Unveiling the Transformative Influence: Qualitative Insights into Teachers' Innovative Work Behavior in Chinese Higher Education

Tian Wang iD
UCSI University, FOSSLA, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
South China Business College Guangdong University of Foreign Studies,
Guangzhou, China

Saeid Motevalli* iD

UCSI University, FOSSLA, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Jianbang Lin iD
Nanfang College・Guangzhou, Guangzhou, China

Abstract. This article uses a qualitative research methodology to delves into the transformative influence of leadership and trust dynamics on teachers' innovative work behavior in Chinese higher education. Through thematic analysis from 20 educators representing diverse roles, disciplines and institutions from educators, we unveil the essential role of visionary leadership, where leaders inspire a collective sense of purpose by vividly painting the future of education. Concurrently, trust, fostered through transparent communication and shared values, emerges as a cornerstone, creating a safe environment that could inspire educators to experiment with innovative teaching methods. The study also highlights the individual empowerment facilitated by transformative leadership, recognizing and valuing each educator's unique contributions. While offering valuable insights, this research has limitations, primarily related to the qualitative nature and the specific cultural and institutional context. Suggestions for future research include the use of mixed methods, where both qualitative and quantitative research are important as the use of mixed research methods would be more comprehensive; widening the range of participants and the need to consider the impact of external factors on the educational environment.

Keywords: transformative leadership; teacher trust; innovative work behavior; Chinese higher education; thematic analysis

*Corresponding author: *Saeid Motevalli,* S*aeid@ucsiuniversity.edu.my*

1. Introduction

In an era featuring rapid technological advancements and shifting educational paradigms, the role of educators in higher education institutions is undergoing a transformative evolution (Morales et al., 2021). Innovative work behavior among teachers has emerged as a pivotal force driving educational excellence and adaptability in response to the ever-changing and specific needs of college students and society. In the dynamic landscape of Chinese higher education, where the demand for knowledge and innovation is burgeoning (Dan et al., 2019), it is imperative to understand the factors that underpin the innovative work behaviors of educators. Against this background, innovative work behaviors among educators have emerged as a central power, which is assumed to position Chinese higher education institutions as pioneers in global academia. As the nation strives to become a leader in knowledge creation and application, educators are at the forefront of this endeavor (Zhu & Li, 2018). Their innovative work behavior is the activator for transformative change, enhancing educational quality and adaptability that reverberates not only within China but also on the global stage.

Recently, Chinese higher education has experienced a remarkable advancement, marked by exponential growth in student enrollment, huge investment in research and development, and a stable commitment to cultivating innovation. Specifically, China's ambition to become a global educational hub is vividly illustrated by initiatives such as the "Double First-Class" project, which aims to cultivate world-class universities and disciplines to enhance the innovative competence of the holistic society and graduates. In a nation with millions of students pursuing higher education, the role of educators has expanded beyond mere instruction. The role of the teacher is also more than just passing on their knowledge to the students. More importantly, as De Pee and Vululleh (2020) indicated, educators are expected to be agents of transformation, inspiring students to think critically, adapt to constant change and contribute to a knowledge-driven society. Consequently, the imperative for innovative work behavior among teachers has never been more prominent in this context and we should do more research on it.

Transformational leadership, a construct articulated by Burns (1978), assumes a pivotal role in the educational scenario of China. Leaders who embody transformational qualities are regarded as the foundation of inspiration and motivation within the development of higher education (Samad et al., 2021). They can construct a compelling vision, foster intellectual curiosity, extend personal care and uphold moral and ethical standards. In the context of Chinese higher education, transformational leadership serves as an illuminating guidepost (Yang, 2023). These visionary leaders have the power to ignite the flames of change and innovation among their faculty members. They chart the course that could encourage teachers to delve into unexplored territories, experiment with novel teaching approaches, engage in research with practical applications, and cultivate an environment where creative thinking thrives. In a nation triggered by a firm commitment to innovation, these leaders are the architects of a culture of

perpetual enhancement, propelling Chinese higher education institutions to the forefront of global pioneering efforts.

Meanwhile, amid the wave of educational transformation, trust among teachers and in educational leadership emerges as an essential basis (Karacabey et al., 2020). In an atmosphere of trust, educators are better able to find ways to explore new areas of instruction, collaborate with peers in teaching, and quickly gain confidence in dealing with potential risks. This environment of psychological safety, nurtured by teacher trust, acts as fuel for enhancing innovation. To be specific, teachers who place their trust in their leaders exhibit a greater tendency to embrace change and willingly take risks in their quest for innovative work behavior (Choo et al., 2021). Similarly, trust among colleagues creates an atmosphere where ideas flow freely, collaboration is actively encouraged and collective learning thrives. The establishment and preservation of trust not only extend beyond the realm of interpersonal relationships but are also foundational for educational leaders and institutions (Connolly et al., 2017). Such trust has a direct and profound impact on teachers' readiness to participate in creative practices. It fuels a collective ethos of exploration, encouraging teachers to push the boundaries of traditional teaching methods and delve into novel, imaginative practices.

The present study attempts to discover the transformative influence of two essential factors of transformational leadership and teacher trust on the innovative work behavior of educators in the dynamic prospect of Chinese higher education. By delving into the lived experiences and perspectives of educators, the researchers aim to clarify the complicated dynamics that underpin their related innovative efforts. Meanwhile, this research also delves into bridging the existing gaps in the literature by shedding light on how these components intersect and interact within the Chinese higher education context. Our exploration of these factors is evidence of the complex development of educational transformation in the realm of Chinese higher education, positioning it at the forefront of global innovation and excellence.

2. Literature Review
In the rapidly evolving landscape of Chinese higher education, innovation has become a tool in maintaining global competitiveness and ensuring the high quality of educational delivery. The importance of focusing on the important role of innovation in education and teaching must be recognized (Appelbaum, 2018). In order to attain a comprehensive understanding of the transformative influence in the realm of China's higher education, this section delves into the specific context of Chinese higher education while exploring the roles of transformational leadership and teacher trust as key drivers of innovative work behavior among educators.

2.1 Innovative Work Behavior
Innovative work behavior is a central component of China's higher education sector, where the quest for educational modernization and global excellence has become increasingly imperative. Innovative work behavior encompasses the

inventive and transformative activities of educators that go beyond traditional teaching methods (Khan et al., 2020). As a result, teachers are intensively encouraged to explore creative pedagogical approaches, develop cutting-edge research, and contribute to the evolution of educational practices (Brennan et al., 2019). This emphasis on innovation is closely linked to China's ambition to establish itself as a global educational leader (Geall & Ely, 2018), with a growing emphasis on fostering entrepreneurship, technological improvement and interdisciplinary collaboration within higher educational institutions. In response to these evolving expectations, educators are under increasing pressure to exhibit innovative work behavior, driving them to actively engage in research, curriculum development and teaching methodologies that echo the demands of a rapidly changing society to address these issues.

Innovative work behavior also extends beyond the classroom to encompass the transformation of institutional policies and practices in the context of China. Chinese universities and colleges have been proactively exploring various forms of educational innovation, including the introduction of online and blended learning, interdisciplinary research centers and international collaborations. In the last few years, online education has gained considerable popularity in China, and teachers and students are adapting to it. The way of education in China nowadays is not limited to classroom education alone. Government policies, such as the "Double First-Class" initiative and the "Belt and Road" project, highlight the importance of innovation in higher education by offering substantial financial and strategic support to institutions that prioritize the effectiveness of innovative work behavior. As a result, educators are challenged not only to adapt to these changes but also to proactively lead them (Huang, 2020). This places a substantial responsibility on academic leaders and teachers to exhibit innovative work behavior, promoting a transformational shift in how teaching, research and institutional governance are conducted within China's higher education sector. People need to understand the important role that innovation plays in China's higher education.

2.2 Teacher Trust in Leadership
In the complex nature of Chinese higher education, the concept of teacher trust in leadership finds its roots deeply embedded in the historical and cultural fabric of the nation. Teachers tend to trust their leaders unconditionally and follow their leaders' instructions on how to do their jobs. Drawing inspiration from the enduring Confucian tradition, "xinyong", which translates to trust, stands as a cornerstone of social harmony in Chinese society (Hallinger et al., 2017). Confucian ideals, with their emphasis on the cultivation of virtuous relationships and mutual respect for each other, have left an indelible imprint on the Chinese cultural and educational landscape. Within the academic realm, this philosophy forms the strong foundation upon which educators place their trust in institutional leaders (Huang et al., 2016).

In the context of Chinese higher education institutions, trust thrives when leaders not only emulate the principles of Confucian ethics but also demonstrate a commitment to transparent and ethically sound decision-making processes. This

commitment extends to fostering open and consistent communication with faculty members, where leaders are expected to provide clarity concerning institutional goals and the rationale behind their key decisions. Additionally, leaders shoulder the responsibility of upholding their promises and commitments, serving as the guardians of institutional integrity and its enduring legacy (Fuller, 2016).

Within the complex educational environment of modern China, which bears the fusion of traditional values and the incentive of modernization, the establishment of trust between educators and leaders emerges as an obvious necessity (Herrman-Pillath et al., 2019). Trust is not merely seen as a cultural artifact. Instead, it is the dynamic force propelling the creation of a positive and collaborative working environment. This trust empowers educators to venture into uncharted pedagogical territories, experimenting with innovative approaches and taking intellectual risks. Furthermore, this solid foundation of trust fosters harmonious educational relationships, which are essential in realizing the personal and institutional aspirations of educators within the multifaceted landscape of Chinese higher education (Chen et al., 2023). Consequently, teacher trust in leadership transcends its role as a cultural relic. It emerges as a dynamic agent for positive transformation, spurring innovation, and ushering in new dimensions of pedagogical excellence within Chinese higher education institutions (Zhuang, 2023).

2.3 Existing Research in China and Abroad
Over the past decades, a growing number of researchers have delved into the realms of transformational leadership and teacher trust within the context of Chinese higher education. Scholars have conducted diverse investigations to explore the complicated nature of these influential elements, acknowledging their significance in shaping educational outcomes, motivating educators, and enhancing institutional effectiveness (e.g., Cui et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2017). However, a critical examination reveals a disparity in the origins of these academic efforts. To be specific, a wealth of literature exists on transformational leadership and teacher trust, predominantly originating from Western contexts (Litz & Scott, 2016). While this research offers valuable perspectives, it may not comprehensively display the complexities ingrained in the distinct fabric of the Chinese educational environment (Chin et al., 2018). Western educational paradigms often fall short of addressing the cultural sophistication, institutional structures and societal expectations specific to China's higher education context. Therefore, it is essential to conduct this study in the Chinese context.

Concurrently, research within China has made great progress in recognizing the essential roles of transformational leadership and teacher trust in recent years (Liu, 2018). Chinese scholars have endeavored to uncover the complexity of these factors and their long-term influence on the educational realm. Their studies have clarified the influence of leadership styles on educational outcomes, the motivational dynamics of teachers, and the holistic effectiveness of educational institutions (Zheng et al., 2018). Despite these efforts, there is a discernible research gap that deserves attention, namely, more context-specific studies that

go beyond the surface to unravel the unique challenges and opportunities embedded within Chinese higher education institutions are needed. Addressing this research gap becomes crucial for a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the interplay between transformational leadership, teacher trust and the dynamics of the Chinese educational landscape. A call for more comprehensive studies that explore the characteristics of this dynamic environment is not merely an academic plea – it is a call to provide insights that could generate the same resonance with the characteristics of China's higher education, thereby enriching global scholarship and fostering educational practices (Xu & Montgomery, 2018). As the academic community converges to explore these fields, a more comprehensive and culturally attuned understanding of transformational leadership and teacher trust in Chinese higher education will undoubtedly develop.

This study aspires to contribute to the current body of knowledge by delving deeply into the interplay between transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior within the unique context of Chinese higher education. Recognizing the existing gaps in the literature, our research aims to provide comprehensive qualitative insights that surpass surface-level understanding, offering a more profound exploration of the dynamics shaping the educational landscape in China.

3. Methodology
3.1 Research Design
The chosen research design, a qualitative approach, has been selected to provide a comprehensive exploration of the complex interrelationships among transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior within the dynamic and multifaceted realm of Chinese higher education. Qualitative research is particularly well-suited for this study due to its inherent capacity to capture the depth and nuances of human experiences, allowing for an in-depth examination of the intricate factors influencing educators in their professional roles.

The use of in-depth interviews offers a personalized and rich narrative from participants. These interviews were semi-structured, allowing for a balance between predefined questions related to transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior, and the flexibility to explore emergent themes as they arose during the conversations. This method enabled participants to express their experiences and perspectives authentically, contributing to a holistic portrayal of their professional journeys within the higher education context. To elicit and interpret the wealth of information gathered through interviews, thematic analysis were used. This systematic and iterative process involves identifying patterns, themes and connections within the data, thereby facilitating the generation of valuable insights. Thematic analysis not only ensures rigor in data interpretation but also provides a structured approach to uncovering the complex interplay between transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior. Through this method, the study aims to reveal the

latent patterns that shape the experiences of educators in Chinese higher education.

3.2 Sampling and Participants
Purposive Sampling Strategy
The study adopted a purposive sampling strategy, strategically selecting participants to offer a rich and diverse representation of experiences within Chinese higher education. This method is instrumental in capturing the multifaceted interplay between transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior. Participants were selected based on specific criteria to ensure their roles, experiences and expertise align closely with the study's focus areas.

Participants
This qualitative study investigates the complex dynamics of transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior in Chinese higher education. With 20 participants representing diverse institutions, including faculty members and academic leaders from various disciplines, the study used in-depth interviews and thematic analysis. The focus is on unraveling contextual nuances and challenges within the Chinese higher education system, aiming to provide nuanced insights into the intersection of leadership, trust and innovation. Ethical considerations and participant diversity underscore the study's commitment to informing leadership practices and enhancing the global competitiveness of Chinese higher education.

3.3 Data Collection
Semi-structured interviews, chosen as the primary data collection method, embodied the study's commitment to capturing the depth and breadth of participants' perspectives within the dynamic feature of Chinese higher education. The interviews, conducted either face-to-face or virtually, provided a versatile platform catering for participant preferences. The interview protocol was thoughtfully developed, aiming to extract rich and detailed narratives from participants regarding their encounters with transformational leadership, experiences of teacher trust and innovative work behavior.

This well-designed protocol not only encouraged participants to share their unique insights but also ensured that the exploration focused on the specific dynamics shaping the educational landscape. Probing questions, strategically interspersed throughout the interviews, served as tools to uncover latent layers of understanding, facilitating a more profound examination of how transformational leadership and teacher trust intersect to influence innovative work behavior. The flexible nature of semi-structured interviews allowed for the emergence of unanticipated themes, providing the study with the agility to adapt to the diverse and nuanced experiences of educators in the Chinese higher education context. In essence, the chosen approach to data collection reflected the study's commitment to extracting comprehensive and authentic narratives, providing a robust foundation for understanding the intricate interplay between

leadership, trust and innovation in the evolving landscape of Chinese higher education.

3.4 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis, recognized for its systematic and flexible qualitative approach, served as the chosen method to elicit patterns and themes within the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This rigorous analysis process unfolded through several interconnected stages. Initially, there was a process of familiarization with the data, immersing the researcher in the participants' narratives to gain a comprehensive understanding of their experiences. Following familiarization, the data was coded, with initial codes being generated to identify meaningful segments related to transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior. Subsequently, a meticulous search for overarching themes took place, highlighting recurring patterns and connections within the dataset. This phase involved a comprehensive review and refinement of the identified themes, ensuring accuracy and consistency in their representation.

The iterative nature of thematic analysis was important in refining the themes, allowing for the detailed interpretation of the data. Themes were not only identified but also contextualized within the broader narrative, offering a more profound understanding of the interplay between transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior in Chinese higher education. The last stage of this analysis process resulted in a final report that synthesized the identified themes, providing a coherent and comprehensive representation of the study's findings. The iterative approach, from data familiarization to theme refinement, enhanced the credibility and validity of the study, ensuring that the insights gleaned accurately reflected the complex dynamics observed within the data.

4. Results and Discussion

The exploration of participants' narratives brought forth a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics surrounding transformational leadership, teacher trust and teachers' innovative work behavior in Chinese higher education. Beyond the overarching themes, the stories shared by educators revealed their unique experiences, each contributing specifically to the broader narrative. Based on the results of the thematic analysis, the related themes are illustrated as follows.

Visionary Leadership as a Motivator

The influence of visionary leadership emerged vividly in participants' anecdotes. A teacher shared, "Our leaders don't just talk about change, in contrast, they paint a vivid picture of what education could be in the future. It's not just motivating; it's inspiring." This emphasis on inspiration over mere motivation underscores the profound impact of visionary leaders who go beyond setting goals, effectively crafting a narrative that sparks educators' belief in their role as transformative agents. Another participant echoed this insight "Our leaders make us believe in big possibilities, and that's what drives us to innovate." These narratives emphasize the transformative power of visionary leadership in cultivating a sense

of purpose that propels educators to explore unconventional and innovative teaching methods aligned with broader educational aspirations.

Teacher Trust as a Catalyst

Teacher trust emerged as a foundational catalyst in participants' stories, illustrating its indispensable role in fostering an environment conducive to innovation. One teacher reflected, "Trust is not just about words; it's about actions. When leaders are open and honest, it creates a sense of security." This emphasis on the tangible actions of leaders reinforces the idea that trust is built on a foundation of transparent communication and shared values. Another participant shared, "In a trusting environment, there's a psychological safety net. It encourages us to take risks and implement innovative practices without the fear of negative repercussions." These quotes illuminate the transformative nature of trust, creating a safe space that emboldens educators to take creative risks, knowing they are supported and valued.

Individual Empowerment Through Leadership

Beyond the overarching themes, participants highlighted instances of individual empowerment facilitated by transformational leadership. A teacher recounted, "Our leaders understand our strengths and encourage us individually. It's not just about the big picture; it's about recognizing our unique contributions." This individualized consideration was repeatedly emphasized, pointing to a leadership approach that goes beyond collective inspiration to recognize and nurture the specific strengths and potential of each educator. These instances of personalized encouragement were seen as powerful drivers for educators to bring their distinctive ideas into the classroom, fostering a culture of innovation from the ground up.

Communication and Consistency in Building Trust

The importance of transparent communication and consistency in building trust was a recurrent theme. A participant shared, "When leaders consistently communicate openly, it builds a foundation of trust. It's not just about big decisions; it's about the everyday conversations." This emphasis on the everyday interactions between leaders and educators highlights the holistic nature of trust-building. It's not confined to major decisions but is woven into the fabric of daily communication and interactions, emphasizing the need for authenticity and reliability in leadership practices.

4.1 Implications of Findings

The implications drawn from these results underscore the transformative potential of both transformational leadership and teacher trust in shaping a culture of innovation in Chinese higher education. These elements are not merely theoretical constructs but tangible drivers that influence educators' willingness to explore and implement creative teaching methods.

Transformational leadership behaviors. The impact of transformational leadership behaviors was vividly portrayed in participants' narratives. Visionary guidance, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized

consideration collectively created an environment where creativity could thrive. One participant shared, "Our leaders encourage us to think outside the box, pushing us to be creative in our teaching methods." This emphasis on creative thinking and intellectual stimulation reflected the influence of leadership behaviors on educators' innovative approaches.

Individualized consideration. The individualized consideration aspect was particularly noteworthy. Leaders who understood the unique strengths of their educators and encouraged them individually were seen as instrumental in fostering innovative work behavior. This personalized support was identified as a driver for bringing unique ideas into the classroom, highlighting the significance of recognizing and valuing individual contributions.

Teacher trust and willingness to innovate. The findings consistently pointed to the pivotal role of teacher trust in creating a conducive environment for innovation. Transparent communication and consistency were highlighted as foundational elements in building trust. Participants expressed that when trust was established, they felt safe and secure to experiment with new teaching methods. This connection between trust and a willingness to innovate aligns with the idea that a culture of openness and consistency fosters a climate where educators feel empowered to take risks.

The interplay between transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior. The interplay between transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior was a recurrent theme in the results. Instances where leaders effectively communicated a compelling vision, demonstrated genuine care, and fostered a trusting environment were consistently linked to increased confidence and enthusiasm among educators to experiment with innovative teaching methods. This interplay emphasizes the interconnected nature of these factors and their collective influence on shaping a culture of innovation within educational institutions.

4.2 Practical Implications

The practical implications of these results extend beyond theoretical considerations. Educational institutions and leaders in China are presented with a clear roadmap for fostering innovation. Cultivating transformational leadership behaviors, including visionary guidance, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, can be a deliberate strategy for promoting an environment where creativity thrives. Simultaneously, the establishment and nurturing of teacher trust through transparent communication and consistency provide the essential foundation for innovation to take root. Ultimately, the qualitative insights from these results contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior. They provide a practical guide for leaders and institutions seeking to enhance their educational landscape, fostering an environment that not only embraces innovation but also positions Chinese higher education as a global leader in creativity and excellence.

5. Conclusion

In summary, the qualitative analysis of narratives in Chinese higher education reveals the influential role of transformational leadership and teacher trust in fostering innovative work behavior. Visionary leadership, vividly portrayed by leaders painting an inspiring future for education, instills a collective sense of purpose, motivating educators to explore unconventional teaching methods aligned with broader educational aspirations. Simultaneously, trust emerges as a cornerstone, creating a safe environment through transparent communication and shared values, encouraging educators to take risks and implement innovative practices without fear of repercussions. Individual empowerment through recognition is a notable theme, emphasizing the personalized nature of transformative leadership. Leaders understanding and valuing individual strengths contribute to a culture where educators feel acknowledged and motivated to bring unique ideas into the educational space, fostering innovation from within. Communication and consistency in trust-building are critical components, underlining the need for authentic, reliable leadership practices that contribute to a culture of openness and shared values.

In practical terms, these findings provide a roadmap for educational institutions and leaders to cultivate a culture of innovation. By recognizing the symbiotic relationship between transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior, institutions can strategically enhance their educational landscape, positioning themselves as hubs of creativity and excellence in the global arena. The narratives shared by educators in this study serve as a powerful testament to the transformative potential of leadership and trust, offering valuable insights into the continued evolution of higher education.

6. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the interplay of transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior in Chinese higher education, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations. Firstly, the qualitative nature of the research limits the generalizability of findings to a broader population. The study focused on a specific group of educators in a particular cultural and institutional context, and caution should be exercised in extrapolating the results to different settings.

Secondly, the reliance on self-reported narratives introduces the potential for social desirability bias. Participants may have been inclined to present their experiences in a favorable light, impacting the accuracy of the data. Additionally, the study's cross-sectional design captures a snapshot in time, offering a static view of the dynamic relationship between leadership, trust and innovation. Longitudinal studies could provide a more nuanced understanding of how these factors evolve over time. Lastly, the study did not delve into the potential influence of external factors such as policy changes, economic shifts or technological advancements. These external dynamics could significantly impact the educational landscape but were beyond the scope of this research.

To address these limitations and further advance our understanding, future research endeavors could adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative insights with quantitative measures. This would allow for a more comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the relationships between transformational leadership, teacher trust and innovative work behavior. Additionally, expanding the study to encompass a more diverse participant pool across various regions and educational levels in China would enhance the generalizability of findings. Comparative studies could also explore how cultural variations impact the observed dynamics. Longitudinal studies tracking the evolution of leadership, trust and innovation over time would provide valuable insights into the sustainability and long-term effects of these factors. Moreover, investigating the influence of external factors on the educational landscape could contribute to a more holistic understanding of the forces shaping innovative practices in higher education.

In conclusion, recognizing these limitations and pursuing future research along these recommended lines will contribute to a more robust and nuanced comprehension of the complex interplay between leadership, trust and innovation in Chinese higher education and beyond.

7. Acknowledgments

8. References
Appelbaum, R. P. (2018). Innovation in China: *Challenging the global science and technology system.* https://openlibrary.org/books/OL27849249M/Innovation_in_China

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). Conceptual and design thinking for thematic analysis. *Qualitative Psychology, 9*(1), 3–26. https://doi.org/10.1037/qup0000196

Brennan, L., Cusack, T., Delahunt, E., Kuznesof, S., & Donnelly, S. (2019). Academics' conceptualisations of the research-teaching nexus in a research-intensive Irish university: A dynamic framework for growth & development. *Learning and Instruction, 60,* 301–309. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2017.10.005

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership.* NY: Harper & Row.

Chen, L., Zhang, J., Zhu, Y., Shan, J., & Zeng, L. (2023). Exploration and practice of humanistic education for medical students based on volunteerism. *Medical Education Online, 28*(1). https://doi.org/10.1080/10872981.2023.2182691

Chin, T., Rowley, C., Redding, G., & Wang, S. (2018). Chinese strategic thinking on competitive conflict: insights from Yin-Yang harmony cognition. *International Journal of Conflict Management, 29*(5), 683–704. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijcma-09-2017-0101

Choo, A. T. B., Van Dun, D. H., & Wilderom, C. P. (2021). Innovative work behavior in Singapore evoked by transformational leaders through innovation support and readiness. *Creativity and Innovation Management, 30*(4), 697–712. https://doi.org/10.1111/caim.12462

Connolly, M., James, C., & Fertig, M. (2017). The difference between educational management and educational leadership and the importance of educational responsibility. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *47*(4), 504–519. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143217745880

Cui, J., Sun, J., & Bell, R. (2021). The impact of entrepreneurship education on the entrepreneurial mindset of college students in China: The mediating role of inspiration and the role of educational attributes. *The International Journal of Management Education*, *19*(1), 100296. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2019.04.001

Dan, H., Zheng, M., Cheng, W., Lau, Y., & Yin, Q. (2019). Interaction between higher education outputs and industrial structure evolution: Evidence from Hubei Province, China. *Sustainability*, *11*(10), 2923. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11102923

De Pee, S., & Vululleh, N. (2020). Role of universities in transforming society: Challenges and practices. In *Emerald Publishing Limited eBooks*. https://doi.org/10.1108/s2055-364120200000032005

Fuller, S. (2016). *The academic Caesar: University leadership is hard*. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473984264

Geall, S., & Ely, A. (2018). Narratives and pathways towards an ecological civilization in contemporary China. *The China Quarterly*, *236*, 1175–1196. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0305741018001315

Hallinger, P., Liu, S., & Piyaman, P. (2017). Does principal leadership make a difference in teacher professional learning? A comparative study China and Thailand. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, *49*(3), 341–357. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1407237

Herrmann-Pillath, C., Feng, X., & Guo, M. (2019). Entrepreneurs and ritual in China's economic culture. *Journal of Institutional Economics*, *15*(5), 775–789. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1744137419000201

Huang, J. (2020). Successes and Challenges: Online teaching and learning of chemistry in higher education in China in the time of COVID-19. *Journal of Chemical Education*, *97*(9), 2810–2814. https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jchemed.0c00671

Huang, Y., Pang, S., & Yu, S. (2016). Academic identities and university faculty responses to new managerialist reforms: experiences from China. *Studies in Higher Education*, *43*(1), 154–172. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2016.1157860

Karacabey, M. F., Bellibaş, M. Ş., & Adams, D. (2020). Principal leadership and teacher professional learning in Turkish schools: examining the mediating effects of collective teacher efficacy and teacher trust. *Educational Studies*, *48*(2), 253–272. https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2020.1749835

Khan, M. A., Ismail, F., Hussain, A., & Al-Ghazali, B. M. (2020). The interplay of leadership styles, innovative work behavior, organizational culture, and organizational citizenship behavior. *SAGE Open*, *10*(1), 215824401989826. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019898264

Litz, D., & Scott, S. (2016). Transformational leadership in the educational system of the United Arab Emirates. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *45*(4), 566–587. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143216636112

Liu, P. (2018). Transformational leadership research in China (2005–2015). *Chinese Education and Society*, *51*(5), 372–409. https://doi.org/10.1080/10611932.2018.1510690

Morales, V. J. G., Garrido-Moreno, A., & Rojas, R. M. (2021). The Transformation of Higher Education after the COVID disruption: Emerging challenges in an online

learning scenario. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*.
https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.616059

Samad, A., Muchiri, M., & Shahid, S. (2021). Investigating leadership and employee well-being in higher education. *Personnel Review*, *51*(1), 57–76. https://doi.org/10.1108/pr-05-2020-0340

Sun, J., Xue-Jun, C., & Zhang, S. (2017). A review of research evidence on the antecedents of transformational leadership. *Education Sciences*, *7*(1), 15. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci7010015

Xu, C. L., & Montgomery, C. (2018). Educating China on the move: A typology of contemporary Chinese higher education mobilities. *Review of Education*, *7*(3), 598–627. https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.3139

Yang, H. (2023). Future perspectives for higher education: A Delphi-based scenario study with special regard to elite higher education institutions and leadership education future perspectives for higher education. *Social Science Journal*, 1–4. https://doi.org/10.1080/03623319.2023.2274716

Zheng, X., Yin, H., & Wang, M. (2018). Leading with teachers' emotional labour: relationships between leadership practices, emotional labour strategies and efficacy in China. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, *24*(8), 965–979. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2018.1508432

Zhu, X., & Li, J. (2018). Conceptualizing the ontology of higher education with Chinese characteristics. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *50*(12), 1144–1156. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2018.1504707

Zhuang, T. (2023). *Engineering teaching in China's higher education: A social realist approach*. Taylor & Francis.