

Transformational Leadership Practices of Principals and Teacher Job Satisfaction in Private Secondary Schools in the Klang District

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between principals' transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction in private secondary schools in the Klang Valley. Surveying 265 teachers from 9 schools, findings reveal high perceptions of principals' transformational leadership, particularly in individualized consideration (average score: 4.34). Overall, principals score 4.30 across all leadership dimensions. Teacher job satisfaction is notably high (overall score: 4.31), with opportunities for advancement (4.42) and salary (4.35) rated most favorably. A strong positive correlation (Pearson coefficient = 0.647) confirms that higher leadership levels enhance teacher satisfaction. The study uses a questionnaire with demographic data, adapted from the MLQ for leadership assessment and the JDI for satisfaction measurement. Effective leadership, particularly in individualized consideration, significantly influences teacher satisfaction, highlighting implications for educational practice and suggesting avenues for future research.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Private Schools, Teacher Job, Principals

Introduction

Transformational leadership has emerged as a crucial factor in enhancing teacher job satisfaction and overall school effectiveness. This leadership style, defined by its ability to inspire and motivate, is essential for fostering a positive school climate and improving teacher morale (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In private secondary schools, particularly in the Klang district, transformational leadership by principals plays a pivotal role in shaping educational outcomes and teacher experiences.

Transformational leadership involves leaders who inspire and motivate their followers to achieve higher levels of performance and commitment. This leadership style, conceptualized by Burns (1978) and expanded by Bass (1985), comprises four key components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These elements collectively create a supportive and stimulating work environment, enhancing teacher satisfaction and performance.

In private secondary schools, principals significantly influence various aspects of the school environment, including teacher job satisfaction, student achievement, and overall school performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Transformational principals, through visionary and supportive leadership, foster a sense of purpose and professional growth among teachers, crucial for maintaining high job satisfaction and reducing turnover rates (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016).

Teacher job satisfaction is a complex construct encompassing intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, professional development opportunities, work environment, and interpersonal relationships (Bukhari et al, 2024). High job satisfaction among teachers is linked to improved teacher retention, better student performance, and a positive school climate (Dicke et al., 2020). Conversely, low job satisfaction can lead to burnout, absenteeism, and attrition, challenging the stability and effectiveness of schools (Layek & Koodamara, 2024).

Empirical research highlights the positive impact of transformational leadership on teacher job satisfaction. Transformational leaders, through clear vision, individualized support, and intellectual stimulation, enhance teachers' professional efficacy and job fulfillment (Ozdemir et al., 2024). Such leaders create an inclusive and participatory school culture, making teachers feel valued and empowered.

The Klang district in Selangor, Malaysia, hosts a diverse array of private secondary schools catering to various educational needs and socioeconomic backgrounds. These schools operate with different resources, curricular frameworks, and administrative structures. This unique context provides an ideal setting to examine the interplay between transformational leadership practices and teacher job satisfaction.

Recent studies underscore the growing adoption of transformational leadership practices in Malaysian private schools. For example, Abdul Ghani et al (2022) found that these practices significantly enhance teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Similarly, Hashim and Mahmood (2023) reported that transformational leadership fosters a collaborative and innovative school culture, boosting teacher motivation and performance.

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the impact of transformational leadership on teacher job satisfaction in private secondary schools in the Klang district. By identifying key leadership practices that enhance teacher satisfaction, the findings can inform professional development programs for school leaders and offer practical insights for policymakers and educational administrators. Transformational leadership is a powerful tool for enhancing teacher job satisfaction and school performance. In the dynamic context of private secondary schools in the Klang district, the role of principals is critical in shaping educational outcomes. Understanding the factors that contribute to effective leadership and teacher satisfaction is essential for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. This study seeks to illuminate these dynamics and provide actionable recommendations for fostering a supportive and inspiring educational environment.

II. Objective and Significance

So, this study focused on identified answers for objectives and research questions as mentioned in table 1.

Table 1

Research Objective with Its Significance

| Research Objective | Research Questions |
|--|--|
| Identifying the Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of Principals in Private Secondary Schools in the Klang Valley. | What is the level of transformational leadership practices of principals in private secondary schools in the Klang Valley? |
| Identifying the Level of Teacher Job Satisfaction in Private Secondary Schools in the Klang Valley. | What is the level of teacher job satisfaction in private secondary schools in the Klang Valley? |
| Identifying the Relationship Between Principals' Transformational Leadership Practices and Teacher Job Satisfaction. | Is there a relationship between principals' transformational leadership practices and teacher job satisfaction? |

III. Material and Method**A) Design of Study**

This study employs a descriptive and inferential quantitative approach using a survey method through questionnaires to measure principals' transformational leadership practices and teacher job satisfaction.

B) Sampling Method

The target population in this study consists of teachers from private secondary schools in the Klang district. The population includes 265 teachers from 9 private secondary schools in the district. The sample was selected based on the Morgan and Krejcie (1970) chart, resulting in 155 teachers being chosen as the sample for this study.

C) Research Instrument

This study utilizes a questionnaire as the research instrument, comprising three sections. Section A includes demographic information of respondents such as age, gender, highest academic qualification, and length of service. Subsequently, Section B is designed to measure the level of transformational leadership practices of principals. The items or questions used in Section B are derived from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) introduced by Avolio & Bass (2004), which has been translated and modified for use in this study. It aims to assess the level of principals' transformational leadership practices. Furthermore, Section C is employed to gauge the level of teacher satisfaction. To measure this, the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) instrument developed by Smith, Kendall & Hulin (1969) and modified by Ahmad Daud (2011) is utilized as the measuring tool for teachers. The questionnaire used employs a five-point Likert scale for analysis in this study.

D) Research Findings

The study utilizes a quantitative data analysis method, with instruments being analyzed descriptively. The research data is processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, employing descriptive statistics. This involves calculating minimum values, percentages, and standard deviations to elucidate the status of principals' transformational leadership practices and teacher satisfaction. For inferential analysis, the Pearson correlation

coefficient test is applied to test hypotheses, examining significant variances between principals' transformational leadership practices and teacher satisfaction in private secondary schools.

Table 2

The Level of Transformational Leadership Practices of Principals

| Dimension of Transformational Leadership Principal | Min | Standard Deviation Level | Levels |
|--|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Inspirational Motivation | 4.31 | 0.55 | High |
| Idealized Influence | 4.25 | 0.52 | High |
| Individualized Consideration | 4.34 | 0.57 | High |
| Intellectual Stimulation | 4.28 | 0.54 | High |
| Overall | 4.30 | 0.53 | High |

Table 3

The Level of Teacher Job Satisfaction

| Dimension | Min | Standard Deviation Level | Levels |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Colleagues | 4.31 | 0.53 | High |
| Work Environment | 4.25 | 0.54 | High |
| Salary | 4.35 | 0.55 | High |
| Job | 4.21 | 0.53 | High |
| Opportunities and Advancement | 4.42 | 0.51 | High |
| Overall | 4.31 | 0.52 | High |

Table 4

The Relationship Between Principals' Transformational Leadership Practices and Teacher Job Satisfaction

| Teacher Satisfaction | | |
|---|---------------------|---------|
| Principal's Transformational Leadership | Pearson Correlation | 0.647** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 |
| | N | 155 |

Discussion

The findings from Table 2 reveal that teachers in private secondary schools within the Klang district perceive their principals to exhibit exceptionally high levels of transformational leadership, particularly in the dimension of individualized consideration, with an average score of 4.34. Overall, all dimensions assessing transformational leadership display high levels, with principals achieving a very high average score of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 0.53.

Moving on to Table 3, it presents insights into teacher job satisfaction in private secondary schools, highlighting influencing factors such as relationships with colleagues, workplace conditions, salary, job nature, and opportunities for advancement. Notably, the dimension of opportunities for advancement garners a high average score of 4.42, indicating favorable

perceptions among teachers regarding career development prospects. Additionally, salary emerges as a top priority, recording the highest level with a score of 4.35. Overall, teacher job satisfaction is notably high, with an overall score of 4.31.

Table 4 underscores a significant positive correlation between principal's transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction, as evidenced by a strong Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.647. This finding suggests that as principals demonstrate higher levels of transformational leadership, teacher job satisfaction increases correspondingly. Therefore, the null hypothesis of the study is rejected, affirming the presence of a robust relationship between these two variables.

Overall the study findings indicate that principals in private secondary schools demonstrate a high level of transformational leadership practices. Dimensions such as Inspirational Motivation, Idealized Influence, Individualized Consideration, and Intellectual Stimulation were found to be at high levels, suggesting an improvement in principals' transformational leadership practices.

The results also reveal that teachers in private secondary schools exhibit high levels of job satisfaction. Factors such as relationships with colleagues, workplace conditions, salary, job nature, and opportunities for advancement contribute to this satisfaction. The dimension of opportunities for advancement emerges as the highest scoring factor, highlighting the importance of career opportunities and professional development in enhancing teacher job satisfaction.

Correlation analysis demonstrates a strong relationship between principals' transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction. This indicates that these dimensions play a significant role in determining teacher job satisfaction.

Implication

The implications of the study's findings resonate across various stakeholders in the educational landscape, spanning principals, teachers, school administrators, policymakers, and researchers. For principals, the study underscores the ongoing importance of cultivating and augmenting transformational leadership qualities. Recent research emphasizes the efficacy of targeted leadership development programs in enhancing such skills among school leaders (Leithwood et al., 2020). By leveraging dimensions like Inspirational Motivation, Idealized Influence, Individualized Consideration, and Intellectual Stimulation, principals can foster a supportive school culture, inspire teacher motivation, and drive innovation, ultimately enhancing student outcomes.

Moreover, the findings suggest that teachers in private secondary schools experience high levels of job satisfaction. Principals and school administrators can utilize this insight to bolster existing practices contributing to job satisfaction and explore novel strategies for further improving teacher well-being. Recent studies advocate for initiatives like professional development opportunities and recognition programs to sustain high levels of job satisfaction among educators (OECD, 2021).

The dimensions identified as crucial factors in teacher job satisfaction highlight areas for targeted intervention by schools. Principals and school leaders can prioritize initiatives aimed

at enhancing relationships with colleagues, improving workplace conditions, and providing avenues for career advancement. Recent literature emphasizes the role of supportive work environments and competitive salary packages in promoting teacher satisfaction and retention (Harris & Muijs, 2021). From a policy standpoint, the study underscores the imperative of investing in leadership development programs and supporting initiatives aimed at bolstering teacher job satisfaction. Policymakers can draw on recent research advocating for policies that incentivize leadership training and prioritize teacher well-being (Schleicher, 2020). Collaborative efforts between policymakers, educational institutions, and stakeholders can foster comprehensive strategies to improve working conditions and support systems for teachers.

The robust correlation identified between principals' transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction underscores the interconnectedness of these variables. Recent research emphasizes longitudinal and qualitative investigations to delve into the mechanisms underpinning this relationship (Day & Gu, 2021). By exploring these dimensions further, researchers can inform evidence-based interventions and best practices to enhance school climates and teacher well-being.

In conclusion, the study's implications extend beyond the confines of private secondary schools in the Klang district, offering actionable insights for enhancing leadership practices, promoting teacher satisfaction, and ultimately, improving educational outcomes. By leveraging these insights and collaborating across stakeholders, educators can foster nurturing learning environments conducive to the success and well-being of both teachers and students.

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Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of transformational leadership practices of principals and teacher job satisfaction in private secondary schools in the Klang District sheds light on critical aspects of educational leadership and teacher well-being. Through a comprehensive analysis of recent literature and empirical findings, several key insights and implications emerge, encompassing various stakeholders within the educational ecosystem.

Firstly, the study highlights the paramount importance of transformational leadership practices exhibited by principals in private secondary schools. Transformational leadership, characterized by dimensions such as Inspirational Motivation, Idealized Influence, Individualized Consideration, and Intellectual Stimulation, plays a pivotal role in shaping school culture, fostering teacher motivation, and ultimately, enhancing student outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2020). Principals who demonstrate these leadership qualities effectively inspire and empower their staff, creating a conducive environment for growth and innovation.

Moreover, the findings underscore the significance of teacher job satisfaction as a crucial determinant of organizational effectiveness and educational quality. High levels of teacher job satisfaction are associated with positive work environments, supportive leadership, and opportunities for professional growth and recognition (OECD, 2021). Principals and school administrators must prioritize initiatives aimed at enhancing teacher well-being to cultivate a motivated and engaged teaching workforce.

From a policy perspective, the study emphasizes the need for investment in leadership development programs and support for initiatives aimed at bolstering teacher job satisfaction. Policymakers play a vital role in shaping the educational landscape and must prioritize policies that promote effective leadership practices and support teacher well-being (Schleicher, 2020). By allocating resources and designing policies that prioritize leadership training and teacher support, policymakers can create an enabling environment for educational excellence and equity.

Furthermore, the study underscores the interconnectedness of transformational leadership practices and teacher job satisfaction. Strong correlations identified between these variables highlight the critical role of principals in shaping the school environment and teacher experiences (Day & Gu, 2021). Principals who exhibit high levels of transformational leadership are more likely to foster a positive work culture and enhance teacher satisfaction, ultimately contributing to improved student outcomes.

In conclusion, the findings of this study carry significant implications for educational leadership, teacher well-being, and policy formulation in private secondary schools. By leveraging these insights and collaborating across stakeholders, educators can create nurturing learning environments conducive to the success and well-being of both teachers and students. Moving forward, further research and ongoing collaboration are essential to deepen our understanding of effective leadership practices and enhance educational outcomes in diverse contexts.

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