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# The Relationship Between Teachers' Perceptions Towards Principal's Transformational Leadership and Their Organizational Commitment in Yuehe Town Junior High School, China

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between teachers' cognition of principals' transformational leadership and their organizational commitment in Yuehe Town Junior High School, Tongbai County, Henan Province, China. This study took 65 full-time teachers as the research object and conducted a questionnaire survey. Means and standard deviations are used to determine teachers' cognitive level of school principals' transformational leadership and organizational commitment, and the Pearson product correlation number is used to analyze the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership and their organizational commitment. In order to analyze the relationship between the two variables, Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used, the results show that the teachers of the target school hold a relatively positive attitude towards the principal's transformational leadership, and the level of their organizational commitment was high. Pearson correlation test shows that there is a significant correlation between junior high school teachers' cognition of principals' transformational leadership and their organizational commitment in Yuehe Town Junior High School,  Henan Province, China.

**Keywords** : Teachers' perception, Principal's transformational leadership, Teachers' organizational commitment

**JEL Classification Code** : I20

## 1. Introduction

The society today is rapidly changing and the competition is high. In the kind of competitive world, to use valuable and limited resources successfully and attain higher achievement is difficult for any organization (Palta, 2019). In educational organizations, there is no doubt that teachers' organization commitment is the main influence for the development of a school. Apart from parents, teachers are the key factor for the students' growth and development of school. The school education for the students to a large extent determines the development of the students and the formation of their outlook on life, values and world outlook. Also, the teacher is the person who spends the most time with the students when they are in school (Wu, 2005). Therefore, it is important to pursue teachers' commitment and improve their work efficiency, otherwise, it is more difficult to reach the vision or to accomplish the organization's long-term goals (He, 2013). For the better working performance of teachers in educational institutions and for the improvement of teachers' motivation to achieve organization's goals, the organizational commitment of teachers was crucial.

In China, as Zheng (2002) mentioned the implementation of the teacher appointment system makes a large number of free flow of teachers, which would result in the high turnover rate and cause more frequent changes in school personnel. This not only directly affects students' achievement performance, but also affects the stability and development of school. Many studies have pointed out that the degree of employee commitment to an organization can not only be used as an indicator of the organization's performance, but also can effectively predict employee performance, absences and turnover (Su & Zhao, 2005; Li, Xu & Zhang, 2006). These studies have also pointed out that the implementation of effective leadership can improve the level of commitment of the members of the organization, so the principal's implemented leadership in the school organization may affect the teachers' organizational commitment in the school.

Transformation leadership was not a new topic in Western leadership theory research since the last century, but it is still a new concept for many school leaders in China. Until recently, the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China incorporated the strategy of rejuvenating the country through educational reform, especially the development of leadership as one of the important strategies for decisively building a well-off society in an all-round way (Xi, 2017). The principal's

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transformational leadership and other leadership style in different school are being concerned, since the principal accountability system has been implemented at the school stage in China, and the principal is the first responsible person and core figure to deepen the educational reform and school development. development continue to deepen (Zheng, 2002).

## 1.2. Research Objectives

Based on the above research questions, the following objectives were developed
for this study:

1. To determine the level of teachers' perceptions towards the principal's transformational leadership at Yuehe Town Junior high School, China.

2. To determine the level of teachers' organizational commitment at Yuehe Town Junior high School, China.

3. To determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards the principal's transformational leadership and their organizational commitment at Yuehe Town Junior high School, China.

## 1.3. Research Hypotheses

One hypothesis was tested in this study.

There is a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions towards the principal's transformational leadership and their organizational commitment in Yuehe Town Junior high School, China.

## 1.4. Theoretical Framework
### 1.4.1. Transformational Leadership Theory

Burns (1978) first introduced the definition of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership theory is usually described as a process that lets followers understand their responsibilities and tasks in the organization, stimulates their needs, so as to help followers to achieve higher level performance. According to Burns (2003), the transforming approach has brought about significant changes in the lives of people and organizations. Transformational leader provides followers with more than

just working for their own interests, inspires subordinates to chase high-level needs and encourages subordinates to contribute their organization to reach higher achievement. Bass (1985) added that transformational leader is not only to lead people to achieve the organizational goals, but also motivate their followers reach a higher level of expectations and achievements.

### 1.4.2. Side-Bet Theory of Organizational Commitment By Becker (1960)

Teacher organization commitment is a " psychological contract " between teachers and school organizations. It is a teacher's identification, devotion, and loyalty to the school they teach and their profession. It reflects, to a certain extent, the teachers' sense of happiness, accomplishment, The sense of honor and the stability of the entire teaching team.

## 1.5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was based on the research objectives and theoretical framework of this study. For the teachers' perceptions of principal's leadership style, this researcher would use on transformational leadership based on Burns (1978) Transformational Leadership theory to focus on four dimensions including Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration. For the teachers' organizational commitment, Side-Bet Theory of Organizational Commitment developed by Becker (1960) would be used, and focus on three dimensions: Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment.
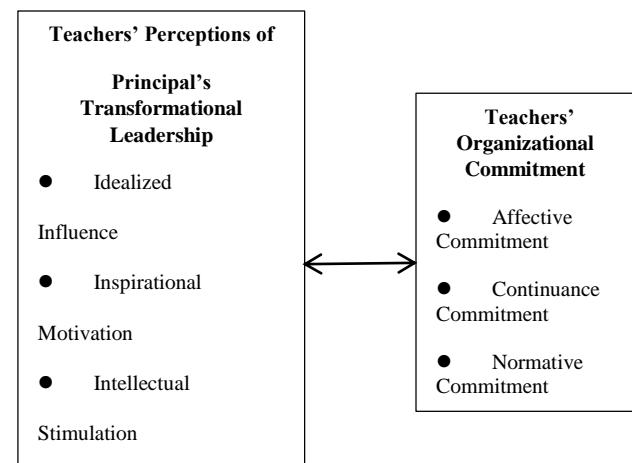


**Figure 1**: Conceptual framework of this study

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## 2. Literature Review

The concept of transformational leadership was first proposed by Burns (1978). He believes that when "leaders and subordinates promote morality and motivation to a higher level through mutual encouragement", we can see this type of leadership. In this process, both leaders and subordinates have experienced change. According to Burns (1978), Bass (1995) believes that determining the common interests between leaders and followers is very important for effective leadership, which also promotes subordinates' values, attitudes and motivation to a higher level of awakening and maturity.

Selamat, Nordin and Adnan (2013) found that there is a significant positive correlation between the transformational leadership of principals and the level of teacher organizational commitment, they suggested that transformational leaders should change the leadership of the school organization and help school staff members to update their personal views. Nasra and Heilbrunn (2016) also supported that transformational leaders can stimulate and improve teachers' self-monitoring and self-control. Adjustment ability, so that teachers' commitment to the school's vision and mission is strengthened.

Researchers abroad and in China have studied and discussed the relationship between school transformational leadership and teacher organizational commitment. On the one hand, when researchers discuss the transformational effectiveness of schools, they often take some elements of teacher organizational commitment as an important measure of school organizational effectiveness.

The study of Pillair and Williams (2004) has shown that transformational leadership in schools is directly related to teacher trust, teamwork, and job satisfaction. Leithwood and Sun (2012) found that transformational leadership in schools affects school organizational culture and Organizational atmosphere can improve teachers' learning school loyalty affects teachers' goal setting and teachers' confidence in school development and personal development, and ultimately affects school organizational effectiveness. On the other hand, when researchers explored the influencing factors of teacher organizational commitment, they found that school transformational leadership is one of the most critical and decisive factors. Aydin, Sarier and Uysal (2013) found that, compared with transactional leadership style, transformational leadership style is more capable of internalizing leaders' values and educational concepts, and teachers are more willing to go beyond immediate personal interests. Pursue leadership.

In China, Zuo's research found that theprincipal's leadership style has different effects on teachers' willingness to work, organizational identification and retention tendency. Among them, the high-task and high-care leadership style helps improve teacher organizational commitment. Zuo (2006) showed that the implementation of transformational leadership is conducive to the establishment of organizational norms and educational beliefs in schools that support teachers' professional development and enhance teachers' professional identity. School transformational leadership there is an all-cause-and-effect logical relationship with teacher organizational commitment, but the mechanism of the internal elements of school transformational leadership and teacher organizational commitment needs to be further clarified and discussed.

Amoroso (2002) study claimed that school transformational leadership mainly influence the teachers' beliefs, ambitions, values and other internal motivations. Under the guidance of the common vision and goals, school leaders and teachers unite, cooperate closely, and share work to promote school reform and school improvement. At the same time meet personal high - level needs and realize personal value pursuing, thereby inspiring teachers' recognition, devotion and loyalty to the school organization and teacher profession, and then to the greatest extent raising the level of teacher's organizational commitment.

The empirical research on organizational commitment by Chinese scholars can be roughly divided into three categories. The first category is research on the status quo of organizational commitment and the impact of personal background variables on organizational commitment. These studies generally believed that the surveyed objects have high organizational commitment. Different background variables are significantly correlated with organizational commitments at different levels, such as Song (2005). It is believed that there are significant differences in the level of organizational commitment of teachers with teaching age and academic qualifications. Wang (2007) also found that there are significant differences in organizational commitments among teachers with different marriages, titles, ages, and the nature of work.

These studies preliminarily showed that the implementation of transformational leadership is conducive to the establishment of an organizational norm and educational belief in schools that support the professional development of teachers and enhance the professional identity of teachers. There is an all-factor between school

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transformational leadership and teacher organizational commitment. The logical relationship of the consequences, but the mechanism of the school's transformational leadership and teacher organizational commitment needs to be further clarified and discussed. Therefore, this study tries to test the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principal's transformational leadership and teacher's organizational commitment in the selected school in China.

## 3. Methodology/Procedure

### 3.1. Population and Sample

The study conducted a questionnaire survey on all full-time teachers in the first semester of the 2020 academic year. As the school's HR department reported there are only 65 full-time teachers who are currently working in, all 65 full-time teachers in this school will be used as the participants for this study. The school Principal, administrators and other technical staffs are not included as respondents.

### 3.2. Research Instrument

To determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards the principal's transformational leadership and their organizational commitment at Yuehe Town Junior high School, China. This study through a questionnaire with quantitative analysis. The questionnaire is divided into two parts, 40 items totally. The first part of the questionnaire is to determine the teachers' perceptions of principal's leadership style, and the second part of the questionnaire is to determine the teachers' organizational commitment. Descriptive statistics and Correlational analysis would be used for this quantitative and correlational design.

In order to collect the data for this study, the researcher firstly had obtained the permission from the principal of Yuehe Town Junior High School. After the proposal defense, the researcher would send the questionnaires to a professional translation agency for translation, and then distributed the Chinese questionnaire to the full-time teachers working in the school in November. By December, 2020, all the questionnaires are expected to be returned and the computation of the data would be started.

### 3.3. Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire is divided into two parts in this study. The first part of the questionnaire was to identify the

teachers' perception towards the principal leadership styles. The instrument of this part researcher used MLQ questionnaire which is highly validated questionnaire by Bass and Avolio (2000). In terms of reliability the MLQ has shown frequent results with reliability scores for each of the scales ranging from 0.74 to 0.91, all of the scales' reliabilities were generally high. The second part of the questionnaire was adopted from Allen and Meyer, (1990) organizational commitment questionnaire. The validity of organization commitment questionnaire was approved by 3 experts from Program Director of Karuna Mission Social Solidarity of Graduate School of Education in Assumption University.

## 4. Findings.

### 4.1. Findings for Research Objective 1

Table 1 shows the summary of the Means and Standard Deviations of the level of teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership in Yuehe Town Junior high School, Tongbai county, Henan province, China. The level of the mean in total for principal's transformational leadership was in level of high, which the score was 3.61, the range of 3.51- 4.50. The score for individualized consideration was the lowest (3.46), and the score for inspirational motivation was the highest (3.74), the level was high.

**Table 1**: Summary of Teachers' Perceptions Towards Principal's Transformational Leadership (N=65)

| Variable | M | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Idealized Influence | 3.64 | .87 | High |
| Inspirational Motivation | 3.74 | .79 | High |
| Intellectual Stimulation | 3.61 | .88 | High |
| Individualized Consideratio | 3.46 | .95 | Moderate |
| Overall | 3.61 | .87 | High |

### 4.2. Findings for Research Objective 2

Table 2 shows the summary of the Means and Standard Deviations of the level of teachers' organizational commitment in Yuehe Town Junior high School, Tongbai county, Henan province, China. In summary, the level of the mean in total for organizational commitment was in the range of 3.51-4.50 interpretations, the level was high, which the score was (3.68). The lowest score for was continuance

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commitment, in the range of 3.51-4.50, the level was high, and the score was (3.57). The highest score for was affective commitment, in the range of 3.51-4.50, the level was high, and the score was (3.80).

**Table 2**: Summary of Teachers' Organizational Commitment (N=65)

| Variable | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Affective Commitment | 3.80 | 1.20 | High |
| Continuance Commitment | 3.57 | 1.36 | High |
| Normative Commitment | 3.67 | 1.35 | High |
| **Overall** | **3.68** | **1.30** | **High** |

### 4.3. Findings for Research Objective 3

The results of Table 3 showed the analysis of the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership and their organization commitment in Yuehe Town Junior High School, Tongbai county, Henan province, China. The result showed that r =.465, Sig. (2- tailed) was .000, which was smaller than .05. That is, at the level of .05 (even .01), there was a strong positive correlation between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership and their organizational commitment perceived by teachers in the school. In conclusion, the hypothesis for this research was accepted, in other word, there was a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership and their organizational commitment in Yuehe Town Junior High School, Tongbai county, Henan province, China.

**Table 3**:Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Teachers' Perceptions Towards Principal's Transformational Leadership and Their Organizational Commitment in Yuehe Town Junior High School (N=65)

| Correlation Test | | Principal's Transformational Leadership | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|
| Teachers' Organization Commitment | Person Correlation Sig. (2 tailed) | .465** .000 | There's a significant relationship |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed).

## 5.Conclusions

This study examined all the full - time teachers in Yuehe town junior high School by questionnaire, to determine the level of teachers' perception towards the principal's transformational leadership and their organizational commitment.

According to the finding of objective 1, this study found that the teachers' perceptions towards the principal's transformational leadership in the selected school were regarded as high level in general. Among the four components, Teachers' perception of individualized consideration from principals is less, teachers' perception on individualized consideration regarded as moderate, meanwhile, for the idealized influence, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation were regarded as high. The findings showed that teachers have a high perception of the transformational leadership of principals. The transformational leadership style of principals has an influence on teachers, and there are still deficiencies in personalized care. Principals need to care more about teachers, not only to provide help and support in work, but also to give care in life, support teachers in spirit, and improve teachers' work quality Enthusiasm and enthusiasm.

According to the finding of objective 2, based on the data analysis results of three aspects of the commitment of teachers' organizations, teachers' perceptions towards their organizational commitment in the target school were regarded as high. teachers in the school used the word "sometimes" to explain their feeling of it. The scores of teachers' affective commitment was the highest, although the lowest was the score of teachers' continuance commitment, but the level was high. According to these three aspects of the resulted of teachers' organizational commitment, it can be concluded that teachers have deep feelings for the school and will not easily leave the school. The school makes teachers have a sense of belonging and are willing to pay for the school. In order to improve the retention rate of teachers, encourage teachers' enthusiasm in work, and provide more support to help and care for teachers.

According to the finding of objective 3, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showed that sig.(2-tailed) between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership and their organizational commitment was .000, the r value was .465,which is less than .05. On account of the result of the data analysis, there is a strong positive relationship between teachers' perception towards principal's transformational leadership

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and their organizational commitment in Yuehe Town Junior high School, China. The resulted support and provide the idea that transformational leadership of principals can have a strong impact on Teachers' organizational commitment, and it is positive and firm.

# 6. Discussion

First, the study found that According to the analysis of the data results, the mean values of the transformational leadership styles perceived by the surveyed teachers in this study are higher than the median 3, indicating that the leadership styles perceived by middle school teachers are in the upper middle level, which is basically consistent with the research results of Tian (2005); Wang , (2007); Wang, Huang and Feng, (2013). The average score of transformational leadership is 3.61, in which the idealized influence, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation score is higher, and the score of individualized consideration is relatively low. The average score of Wang Sainan and Wang Lei's research on transformational leadership is 3.51 and 3.25 respectively. Comparatively speaking, the average score of transformational leadership in this study is slightly higher than the previous research results. These are in line with the actual situation of primary and secondary schools in our country. The analysis of the reasons showed that the principal responsibility system is implemented in primary and secondary schools in our country, and the principal's responsibility and power are relatively large, especially the transformational leadership. The principal obtains the teachers' trust, admiration, loyalty and respect with his own quality by virtue of his idealized influence. At the same time, the principal's leadership style is not far behind the teachers' expectations by giving meaning to his work The results show that the school principals do not care enough for teachers, and they need to create space for teachers' personal development, create an atmosphere and environment conducive to teachers' reflection, cooperation and learning, and influence teachers' pursuit of higher level with personal charm In order to better link the improvement of teachers' ability with the development of school reform.

The results showed that teachers have a high level of organizational commitment to the school. The scores of teachers' organizational commitment were affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment. On the one hand, with the development of teachers' professionalization, teachers pay more and more attention to the embodiment of their own value, and pay attention to whether the individual's specialty can be brought into play in the school, whether the school can provide working conditions and learning and improvement. On the other hand, school-based management is an important direction of reform. Teachers and school organizations are partners. Teachers have more opportunities to participate in school affairs and have the right to decide on curriculum and teaching, which can strengthen teachers' sense of responsibility for the school, Therefore, they will have higher emotional commitment. In terms of teachers' organizational commitment, these research results were consistent with the research of scholars (Chen, 2007). Teachers' organizational commitment refers to the psychological binding force that teachers identify with and accept the school's development vision, school culture and values, and that teachers would to make every effort for the school's development and reform, and are eager to stay in the school. According to research results, the level of teachers' organizational commitment is mainly affected by three factors: the satisfaction of teachers' personal needs (especially the satisfaction of personal development needs: work itself, promotion opportunities, career development and promotion space), social comparison and the degree of internalization of social norms (Chen, 2007).

This study showed that principals learn to listen to teachers and establish good communication between principals and teachers are very important factors to improve teachers' organizational commitment. According to the needs of professional psychology, the career of teachers is divided, and the teachers between teaching years are in the stage of gradual maturity and stability (Long, 2002). At this stage, after many successful encouragements and failure setbacks, teachers may mobilize their work or change their careers, determine their own direction and path of professional and technical development, and aspire to become the backbone of professional and technical work in the school. Their understanding of the profession tends to be realistic and lay a solid foundation for long-term professional development. For the teachers at this stage, the headmaster should focus on helping them to improve their own quality through unremitting efforts, and strive to engage in education and teaching work, so that they can experience the sense of achievement and self satisfaction in school, experience the fun and challenges in work, and improve their retention commitment.

When exploring the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' organizational

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commitment, the results showed that there is a significant positive correlation between them. That is to say, there is a significant positive correlation between the dimensions of transformational leadership and the dimensions of teachers' organizational commitment as well as the overall commitment. That is to say, if the principal adopts more transformational leadership style in practical work, the higher the organizational commitment of teachers is. Through further analysis, it is found that the four dimensions of transformational leadership have significant predictive power on Teachers' organizational commitment. This shows that school administrators should have a strong sense of dedication and devotion to their work, set an example and keep their words and deeds in line, so that teachers can understand the future of the school, point out their goals and development directions, and consider their personal situation, create an environment for their growth, care about their development, family and life, It is helpful to strengthen teachers' recognition of the school and form higher organizational commitment.

## 7.Recommendations

### 7.1. For Teachers

The researchers suggest that teachers should pay more attention to the specific aspects of the principal's transformational leadership style, and provide feedback to school administrators if they have any suggestions on school management. In this way, teachers can help school leaders understand teachers' views, so as to help school leaders better carry out school management projects.

### 7.2. For Principal

principals should maintain communication channels with teachers, share information with teachers, help teachers reduce work pressure, improve teachers' work efficiency, and improve their personal skills in dealing with pressure and problems. It is suggested that principals should have a clear teaching structure and orientation to make it easier for teachers to teach and learn and reduce their workload. More importantly, principals should continuously evaluate students' performance and provide feedback regularly to help teachers' professional development. In addition, it is suggested that principals should improve teachers' working conditions, guide new teachers, provide opportunities for teachers to participate in school decision-

making process, encourage teachers to continuously learn and develop for their own majors and promote teachers' cooperation. In short, improving effective principal support will increase teachers' organizational commitment, which will be a major obstacle to school management and a major wish of principals. However, it is worth improving teachers' organizational commitment that principals support their teachers in different fields.

### 7.3. For School Administrators

School administrators should find a good way to acceptteachers' suggestions and encourage teachers to express their feelings to the school. According to the feedback from teachers, this method should be private, regular and transparent. Only when school administrators understand teachers' real ideas and needs, can schools formulate better management system to enhance teachers' organizational commitment. School administrators should give more emotional care to teachers to encourage them to do a good job.

### 7.4. For Future Researchers

This study aims at those who are interested in studying the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership and their organization commitment in Yuehe Town Junior High School, Tongbai county, Henan province, China. The object of this study is 65 full-time teachers of Yuehe town junior high school in 2020. The results of this study will not be used to promote or improve other schools. Future researchers can also conduct similar research through quantitative and qualitative methods. The hybrid approach will determine teachers' views, so as to obtain more understanding, information and better results, improve teachers' loyalty to the school, and try more diversified learning methods. In addition, future researchers can also compare public and private schools and consider more variables that affect teachers' organizational commitment, such as educational background, nationality and so on.

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