

Challenges Toward Practicing Lecturers' Transformational Leadership at Public Universities in Afghanistan

Faridullah Salarzai¹ and Masoud Hasanzai²

¹Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Kunduz University, AFGHANISTAN.

²Lecturer, Pashto Language and Literature, Kabul University, AFGHANISTAN.

²Corresponding Author: farid_salarzai@yahoo.com



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ABSTRACT

Transformational leadership has been widely investigated in business and educational sectors; however, little is known about its practices in a classroom setting. This study unveiled challenges toward practicing transformational leadership at public universities in Afghanistan by using a descriptive case study design of the qualitative method. The study used in-person interviews and classroom observations as research data collection instruments. The study also practiced the criterion technique of purposive sampling in order to select the right participants for the study. The interview data was saturated when the sample reached twelve participants, and used Nvivo12 for thematic analysis of the data. The result of the study showed that there are seventeen challenges when transformational lecturers practice transformational leadership in their working area.

Keywords- Transformational Leadership, Transformational lecturers, Challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan had suffered from more than three decades of ongoing wars and conflicts. During that life span, most Afghan children have grown up illiterate. Following the communist coup in 1978 and the Soviet invasion in 1979, educational foundations were ruined entirely, and teachers were killed. Many people would say that education is a threat to Islamic values and Afghanistan's very existence (Roof, 2014). The number of students enrolled in university dropped to 8000 across the country, and only eight public higher education institutions existed before 2001 (Baiza, 2013; Couch, 2019). Since 2001, there has been a massive growth in higher education. Currently, hundreds of thousands of students pursue their education at around 140 private and 38 public universities. Students who pursue their education have a strong belief in education's value (Holland & Yousofi, 2014). Afghanistan needs a robust educational system in which seasoned and qualified instructors have to be placed. Besides, standard teaching and learning material, quality education, and teaching

methodology are crucial for the growth of Afghanistan's economy and stability (Holland & Yousofi, 2014).

The number of teachers is getting increased, and simultaneously the roles of teachers and teaching strategies change and become more complex and specialized. Likewise, teachers play a crucial part in providing, backing, and encouraging quality instruction. Numerous studies have found that teaching quality has an important influence on the students' achievements (Darling Hammond, 2000).

In higher education institutions, instructors influence students inside the classroom. Still, the instructors also affect their students outside the classroom in course-related matters, e.g., informal meetings and talking after the course (Balwant, 2016).

Some researchers also argued that the classroom is considered a quasi-organization as the teacher plays the role of a leader and students form the role of followers (Balwant, 2016; Pounder, 2008a; Weaver & Qi, 2005). Therefore, higher education institutions are social organizations due to the assertion of power, assigning and negotiating responsibilities, and formal and informal

interplaying of social structure for accomplishing tasks (Weaver & Qi, 2005).

Harrison (2011) also stated that higher education and other social organizations are identical because lecturers or instructors also influence their students by determining the students' future development and involve students in the course as a leader influences his/her subordinates.

Lecturers also play a crucial role in student development and their leadership significantly influences students' behavior in a classroom context. Lecturers prepare students with skills and proficiencies to succeed in the classroom and workplace (Achieng-Ayodo, 2016). Furthermore, the lecturers improve the classroom atmosphere by setting purposeful strategies and techniques, and lecturers lead students to experience change and achieve students' course goals (Lai & Cheung, 2015). Similarly, Lieberman (2011) stated that a lecturer or instructor is in a unique position to make change happen. However, expected results and goals cannot be achieved without proper leadership (Salarzai & Abdullah, 2023).

Teaching in the classroom is succeeded when the teacher or lecturer regards himself as a classroom leader, formulates the teaching with a purpose and goal in mind, involves the students in the classroom discussion, provides goals for the students, strives to enhance their teaching method, and ensures students attain the appropriate knowledge of the course (Drummond, 2013). As a leader, the lecturer fixes and sets course goals and objectives, upgrades students' critical thinking, refines students' self-discipline, and enhances interpersonal skills.

Lecturers need to practice transformational leadership in the classroom context. The lecturer as a transformational leader demonstrates leadership by role-modeling behavior. According to Ayub Khan (2015), transformational lecturers provide academic and intellectual challenges and develop students through encouragement to change and grow by displaying modeling behavior, exertion of critical thinking, and self-management skills.

Problem Background

Educator, as one of the leading changing agents, plays a crucial part in the transformation of the environment. Crowther (1997) opined that teachers as leaders are acclaimed for their pedagogical excellence and for stimulating change in the environment and socio-economically disadvantaged societies in which teachers work. Furthermore, the teacher as a leader coaches colleagues, settles the institution's problems and provides professional growth.

Transformational lecturer implants pride, receives trust and respect, and upsurges optimism (Pounder, 2006). According to Chen (1994), classroom leadership positively and robustly affects classroom social climate and students' affective performance (Pounder, 2006). The best teacher is a strong classroom leader who is also understanding and friendly (Wubbels et al. 1997).

As the higher education system has bloomed rapidly worldwide, a centralized system has hindered the improvement of public universities' quality and ability to respond to social needs (World Bank, 2012b). University teachers need to deliver quality education to students. The interaction between students and academic staff is crucial to students learning (Aturupane, 2013).

Besides, the low capabilities, weak guidance, the shortage of students' ascendancy, and stumpy student encouragement are the reasons that cause the students not to receive the skills useful for their societal environment (Momand, 2017). Furthermore, a weak relationship between teachers and students leads to deficient student engagement because teachers cannot foster students' academic enabling behavior without an ongoing relationship or positive and collaborative classroom culture (Goldstein, 2020; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; DiPerna & Elliot, 2002).

Research Objectives

This study aims to find out the challenges facing lecturers while practicing transformational leadership at public universities in Afghanistan. The study will obtain the following research objective.

i. Objective: To describe the challenges faced by lecturers as transformational leaders when applying transformational leadership at public universities in Afghanistan.

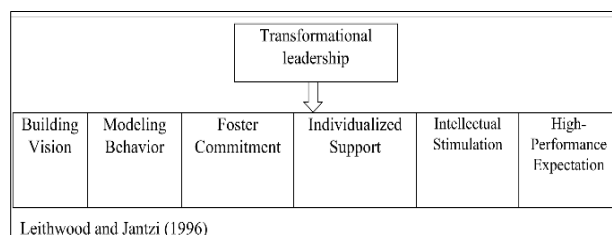
Research Question

The research question was answered through the interviews and classroom observations of the case study participants. It framed a qualitative study to explore the challenges of practicing transformational leadership in a classroom context. The study answered the following central research question.

Research Question: What challenges are faced by transformational lecturers while implementing the dimensions of transformational leadership?

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study aimed to find out the challenges of practicing transformational leadership at public universities in Afghanistan. The researchers used Leithwood and Jantzi's (1996) transformational leadership model. Their model includes six indicators which are building vision, modeling behavior, fostering commitment, individualized support, intellectual stimulation, and high-performance expectation. This study is grounded on this model as its all dimensions are applicable in a classroom setting and particularly compatible with lecturers' leadership style.



Significance of the Study

The classroom is like a small organization, where the lecturer is a leader and his students are his followers. The study of transformational leadership in a classroom context is crucial to the academic studies' contribution to the improvement of students' contextual performance. The study will be crucial for university staff and lecturers who intend to transform the traditional education system, solely teaching and learning. Transformational lecturers will first recommend solutions to the challenges that emerged in this study toward practicing transformational leadership in a classroom setting, and use the strategies used for practicing transformational leadership. Above all, the study will be a source of reference for the Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan to eradicate the barriers in front of practicing transformational leadership dimensions at public universities in Afghanistan.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the challenges toward practicing transformational leadership at public universities in Afghanistan. The study used Leithwood and Jantzi's (2006) transformational leadership model which has six dimensions; building vision, modeling behavior, intellectual stimulation, individual support, fostering commitment, and setting high-performance expectations.

II. METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative research paradigm to describe the challenges faced by the lecturers while practicing transformational leadership at public universities in Afghanistan. As little is known about the challenges of practicing transformational leadership, a qualitative approach is suitable. According to (Johnson & Larry, 2014; Hancock and Algozzine (2006), qualitative research is the best fit when there is little known about a phenomenon and a need for more discovery and learning. Therefore, it is justified to select the descriptive design of the qualitative method to give further understating of the challenges of practicing transformational leadership.

Moreover, as this study described the challenges of practicing transformational leadership in some specific public universities in Afghanistan, a descriptive case study is well-suited. McDonough (2014) opined that a descriptive case study could be in narrative form. The current study also described the challenges of the participants' narrations.

Participants for this study were selected from four public universities in the northeastern provinces of Afghanistan. Lecturers and students from different ethnic groups are pursuing knowledge at the universities in the

northeastern provinces of Afghanistan. Therefore, it was rationalized to take the sample from this region where the majority and minority ethnicities existed in the lectureship and studentship positions.

It is critical for the study to select the right participants with the most knowledge because the research study depends on validity, honesty, and actual participation (Yin, 2014). Furthermore, qualitative researchers are purposeful in selecting participants. The researchers chose purposive sampling because of believed in providing sufficient insight and understanding about the phenomenon (Ary et al., 2010). The initial criterion for sample size is the redundancy of information or data saturation. The data was saturated when the sample size reached 12 out of 30 potential participants.

In order to select the right participants, the research set three criteria for the potential participants. The criteria included understanding both the official languages of Afghanistan and English Language, practicing transformational leadership in their home institutions, and having ten years of teaching experience. The research identified the potential participants by distributing a questionnaire developed by Leithwood and Jantzi (2006), with minimal amendments, along with other items asking about other criteria. The researcher also received written consent from Leithwood to use their instrument for this study. The questionnaire was randomly distributed to 150 lecturers of 550 population size. Thirty respondents were identified who met the criteria and were considered potential study participants.

Later, the researcher conducted in-person in-depth interviews with the potential participants and performed on-site observation concurrently to support the interviews. Hancock and Algozzin (2006) stated that the semi-structured interview is well-suited to case study research. Researchers use predetermined but flexible reworded questions to dive deep into the issues. The participants were interviewed individually because an ample amount of information is yielded in an individual interview (Hancock & Algozzin, 2006). Later on, the researcher used Nvivo12 for thematic analysis of the interview transcriptions.

In addition, the observational data aims to provide a clearer understanding and more information about the case in a more natural setting. Lodico, Spaulding, and Voegtler (2010) stated that using observation as a tool to collect information to ensure that the phenomenon is observed in a naturalistic setting.

This study used Yin's (2014) data analysis steps. Yin's (2014) method of data analysis process includes five steps: (a) compiling the data; (b) disassembling the data; (c) reassembling the data; (d) interpreting the meaning of the data, and (e) concluding the data.

Data Analysis Procedure	Taking actions
1. Compiling the data 2. Disassembling the data	– Using NVIVO 12 for coding and identifying themes to answer research questions.

3. Reassembling the data

4. Interpreting the meaning of the data

– Integrating sub-themes to Answer the Research question

5. Concluding the data

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories and Models of Transformational Leadership

Several models have been developed since the concept of transformational leadership was founded by J Victory in 1973. Leithwood (1996) used transformational leadership in the school setting. He developed a model of transformational leadership comprised of six dimensions attributed to the school's principal. However, this study concentrates on lecturers' behaviors in the higher education context. The researchers adopted the questionnaire into an interview protocol, and from the principal to the lecturer's perspective. The main reason for choosing Leithwood and Janzi's (1996) transformational leadership model is that all of the six dimensions are attributable to a lecturer and contemplate an extensive perception as compared to other models and theories such as Bass (1985) or Burn (1978) transformational leadership theories.

3.1 Burn's (1978) Transformational Leadership Theory

In the late 20th century, Burns (1978) devised the theory of transformational leadership in politics. Burns believed that transformational leadership uplifts subordinates to esteemed needs (Givens, 2008). Burn proposed two components for the leadership process: transformational and transactional leadership. Burns (1978), through analysis of leadership behavior in an organization and the nature of leaders' influence on a follower, identified two significant leadership forms: transactional and transformational. Transactional leaders concentrate on methods, techniques, and mechanisms rather than on broader ends and purposes to fulfill organizational members' self-interests and handle daily corporate operations. On the other hand, transformational leadership attempts to satisfy followers' higher-level growth needs and transform their interests into shared concerns (Burns, 1978, p. 4). Transactional leadership is not moral in that. It is self-centered and manipulative (Kanungo, 2001). Burn believed that transactional and transformational leadership are both separate points in leadership, and they are mutually exclusive (Jandaghiet al., 2009; Moghali, 2002).

3.2 Bass (1985) Transformational Leadership Theory

Bass (1985) developed a full set of leadership ranges namely, laissez-fair, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership. Bass (1990) said that transformational leaders have a better relationship with the leaders as compared to those who are applying only transactional leadership (Bass, 1990). Bass's (1985) transformational leadership substituted Burns' (1978) transformational leadership model and made the concept more natural to understand transformational leadership's

contents. Bass (1998) said that transformational leadership improves followers' engagement, loyalty, commitment, and performance. On the contrary, transactional leadership may bring more stress and pressure (Bass, 1999). There were three factors expressed in Bass's (1985) original theory of transformational leadership: charisma, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation.

3.3 Bennis and Nanus (1985) Transformational Leadership

Bennis and Nanus (1985) described that transformational leadership is when followers are transformed into leaders and leaders into change agents. They further stated that transformational leader cultivates commitment and motivation among subordinates when the leader considers the vision, creates trust among followers, and facilitates the organization's learning. Bannus and Nanus (1985) included four strategies for improving followers' motivation. These strategies are; attention through vision, meaning through communication, trust through position, and self-confidence through positive self-regard (Bennis and Nanus, 2007). According to Bennis (1985), transformational leadership begins with a vision, but only the vision is not enough; it is communicated to give meaning to the followers to direct them toward goals.

3.4 Leithwood's (1996) Transformational Leadership Model

After instructional leadership lost its consideration in the late 20th century due to no capturing of school administration's hearts because of designing new restructuring school initiatives for the 21st Century, Leithwood (1992) brought transformational leadership to the education setting. He wanted to bring second-order change in school systems in which instructional leadership was not sufficient. Second-order change is seeing a new way of things, which needs a transformation in an organization's current structure. He suggested three things as the requirements of second-order changes: developing a shared vision, creating productive work cultures, and distributing leadership to others. Teachers are stimulated by transformational leadership to engage in new activities out of the classroom and make an extra effort (Leithwood & Poplin, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991). Similarly, it indicates that transformational leader and followers work harder to be loyal to their group's improvement. Moreover, Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) further developed the transformational leadership model which has six dimensions including building vision, modeling behavior, fostering commitment, providing individual support, intellectual stimulation, and high-performance expectations.

Vision: Nanus (1992) said that vision is truthful, trustworthy, and striking for the future of an organization. Vision also concerns the goals that an organization attempts to achieve. Likewise, vision is one of the critical behaviors of leadership used when an organization needs to seek an opportunity for organizational growth and development (Conger, 1991; Densten, 2002). The leader actively builds a clear vision through activities of the organization, communication with employees, and the use of his charisma to better develop the organization.

Modeling Behavior: Leithwood said that modeling includes "walking the talk"- leaders do not only orally say something, rather, they bring it into practice, giving pride to the followers, symbolizing success, and having respect, trust, and confidence in their followers (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

Foster Commitment: Teacher commitment is defined as why teachers continue tireless efforts to inspire their students' learning, care for their students' comfort, and become more effective (Day and Gu, 2007, 2009; Day et al., 2007; Fransson & Frelin, 2016). In an educational context, committed teachers are more likely to symbolize hard work, devote more time to teaching activities, and exert more effort beyond their interests and needs (Reyes, 1990; Thien & Razak, 2014).

Individualized Support: Leithwood (1996) stated that practicing individualized support aims that leaders will respect every single member of staff. Leaders, through individualized support, consider the personal feelings and needs of their followers. Besides, leaders pay more attention to their followers, treat them as an individual, acquaint well with them, and listen to their concerns and ideas when they apply individual consideration (Kirkbride, 2006; Ogola, 2017; Sarros and Santora, 2001; Stashevsky et al., 2006).

Intellectual Stimulation: By considering intellectual stimulation, the leader challenges the followers to review their work, and the followers will have to rethink their work. Intellectual stimulation also upgrades the followers' capacity to a higher level and leads to creative and innovative efforts. So, transformational leaders practice intellectual stimulation to generate and stimulate creativity in their followers, refine followers' practices, and perform other related tasks effectively. A leader who applies intellectual stimulation seeks to motivate employees to think carefully about their work and reflect on new approaches that make their work more effective (Peng et al., 2016).

High-performance expectation: leader also sets impressive goals and shows their subordinates what the leader expects. Besides, setting clear expectations for subordinates curtails confusion and escalates the chances of followers' success in achieving goals (Jacobsen & Andersen, 2019). It is also believed that employees are less engaged when they do not have a vivid understanding of what is required of them.

Previous Studies on Challenges Toward Practicing Transformational Leadership

Schiller (2003, p. 172) stated that the leaders of school improvement and ICT integration need to have computer expertise. Principals had better improve their expertise and skills in computers and other technologies, as well as they have to know the worth of modern technologies in schooling. It is also disclosed by Afshari et al. (2012) that the role of the principal as a transformational is probably influenced by the use of computers and other activities carried out for professional development. Their finding implies that transformational leaders in the education sector need to be accustomed to new technologies.

Likewise, there are various barriers reported for practicing the elements of transformational leadership. For instance, some of the institutional barriers affect modeling behaviors. The organizational structure that burdens employees with excessive work, bearing inadequate time for instructing (Ludmerer, 1999), paucity of institutional support for teaching (Hafferty, 1998; Inui, 2003), and culture that leads to the poor relationship between the members (Inui, 2003).

Bumgarner (2016) conducted an interview-driven qualitative study in the public sector to explore why the leaders of public sectors were challenged to manage employee performance and explore the role of transformational leadership. Bumgarner (2016) explored nine major obstacles that restrain employee performance. The most common barriers were subordinates' self-preservation interests, market pay disparity, employee low motivation levels, and inadequate leadership training. However, his study focused on the business sector which is undoubtedly different from the education sector, particularly from a classroom setting. Therefore, challenges toward practicing the elements of transformational leadership by lecturers in a classroom setting are felt necessary to fill the gap.

Likewise, Navickaite and Janiunaite (2012) carried out case study research to explore the hindrances to the school's transformational principal the principal processes the change. Their study examined some internal and external barriers. According to Hadimani (2003), external barriers pertain to political, market, social, and constitutional, whereas internal obstructions concern the institution's structure and strategy. Their study exposed the following external barriers toward implementing change through the principal's transformational leadership: the sluggishness of other schools, the negative attitude of the public towards the school, and the disregarding of change expressed by the founder. However, internal barriers included fear teachers of change, doubt, aversion to taking responsibility and changing self, students' disinterest, and blindness to parents' change.

IV. RESULT

There were a total of 17 challenges that emerged in the interviews toward practicing transformational

leadership in a classroom setting. The following figure showcases the challenges of practicing each of the dimensions of transformational leadership.

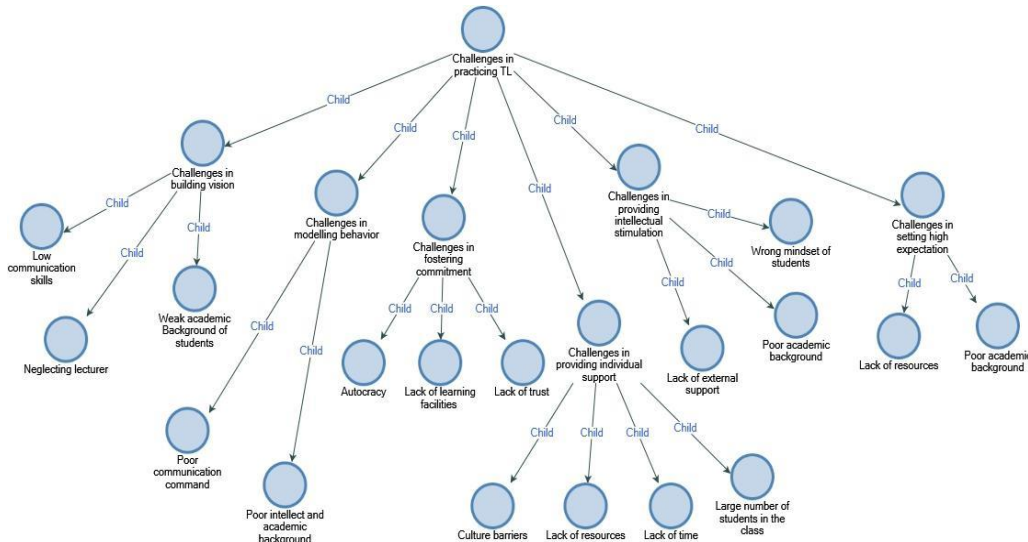


Figure: Challenges toward practicing transformational leadership

Challenges in Practicing Building Vision
Low communication skill

The researcher asked the faculty members “What challenges are you facing when you give visions to your students to enhance their performance?” The study participants disclosed several challenges facing them while building a vision for their students. The first challenge that appeared in the interview responses was the

low capacity of students. Of 12 participants, 10 participants believed that the students' weak academic background was challenging for a reasonable vision practice. They stated that students are vulnerable and rarely achieve whatever is given to them according to the syllabus. Some of the interview responses are given below:

Participant	Description
Participant1They did not simply adopt the University rules and did not care about the lecturers. Moreover, the poor educational background is another challenge to provide the vision....”
Participant6	“.... Sometimes I face challenges. For some subjects they study, they think that the subjects do not have links to real life. So, they might think that studying these things is useless. They consider the subjects superficially, not profoundly, and they do not remember the lesson well in other semesters.....”
Observation	Description
(Observation1, University C, Class C	“Some of the students showed their concern regarding the volume of the lecturer's notes provided to them. Some students asked the instructors; the lecturer's notes are extremely lengthy, how it would be possible to learn it in one semester
Observation 3, University B, Class B	The observation recorded “Students’ looked noisy in the class, and some of the students’ mobiles rang while the instructor was teaching. it looked like the ringing mobile was distracting the teaching

Neglecting Lecturer

The second challenge unveiled in participants’ responses is that some students ignore the lecturers. Out of 12 participants, 7 participants believed that students ignore their lecturers and do not pay much attention to their suggestions. When the participants asked about this challenge's reasons, they presented various reasons for such a problem. The lecturers pointed out that most

students have come from rural areas where the quality of education is relatively low. Therefore, they keep themselves marginalized and do not tend to participate in classroom activities. It was also found that the majority of students do not take subjects or learning materials earnestly, and they deal with them superficially. Here are some of the excerpts of the participants’ responses:

Participant	Description
Participant 1	".... the students who are from rural areas also ignore the lecturer and do not consider their suggestion seriously...."
Participant 7	some students are weak and do not care what is told to them. It is because they have come from very rural areas where the level of education is very incompetent...
Participant 9	".... there are different challenges, the first one is... some students ignore the lecturers. and do not pay attention to the lecturers...."
Observation	Description
(Observation4, University C, Class B	"...the number of students was increased in the class, some of the students were in the back of the classroom using the smartphone and looked indifferent in the class..."
Observation 3, University B, Class B	"...the instructor asked the students about previous assignments and some of the students responded that they had not done their assignments and did not present any reasonable excuses or justification for not doing their assignment ..."

Low Communication Skills of the Student

The last challenge that appeared in the data was students' low communication skills. The lecturer unveiled

that students have low communication skills, so it is challenging to implement the vision properly.

Participant	Description
Participant 8	"..... there are many challenges to this problem. for example, students' weak ability, their wrong mindset, lack of knowledge in leadership and communication skills...."
Participant 12	".... When wan I want to make my students think like a leader, they have some communication problem.... I mean students' low communication skills is a challenge for me...."
Participant 9	".... their communication skill is also another challenge to convince and include others in their life."
Observation	Description
(Observation4, University C, Class B	When the lecturers were asking students' opinions regarding an issue, the students could not communicate well, and some students would be quite against asking questions by the instructor

Challenges Toward Practicing Modeling Behavior

The themes concerning what challenges lecturers face while implementing "modeling behavior" in the classrooms were similar to practicing building vision problems. However, some differences were also identified. The main themes that emerged from collected data contained that students have low intellect and low communication skills.

Poor communication command of students

Participants' feedback illustrated that they traditionally consider them when they teach and apply new classroom methods and do not believe in them. It was also noted that most students have grown up in unsocial areas; they could not copy modeling behavior immediately. Besides, it was also recorded in the participants' responses that students could not communicate the subject matter smoothly. Some of the excerpts from the participants' responses are stated below.

Participant	Description
Participant 4	"...Their communication skill is weak so transferring and applying the behavior model on them..."
Participant 9	".... their communication skill is also another challenge to convince and include others in their life."
Observation	Description
(Observation4, University C, Class B	It was noted that students did not communicate with one another. For instance, when the lecturer asked about a topic, the students could not suitably convey information. Secondly, when the teacher assigned group work, the students looked like they would not carry on activities heartily

Poor Intellect and Academic Background of Students

The second challenge that emerged in the interviews is the low student intellect and educational

background of students. The theme emerged in 4 four of the participants' responses.

Participant	Description
Participant 4	".... The only challenge I face here is that some students who grew up in rural areas do not want to change their behavior very quickly. It took much time, and this makes my work a little bit difficult...."
Participant 6	".....If a lecturer behavior well, some students feel it negatively and think that the lecturer is overacted. The level of student's intellect is low and have a misconception regarding the behavior of lecturers....."
Participant 3	".... most of the students are from rural areas, and they have a poor academic background, it is difficult for them to adjust themselves to the situation easily and quickly. Therefore, I am less able to lead my students with my modeling behaviors...."
Observation	Description
(Observation4, University C, Class B	it was noted that students did not communicate with one another. For instance, when the lecturer asked about a topic, the students could not suitably convey information. Secondly, when the teacher assigned group work, the students looked like they would not carry on activities heartily

Challenges in Practicing Fostering Commitment

The main themes emerged in the participants' responses toward fostering commitment included not considering the ideas of the lecturers by universities' high officials, a lack of learning and teaching facilities, and a lack of trust among students.

The first challenge that emerged in the participants' responses was autocracy in the institutions. Six of the 12 participants stated that they contribute to the faculty and their respective departments. However, sometimes their ideas and suggestions are not considered by the head of the department or dean of the faculties. Some of the interview excerpts are given below:

Autocracy

Participant	Description
P11	".... Sometimes, the head of department and dean of faculty do not consider lecturers' suggestions"
P7	".... sometimes, the dean of the faculty and head of the department ignore lecturers' ideas and impose what they wish
P8	".... the head of the department or dean of the faculty ignores the need for bringing changes, and sometimes they do not consider our suggestion. and they do not feel responsibility...."
Observation	Description
(Observation3, University B, Class B	when the lecturer wanted to consider students as individual considerations, the lecturers would say, "If the department or faculty agree, I conduct a special program for you." The statement was condition-based, which means getting approval regarding arranging special programs for students' learning is a challenge.

Lack of Facilities

The faculty members believed that the lack of teaching and learning resources hindered them from practicing foster commitment. For example, they stated that each lecturer has a specific office to spend teaching-

free time with working and carrying out their full-time duty. The faculty members believed that the lack of such facilities led them being absent from the university. Here are the responses about challenges toward implementing fostering commitment.

Participant	Description
P6	".....There are many challenges while playing commitment. First, lack of resources such as internet, electricity, and a teacher's office. These problems abstain us from the full achievement of set goal...."
P12	"...There are many challenges we are facing, for example, large class size, congested classes. furthermore, sometimes the head of the department or dean of the faculty does not consider the ideas we suggest and imposes what they want..."
Observation	Description
	The challenges that emerged from the participants' interviews were not recorded in the classroom observation because it concerns the universities' top or middle-level management.

Lack of Trust

Some other participants perceived that some lecturers let their students evaluate their progress, but they did not honestly rate their progress toward shared goals. They believed that students evaluate their instructors completely positively even though there may be negative characteristics as well. For instance, a faculty member added, "When we let the student evaluate us. Mostly they

consider all the points positively even if there is something negative in our teaching." The faculty members acknowledged that when they want to apply "foster commitment," they call for students' involvement in setting goals, but they are free-riders and do not share their ideas in setting the students' future goals. Here are some of the responses given by the participants:

Participant	Description
P1	".... Some students feel fear of the lecturers if they evaluate the lecturers negatively. They think that they will face some problems, and the teacher may give them low marks. Therefore, the majority of the students consider every negative thing as positive....."
P4	".... Sometimes students are not eager to participate in the development of the department goals. They think their opinions will not be taken into account. Alternatively, they do not have confidence and think their opinion will not be that fruitful....."
Observation	Description
	The challenges that emerged from the participants' interviews were not recorded in the classroom observation

Challenges in Practicing Providing Individual Support

The major themes that emerged from participants' interviews regarding the challenges faced by lecturers while considering students' individual needs included cultural barriers, lack of resources, lack of time, and class size.

Culture Barrier

Seven participants believed that cultural barriers are another challenge in implementing "individual support." They expressed that lecturers sometimes invite

and make an appointment with the students to know and give them individual support in their learning, but only limited to male students. Nevertheless, female students only receive one-on-one assistance in the class. According to the participants, it is culturally prohibited to make an appointment with female students until they meet as a group. another participant stated, "lecturers cannot provide individual support to a female student outside the class, but few female students can meet with a lecturer."

Participant	Description
P11	"...There are some cultural issues as well as female students receive individual support as compared to their male counterparts...."
P2	".... There are some cultural issues as well that female students are less receive individual support as compared to their male counterparts...."
Observation	Description
	As female education has been suspended, the interview responses could not be supported by the observations.

Lack of Resources

Another theme that appeared in the participants' responses regarding challenges against applying "individual support" was the lack of facilities. The participants believed the universities they teach do not have reasonable facilities to help students fulfill their

unique problems or refer them to special programs and activities. One participant stated, "Learning facilities, like the internet, and electricity are the challenges toward giving each student individual support." Other lecturers said that having no libraries, laboratories, and the internet is the biggest challenge to fulfill students' unique needs.

Participant	Description
P11 Lack of technology and cultural restrictions such as individual meetings with female students...
P12	"...., there are various challenges we are facing. For example, no electricity, no facilities such as internet...."
P2	".... learning facilities, like the internet and electricity, are the challenges toward giving each student individual support....."

Observation	Description
Observation 2 University C, Class A	During the class, it was noted that there was a need to carry out an online exercise and recommend it to a specific group of students. However, there was no internet accessibility in the classroom to perform that activity.

Lack of Time

Nine faculties think that the shortage of time is a big challenge for them. They indicated that the least teaching period put them in problems to give individual

support to students. For example, among the participants, one participant stated: "Lack of time is also a challenge because the number of students in the class is very high and needs more time to give individual support."

Participant	Description
P12	".....lack of time is also a challenge because the number of students in the class is very high and needs more time to provide individual support....."
P4	".....While giving students individual support, I face time problems. I need ample time to provide one-on-one assistance to all the students, but I have to teach many classes from 6 to 9. So providing individual support to students in Afghanistan class is a challenging task that a teacher can do....."

Observation	Description
Observation 2 University B, Class B	It was also noted in the observation that the time allocated for the teaching period was not sufficient. It could not adhere to the number of students in the class. Many of the students' learning problems remained unsettled because of the finishing teaching period

Small Classroom

Participants believed that the number of students in the class was considerably high. Ten participants facing the same challenges stated that many students prevent them from reaching an individual's needs and solving their problems in the class. For instance, one participant said,

"There are too many students in the class. Some classes have even more than one hundred students, so it is difficult to give individual support to each student in the class. Another theme noted from the faculty's interviews was lack of time.

Participant	Description
P10	".....The major problem in considering every individual's needs is the small size of the class...."
P5	"...Large classes will prevent me from supporting students individually...."
P9	"...The main challenge in providing individual support is the number of students. each class in the university has a large number of students..."

Observation	Description
Observation 4 University C, Class D	The observation noted, "There were many students in the class, the class looked completely congested, and even the instructor could not walk around the class to reach settle student learning problems from near"

Challenges in Practicing Intellectual Stimulation

The themes that appeared in the participant's responses regarding students' intellectual stimulation challenges involve a lack of external support, students' past educational background, and students' mindsets. The participants claimed the factors mentioned above hinder them from the appropriate application of intellectual stimulation. Some participants stated that a lack of external support like administrative support, family, and

societal support is challenging against students' intellectual stimulation.

Lack of External Support

The challenge that emerged in practicing intellectual stimulation is the lack of external support. Four participants unveiled that a lack of external support is a challenge to an appropriate practice of intellectual stimulation. Here are the participants' views regarding the challenges facing lecturers while implementing intellectual stimulation.

Participant	Description
P2	"....There are some challenges I am facing while applying intellectual stimulation. First, the lack of administrative support, for example, the dean of the faculty, is not fully interested in providing me much opportunity to conduct more extracurricular activities...."

P1 *"...There are no necessary facilities for learning, for example, standard library, internet, electricity. besides this, family support is very crucial to achieve high expected performance...."*

Observation	Description
Observation 1 University A, Class A	The observation recorded that "the lecturer asked the students whether they have done their assignments, which had to be accomplished through online sources. Some students offered excuses and said that they did not have Internet access."

Poor Academic Background

Five faculty members also disclosed that the students' weak educational background hinders the implementation of intellectual stimulation among

students. The participants believed that students refine their work very hard because of their past weak background of education.

Participant	Description
P9	<i>".... Because of the poor academic background of some students, tasks that are given to them may be tough....."</i>
P6	<i>".... Most of the students come from rural areas, and they think the subject is no longer used in their future professional life. Therefore, they are not much interested in learning....."</i>
Observation	Description
	The observation did not find any evidence regarding the statement of P9 stated in the interview.

Student's Negative Mindset

The participants thought that the students' wrong mindset was still a challenge before intellectual stimulation. They said most students think for a short future. They also believed that students' wrong mindset is a challenge. For example, one stated: "The mindset of some students is not improved; they think they study just to receive the degree." Similarly, another participant added, "Some students have a low level of intellect the majority of students think for short terms like they think just to get the degree of graduation.

Challenges in Practicing Setting High-Performance Expectations

The themes emerged from the participants' interviews regarding challenges in setting high-performance expectations, including lack of resources, and low educational background. The faculty members believed that students need to provide formal learning and teaching materials to be creative and innovative. here are some of the participants' responses:

Participant	Description
P6	<i>"...Learning facilities are not provided to students, which is a challenge that prevents students from being active and self-dependent learners..."</i>
P7	<i>".... there are no resources and facilities such as a standard library, internet, and electricity for the students to acquire highly expected performance...."</i>
P1	<i>"...There are no necessary facilities for learning, for example, standard library, internet, electricity."</i>
Observation	Description
Observation 1 University A, Class A	The observation recorded that there were no internet facilities in the class.

Students' Weak Educational Background

Nine of 12 participants believed that students have a weak academic background, which is a challenge before expecting high performance. They clarified that students had not been given activities concerning their

innovation and creativity in their school period. They said it is hard to expect them to be creative and exhibitors of highly expected tasks. Here are some of the participants' responses:

Participant	Description
P10	<i>"..... Some students are extremely weak; they have poor academic backgrounds that stop creativity. If we set high expectations for those weak students, we are failed to achieve them. However, poor performer students should be provided special clinical programs and attention ..."</i>

P9	“..... Some of the students have a poor academic background, they come from rural areas where the quality of education is extremely low. If they are expected highly, they very hardly fulfill it....”
P7	“...Some students are fragile; they do not understand how to carry out high expected task”

Observation	Description
Observation 4 University C, Class D	The observation recorded “when the lecturer wanted to ask to encourage questions, some students would claim the questions are out of their chapter notes.”

Limitations and suggestions for future study

The limitation of the study is described as the boundaries that help or contribute to the study (McManus, 2019; Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Similarly, it is stated by Dusick (2014) that elements that are beyond the control of researchers are called limitations. Lecturers' transformational leadership is a new concept attributed to lecturers, especially in Afghanistan's educational contexts. The study recorded several limitations. First, the current research concentrates merely on lecturers who have been teaching at public universities in the northeastern provinces of Afghanistan. The result of the study is not generalized to other private universities in Afghanistan.

V. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to investigate challenges toward practicing transformational leadership at public universities in Afghanistan. Consequently, it is hoped that the study's findings will be a part of the body of knowledge related to practicing transformational leadership in a classroom setting, and provide benefits to the university lecturers, heads of the departments, and deans of the faculties and to those who work in educational sectors. Furthermore, transformational leadership is essential in a classroom setting to ensure the current traditional approach to teaching and learning.

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