

# Transformational Leadership of Principal in Private Preschool: A Relationship to Workplace Spirituality

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of the research is to identify the relationship between transformational leadership among the principles of workplace spirituality. Furthermore, the relationship between the four dimensions of transformational and workplace spirituality is examined in this study. This survey included a total of 70 preschools that involve the teachers as participants. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the acquired data. This study, on the other hand, preschool demonstrates that transformational leadership has a considerable beneficial link with workplace spirituality. Furthermore, each of the transformational leadership sub-dimensions shows a significant direct association with workplace spirituality. As a result, the study's implications are useful to both teachers and principals in terms of increasing their degree of workplace spirituality. The direct consequence is that the principal should integrate any four transformational dimensions to accomplish the aim and objective of early childhood education.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Leadership Concept

Leadership skills play a key role in one's career development process. To be a quality and innovative leader, also need soft skills, such as the ability to be a listener and able to communicate better. The guideline is focusing on ensuring that every teacher has high-quality elements and a managerial support team that can provide leadership practices and contributes to the preschool's effectiveness. However, a study was performed that focused on the concepts of spirituality in the workplace and its relationship with the type of leadership of top management. However, this research is to examine the impact of transformation leadership of principals towards workplace spirituality that is still limited. Furthermore, there should be future research on the three dimensions of spirituality in the workplace such as purposive work, community, and alignment with organizational values (To et al., 2021). As a result, this study discovered that four transformational leadership elements, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation, could affect workplace spirituality. One teacher respondent stated that spirituality in leadership should be increased to build the school community (Gibson, 2011).

### 1.2 Integrated Transformational Leadership Practices

This research is significant in terms of giving knowledge and reference materials to early childhood education administration and leadership, particularly in early childhood settings. However, the practices are significant as this research may be observed in the style of leadership used by leaders in private preschools with a connection to workplace spirituality. The Malaysian Ministry of Education can utilize this study as a guide to ensure that the safety of teachers in private preschools is continually protected. The findings of this study are

also relevant in terms of providing knowledge and information about the real challenges that private preschool leaders face when it comes to transformational leadership styles.

### *1.3 Definitions of the terms*

Transformational leadership is a leadership practice that attempts to build new practices, affects teachers' behavior, comply with the specifications of new visions, and implement changes based on organizational culture (Anderson, 2017). Transformational leadership behavior, according to the researcher, refers to behaviors or actions conducted by leaders to enhance the overall efficiency and results of the organizations. The effectiveness of transformational leadership among teachers is assumed to be influenced by leadership conduct (Pushpanadham & Mammen, 2015). This type of behavior is described as inspirational and socially supportive. With the concept of encouragement, inspiring refers to defining a vision and allocating work, whilst emotional advantages pertain to promoting a learning culture. Tobias (2017) explains this statement by claiming that learning strategic leaders are essential for establishing institutions where they can continue to improve their capability to understand the difficulty, describe the vision, and increase cognitive evaluation conceptions.

Spirituality in the workplace entails creating an environment where the employees may understand and respect as if they have the main mission. According to Fanggidae et al. (2016), there is a significant and positive relationship between spirituality in the workplace and organizational commitment. Rajappan et al. (2017) emphasize that organizational culture is sustained by socially responsible organization leadership practices and involves values, staff efforts, and emphasizes dimensions of spiritual development and productivity well-being.

### *1.4 Research Objective*

This study indicated the four main dimensions of transformational leadership in the preschool context. The focus of this research, on the other hand, is to determine the positive relationship between transformational leadership techniques among private preschool principals and workplace spirituality in Penang.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1 Leadership Practices*

By expressing enthusiasm and respect, transformational leaders may establish a strategic vision and encourage others to achieve it (Beck II, 2017). However, the same research mentioned that the practices of transformational leadership foster followers' devotion through personalized contemplation, generate inspiration, and stimulate intellectuals. Leadership theory, according to Colton (2016), varies from other theories in that it emphasizes long-term strategy and genuine concern for the self-improvement of followers. According to Bass and Riggio (2014), a transformational leader exposes his supporters to a vision, focuses on common goals, challenges them to incorporate new thinking concerns, and provides advice, advice, and assistance to them to help people acquire leadership skills.

### *2.2 Dimensions of Transformational practices*

There are four main dimensions of transformational practices. The first dimension is idealized influence refers to transformational leaders who are valued, loved and respected, and recognized, as well as those who have the ideal dimension of influence. Transformational leaders are characterized as motivating influences that demonstrate behaviour that encourages and inspires followers by bringing meaning and challenge to their job (Pushpanadham & Mammen, 2015). Both one-way and two-way interactions are described by individual evaluation (Bass, 1985). He claims that transformational leaders value relationships and capabilities when it comes to meeting the individual requirements of their people. The ability to engage the brains of their followers and urge them to think creatively is known as intellectual stimulation. (Fatimah Isa, 2020).

### *2.3 Transformational Leadership Model*

Leithwood (1994) established the Transformational Leadership Model, which includes eight criteria in determining behaviours for transformational leadership that can be used as educational leadership models. Several studies looked into the role of principals in terms of transformational leadership, organizational cultural transformation, and setting conditions for teacher effectiveness development and maintenance (Gibson, 2011).

### *2.4 Spirituality in preschool*

Schwebel (2017), being conscious of spirituality at work is a sign that a person is living a meaningful life in society. The three components that relate to societal life are inner life, meaningful employment, and workplace spirituality. One of the variables that contribute to the establishment of a meaningful workplace is spirituality in the workplace (Schutte, 2016). According to Lean, (2012), employees who are engaged and excited about their professions, who seek meaning and purpose in their work, and who can fully integrate with their tasks are referred to be spiritual in the workplace. Individuals and institutions see employment as a chance to create for development and make a significant commitment to producing a supportive environment.

### 2.5 Spirituality Framework

Fry (2003) developed the spirituality model that related to the dimensions of creating meaningful work while in workplace settings. The idea is to create organizations with a high level of intrinsic motivation. A spirituality model in which spirituality is used to accelerate the growth and experience of followers (Isaacson's, 2002). This model, presented by Yishuang Meng (2016), is also referred to as "The organizational outcomes of commitment and productivity," and it describes intrinsic self-motivation and follower motivation based on principles, behaviours, and attitudes. Based on Fry (2017), the first phase of workplace spirituality is to identify and develop leaders with a sense of purpose, allowing them to work with meaning and purpose while also maintaining the potential to influence others. Next, it also seems to have the power to foster a love-based workplace culture for which members and leaders feel like they belong, are appreciated, and are recognized.

### 2.6 Relationship between principals and the workplace spirituality among teachers in the private preschool

Arokiasamy & Tat (2020), investigate transformational leaders' spirituality and school conduct. This study looked at the relationship between preschool principals and transformational leadership styles and the impact of ideal behavior on principal spirituality. There is a correlation between transformative leadership and well-being, which also develop a feeling of purpose in their life (Groom et al., 2006). Successful leaders will motivate their employees to follow their interests, work for long-term goals, and find deeper meaning and insight in their working life. Transformational leadership seems to have a spiritual dimension to it since it encourages employees to bring aside their goals for a better purpose.

The following is the research hypothesis:

*H<sub>11</sub>: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership among the private preschool principal towards workplace spirituality teachers in Penang*

### 3. Method

This research used a quantitative method to analyze the data. This survey included a total of 70 preschool teachers in Penang as respondents. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the acquired data. A basic randomization strategy was used to choose the study sample. To collect data from the respondent, this questionnaire was conducted using Google Forms. The obtained links were shared with private preschool teachers for them to complete the study's questionnaire.

To examine all dimensions, a Likert Scale was used to measure. Many dimensions are commonly evaluated using Likert Scales (Sharidatul Akma, 2020). Scales are commonly used to measure attitudes and are based on frequency. This scale has intervals of 5 to 7, with a neutral value of 0 being the middle one (Mills & Gay, 2019). Interval data of this type is utilized in data analysis. As a result, each component of this study was given a score of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### 4. Results and Discussion

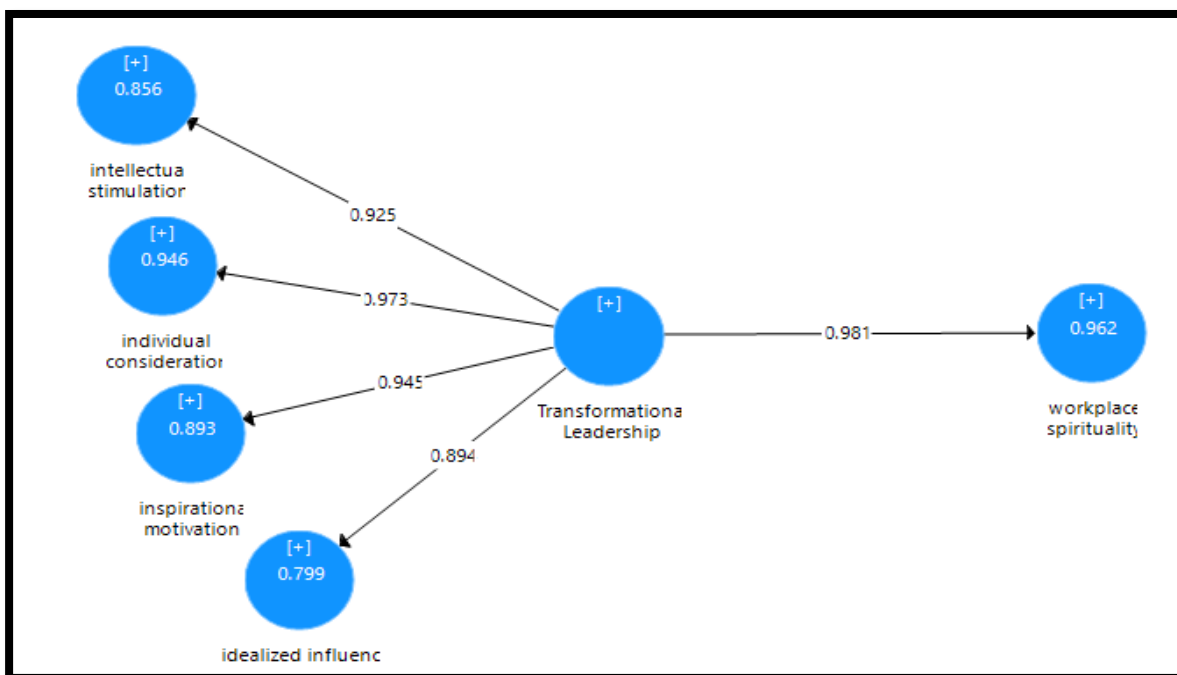
The demographics of the questionnaire survey are shown in Table 1. Female educators show the majority group (94.3 percent) compare to Male educators. The proportion of the respondents is preschool educators between the ages of 21 and 30. (75.7 percent). With 41.4 percent, the majority of respondents had a bachelor's degree.

**Table 1.** Demographic of the respondent

Demographic	Frequency	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	4	5.7
Female	66	94.3
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20 years	1	1.4
21-30 years	53	75.7
31-40 years	16	22.9
<b>Level of education</b>		
SPM	9	12.9
Diploma	20	28.6
Bachelor's degree	29	41.4
Master	12	17.1

The findings of the analysis will be utilized to assess if the hypotheses tested were confirmed by the findings. To evaluate the data gathered in this study, SMART-PLS was used. According to Figure 1, the outer loading value is more than 0.7. Each item that has outer loading should have at least 0.7 as a value. (Hair et.al, 2017).

Table 2 displays the findings of the hypotheses that were investigated. It demonstrates that Transformational Practices Leadership has a significant impact on workplace spirituality ( $r= 0.981$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). The results suggest that H1 is supported. Nonetheless,  $p$ -values ( $p- 0.10$ ,  $p- 0.05$ , and  $p- 0.01$ ) are used to determine if the alternative hypothesis is supported or not.



**Figure 1. Outer Loadings Values**

**Table 2. Relationship of the variables**

	<i>Beta</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t- value</i>	<i>p-values</i>	<i>Hypotheses</i>
Transformational Leadership → Workplace Spirituality	0.981	0.982	221.0	0.000	Supported

Based on the results shows that there is a favorable correlation between transformational leadership techniques among private principals and teachers' spirituality. The effective principal will inspire their people to pursue their interests, collaborate toward a common purpose, and discover hidden significance and wisdom in their situations.

Furthermore, Individuals or organizations are strongly impacted by transformational leadership and spirituality in the workplace. Furthermore, Ibrahim Bafadal et al., (2019) claims that this leadership has different inspirations, principles, relationships, honesty, and spirituality, that have been integrated into this leadership. However, Fry (2017) defines spirituality as transformation, authenticity, and values. In addition, integrity, honesty, compassion, knowledge, truthfulness, suitability, connectivity, and collaboration are all attributes he believes spirituality contains. Spirituality has broadened the scope of leadership ideas and energies. As a result, spirituality and philosophy have been identified as crucial to transformative leadership and as sources of motivation for transformational leaders (Macon, 2014).

In addition, the findings of this study have practical implications in that instructors will be inspired to see everything than consciousness and concentrate on the advantage of the organization when preschool principals display knowledge and interest in their followers recognizing the group purpose. According to the findings of this study, transformative leaders aim to make a transformational leader more applicable than other styles of leadership, particularly when it comes to workplace spirituality, by encouraging followers' motivation, understanding, self-worth, and dedication.

## 5. Conclusion

Thus, the principal is a progressive individual who not only focuses on the goals of the organization to increase production, but also on improving organizational employees' capability and desire, attitudes, and ethics. However, it is suggested that this be done for future study purposes. Larger sample sizes from several states could be used in future investigations. Furthermore, the study's design was limited to a questionnaire. Hence, the existence of qualitative supporting data, such as interviews or observations, allows for a more in-depth comprehension of the study's conclusions. As a result, future studies should explore other characteristics that

are likely to have a positive link to leadership and spirituality. This study, on the other hand, shows that transformative leadership has a favorable impact. As a result, respectively teachers and preschool principals can benefit from the report's results in terms of improving their levels of employee spirituality. The direct consequence is that the principal should incorporate any dimensions such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation as main to fulfill the preschool vision and goals, techniques to promote the spirituality of the preschool teacher should be used.

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