



Leading with Purpose: The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Review Article

Transformational leadership is globally recognized as an effective strategy across many disciplines, and its role in education is particularly vital. This study was conducted during the School Year 2025–2026 among 132 elementary school teachers in the South Cluster of Santiago City to determine how such leadership influences teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study sought to establish the relationship between these variables, focusing on how leaders who communicate a clear, shared goal and provide personalized support can empower their faculty. The research is anchored in Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, examining the idea that transformational leaders do more than just manage—they promote an inspiring environment that motivates others to exceed basic expectations. Through data gathered from nine public schools, the study analyzed teacher perceptions of their principals’ leadership behaviors alongside demographic profiles such as age and teaching experience. By testing null hypotheses regarding these connections, the research aimed to provide localized evidence of how intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration translate into higher morale within the Philippine school system. The findings serve as the foundation for a targeted Plan of Action designed to help school heads in Santiago City institutionalize leadership strengths that support teacher well-being and a positive school culture. Ultimately, this study offers practical insights for DepEd officials and administrators, emphasizing that when leaders inspire and empower, they create a sustainable path toward instructional excellence and professional fulfillment.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Teacher Motivation, Job Satisfaction, South Cluster Schools, Santiago City, Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory.

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Introduction

Transformational leadership is globally known as an effective leadership strategy in various disciplines, including education. Transformational leaders promote a good and empowering environment by communicating clearly a shared

goal, motivating and inspiring others, and giving personalized support. These conditions inspire teachers and other employees to surpass basic expectations and cooperate to achieve common goals. Recent empirical and review studies reveal that transformational leadership promotes employee



motivation, job satisfaction, professional growth, creativity/innovation, trust, and ultimately organizational performance across sectors and countries (Palla et al., 2025; Hidayah, 2025; Nasir et al., 2022; Nguon et al., 2025; Nguon, 2022; Akdere & Egan, 2020; Suryadi et al., 2024; Cesilia et al., 2025).

Within the Philippines, transformational leadership serves as a fundamental catalyst in the evolution of school culture and the optimization of teacher efficacy. According to research studies, school leaders who adopt a leadership style contribute to the creation of collaborative, trusting, and innovative educational settings, which improves the motivation of teachers and satisfaction with their jobs. However, many schools in the Philippines, particularly those in rural or underdeveloped areas, continue to suffer issues such as unequal remuneration and inconsistent leadership methods. These things can lower teacher commitment and morale (Hardianto et al., 2025).

Teachers in the South Cluster Schools in Santiago City deal with similar local problems. Teachers' motivation and job satisfaction may be weakened by differences in leadership styles and inadequate reward systems, which could have an impact on classroom instruction, student learning outcomes, and teacher retention. There are several studies on transformational leadership, both domestically and internationally, but few of them concentrate on the South Cluster Schools. The lack of localized evidence highlights how crucial it is to comprehend the ways in which incentive structures, motivation, and transformational leadership interact to enhance teacher job satisfaction in this context (Roesminingsih, 2025).

By examining how transformative leadership affects teacher engagement and job satisfaction in the

South Cluster Schools, this study aims to bridge the gap. The results are meant to give educators, stakeholders, and school administrators useful information about how to improve incentive programs and leadership strategies that support teachers in their jobs. Lastly, the study seeks to improve Santiago City school communities, increase teacher wellbeing, and support the general advancement of educational quality.

Methods

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design to examine the relationship between transformational leadership, teacher motivation, and job satisfaction among 132 randomly selected elementary teachers in Santiago City's South Cluster. Data were gathered using an adapted four-part survey instrument based on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X) and validated scales from prior research. To ensure the accuracy of the tools, a pilot test was conducted, yielding Cronbach's alpha values between 0.837 and 0.881, confirming high internal reliability.

The research followed strict ethical protocols, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring participant anonymity after securing approval from the Division Superintendent. Because a Shapiro-Wilk test revealed that the data followed a non-normal distribution, non-parametric statistical tools were utilized for analysis. Specifically, frequency and percentages were used for demographic profiling, medians were calculated to assess levels of the primary variables, and the Spearman rank correlation coefficient was applied to determine the significance of relationships between leadership perceptions, motivation, and job satisfaction.

Results and Discussions

Table 1. Spearman Rank Correlation between Teachers’ Perceptions of Transformational Leadership and Selected Profile Variables

Profile	r	Des	p-value	Decision
Age	.059	Very Low	.500	Fail to reject Ho
Years of Teaching	.086	Very Low	.324	Fail to reject Ho
Grade Level Taught	.026	Very Low	.767	Fail to reject Ho

The statistical analysis in Table 6, utilizing the Spearman Rank Correlation, indicates that there is no significant relationship between the teachers' personal profiles and how they perceive their principal's transformational leadership. Across the variables of age ($r = .059$), years of teaching experience ($r = .086$), and grade level taught ($r = .026$), the correlation coefficients remain very low with p -values well above the .05 significance threshold. These results lead to a failure to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that a teacher's background, whether they are a novice or a veteran, or whether they teach primary or intermediate grades, does not dictate or skew their view of their leader's effectiveness. These findings carry an important implication for school management: transformational leadership is perceived as a universal quality rather than one that appeals only to specific groups. Because the perception of leadership remains consistent regardless of a teacher's age or tenure, it implies that the principal's strategies are reaching the faculty in a balanced and equitable manner. Instead of needing to tailor leadership styles

to match different demographic segments, school heads can focus on broad, high-impact behaviors like inspirational motivation and individualized consideration. Essentially, the data suggests that good leadership is recognized as such by all staff members, regardless of where they are in their personal or professional lives.

This lack of demographic influence is consistent with several contemporary studies in the East Asian educational context. Research by Ma and Omar (2025), as well as Li and Liu (2020), similarly found that positive organizational outcomes and leadership perceptions are often independent of a teacher's age or length of service. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2025) and Firmansyah et al. (2022) argue that transformational leadership is a broad and inclusive framework whose impact transcends individual differences. By maintaining this universal appeal, as supported by the work of Liu et al. (2024), school leaders can foster a cohesive organizational culture that values every teacher's contribution without being restricted by demographic boundaries.

Table 2. Spearman Rank Correlation between Teachers’ Motivation and Selected Profile Variables

Profile	r	Des	p-value	Decision
Age	.089	Very Low	.310	Fail to reject Ho
Years of Teaching	.108	Very Low	.219	Fail to reject Ho
Grade Level Taught	-.078	Very Low	.376	Fail to reject Ho

The correlation analysis employing Spearman's rank correlation shows a very negligible, not significant correlation between teachers' motivation and selected profile variables indicated in Table 7. This means that teachers' motivation is not linked with demographic factors like age, years of teaching, and grade level taught. This finding is aligned with the research results of Salipong et al. (2025), Zhang et al. (2025), Zhang et al. (2021), and Supriadi et al. (2025), who mentioned that in China and in the Philippines, teacher motivation is influenced by intrinsic factors, including professional commitment,

growth opportunities, and work environment support over age or length of service.

These results imply that administrators and policy makers may take into consideration strategies that reinforce intrinsic motivation, including leadership support, professional development, and sufficient resources, rather than designing tactics based on demographic profiles.

In so doing, schools can sustain high teacher motivation, which can translate into better instructional quality and improved student outcomes (Tecson & Malabo, 2025; Kumari & Kumar, 2023).

Table 3. Spearman Rank Correlation between Job Satisfaction and Selected Profile Variables

Profile	r	Des	p-value	Decision
Age	.095	Very Low	.277	Fail to reject Ho
Years of Teaching	.055	Very Low	.532	Fail to reject Ho
Grade Level Taught	-.038	Very Low	.668	Fail to reject Ho

The statistical results in Table 8, derived from the Spearman Rank Correlation, show that there is no significant link between the teachers' job satisfaction and their demographic profiles. Specifically, age ($r = .095$), years of teaching experience ($r = .055$), and grade level taught ($r = -.038$) all yielded very low correlation coefficients. With p-values significantly higher than the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is maintained. These findings suggest that whether a teacher is at the start of their career or a veteran, and regardless of the grade level they handle, their level of satisfaction remains relatively consistent. In this study, demographic characteristics appear to have a negligible impact on how content an educator feels in their role.

The implication of these findings is that job satisfaction is likely driven by external, organizational factors rather than individual traits. Since variables like age and experience do not dictate how satisfied a teacher is, school administrators

should look toward systemic improvements to maintain high morale. This suggests that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to improving the school climate can be effective across the entire faculty. Rather than designing different retention strategies for younger or older teachers, leadership can focus on universal motivators such as improving the school atmosphere, ensuring fair recognition, and providing adequate resources, knowing that these changes will benefit the staff as a whole, regardless of their personal backgrounds.

This perspective is well-supported by various studies across Asian educational systems, which argue that school climate far outweighs individual characteristics in determining job satisfaction. For instance, Nalipay (2023) observed that environmental factors and teacher-student relationships have a much stronger influence than age or teaching assignments. Similarly, research from rural China by Wang et al. (2022) and Zhang

and Varela (2024) indicates that leadership styles and working conditions are the primary drivers of teacher happiness. Ultimately, as highlighted by Chang and Yusof (2025) and Tecson and Malabo (2025),

prioritizing teacher self-efficacy and supportive leadership over demographic considerations is a more effective way to sustain motivation and improve educational quality for everyone.

Table 4. Spearman Rank Correlation between and among Respondents' Perception of Transformational Leadership, Motivation, and Job Satisfaction

Variables	Transformational Leadership				Teacher Motivation			
	r	Des	p-value	Decision	r	Des	p-value	Decision
Transformational Leadership	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Teacher Motivation	.466	Moderate	<.001	Reject Ho	-	-	-	-
Job Satisfaction	.519	Moderate	<.001	Reject Ho	.565	Moderate	<.001	Reject Ho

The statistical data in Table 9 reveal a significant and positive interconnectedness between transformational leadership, teacher motivation, and job satisfaction. The results show a moderate positive correlation between leadership and motivation ($r = .466$), as well as between leadership and job satisfaction ($r = .519$). Notably, the strongest relationship observed is between teacher motivation and job satisfaction ($r = .565$). With p-values consistently falling below .001, the null hypotheses are rejected in all instances. These figures clearly demonstrate that when teachers perceive their school heads as transformational leaders, those who inspire, challenge, and support them in their own internal drive and overall happiness with their careers increase in tandem.

These results imply that transformational leadership acts as the "engine" for school-wide professional health. Because leadership is significantly linked to both motivation and satisfaction, it suggests that the principal's ability to model ethical behavior and provide individualized support is not just a management style, but a direct catalyst for teacher engagement. Furthermore, the strong link between motivation and satisfaction implies that these two factors reinforce one another;

a motivated teacher is likely a satisfied one, and vice versa. For school systems, this suggests that the most effective way to improve teacher retention and performance is to invest in leadership training that prioritizes these transformational qualities, as they produce a measurable ripple effect across the entire faculty.

These findings are firmly supported by a growing body of research across the Asian educational landscape. Studies by Ma and Omar (2025) and Lei et al. (2024) confirm that principals who utilize individualized consideration and inspirational motivation see much higher levels of teacher commitment. Similarly, research in Chinese schools highlights that transformational leadership is the primary factor in creating a favorable school climate, which is essential for both motivation and satisfaction (Chang & Yusof, 2025). This sentiment is echoed by Cruz and Chagas (2025) and Manogaran and Wahab (2024), who argue that empowering teachers through consistent leadership support is the key to professional fulfilment. Ultimately, as noted by Maheshwari (2021), developing these leadership competencies is vital for achieving the high-quality educational outcomes that modern Asian school systems strive for.

The study concludes that transformational leadership is practiced with a high degree of uniformity across the Division, serving as a "universal" style that resonates with faculty regardless of their age, experience, or grade assignment. This leadership approach acts as the primary driver of professional engagement, directly fuelling teacher motivation and job satisfaction through ethical modelling and individualized support. Furthermore, a strong "virtuous cycle" exists between motivation and satisfaction, indicating that these two psychological states are inseparable and mutually reinforcing.

Significantly, the findings prove that a transformational school climate serves as a "great equalizer," where the quality of the work environment and leadership far outweigh personal demographics in determining teacher success. Finally, while current leadership is highly effective, the study concludes that these individual strengths must be institutionalized into formal policies to ensure the long-term sustainability of teacher morale and school culture, independent of administrative changes.

Based on the study's findings, several key actions are recommended to sustain and institutionalize high levels of leadership and teacher morale within the South Cluster Schools. First, to ensure cultural continuity, effective principals should establish a leadership mentorship program for aspiring school heads, transforming individual strengths into a permanent institutional standard. Professional development should also transition toward teacher-led learning circles, which foster autonomy and allow faculty to take ownership of their own professional mastery. To reinforce the intrinsic motivation already present, schools should formalize peer recognition systems that allow teachers to celebrate each other's achievements alongside administrative feedback.

Furthermore, administrators are encouraged to implement universal support strategies, focusing on broad improvements in resources and communication that benefit all faculty members regardless of their age or tenure. To protect current high levels of job satisfaction and prevent burnout,

formal work-life balance protocols should be established, specifically by setting clear expectations regarding after-hours communication. Finally, it is essential to institutionalize transformational practices such as individualized support and vision-sharing by incorporating them directly into the School Improvement Plan (SIP). This ensures that these successful leadership behaviors remain funded, prioritized, and sustained regardless of future administrative changes.

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