

Principal's Transformational Leadership in Developing a Positive and Happy School Organizational Culture



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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the role of principals' transformational leadership in developing a positive and happy school culture. A qualitative literature review method was employed, focusing on scholarly articles published from 2019 to 2024. The findings reveal that transformational leadership significantly impacts teachers' motivation, job satisfaction, and performance by fostering a supportive work environment. It highlights the importance of inspirational leadership, which enhances collaboration, innovation, and overall well-being within the school community. Moreover, transformational leadership was found to indirectly contribute to a positive and happy school culture through improved professional relationships and reduced stress among educators. The discussion emphasizes that principals adopting transformational leadership inspire staff development and establish an inclusive culture that promotes collective happiness and productivity. Transformational leadership not only addresses immediate organizational challenges but also cultivates long-term sustainability in school culture. This study highlights the essential role of transformational leadership in creating a conducive educational environment and provides practical insights for school leaders to enhance teachers' well-being and happiness, which will impact the overall educational process in schools.

KEYWORDS: Organizational Culture, Positive and Happy Culture, School Principal, Transformational Leadership

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid pace of digital transformation has brought significant impacts and introduced new challenges to organizational dynamics (Atafta et al., 2024). The complexity of work across various industrial sectors has increased alongside demands for adapting to technological innovations, system flexibility, and changing communication patterns (Lesnussa et al., 2023). In the era of Industry 4.0 and the transition towards *Society 5.0*—where technological advancements are coupled with a focus on human-centered values—the pressure on the workforce to continuously adapt has intensified (Chandre et al., 2025). In the education sector, technological developments have transformed teaching and learning processes, administration, and school management. This pressure necessitates that educators and school staff adapt quickly, often leading to increased stress, workloads, and the risk of burnout (Amelliya et al., 2024). These phenomena highlight the importance of fostering a positive organizational culture to support the well-being of individuals within educational institutions.

Various international studies have demonstrated that a positive organizational culture is a crucial factor in fostering well-being and healthy relationships in the workplace (Janiukštis et al., 2024). The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes that a work environment that supports mental health can significantly reduce the risks of stress and burnout among employees (Hamed, 2024). In the school setting, principals play a strategic role in establishing a harmonious organizational culture that promotes collaboration, innovation, and the well-being and happiness of the entire school community (Simatupang et al., 2024). Thus, the principal's leadership becomes a key element in creating such conditions. As leaders, principals are not only responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of policies but also for creating a work environment that supports staff well-being. Unfortunately, the well-being of teachers and school staff often becomes a neglected priority, even though an unhealthy work culture can hinder educational effectiveness (Gylymi, 2023).

This issue highlights the need for in-depth research on how school principals can manage policy transitions through leadership approaches that foster a happy organizational culture. A supportive work culture is not only essential for enhancing teacher well-being but also plays a vital role in creating a more productive and innovative educational environment (Mahmood, 2024). Therefore, leadership that prioritizes not only outcomes but also individual well-being has become increasingly relevant. Transformational leadership, which emphasizes inspiration, motivation, and individual development, has been globally recognized as an effective approach to driving organizational cultural change (Nazari et al., 2024).

Previous studies have extensively examined transformational leadership, particularly in the context of improving motivation and organizational performance. Studies Lameja (2024) and (Sugianto, 2024) demonstrate that school principals employing

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transformational leadership can drive significant organizational changes through their support and positive role modeling. Furthermore, research by Aritonang & Hutauruk (2024) highlights the impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. However, most of these studies predominantly focus on academic outcomes and organizational achievements, with limited exploration of its effects on the well-being of educational staff and workplace culture.

A recent bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer reveals that research on transformational leadership has evolved across various contexts, including education and organizational culture. However, as illustrated in Figure 1.1, the primary focus of these studies remains limited to improving performance, motivation, and job satisfaction. In contrast, the exploration of the role of transformational leadership in fostering a positive and joyful organizational culture within schools remains underexplored. This gap highlights the need for further research to understand how transformational leadership can be implemented within the dynamics of school organizations.

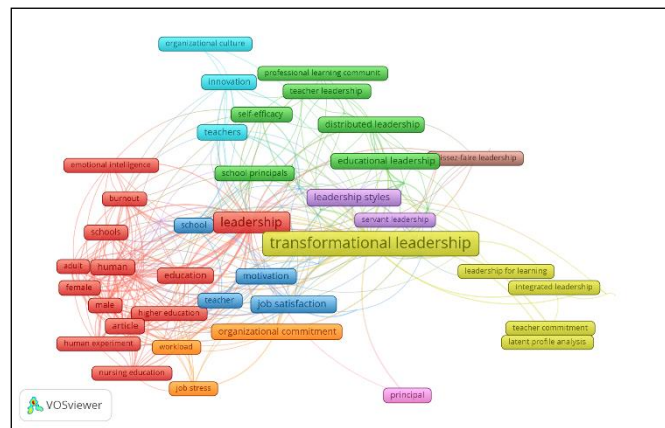


Figure 1. VOSviewer Transformational Leadership

This study offers novelty by exploring the role of transformational leadership in building a positive and happy school organizational culture. This approach is relevant to answer the challenges that arise due to the dynamics of education, both nationally and globally. In addition to providing theoretical contributions, this study is also expected to provide practical guidance for school principals to create a more supportive work environment for education personnel. Thus, this study is important not only to improve the welfare of teachers and school staff, but also to support the successful implementation of education policies in the future.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach through a literature review. To conduct the research, the authors accessed Scopus, Google Scholar, and Web of Science to gather articles from national and international journals. The collected articles were published over the last four years, from 2019 to 2024. The sources include topics related to the role of transformational leadership, school organizational culture, and positive and joyful culture in the school context. This literature review aims to provide a conceptual framework that can support the development of effective educational leadership in developing a positive and happy school organizational culture.

III. RESULT

The following are the results of the research conducted by the authors. The findings focus on transformational leadership in school principals and its relationship with organizational performance. The reviewed articles are based on prior research conducted in various educational institutions. The results of the literature review conducted by the authors are presented in the table below:

Researcher, Year of Research	Research Title	Research Result
Bao, 2024	The Effect of Principal Transformational Leadership on Teacher Innovative Behavior: The Moderator Role of Uncertainty Avoidance and The Mediated Role of The Sense of Meaning at Work	This study examines the relationship between transformational leadership (TL) and teachers' innovative behavior (TIB), focusing on the mediating role of teachers' sense of meaning at work (TMW) and the moderating role of uncertainty avoidance (TUA). The findings show that TL positively affects TIB ($\beta = 0.131, p < 0.001$) and that TMW partially mediates this relationship, enhancing the impact of TL on TIB ($\beta = 0.118, p < 0.01$). Additionally, TUA

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		moderates the relationship between TL and TIB, suggesting that teachers' tolerance for uncertainty influences the effectiveness of transformational leadership. These results highlight the importance of meaningful work and individual differences in fostering innovative behavior among teachers.
Alzoraiki, et al., 2024	The Role of Transformational Leadership in Enhancing School Culture and Teaching Performance in Yemeni Public Schools	This study highlights the importance of transformational leadership in improving teaching performance in public schools in Yemen. The findings show that transformational leadership behaviors, such as ideal influence and inspirational motivation, are positively correlated with improved teaching performance, especially when supported by a conducive school culture. The positive effects of transformational leadership on teaching performance are significantly enhanced when a supportive school culture is present. It is concluded that transformational leadership can drive better educational outcomes.
Heenan, et al., 2024	Enactment of Transformational School Leadership—Insights from Primary School and System Leaders	These findings demonstrate a positive attitude toward transformational leadership in schools as a valuable approach to driving effective change in primary education. The identified benefits include fostering aspirations, enhancing school culture, and improving motivation and role modeling among staff, which positively impact the school community and the quality of learning.
Cakir & Ozgenel, 2024	The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and School Happiness: The Mediator Role of School Culture	This study concludes that transformational leadership positively impacts school happiness, and this relationship is supported by specific aspects of school culture. The findings suggest that enhancing school culture can further amplify the effects of transformational leadership on school happiness.
Lede, et al., 2024	The Influence of Transformational Leadership Based on Rato Marapu on Organizational Culture Impact on Teacher Performance in Senior High Schools in Southwest Sumba Regency	This study examines the impact of Rato Marapu-based transformational leadership on organizational culture and its subsequent effect on teacher performance in high schools in Southwest Sumba Regency. The findings reveal that Rato Marapu-based transformational leadership directly influences organizational culture (T-Statistics: 3.662, P-Value: 0.000) and teacher performance (T-Statistics: 4.778, P-Value: 0.000), both demonstrating significant impacts. Organizational culture plays a critical role, showing the strongest direct influence on teacher performance (T-Statistics: 33.864, P-Value: 0.000). Additionally, transformational leadership indirectly affects teacher performance through organizational culture (T-Statistics: 3.762, P-Value: 0.000). The predictive strength of the model, with R ² values of 0.544 for organizational culture and 0.590 for teacher performance, is categorized as moderate.

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Liu, et al., 2024	Teacher Motivation and Commitment through Transformational Leadership in China's Vocational Schools	The paper highlights the significant impact of transformational leadership on teacher motivation and commitment. Key findings reveal that transformational leadership, characterized by vision, charisma, and empowerment, fosters a positive and motivating environment for teachers, improving their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. It enhances academic performance by motivating teachers to excel and aligning curricula. Transformational leaders also play a critical role in creating inclusive workplaces, supporting professional development, and mitigating the negative effects of workload-induced stress and burnout.
Andriadi & Sulisty, 2024	The Influence of Transformational and Instructional Leadership Styles of School's Principals on Teacher's Performance, Motivation, Job Satisfaction and Student Achievement in Primary and Secondary Schools	The findings indicate that transformational and instructional leadership significantly impact teacher performance, motivation, job satisfaction, and student learning outcomes. The combination of these leadership styles can foster a more supportive and productive educational environment, benefiting both teachers and students. Developing effective leadership skills for school principals is essential to ensure sustained improvement in educational outcomes.

Existing studies demonstrate that transformational leadership (TL) has a significant impact on various aspects of education. Victor & Bao (2024) found that TL positively correlates with teachers' innovative behavior, mediated by job meaningfulness and moderated by uncertainty avoidance. This indicates that TL not only enhances innovation in schools but also underscores the importance of a sense of meaningfulness in supporting such innovation. Alzoraiki et al., (2024) highlighted that transformational leadership, characterized by idealized behavior and inspirational motivation, positively influences teaching performance, especially when supported by a conducive school culture. This study emphasizes that TL is highly dependent on a supportive school culture to achieve better educational outcomes.

Heenan et al. (2024) affirmed positive attitudes toward TL as a valuable approach to driving effective change in primary education, including improving school culture, staff motivation, and teaching quality. Similarly, Çakır & Özgenel (2024) found that TL positively impacts school happiness, with school culture serving as a mediator in the relationship between TL and happiness. Lede et al. (2024) demonstrated how culture-based transformational leadership positively influences organizational culture and teacher performance, suggesting that a strong culture accelerates the achievement of better educational goals.

Moreover, Liu et al. (2024) revealed that TL can enhance teachers' motivation and commitment, leading to increased job satisfaction and performance. This highlights how TL creates an environment conducive to teachers' well-being while reducing job-related stress. Additionally, Andriadi & Sulisty (2024) found that a combination of transformational and instructional leadership improves teacher performance, motivation, job satisfaction, and student achievement, ultimately fostering a more productive and supportive educational environment.

From these findings, although no studies directly link transformational leadership to the creation of a positive and joyful school culture, it can be inferred that such outcomes are indirect results of effective TL. This is reflected in the increased motivation, job satisfaction, and teacher performance driven by inspiring and supportive leadership. Therefore, the relationship between transformational leadership and a positive and joyful school culture is highly relevant, as effective leadership fosters an environment conducive to growth for all stakeholders in the school.

IV. DISCUSSION

School principals are educational leaders who play a crucial role in achieving educational objectives within schools. Principals are responsible for managing and improving the quality of teaching and learning. By adopting an integrated approach as supervisors, managers, mentors, and leaders, principals can create an environment that fosters the professional development of educators while enhancing the overall effectiveness of the learning process (Syaikhudin, 2023). Artanti et al. (2024) describe principals as key leaders who are not only accountable for academic achievement but also for establishing a conducive work atmosphere for teaching and non-teaching staff. This role becomes increasingly significant given the challenges of globalization, rapid technological

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advancements, and the evolving needs and expectations in the field of education. It is in this context that the leadership style of school principals plays a pivotal role in creating an environment that supports both well-being and work effectiveness.

Principals who adopt a transformational leadership style focus not only on technical and administrative aspects but also on the personal and professional development of teachers and school staff. This leadership style emphasizes the principal's role as a change agent who provides inspiration, motivation, and clear direction to achieve shared goals Kareem et al. (2023). According to Bass's (1985) theory, as explained by Li et al. (2020), transformational leaders can turn organizational visions into reality by fostering enthusiasm and commitment among their followers. Such leaders strive to develop the potential of each individual by providing opportunities for growth and innovation. Transformational leadership not only drives short-term achievements but also cultivates a healthy and productive work culture in the long term.

Based on a review of previous studies, the impact of transformational leadership by school principals is highly significant across various aspects of the school environment. Several studies indicate that transformational leadership is closely associated with increased motivation, performance, and job satisfaction among teachers. Alzoraiki et al. (2024) highlight that principals demonstrating idealized behavior and inspirational motivation can enhance teaching performance, which directly impacts the quality of learning and academic achievement. Similarly, Bao (2024) found that transformational leadership in school principals fosters innovation in the teaching process by enhancing teachers' sense of meaning in their work. This suggests that principals with a transformational leadership style can optimize the potential of educators and create a more enjoyable work environment.

Transformational leadership has the capacity to cultivate a positive and joyful school culture. As noted by Aldhafeeri (2024), organizational culture is a pattern of values and behaviors shaped through interactions among members, influencing all operational aspects and interpersonal relationships within the organization. Principals who implement transformational leadership play a crucial role in fostering a culture that promotes collaboration, innovation, and the well-being of teachers and staff. In their Self-Determination Theory, McAnally & Hagger (2024) also emphasize the importance of fulfilling basic psychological needs, such as autonomy and connectedness, to enhance happiness and well-being within an organization. In this context, principals acting as transformational leaders ensure that teachers feel valued, have opportunities for growth, and work in an environment conducive to their well-being.

Furthermore, principals who lead with a transformational approach can strengthen relationships among staff members and create a supportive environment. As Anyanugo et al. (2024) explains, effective leaders are those who build trust, set a positive example, and inspire others to act with enthusiasm and commitment. In this context, principals capable of demonstrating transformational leadership foster an inclusive school culture where everyone feels part of a shared purpose. This inclusivity ultimately leads to collective happiness and well-being within the school environment.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study highlights that transformational leadership by school principals plays a vital role in developing a positive and happy school organizational culture. Although no research explicitly links transformational leadership to the creation of school happiness, findings indicate that transformational leadership significantly impacts teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. These factors collectively contribute to fostering a healthier, more productive, and innovative school environment. Thus, transformational leadership can establish a school culture that supports the well-being of educators and staff, ultimately facilitating the successful implementation of future educational policies.

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