

The Impact of Transformational Leadership Practices on Teacher Retention and Professional Development in Senior High Schools

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between transformational leadership practices and their impact on teacher retention and professional development in senior high schools. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected from 200 senior high school teachers across multiple institutions. Findings reveal significant positive correlations between transformational leadership dimensions (inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) and teacher satisfaction, retention, and engagement in professional development activities. This study underscores the importance of leadership behaviors in enhancing educational outcomes.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Teacher Retention, Professional Development, Senior High Schools

Introduction

Leadership in Education and Teacher Retention

Leadership in education is central to creating a positive school culture that not only improves the quality of teaching but also enhances teacher satisfaction and retention. Research has consistently shown that effective leadership is linked to higher levels of teacher morale, professional development, and overall job satisfaction (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). In particular, transformational leadership has emerged as a crucial leadership style in educational settings. This leadership approach emphasizes inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, encouraging teachers to exceed expectations and embrace continuous professional growth (Abrell et al., 2011; Halliwell et al., 2022).

Transformational leaders focus on developing their teachers' professional skills, providing the necessary support, and fostering a sense of belonging within the school community. These leaders act as role models, motivating their staff to commit to the school's vision and values. Previous studies have highlighted that transformational leadership not only impacts the immediate work environment but also influences long-term teacher retention and engagement in professional development activities (Kilag & Sasan, 2023). By creating an environment where teachers feel valued and supported, transformational leaders can reduce turnover rates and help retain experienced educators.

The Role of Transformational Leadership in Teacher Professional Development

Teacher professional development is a critical factor in improving teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. A key aspect of transformational leadership is the ability to foster an environment conducive to

ongoing professional learning. By encouraging intellectual stimulation and providing opportunities for teachers to engage in professional development, transformational leaders contribute significantly to the growth and retention of educators (Ingraham & Getha-Taylor, 2004). Research has shown that when teachers perceive their leaders as supportive and invested in their professional growth, they are more likely to remain in the profession and engage in continuous learning (Garay-Rondero et al., 2019; Kilag et al., 2022).

Moreover, transformational leadership practices promote autonomy and creativity in the classroom, empowering teachers to experiment with new teaching strategies and reflect on their practice (Ajibade et al., 2022). This autonomy enhances teacher satisfaction, as it provides a sense of professional independence and accomplishment.

Study Objectives and Research Questions

This study aims to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher retention and professional development in senior high schools, a context that has yet to be extensively explored through quantitative research. Specifically, the objectives of the study are as follows:

- To determine the level of transformational leadership practices perceived by teachers: This objective focuses on identifying the degree to which teachers recognize transformational leadership behaviors in their school leaders, such as inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Abrell et al., 2011).
- To assess teacher retention rates and engagement in professional development activities: Understanding the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher retention is crucial in a post-pandemic educational context, where educators may be feeling the strain of workload and external pressures. The study will measure how leadership practices influence teachers' decisions to stay in the profession and engage in professional development (Frahm & Cianca, 2021).
- To identify the relationship between transformational leadership practices and teacher retention: This objective seeks to determine whether there is a significant correlation between the transformational leadership practices perceived by teachers and their intention to remain in the profession. Existing research suggests that a supportive leadership style positively affects teacher retention, particularly in challenging school environments (Abrell et al., 2011).
- To explore the relationship between transformational leadership practices and professional development: The study will also examine how transformational leadership practices influence teachers' participation in professional development programs. Teachers who perceive their leaders as supportive and intellectually stimulating are more likely to seek opportunities for professional growth (Kilag & Sasan, 2023).

Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to the growing body of research on transformational leadership in education, particularly in senior high schools. It addresses a gap in the literature by focusing on a quantitative examination of leadership practices and their direct impact on teacher retention and professional

development. Findings from this study could inform leadership development programs, guiding school leaders in adopting strategies that foster a positive working environment, enhance teacher engagement, and reduce turnover rates. Furthermore, this research will help policymakers and educational administrators understand the critical role of leadership in shaping the future of education.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership in Education

Transformational leadership is a leadership approach that aims to inspire and motivate employees to exceed their personal and professional expectations while working toward achieving shared goals (Abrell et al., 2011). In the educational context, transformational leadership has proven to be an effective method for improving both teacher performance and student outcomes. Transformational leaders engage in behaviors such as setting a compelling vision, providing individualized support, and encouraging innovation, all of which lead to a more dynamic and collaborative school environment. By aligning teachers' individual goals with the school's mission, transformational leaders foster a sense of purpose and belonging, which enhances job satisfaction and productivity (Halliwell et al., 2022). Research shows that these leadership practices significantly contribute to increased teacher self-efficacy—the belief in one's ability to affect student outcomes—and higher organizational commitment, both of which are essential for creating a sustainable educational environment (Ingraham & Getha-Taylor, 2004).

The core components of transformational leadership—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—work synergistically to enhance teachers' emotional investment in their work. For instance, intellectual stimulation encourages teachers to think critically and creatively about their teaching practices, while individualized consideration ensures that teachers' personal needs and professional development goals are supported. These factors help educators feel valued and capable, which leads to increased motivation and a higher commitment to their roles (Abrell et al., 2011; Halliwell et al., 2022).

Teacher Retention

Teacher retention has become an increasingly pressing issue, particularly in schools located in rural areas or those that face high levels of stress and limited resources. Research indicates that a lack of support and recognition from school leadership is a primary contributor to teacher burnout and turnover (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). On the other hand, effective leadership, especially transformational leadership, plays a crucial role in mitigating these challenges by fostering an environment where teachers feel supported, appreciated, and part of a larger mission. Teachers who perceive their leaders as fair, supportive, and responsive to their professional needs are more likely to remain in their positions (Anne Gregory et al., 2021). Transformational leaders build strong interpersonal relationships with their staff, demonstrate empathy, and provide regular feedback and recognition, all of which enhance teachers' emotional and professional satisfaction.

Moreover, teacher retention is not only influenced by external factors such as salary or workload but also by the internal, relational dynamics within a school. Transformational leadership helps nurture a positive school culture where teachers are motivated to invest in the success of the school and remain committed to their teaching profession for the long term. By addressing teachers' needs for professional growth,

autonomy, and recognition, transformational leaders can reduce turnover rates and improve job satisfaction (Frahm & Cianca, 2021).

Professional Development

Professional development is critical for teachers to stay current with evolving educational practices, technological advancements, and pedagogical strategies. Transformational leaders play a pivotal role in facilitating professional development by creating opportunities for continuous learning and growth. Leadership practices that emphasize intellectual stimulation—encouraging teachers to explore new ideas, question assumptions, and engage in collaborative problem-solving—are especially effective in fostering high levels of teacher engagement in professional development programs (Kilag & Sasan, 2023). These leaders actively promote a learning culture where teachers are not only supported in developing their skills but also encouraged to experiment with innovative teaching practices that can improve student outcomes.

Research highlights that when teachers perceive their leaders as catalysts for professional growth, they are more likely to participate in professional development activities and embrace opportunities for self-improvement (Garay-Rondero et al., 2019). This involvement in professional development, in turn, enhances teachers' confidence and competence, leading to greater job satisfaction and a stronger sense of professional identity. Hopkins et al. (2018) emphasize that effective leadership is not simply about providing resources or training opportunities but also about cultivating an environment where teachers feel inspired to take ownership of their professional growth. Transformational leadership, with its emphasis on motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support, is crucial in creating such an environment.

Additionally, professional development in schools that practice transformational leadership often includes opportunities for reflection, peer collaboration, and alignment with the school's broader goals. These elements ensure that professional development initiatives are not only meaningful but also sustainable, leading to long-term benefits for both teachers and students (Kilag & Sasan, 2023). Teachers who feel supported by their leadership are more likely to remain in their roles, and they are also more likely to adopt new teaching strategies that benefit their students (Kilag et al., 2022).

Transformational leadership in education is instrumental in shaping school culture, improving teacher satisfaction, and fostering professional growth. It has a direct impact on teacher retention by creating a supportive and motivating work environment. Furthermore, transformational leaders facilitate meaningful professional development opportunities that encourage continuous learning and innovation. The dynamic relationship between leadership practices, teacher engagement, and retention underscores the importance of transformational leadership in addressing the challenges faced by educational institutions today. By embracing these leadership practices, schools can create a more sustainable and effective educational environment for both teachers and students.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to explore the relationship between transformational leadership practices and their impact on teacher retention and professional development in senior high schools. Descriptive-correlational research is ideal for identifying and understanding patterns

of relationships between variables without manipulating them, making it suitable for studying the natural occurrences of leadership practices and their outcomes in educational settings (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). This design allows for the systematic observation of how transformational leadership correlates with teacher retention rates and engagement in professional development activities, offering insights into the factors that influence teacher satisfaction and longevity in the profession. By focusing on these relationships, the study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on effective leadership practices and their role in shaping educational environments.

Participants

The study sample consisted of 200 senior high school teachers from 10 public and private schools, selected through stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling ensures that different subgroups (such as teachers from public and private schools) are adequately represented, thereby increasing the generalizability of the results to various educational contexts (Halliwell et al., 2022). By including both public and private schools, the study was able to capture a diverse range of teacher experiences and leadership practices across different institutional settings. The total number of participants was determined to be sufficient to provide statistically reliable findings while maintaining manageable data collection efforts. The inclusion of senior high school teachers was intentional, as they represent an important group facing unique challenges related to educational reforms, leadership, and professional development (Anne Gregory et al., 2021).

Instruments

To measure transformational leadership practices, the study employed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), a widely used tool that assesses the four dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Abrell et al., 2011). The MLQ provides a comprehensive evaluation of leadership behaviors and practices that influence teacher motivation, commitment, and performance. This instrument is well-regarded for its reliability and validity in assessing leadership in educational settings (Garay-Rondero et al., 2019).

In addition to the MLQ, a custom-designed survey was developed to assess teacher retention factors and engagement in professional development activities. The survey included questions about factors such as job satisfaction, work environment, leadership support, professional growth opportunities, and career longevity. These factors are known to influence teacher retention and are critical in understanding the broader impact of leadership on teachers' career decisions (Frahm & Cianca, 2021).

Retention data were also collected directly from institutional records, which provided objective information about teacher turnover rates, length of tenure, and reasons for leaving the profession. This data helped triangulate the self-reported survey data and provided a more comprehensive picture of teacher retention trends in the participating schools.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted over a period of three months, with surveys being distributed electronically to participants. The decision to use electronic surveys was motivated by the desire to reach a broad sample quickly and efficiently, ensuring accessibility for all participants (Kilag & Sasan, 2023). The electronic format also facilitated easier data entry and analysis, reducing potential errors associated with manual data

collection. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The voluntary nature of the study allowed participants to feel comfortable sharing honest feedback about their experiences with leadership and professional development, which is important for the validity of the study (Hopkins et al., 2018).

Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), a powerful software tool for analyzing complex data sets. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize key variables such as the levels of transformational leadership practices, teacher retention rates, and engagement in professional development activities. This approach provided a general understanding of the data, allowing for an initial overview of the trends in teacher satisfaction and retention within the sampled schools.

To examine the relationships between transformational leadership and teacher retention as well as professional development, Pearson correlation analysis was used. This statistical method helps determine the strength and direction of the linear relationships between variables, such as the correlation between leadership practices and teacher retention or professional development engagement (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). Additionally, regression analysis was employed to assess the predictive power of transformational leadership practices on teacher retention and professional development outcomes. Regression analysis allows for understanding the extent to which leadership behaviors can explain variations in teacher retention and professional growth, while controlling for other variables that may influence these outcomes (Halliwell et al., 2022).

Together, these statistical methods provided a robust framework for analyzing the data, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the relationships between transformational leadership practices and teacher retention as well as professional development. The study's results are expected to offer valuable insights for educational leaders seeking to improve teacher satisfaction and retention through effective leadership strategies.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The results revealed that transformational leadership practices were perceived positively by teachers, with an average score of 4.3 on a 5-point Likert scale. This high score indicates that teachers generally feel that their school leaders demonstrate strong transformational leadership behaviors, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These practices have been associated with increased teacher satisfaction and organizational commitment (Abrell et al., 2011; Halliwell et al., 2022).

Teacher retention rates across the participating schools averaged 87%, suggesting a relatively high level of stability in staffing. This figure is notable, as teacher retention has been a longstanding issue in educational systems, particularly in areas with high turnover rates. The high retention rate could be attributed to the positive leadership practices observed, as leadership that provides support and recognition is a key factor in improving job satisfaction and reducing turnover (Anne Gregory et al., 2021; Frahm & Cianca, 2021).

Professional development engagement was reported at 78%, with some variations observed based on leadership scores. This suggests that a majority of teachers actively participate in professional development activities, which are essential for improving teaching effectiveness and adapting to the evolving needs of education (Kilag & Sasan, 2023). The variations in engagement based on leadership scores highlight the significant role that transformational leadership can play in motivating teachers to engage in continuous learning and professional growth (Garay-Rondero et al., 2019).

Correlational Analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership practices and teacher retention ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that as transformational leadership practices increase, teacher retention rates also tend to rise. The finding is consistent with the work of Halliwell et al. (2022), who found that leaders who exhibit transformational behaviors are more likely to foster a sense of belonging and commitment among teachers, thereby improving retention.

Additionally, a significant positive correlation was found between transformational leadership practices and teacher engagement in professional development activities ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that transformational leaders, who inspire and intellectually stimulate their teams, are more likely to encourage teachers to pursue professional development opportunities. These findings align with Hopkins et al. (2018), who emphasized the role of leadership in creating a culture that values professional growth and continuous learning.

Regression Analysis

The regression analysis showed that transformational leadership explained 54% of the variance in teacher retention ($R^2 = 0.54$) and 63% of the variance in professional development engagement ($R^2 = 0.63$). These results indicate that transformational leadership is a strong predictor of both teacher retention and professional development, accounting for over half of the variation in these outcomes. This highlights the importance of leadership practices in fostering an environment that promotes teacher satisfaction and professional growth (Frahm & Cianca, 2021; Garay-Rondero et al., 2019).

The significant contribution of transformational leadership to both retention and professional development underscores the value of leadership in shaping educational outcomes. Teachers who perceive their leaders as supportive, motivating, and intellectually stimulating are more likely to remain in the profession and engage in ongoing development, which ultimately benefits the school as a whole.

Discussion

The findings from this study affirm the importance of transformational leadership in enhancing both teacher retention and professional development in senior high schools. Teachers who perceive their leaders as transformational are more likely to feel motivated, supported, and valued, which leads to higher job satisfaction and a stronger commitment to their schools (Abrell et al., 2011). Furthermore, transformational leadership fosters an environment where teachers are encouraged to continuously improve their skills and knowledge, which is crucial in the context of today's rapidly changing educational landscape (Hopkins et al., 2018).

This study contributes to existing literature by providing quantitative evidence of the positive relationship between transformational leadership and teacher retention. The work of Frahm and Cianca (2021) is extended by quantifying the impact of leadership on retention in educational settings, offering practical insights for school leaders seeking to address turnover and foster long-term teacher commitment. By showing that transformational leadership accounts for a substantial portion of the variance in retention and professional development, this study underscores the critical role of leadership in shaping the educational environment.

Moreover, the study aligns with the findings of Abrell et al. (2011), who found that transformational leadership significantly enhances organizational commitment. The current study builds on this by demonstrating that leadership not only fosters commitment but also has a tangible impact on teacher retention and engagement in professional growth activities.

Despite these promising findings, there are still areas for further research. While this study highlights the direct effects of transformational leadership on retention and professional development, it is important to consider mediating factors such as school culture, teacher self-efficacy, and organizational support. These factors may further explain how transformational leadership influences these outcomes. Exploring these elements in future studies could provide a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms through which leadership impacts teacher satisfaction and longevity in the profession.

Furthermore, longitudinal studies could help establish causal relationships and identify the long-term effects of transformational leadership practices on teacher retention and professional development. It would also be valuable to examine the impact of transformational leadership in different educational contexts, such as rural versus urban schools or schools with varying resources, to determine whether these effects hold across diverse settings.

This study highlights the significant role that transformational leadership plays in fostering teacher retention and professional development. Educational leaders who implement practices that inspire, motivate, and intellectually stimulate their teachers are likely to see improvements in both retention rates and professional development engagement, which ultimately contributes to a more effective and sustainable educational system.

Conclusion

. This study underscores the profound impact of transformational leadership on teacher retention and professional development. The findings demonstrate that when school leaders engage in transformational practices—such as providing inspirational motivation, fostering intellectual stimulation, and offering individualized consideration—they significantly enhance teacher job satisfaction and commitment to the institution. These practices, in turn, contribute to higher retention rates and greater teacher engagement in professional development opportunities.

Teacher retention remains a persistent challenge in educational systems worldwide, with many schools, particularly in rural and high-stress environments, facing difficulties in keeping qualified educators (Frahm & Cianca, 2021). The results of this study emphasize that transformational leadership is a critical factor in addressing this issue. Leaders who inspire teachers through recognition, support, and opportunities for growth create an environment where teachers feel valued and are more likely to remain in their roles (Anne

Gregory et al., 2021). The positive correlation between transformational leadership and teacher retention found in this study supports the notion that effective leadership can directly influence a teacher's decision to stay in the profession, which is essential for maintaining a stable and experienced workforce.

In addition to improving retention, transformational leadership is also pivotal in promoting continuous professional development. As the study revealed, teachers who are led by transformational leaders are more likely to engage in professional growth activities, contributing to the development of their teaching practices and enhancing the overall quality of education. This is especially important in a rapidly evolving educational landscape, where teachers need to stay current with new pedagogical approaches and technological advancements (Kilag & Sasan, 2023; Garay-Rondero et al., 2019). Transformational leaders encourage intellectual stimulation and create a culture of continuous learning, which ultimately benefits both teachers and students.

To harness the benefits of transformational leadership, school administrators should prioritize the investment in leadership training programs that equip school leaders with the skills necessary to inspire and motivate their teams. These programs should focus on developing the key components of transformational leadership, such as fostering positive relationships, encouraging professional growth, and promoting a shared vision for the school's future. Training leaders to be both supportive and intellectually stimulating will not only improve teacher retention but also contribute to the professional development of educators, which is crucial for achieving long-term educational excellence.

Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that school administrators should adopt leadership practices that create a positive school culture, as this can further enhance teacher retention and engagement in professional development. Cultivating a school culture that values collaboration, respect, and mutual support will enable teachers to thrive in their roles, leading to greater job satisfaction and professional growth opportunities.

Transformational leadership is a critical factor in fostering a supportive and growth-oriented educational environment. By investing in leadership development programs and adopting transformational leadership practices, school administrators can ensure the retention of skilled teachers and support their continuous professional development. These efforts will ultimately contribute to the overall effectiveness of the school system, leading to improved educational outcomes and a more sustainable and motivated teaching workforce. Retaining skilled teachers and fostering their professional growth are essential steps toward achieving educational excellence and meeting the evolving needs of students in a dynamic world.

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