led the Millennials to take electronic collaboration for granted, competent at multi-tasking due to the ability to assimilate information quickly (Gursoy et al., 2008), and merged their world to be more diverse in terms of culture and society. Thus, this cohort tends to seek their role models as successful people around the globe easily to be approached.

Indeed, Millennials have been raised through a higher level of education than the previous generations which provides more opportunities for hands-on experiences at a very young age from school activities. This factor leads the Millennial generation to be very goal-oriented, competent collaborators and looking for teamwork, and seeking new learning opportunities for goal achievement. Meanwhile, they are also highly optimistic, idealistic, conventional, with high expectations of self (Chen & Choi, 2008), very independent, self-confident, self-expressive (Gursoy et al., 2008), and prefer a better work-life balance (Smith & Nichols, 2015). Thus, Millennials are accustomed to a supportive and nurturing environment which through the characteristics of transformational leadership seems to be able to well handle this cohort (Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Characteristics of transformational leadership (TL) and Millennials Characteristics



(Source: Chen & Choi, 2008; Gursoy et al., 2008; Sandeen, 2008)

### The mediating role of intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation can be defined as the encouragement or inspiration in which the individuals are fascinated toward a task in his/her own interest, rather than external

influences (Siyal et al., 2021). According to the Self- Determination Theory (SDT) suggested by Ryan & Deci (2000), social contexts catalyze both within and between-person differences in motivation and personal growth, resulting in people being more self-motivated, energized, and integrated with some situations, domains, and cultures than in others. By this, motivation in personal development which can further lead to organizational success relates to the surrounded people, especially leaders who have authority in decision-making within the organization. Though intrinsic motivation, which depends on ambient support for basic psychological needs that include autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Chaudhuri, 2019), can play a moderating role in transformational leadership through its four-dimensional characteristics:

First, transformational leaders have a strong mindset to provide freedom of thought and give opinions, training, and feedback in a way to intrinsically motivate their followers to get in-depth learning and further improve their performance. Consequently, a leader can support basic psychological needs regarding autonomy in their working styles.

Second, transformational leadership enhances intrinsic motivation by challenging and working as a team, visualizing accurate tasks in a sense of followers can successfully commit, and being supportive in every situation. As a result, competence as a basic psychological need among employees would be fulfilled.

Third, the sense of relatedness linked to working in teams benefits the individual on a personal level as it fulfills needs such as social interaction and affiliation (Khawama et al., 2017).

Since transformational leadership focuses on teamwork, it encourages better communication between employees to discuss and endeavor to understand each other to reach the goals. Furthermore, a strong connection between employees and leaders has been created since transformational leaders also monitor their followers closely.

### **The mediating role of working environment**

A leader or a supervisor has the crucial power to create a healthy working environment for every organization. A study by Pourbarkhordari et al. (2016) observes that leader behavior, both from direct supervisors and top managers, contributes to

the subordinate perceptions of the work environment, and different leadership styles have different approaches to managing and delivering the right directions to the employees in the work environment. In this regard, transformational leadership can create a healthy working environment. First, transformational leaders foster a supportive environment in the perception of employees. Additionally, transformational leadership is competent to visualize an accurate sense of vision and clear organizational goals which provoke employees to vigorously understand their duties along with supervising their subordinates according to their abilities and further strengthen the positive relationship between employees and leaders.

Second, open communication and trust can be achieved by transformational leadership. As transformational leaders keep communication lines open, mentor individual followers when appropriate, listen attentively to their concerns and needs, and pro-actively take steps to address these (Zhu et al., 2013), employees' works are also recognized by others within the workplace through sharing thoughts which make a meaningful contribution for them and further lead to create a perception of a healthy workplace. Given the differences in cultures, traditions, and social perceptions differing from country to country and a majority of the theories on transformational leadership being based on the western context, this research intends to focus on the relationship between transformational leadership and Millennial workers in Thailand along with analyzing the role of mediating factors, which are intrinsic motivation and working environment, in the Thai context.

### **Objectives**

- 1.) To visualise the impact of transformation leadership to be had on the intrinsic motivation of millennial workers in Thailand.
- 2.) To visualise the effect of the aforementioned type of leadership on working environment of millennial workers
- 3.) To create a better understanding of the effectiveness of the aforementioned type of leadership, applied in Thailand.

## Methodology

The data collection is carried out through the use of surveys, collected throughout the Kingdom of Thailand and via the online reach-out methodology, as it relies on the habit of the Millennial generation who are keen on social media platforms in such a way to reach the target sampling extensively, thoroughly, and more conveniently. The sample is determined based on Taro Yamane's formula, which is computed to be 400 samples calculated from the population of 19,040,538 (Department of Provincial Administration Registration, 2021). The questionnaire set has four sections. It begins with demographic information of the participants and screening questions in section 1 before asking the questions regarding transformational leadership, and intrinsic motivation, and ending with the working environment section. All questions are required to answer through Likert scale. From section 2 to section 4, the questionnaires have been adopted from previous studies by Antonakis (2001) for Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), McAuley et al., (1989) for Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI), and Rossberg et al. (2004) for The Work Environment Scale-10 (WES-10). All responses were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity. The data analysis is carried out via statistical analysis, considering percentages, mean values, and standard deviation values.

## Findings

Regarding the demographics information (Table 1), a total of 400 participants are participants whose ages are between 21 to 40 years can be considered the population of Millennials which is accounted for 68.9%. However, 78.3% out of the total surveyed Millennials have experienced the workplace and only 69.3% out of the surveyed have worked in the workplace in Thailand (Table 2). The demographic of targeted sampling can be presented in 4 parts, including gender, educational level, workplace type, and year of work experience (Table 3).

Firstly, the Millennials are mainly females with 54.2% followed by 45% of males, and 0.8% prefer not to say. Secondly, educational level, from the obtained data shows that the majority of the Millennial participants attain bachelor's degrees (73.3%) followed by 17.6% with master's degrees, 8.4% below bachelor's degrees, and 0.8%

with Doctoral degrees. Thirdly, Millennial participants have mainly experience in Small and Medium-sized Enterprise with 19.8 percent and multinational corporations (MNCs) in the host country, which refers to the foreign companies located in Thailand, with 18.3 percent followed by large enterprises (15.3%) and government organization (13.7%). The rest of the Millennial participants have worked in start-ups (9.2%), multinational corporations (MNCs) in the home country of the multinational corporations (MNCs) originating in Thailand (6.9%), family businesses (6.9%), state-owned enterprises (6.1%), and non-governmental organizations (3.8%), consecutively. Lastly, most of the Millennial participants have less than 5 years of working experience (77.9%) followed by 5-10 years (13.7%), 11-20 years (6.9%), and more than 20 years (1.5%) of working experience.

Table 4 exhibits the result of the survey collected from screened Millennials regarding the perspective of transformation leadership on their leaders. The result shows Millennial workers in Thailand have seen their leaders keep practicing and treating them according to the characteristics of transformational leadership with a 3.82 score on the overall average score which is in high rank.

Regarding the intrinsic motivation level of the Millennial participants in Thai workplaces (Table 5), the overall result exhibits as high with a 3.82 average score even though the average score on each item quite varies. The majority of all items have been rated with high average scores.

The average result in the overall data collected from 69.3 percent of Millennial participants regarding the perspective on their working environment (Table 6) in the Thai workplace context exhibits as high with a 3.52 average score. However, the items have been evaluated a little lower compared with the transformational leadership part and intrinsic motivation part.

**Table 1.** The Demographic Data from All Participants in Percentage

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION		PERCENTAGE
GENDER	Male	38.5
	Female	60.4
	Prefer not to say	1.1
AGE	Under 21 years old	13.9
	21 – 40 years old	68.9
	41 – 60 years old	16.1
	Over 60 years old	1.1
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	Below Bachelor’s degree	17.6
	Bachelor’s degree	68.5
	Master’s degree	11.7
	Doctoral degree	2.2

**Table 2.** The Working Experience Data of Millennial Participants

WORKING EXPERIENCE		PERCENTAGE
Are you currently employed doing internship or have you ever experienced in workplace before?	Yes	78.3
	No	21.7
Are you currently working or have you worked in Thailand?	Yes	69.3
	No	9.0

**Table 3.** The Demographic Data from Millennials Participants in Percentage

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION		PERCENTAGE
GENDER	Male	45
	Female	54.2
	Prefer not to say	0.8
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	Below Bachelor’s degree	8.4

	Bachelor's degree	73.3
	Master's degree	17.6
	Doctoral degree	0.8
<b>WORKING EXPERIENCE</b>		<b>PAERCENTAGE</b>
Type of your workplace you are/have been hired	Multinational corporations (MNCs) in <u>HOME COUNTRY</u>	6.9
	Multinational corporations (MNCs) in <u>HOST COUNTRY</u>	18.3
	Government Organization	13.7
	State-owned Enterprise	6.1
	Large Enterprise	15.3
	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise	19.8
	Start-up	9.2
	Family Business	6.9
	Non-governmental Organization	3.8
Years of Working Experience	Less than 5 Years	77.9
	5 – 10 Years	13.7
	11 – 20 Years	6.9
	More than 20 Years	1.5

**Table 4.** The Millennials Participants' Perspective on Transformational leadership (%)

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP		LIKERT SCALE RESULT IN PERCENTAGE					$\bar{X}$	S.D.	
		1	2	3	4	5			
Idealized Influence (Attributed)	Item 1	3.8	8.4	32.1	41.2	14.5	3.54	3.76*	0.971
	Item 2	2.3	4.6	20.6	37.4	35.1	3.98		0.977
Idealized Influence (Behavior)	Item 3	2.3	8.4	22.1	36.6	30.5	3.85	3.88*	1.026
	Item 4	3.1	6.9	19.8	37.4	32.8	3.90		1.037
Inspirational	Item 5	2.3	5.3	21.4	38.2	32.8	3.94	3.93	0.983

Motivation	Item 6	1.5	7.6	22.1	35.9	32.8	3.91		0.996
Intellectual Stimulation	Item 7	3.1	7.6	29.8	36.6	23.0	3.69	3.78	1.008
	Item 8	3.1	6.1	25.2	32.1	33.6	3.87		1.048
Individualized Consideration	Item 9	2.3	6.9	26.0	40.5	24.4	3.78	3.75	0.971
	Item 10	2.3	11.5	24.4	36.6	25.2	3.71		1.041
<b>TOTAL</b>							<b>3.82</b>		<b>High</b>

*Questionnaire from this section is based on “A Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)” (Antonakis, 2001)*

**\*\* Rating scale: 1 (rather insignificant), 2 (insignificant), 3 (somewhat significant), 4 (significant), and 5 (rather significant)**

Item 1	Do you think your leaders practice beyond their self-interest for the good of the team?
Item 2	Do you think your leaders act in ways that builds your respect?
Item 3	Do you think your leaders specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose?
Item 4	Do you think your leaders consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions?
Item 5	Do you think your leaders talk optimistically about the future?
Item 6	Do you think your leaders can express confidence that goals will be achieved?
Item 7	Do you think your leaders re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate?
Item 8	Do you think your leaders get you to look at problems from many different angles/perspectives?
Item 9	Do you think your leaders treat you as an individual rather than just as a member of a team?
Item 10	Do you think your leaders consider you as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others?

**Table 5.** The Intrinsic Motivation Level of Millennials Participants in (%)

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION	LIKERT SCALE RESULT IN PERCENTAGE					$\bar{X}$	S.D.
	1	2	3	4	5		
Item 1	2.3	8.4	35.9	30.5	23.0	3.63	1.002
Item 2	3.1	6.9	33.6	35.9	20.6	3.64	0.985
Item 3	0.8	9.2	27.5	35.1	27.5	3.79	0.974

Item 4	0.8	7.6	16.8	38.9	35.9	4.02	0.953
Item 5	-	5.3	26.0	44.3	24.4	3.88	0.841
Item 6	-	6.9	14.5	45.8	32.8	4.05	0.867
Item 7	-	3.8	20.6	51.1	24.4	3.96	0.779
Item 8	-	3.1	13.0	40.5	43.5	4.24	0.795
Item 9	-	3.1	7.6	30.5	58.8	4.45	0.767
Item 10	6.1	22.1	33.6	19.8	18.3	3.22	1.165
Item 11	6.1	20.6	35.9	26.7	10.7	3.15	1.063
Item 12	1.5	7.6	25.2	37.4	28.2	3.83	0.978
Item 13	1.5	9.2	26.0	36.6	26.7	3.78	0.995
Item 14	0.8	3.8	17.6	34.4	43.5	4.16	0.901
Item 15	4.6	9.9	31.3	30.5	23.7	3.59	1.095
Item 16	2.3	8.4	27.5	39.7	22.1	3.71	0.980
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>3.82</b>	<b>High</b>

*Questionnaire from this section is based on “A multidimensional measurement device - The Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI)” (the Center for Self-Determination Theory, 2021)*

**\*\* Rating scale: 1 (rather insignificant), 2 (insignificant), 3 (somewhat significant), 4 (significant), and 5 (rather significant)**

Item 1	I enjoy working very much.
Item 2	I would describe my work as very interesting.
Item 3	I enjoy finding solutions to complex problems.
Item 4	I enjoy engaging in analytical thinking.
Item 5	I think I am pretty good at working.
Item 6	After working for a while, I feel rather competent.
Item 7	I am satisfied with my work performance.
Item 8	I put a lot of effort into my own work.
Item 9	It is important to me to do well on my work.
Item 10	I don't feel very tense while working.
Item 11	I don't feel pressured while working.
Item 12	I believe I have some choice to decide on my work.
Item 13	I decide to work because I want to.

Item 14	I believe my work could be beneficial to me.
Item 15	I feel really close to my leader(s).
Item 16	I feel like I could really trust my leader(s).

**Table 6.** The Perspective on Working Environment of Millennials Participants (%)

WORKING ENVIRONMENT	LIKERT SCALE RESULT IN PERCENTAGE					$\bar{X}$	S.D.
	1	2	3	4	5		
Item 1	-	3.8	26.7	48.1	21.4	3.87	0.788
Item 2	0.8	4.6	26.7	43.5	24.4	3.86	0.866
Item 3	1.5	18.3	36.6	29.8	13.7	3.36	0.985
Item 4	10.7	14.5	35.9	28.2	10.7	3.14	1.128
Item 5	2.3	4.6	35.1	36.6	21.4	3.70	0.934
Item 6	-	9.9	26.0	42.7	21.4	3.76	0.904
Item 7	6.9	22.1	26.0	27.5	17.6	3.27	1.189
Item 8	1.5	9.2	37.4	32.1	19.8	3.60	0.959
Item 9	2.3	9.9	35.9	39.7	12.2	3.50	0.915
Item 10	8.4	19.1	30.5	31.3	10.7	3.17	1.117
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>3.52</b>	<b>High</b>

*Questionnaire from this section is based on “The Working Environment Scale10 (WES-10)” (Rossberg et al., 2004)*

**\*\*** Rating scale: 1 (rather insignificant), 2 (insignificant), 3 (somewhat significant), 4 (significant), and 5 (rather significant)

Item 1	Does what you do at your workplace give you a chance to see how good your abilities really are?
Item 2	Does what you do at your workplace help you to have more confidence in yourself?
Item 3	To what extent do you feel nervous or tense from working at your workplace?
Item 4	How often does it happen that you are worried about going to work?
Item 5	To what extent do you feel that you get the support you need, when you are faced with difficult tasks?
Item 6	To what extent do you find that you can use yourself, your knowledge and experience in the work at your workplace?

Item 7	To what extent do you find that your work is complicated by conflicts among the staff members?
Item 8	To what extent do you find that it can be difficult to reconcile loyalty towards your team with loyalty towards your own profession?
Item 9	What do you think about the number of tasks imposed on you?
Item 10	How often does it happen that you have a feeling that you should have been working on several places at the same time?

### Explanation of Research Outcomes

It can be visualized that most respondents, who by the definition of this research are considered ‘millennials’, are female individuals, ageing between the ages of 21-40 years old, having graduate Bachelor’s Degree from their respective universities, and working for companies of their choices. The largest group work for small medium enterprise (19.8%), MNCs in Thailand as the host country (18.3%), and large enterprises (15.3%) respectively. It can also be seen that a significant chunk at 13.7% is working for enterprises of the governmental agencies.

Regarding the perspectives on transformational leadership, the outcomes shows that inspirational motivation tops with the highest mean value of 3.98, indicating that leaders, preferred by the group, are those who can inspire positive talks of the future and confidence in the anticipation of goal achievement. Another high mean value can be accounted for idealized influence (behaviors) at the mean value of 3.88, preferring leadership which can bring out strong sense of purpose and can consider moral and ethical implications of decisions made. The rest can be arranged in the following order respectively: intellectual stimulation (3.78), idealized influence (attributes) (3.76), and individualized consideration (3.75).

As for the intrinsic motivation of the millennial participants as a result of transformational leadership being applied, it is shown clearly that should their respective managers put in characters of transformational leaders, the cohort tends to consider it’s a priority that they do all the assigned work excellently (4.45) and go extra mile in their work efforts (4.24). In fact, the cohort would also believe that the work they do will be beneficial to them (4.16), that they feel confident after working for a

certain period of time (4.05), and that they would enjoy getting in the discussion with their teams/work colleagues for the work that requires analytical thinking skills (4.02). Furthermore, the rest of the section shows strong indication of intrinsic motivation being present for the cohort.

In regard to the effect on the working environment as a result of the application of transformational leadership, it is displayed that the cohort views the workplace more positively for being a platform to showcase their skills (3.87) and as a place for confidence building (3.86). Indeed, the cohort would also see themselves committing themselves wholly, their knowledge, and their experience to the workplace (3.76) and that they would feel supported should they are faced with any adversities or issues that they require farther assistance (3.70). Furthermore, the rest of the section shows strong indication of positive working environment being present for the cohort.

## Discussion

The results indicate that leaders in Thai workplaces have been evaluated as high in practicing transformational leadership which can be deeply explained in four parts:

The inspirational motivation dimension is strongly performed with the highest score among the four characteristics which show that the Thai leaders are most likely able to stimulate the level of their subordinate's emotions along with building confidence in their working performance to reach the goals and providing appropriate feedback in the Millennial worker's perspective. One of the prominent characteristics of Millennials is being self-expressive to share their views within the teams and seek the opportunity for self-development. The result contradicts the previous study that Thais only prefer decisions made by their leaders and avoid any conflict from different views (Anurit et al., 2011).

Secondly, the high-performance result of idealized influence characteristic built on existing evidence of Buddhism has taught Thais to grant allegiance and loyalty to the people who have been grateful, nice, and had helped them (Klauser, 1983) and the importance of harmony within the team (Jiang, 1966).

Thirdly, high practice on the intellectual stimulation characteristics is contrary to the previous study by Anurit et al. (2011) and Kamgoen & Duangkaew (2008) since the

Millennial workers have not felt that they have been limited in their thoughts. On the other hand, their leaders also stimulate them to look at problems at different angles.

Lastly, the characteristic of individual consideration also ranks as high. The result supports the family-like organizational structure in Thailand where leaders are willing to support, coach, and train their subordinates as per their relatives, care about individual feelings, and need more women to be involved in Thai workplaces.

Previous researchers have vastly found a strong impact of transformational leadership on employee intrinsic motivation and positive psychological states (Shafi et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2020). The findings of this present research indicate that intrinsic motivation has been found at a high level among Thai Millennials who have worked in the Thai workplace. Since the Thai leaders have performed significant characteristics of transformational leadership in the Thai Millennial worker's perspective, it contributes to the additional confirmation that transformational leadership has a positive relationship with Millennial workers' intrinsic motivation and escalates the positive psychological state in a positive direction.

The current study demonstrates a significant correlation between transformational leadership and their working environment. This finding is in line with the previous studies discussing the key factors to creating a healthy workplace such as positive relationships with colleagues and leaders, friendly and helpful colleagues, respectful and good communication, and recognition of their work (Pourbarkhordari et al., 2016) which can be built by transformational leaders who are capable to be open and provide an individual mentoring for workers of different perspectives (Zhu et al., 2013; Breevaart et al., 2013). Even though previous research argues that subordinates do not have much voice to discuss the decision-making due to the high hierarchy system and non-confront communication (Klauser 1983; Anurit et al., 2011), Thai Millennials workers appreciate the supports from their leaders which further let them satisfy on their working environment. However, many Thai Millennial workers still deem that they do not have a good balance over the number of tasks imposed on them and to be loyal to their team and individual profession.

Although several points stemmed from the root of Thai cultures and traditions seem to have conflicts with the transformational leadership theory and the

organizational practices in the western context which have been studied by the previous research (Klauser 1983; Anurit et al., 2011; Taksinapan, 2015). The current study proved that the theory has been well-applied among Thai leaders and further significantly enhance Thai Millennial workers' intrinsic motivation and successfully creates a healthy working environment in the Thai Millennial's perception.

## **Conclusion**

The leadership practices vary widely due to the diversity of cultures and traditions in each region of the country. As previous studies have discussed in the international context, this present study is designed and aims to investigate the effectiveness of transformational leadership along with the level of intrinsic motivation and appreciation of the working environment among Thai Millennial workers in Thailand. Through the study, transformational leadership, intrinsic motivation, and working environment have been observed significantly in a positive direction. To enhance the Thai Millennial intrinsic motivation and enrich a healthy working environment, this study recommends that leaders or practitioners practise four characteristics of transformational leadership, having been proved that significantly affected intrinsic motivation and the working environment.

Although this research successfully contributes to its objectives and delivers useful insight into the leadership and working environment in Thailand, several limitations still lies. First, the data was collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire with neither an open-ended question nor an in-depth interview. Future research might consider conducting either an open-ended question or an in-depth interview to further assure the conclusiveness of data obtained. Second, although the participating Millennial workers are mainly employed in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, the ratio of percentage range interval is quite large. To generalize the findings of this study, future research should investigate each specific type of workplace to see the variations in results based on the different organizational structures and the nature of which companies of different types operate. Last, since the Millennials will completely enter the workforce by 2022 (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010), future research can consider investigating Generation Z who are soon to enter the workforce afterwards.

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