

The Relationship between the Teachers' Transformational Leadership as Perceived by Students and the Students' Engagement in Alternative Schools, Bangkok Metropolis

Kittiphan Lappayanant* and Patreeya Kitcharoen

Department of Education, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Mahidol University, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand

*Corresponding author E-mail: kittiphan.lappayanant@gmail.com

Abstract

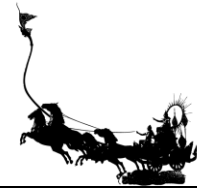
The objectives of the studies were 1) to examine the level of the teacher transformational leadership (TL) in the alternative schools; 2) to examine the level of the student engagement (SE); and 3) to study the relationship between TL and SE. The study was conducted into quantitative and qualitative parts. 149 students were conducted in the quantitative approach in order to examine how students evaluate 1) teachers' TL through 4 attributes (Idealized Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, Inspirational Motivation and Individual Consideration) ($\lambda = 0.956$) and 2) SE based on 3 attributes (Affective Engagement, Behavioral Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement) ($\lambda = 0.963$) and 4 teachers were conducted in the qualitative approach in order to confirm the relationship. The validities for the questionnaires were checked through IOC and peer review and the interview protocol was checked by those who are expert in linguistic.

The result of the study was calculated through the correlation in a computer program in order to find the relationship. With the participation of the subjects, it was analyzed that there is a positive correlation between TL and SE ($r = .626$). Also, the qualitative result was found more in-depth reasons that clarify the relationship between these factors. It can be stated at one extent that one of the ways that can improve the engagement in student to learn is to provide the training program to increase the level of the transformational leadership and more in-depth research should be conducted for more in-depth result as well.

Keywords: Teacher transformational leadership, Transformational leadership, Student engagement, Alternative schools

1. Introduction

The 21st Century skills, life-long learning, and intellectual curiosity are very essential characteristics nowadays. In order to acquire these skills, it is important to gain high engagement. Student engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004) can be separated into three major attributes: 1) Affective Engagement (AE) – the sense of belonging and the relationship with peers and adults at school; 2) Behavioral Engagement (BE) – the participation of students in classroom, extracurricular activities and behavior; and 3) Cognitive Engagement (CE) – the belief that the schoolwork is relevant to their life and goals in the future. However, not student engagement is only the factor that can make students acquire the aforementioned essential characteristics, but the teacher leadership is also significant as well. Teacher leadership affects student learning behavior. In order to reach that goal, the role of teachers has been changed. Teachers have to be good role models for students, motivate them, challenge them to solve problems with the new solution, understand students, analyze their strengths and weakness, etc. With these roles, the characters of the teachers suit with the characters of transformational leadership. Bass (1985) defined the term “transformational leadership” as a leader who has 4 major attributes: 1) Idealized Influence (II) – the leader has to encourage the follower to share and provide the clear vision, and the leader has to gain respect, trust and high ethical behavior; 2) Inspirational Motivation (IM) – the leader has to have the strong motivation to inspire the followers; 3) Intellectual Stimulation (IS) – the leader who stimulates and encourages followers to look the old problem with the new solution; and 4) Individualized Consideration (IC) – the leader has to understand the followers' needs.



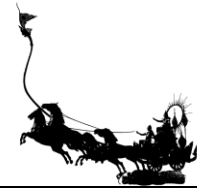
With these ideas, it can be applied to teacher leadership: 1) Idealized Influence (II) – the teacher has to be a good role model for the students; 2) Inspirational Motivation (IM) – the teacher has to motivate students and make them concern about their future; 3) Intellectual Stimulation (IS) – the teacher has to stimulate and encourage students to think out of the box or find the new solution when they face the problems; and 4) Individualized Consideration (IC) – the teacher has to understand students' individual concern and provide the development program to fit for each student. There are many studies that support that there is a significant relationship between the teacher transformational leadership and the student engagement. Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) stated that the characteristics of the transformational leadership increase the level of the motivation and the learning outcomes. Woodsmall and Antoine (2014) also claimed that transformational leadership is the factor that increases the motivation and drives the best performance and the fullest potential of the students. Jovanovic and Ciric (2016) supported that the transformational leadership is the significant factor that affects to the increasing level of satisfactory, motivation and the engagement of the students.

Therefore, these aforementioned reasons bring to the authors' interest that there might be a significant relationship between them. The research was taken place in alternative schools. The alternative school is one of the school types that has its own curriculum, teaching methodologies, materials, etc. With this flexibility, it is easier to identify the relationship between the teacher transformational leadership and the student engagement, particularly in comparing with other types of schools.

1.1 Transformational Leadership

The principle of transformational leadership firstly appeared in the work of Weber (1963) as charismatic leadership. Then, Burns (1978) extended and coined the term "transformational leadership" in 1978. He firstly defined it in terms of the political leaders as people who attempt to raise the need of followers (intrinsic needs) and promote the dramatic changes of individuals, groups, or organizations. Bass (1985) continued on the Burns' work. Bass stated that transformational leaders are people who attempt and succeed in raising colleagues, followers, clients or constituencies to a greater awareness about issues of consequence. This heightening of awareness requires a leader with vision, self-confidence, and inner strength to argue successfully for what he sees is right or good, not for what is popular or is acceptable according to the wisdom of time. He also categorized the behaviors of the transformational leaders into 4 types (named as 4Is): Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration.

The first characteristic is the Idealized Influence (II). Transformative leaders have to encourage the followers in order to share their visions and goals and the leaders themselves have to have a power in order to influence over the followers by providing clear vision. Thus, in order to encourage the followers, the leaders have to be the role model for high ethical behavior, pride for the followers, and gain the respects and trust from followers. Also, these leaders normally have to consider their followers' needs over their own personal needs (Tracey & Himkin, 1998). The second characteristic is Inspirational Motivation (IM). Followers need to have a strong motivation from leaders. So, they are willing to invest more effort in their tasks when they are encouraged, motivated in the leaders' abilities. Leaders have to express the importance and value of the desired goals that is appealing and inspiring to the followers. Also, the leaders have to be able to motivate the followers to challenge themselves in order to take a good view about the future goals. Thus, followers reacted by willingly increasing their efforts to attain the vision (Coad & Berry, 1998). The Intellectual Stimulation (IS) refers to the leaders who challenges the assumptions and solicits their followers' ideas. The transformational leaders were able to stimulate, demonstrate, and encourage the new looking for the old problem. It means that not only leaders have to provide the followers the creativity to enhance the better outcome, but the leaders themselves also have to think different, to be creative in order to suggest a new way of stating the problems. Leaders view learning is a value and the unexpected situations are seen as good opportunities to learn (Pawar, 2016). Leaders have to be open-minded to listen to followers' ideas even it is different from others. It means that "followers



should feel free to try out new approaches, and their ideas will not be publicly criticized because they differ from those of the leader" (Coad & Berry, 1998). The Individualized Consideration (IC) can be defined as the degree to which the leader attends to each followers' needs. Leaders have to be the followers' coach and they have to be able to listen and understand to the followers' concerns and needs (Greenberg, 2012). Bass and Avolio (1997) mentioned that it refers to the understanding and sharing in others' concerns and developmental needs and treating each individual uniquely. With the characteristic of the Individualized Consideration, the leaders spent more time to teach and coach the followers and treat them as individuals. Also, the followers who are treated by the leader's special attention, were more likely to work harder to meet their leader's high expectation (Muenjohn, n.d.).

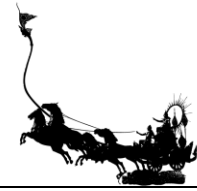
There are numerous researches mentioned about the application of the transformational leadership in the educational institutions benefits the students' potential. Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) stated that transformational leadership in teachers increase students' motivation and the learning outcomes. Some researchers indicate that transformational leadership plays a significant role in enhancing the motivational tool and it is considered as the factor that brings the best performance for the teacher in order to foster the student outcomes (Woodsmall & Antoine, 2014).

Many questionnaires are used to evaluate the level of transformational leadership; some of which are the Transformational Leadership Behavior Inventory (TLI – 1990), Global Transformational Leadership Scale (GTL – 2000), Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ – 2001), and so on. However, the researcher uses the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) as the instrument because it is a standard instrument for assessing transformational and transactional leadership behavior and it has been translated into many languages and widely used by both practitioners and researchers around the world (Bass & Avolio, 2000).

1.2 Student Engagement

Chapman (2003) defined this term as the willingness to participate in the routine school activities with subtle cognitive, behavioral, and affective indicators of students in specific learning tasks. The behavioral engagement refers to the participation of the students in classroom, extracurricular activities and behaving appropriately. The attendance, effort, behavior referrals are examples of the indicators. The cognitive engagement refers to the belief of the students that the schoolwork is relevant to their life and goals in the future. Furthermore, academic goals, being motivated to learn, and using the effective strategy of studying are the definitions of the cognitive engagement. The affective engagement is the students' sense of belonging and identification with school, the relationship with peers and adults in school, and the support from learning are the definitions of the affective engagement in terms of the student engagement. Hence, higher engagements mean higher sense of belonging of the students (Pohl, 2013). There are a lot of reasons why student engagement should be increased and it becomes interesting in the educational research. First of all, engagement is the main factor of learning and academic success (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004; Wang & Holcombe, 2010; Wang & Fredricks, 2014). Secondly, engagement has appeal because it is a "meta-construct" including with the observable behaviors, internal cognitions, and emotions. Thirdly, disengagement is the biggest challenge teachers face in their classrooms. Lastly, engagement holds tremendous potential as a key target for the interventions (Fredricks et al., 2004). Also, it is the goal of many school improvement efforts, especially the secondary level (Appleton, Christenson & Furlong, 2008; National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, 2004).

For the questionnaire, the researcher applies the Student Engagement in Schools Questionnaire (SESQ) as the questionnaire. The SESQ is the self-report measure which obtains information from the students' perspective related to both indicators and facilitators of engagement. The items are contained with the affective engagement, the behavioral engagement and the cognitive engagement (Hart, Stewart & Jimerson, 2011).



Macfarlane and Tomlinson (2017) stated about student engagement that student engagement has become a significant area in the academic research. Numerous studies about student engagement have stated about the significance of student engagement. Gunuc (2014) studied about the relationship between student engagement and students' academic engagement. The research found out that the high level of student engagement enhances the level of the academic engagement. Not only the engagement of the students benefits the academic engagement, but it also affects other factors. Wentzel (2003) stated in the findings that the high level of the student engagement increases the level of the academic outcomes, efficient learning strategies and the level of the persistence in students. Furthermore, Archambault et al. (2009) found that there is a significant relationship between student engagement and school dropout rates. Accordingly, it can be concluded that student engagement is the key factor for the success of students.

1.3 Alternative Education in Thailand

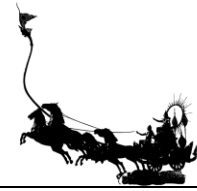
Education nowadays is not only created by the Ministry of Education (MOE), but there are also other forms of education. Alternative education is considered as another type of education that responds to the various needs of learners. In general, alternative education (known as the free-education) refers to the education that is based on the national curriculum from the ministry of education which differs from the conventional schools. However, they have their freedom to creatively organize the contents, the methods of teaching, and the using of the textbooks. Alternative education focuses not only the academic contents, but also encourage the education to be child-centered, encourage students to develop the life skills and the teamwork through many progresses; some of which are group activities, field trips, and student research. Alternative schools are run by a private organization. This so-called "whole person" approach can develop children's innate capability (Choeybal, 2008). In Thailand, there are a lot of studies and more specific decisions of the term "alternative education".

Siwalak et al. (2002) defined the term "alternative education" as another type of education where it contains two major elements: diversities and significance of humans. Diversity is a nature that the individuals are different. Hence, educational management should be managed along with the diversity of a human. Furthermore, the educational system should be provided variously as much as possible so that every person can have a chance to choose the most suitable education for them. Secondly, it is the significance of humans. A human is a living organism where it has both wisdom and mind. In addition, humans have their own duty to seek for their own potential in order to contribute the knowledge to themselves and the society. Hence, education has to express the worthiness of humans and development of humans.

In accordance with the Office of the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education (OPSMOE) (2008), the term "alternative education" is defined as education where it responds to the needs for those who are not willing to learn in formal education. Alternative education is set based on the diversities of human. Nonetheless, the various types of the alternative education still share the same goals which are to develop human to be perfect in both intelligence and mind, to decentralize the education to all citizens, and to solve the problems of the education nowadays. The Office of the Education Council (OEC) (2009) defined alternative education as one of the types of education that emphasize on development of the humanity both individuals and communities.

1.4 Related Research on the Relationship between the Teacher Transformational Leadership and the Student Engagement

Notwithstanding it is the fact that the relationship between the transformational leadership and student engagement is interesting for the adaptation for the education in the 21st Century, as there are a number of the studies are considerably low. Leithwood (2000) studied about the relationship between the transformational leadership and the student engagement. It was found that the relationship between these two aforementioned variables is significant, but it is weak on affective engagement and behavioral engagement. Even if the earlier



studies show the vagueness of the result that it is significant but weak, there are some studies that prove that there is a positive relationship between these variables. Some researchers indicated that transformational leadership plays a significant role in enhancing the motivational tool and it is considered as the factor that brings the best performance for the teacher in order to foster the student outcomes. Jovanovic et al. (2016) stated about the findings of the relationship between the transformational leadership and the student engagement that transformational leadership in the principals can change teachers' classroom practices, improve the student achievement and student engagement. He also stated about the teacher transformational leadership that it enhances the level of the student satisfaction, motivation, empowerment and students' active engagement. Ruyle (2014) work claimed that the higher level of transformational leadership, the higher level of student engagement. He expressed that the research between the transformational leadership and the student engagement should be made as the further study.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows;

1. to examine the level of the teacher transformational leadership (TL) as perceived by students in the alternative schools
2. to examine the level of the student engagement (SE) in alternative schools
3. to study the significant relationship between teacher transformational leadership (TL) and the student engagement (SE) in alternative schools

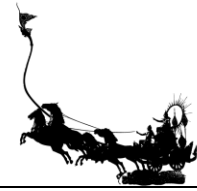
3. Research Methodology

3.1. Sample size

The data was collected from 149 students from grade 7 to grade 12 and 4 teachers in the alternative schools in Bangkok Metropolis through random sampling.

3.2. Research Methodologies

The study was conducted in alternative schools with 2 approaches: the quantitative and the qualitative approach. For the quantitative approach, it was conducted by using two questionnaires; the applied MLQ-5x questionnaire which consisted of 18 items. The questionnaire was conducted in order to examine the level of the teacher transformational leadership by students. The questions tested 4 attributes; Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individual Consideration ($\lambda = 0.956$). The second questionnaire utilized the applied SESQ (the student engagement in school questionnaire). This 30-item questionnaire was conducted in order to examine the level of student engagement. The questions tested 3 types of the student engagement; Affective Engagement, Behavioral Engagement, and Cognitive Engagement ($\lambda = 0.963$). For the qualitative approach, the semi-structured interviews were conducted. 4 teachers were interviewed in order to confirm the relationship between the teacher transformational leadership and student engagement. The data were calculated through the correlation in computer program in order to find out the correlation of this relationship. Also, the qualitative data were provided in order to find the explanation of this relationship.



4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Quantitative Results

Table 1 The overall level of the teacher transformational leadership as perceived by students by using the statistical analysis program

Teacher Transformational Leadership	μ	σ	Perception Level
Idealized Influence	3.79	.74	High
Inspirational Motivation	3.43	.80	High
Intellectual Stimulation	3.49	.91	High
Individual Consideration	3.55	.86	High
Total	3.57	.72	High

Note: The rating scale was divided into 5 perception level to the mean score from 4.21-5.00 as highest, 3.41-4.20 as high, 2.61-3.40 as moderate, and 1.81-2.60 as low and 1.00-1.80 as lowest.

Table 1 indicates the statistical results of the students' perception towards the transformational leadership in teachers, it is found out that there is a high level of the transformational leadership in teacher ($\mu=3.57$). Furthermore, within four characteristics of transformational leadership, it can be seen in the table 1 that the idealized influence has the highest mean ($\mu=3.79$) where the inspirational motivation is the least ($\mu=3.49$).

Table 2 The overall level of the student engagement in the alternative schools in Bangkok Metropolis by using the statistical analysis program

Student Engagement	μ	σ	Perception Level
Affective Engagement	3.57	.72	High
Behavioral Engagement	3.49	.60	High
Cognitive Engagement	3.51	.67	High
Total	3.53	.57	High

Note: The rating scale was divided into 5 perception level to the mean score from 4.21-5.00 as highest, 3.41-4.20 as high, 2.61-3.40 as moderate, and 1.81-2.60 as low and 1.00-1.80 as lowest.

Table 2 indicates the overall level of the student engagement, it is found that the overall level of the student engagement is high ($\mu=3.53$). The students agree that within three factors of the student engagement, they have the highest level of affective engagement ($\mu=3.57$) while behavioral engagement is the lowest ($\mu=3.49$).

Table 3 The relationship between the teacher transformational leadership and the student engagement in alternative schools in Bangkok Metropolis (n=149)

Variables	TL	SE
TL	1	
SE	.626**	1

**Statistically significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 indicates statistical data of the relationship between the teacher's transformational leadership as perceived by students and student engagement in alternative schools. It is found that there is a positive correlation between the teacher transformational leadership as perceived by students and the student engagement ($r = .626$) which is suggested that whenever the level of teacher transformational leadership increases, the level of the student engagement also increases.

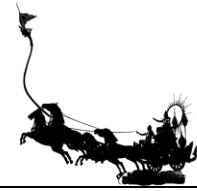


Table 4 The relationship between the teacher transformational leadership and the student engagement in alternative schools in Bangkok Metropolis (n = 149)

Variables	II	IM	IS	IC	AE	BE	CE
II	1						
IM	.750**	1					
IS	.625**	.667**	1				
IC	.669**	.682**	.742**	1			
AE	.573**	.579**	.583**	.558**	1		
BE	.372**	.361**	.474**	.422**	.654**	1	
CE	.387**	.454**	.390**	.402**	.541**	.589**	1

**Statistically significant at 0.01 level

The table 4 indicates more specific information of the statistical data of the relationship between teacher transformational leadership as perceived by students and the student engagement in alternative schools. It is found that there is a positive correlation between teacher transformational leadership and student engagement. The highest correlation between these two factors is Intellectual Stimulation (IS) and Affective Engagement (AE) ($r = .583$).

4.2 Qualitative Results

The semi-structured interview was conducted with 4 teachers in alternative schools to explain more in-depth about teacher transformational leadership, the student engagement and the relationship between the teacher transformational leadership and the student engagement as follows;

Interviewees all agree that student engagement is important to the student performances and learning outcomes. They said that student engagement is one of the factors that increase student learning outcomes. Also, student engagement is a factor that reflected the sense of belonging of the students. All of the interviewees said that the level of student engagement can be increased by teachers. Some of them added that the level of student engagement can be enhanced by the students themselves as well. The increasing level of student engagement is related to the four characteristics of teacher transformational leadership; Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation and Individual Consideration.

4.3 Idealized Influence

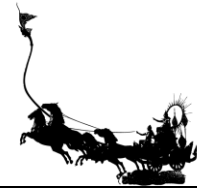
All of the interviewees agree that being a role model for students is important even if they focus on different points based on the ideologies that the schools are based on. For instance, the schools that focus on religious issues that are important then teacher is the role model in terms of moral and ethics. Others focus on work and attitudes. If the teacher has a positive attitude to the students, they will see the intention of the teacher and brings to the increasing of the student engagement.

4.4 Inspirational Motivation

Most of the interviewees said that conveying a clear goal and vision of learning can increase the level of student engagement. When sharing a clear goal and vision of learning to the student, they will understand what they are learning, how is it important to them, and else more. Some teachers added that not only the inspirational motivation affects student engagement, but it can also enhance the school performance when transformational leadership applied to everyone.

4.5 Intellectual Stimulation

Challenging students to think out of the box is another factor that causes the enhancing of the level of student engagement. Some interviewees added that teachers should be open-minded and accept different ideas



of solving the same questions. Creativity is one of the most important skills for the 21st Century. Also, intellectual stimulation increases the engagement in learning for those who are the fast-learner as well.

4.6 Individual Consideration

Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each student is significant for enhancing student engagement. The interviewees claimed that when teachers understand the strengths and weaknesses of each student and provide the appropriate method to make students understand, students will learn happily because they do not feel that they are forced to learn. Some teacher added that the class size affects the intellectual stimulation. Smaller class sizes increases intellectual stimulation.

4.7 Discussion

According to the analyzed statistical data, it was found out that there is a high level of teacher transformational leadership ($\mu=3.57$) and a high level of the student engagement ($\mu=3.53$). Also, according to table 4, it can be seen that the most positive correlation between the two factors is Idealized Influence and Inspirational Motivation ($r = .750$) which is in the alignment with the study from Dr. Raja Irfan Sabir (2015) that states strong positive relationship within transformational leadership is correlated between Idealized Influence and Inspirational Motivation. According to the qualitative data, most of the interviewees claimed that there is a relationship between Idealized Influence and Inspirational Motivation as well. Most of the interviewees claim that teachers can be a role model for students by providing clear vision and goals of learning for the students. Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between transformational leadership and student engagement ($r = .626$) which is in alignment with the studies from Leithwood (2000), Ruyle (2014) and Jovanovic et al. (2016) which agree that there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and student engagement. The most recognizable positive relationship between teacher transformational leadership perceived by students and student engagement is the Intellectual Stimulation and the Affective engagement ($r = .583$).

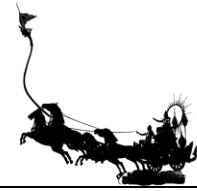
The qualitative results also expressed that there is a relationship between teacher transformational leadership and student engagement. For instance, some interviewee explained the phenomena that student engagement comes from students themselves; however, a teacher is another key factor that students enhance student engagement by being the role model. Also, when students gain student engagement, they will express the nature of themselves which makes teachers analyze the strengths and weaknesses easier.

However, there is some interesting points from the findings. According to the quantitative findings, it was found that the relationship of intellectual stimulation and the affective engagement is the most recognizable relationship. However, according to the qualitative findings, it was found that the idealized influence is the attribute that is mostly related to the student engagement.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

This research explains that there is a positive relationship between teacher transformational leadership and student engagement. In addition, the most outstanding relationship is intellectual stimulation and affective engagement ($r = .583$). Though in some, relationships are not strong, the relationship is still positive relation which means there is something between teacher transformational leadership and student engagement. Additionally, the conflict from the findings is interesting because it might be because of the different aspects. The quantitative data was based on student perspectives while the qualitative data was based on the teacher perspectives. Therefore, the different aspects between teachers and students are the interesting issue for further research. There are some limitations of the research. One of them is that the number of the alternative schools in Metropolis of Bangkok and the class size are limited; therefore, the number of participants is quite limited.



5.2 Suggestions

The procedure of this study is to examine the level of the perception on both teacher transformational leadership through questionnaires and semi-structured interview on teachers. However, as it was mentioned earlier that there is some conflict of the result between the quantitative and the qualitative data. Therefore, in the future, further research might be suggested to provide qualitative data on students and quantitative data on teachers in order to understand the aforementioned phenomenon and make the results more in-depth and accurate.

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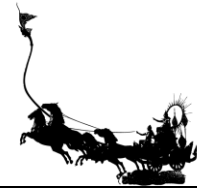
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