



RESEARCH ARTICLE

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2016  
Received in revised form  
17<sup>th</sup> June, 2016  
Accepted 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2016  
Published online 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2016

Key words:

Transformational Leadership,  
Principals,  
Elementary school.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to study the behavior of elementary school principals that reflects transformational leadership in the new paradigm of 21<sup>st</sup> century education and to compare behavior by gender, work experience, and levels of education. The survey methodology was used, gathering data from a sample of the population who are public elementary school principals in Khon Kaen province, Thailand. The results showed that: (1) the public elementary school principals in KhonKaen had behavior that reflects the transformational leadership at high extent, (2) male and female elementary school principals are no different to exhibit behavior that reflects the transformational leadership, (3) the public elementary school principals in KhonKaen with work experience of 5-15 years showed behavior that reflects transformational leadership more than two of those work experiences; less than 5 years and more than 15 years and (4) the public elementary school principals in KhonKaen who graduated with master degree had behavior reflecting transformational leadership more than those who graduate a bachelor degree.

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Citation: Akkharadet Neelayothin, Paisan Suwannoi, Phakru Dhammapissamai and Pataraphorn Arunmala. 2016. "Transformational leadership of elementary school principals", *International Journal of Current Research*, 8, (08), 36530-36533.

INTRODUCTION

Sanrattana, Parkay, Phrakrusutheejarayawattana, Phrakrupaladsamai and Suwannoi. (2016) analyzed and synthesized concepts of various scholars, and found that leadership is defined as a basic idea in two respects: (1) the definition of leadership is based on the idea to achieve success by other. To trust other people having desire and ability to work together to achieve coordination together by inviting inspirational leaders or by the relationship of the group which is the focus of the new organization or a new world. (2) the definition of leadership is based on ideas for change and for a better future. From two such concepts, Sanrattana, et al. have taken the basic idea of these two together that integration. "Leadership refers to the relationship between leader and follower in a relational process to transition to a new world or a better future whether the leaders by position or by nature". According to those definitions, it focuses on the transformation of the old world to the new world or a better future which this change requires transformational leadership or a leader who accepts the changes. For the better transformation, developing itself over time, keeping up with a constantly changing world, being ready to get on with something new or a new better

future and being efforts to achieve practical results in the change are needed. Accordance with the opinion of Burns (1987) has said that the leaders who can achieve the aim expressed by the values, motivation, needs, and expectations of both the leader and the follower which all reflect the different interactions of individuals in power, motivation and skills toward a common purpose. Moreover, Bass (1999) defined the transformational leadership is that the leader would urged followers to aware of their need and realize the importance of values with the aim of achievement. Additionally, taking in to the team and organization rather than personal and raise to the higher demand. Since the past to the present, the attitude towards transformational leadership is the key feature of the leadership especially for school administrators. As the viewpoint of Razik & Swanson (2001) said that transformational leadership is the ability of leaders to improve, enhance the motivation and goals of the implementation of the changes significantly. In accordance with the opinion about transformational leadership of Viroj Sanrattana (2001), transformational leadership is theory that explains what leaders do till it succeed or cause of the changes in new things rather than describe the characteristics of a leader to urge the believe from followers. The main characteristics of transformational leadership is to aim for a change oriented by urging followers to recognize the opportunities or problems and share the vision for something new. Moreover, Bass & Avolio (1990) has

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expressed the point of view is that transformational leadership could activate the interesting among colleagues and others to interest their works on new aspects, raises awareness about the mission and vision of team and the organization. Transformation leader would develop the ability of coworker to higher level and challenge their follower to achieve higher performance. The ability of the transformation leadership is defined in four areas: 1) Idealized influence of charisma leadership 2) Inspiration motivation 3) Intellectual stimulation and 4) Individualized consideration

### Purpose

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is an era of change and learning due to the development of digital technology that affects society is changing in the new paradigm in many areas, including education. The change of leadership would increase motivation, morale and performance of the track; inspiring them to commit to a common vision, transformational leaders are able to create a clear vision for their followers while serving as a role model. Transformational leadership would empower people by understanding their strengths and weaknesses, and adapt to the increased efficiency of their work. Transformational leadership would is a process that often includes the prestige and vision together which is the key characteristics, strengths, and most useful for a leader. (Colquitt, Lepine & Wesson, 2013). This paradigm change requires school administrators whose behavior reflects the transformational leadership both in terms of the ability as 1) Idealized influence of charisma leadership 2) Inspiration motivation 3) Intellectual stimulation and 4) Individualized consideration. In line with the Ministry of Education's policy is to raise the quality of basic education to higher level by upheld the school administrators as the policy-driven for achieving success. Thus, this research aims to study how much the behavior of elementary school principals reflects transformational leadership and, when analyzed by the different gender, work experience, and education levels of the elementary school principals, whether those reflect different levels of transformational leadership or not in both the overall and each aspect of the study, in order to get empirical research as a guide to develop elementary school principals.

### Hypothesis

In the case of a comparative study of behavior of elementary school principals reflects transformational leadership by the different gender, work experience, and education levels of the elementary school principals. The research result will be differences, statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

### Methodology

This study is a survey research. Survey population is the public elementary school principals in KhonKaen province which is a large province in the Northeast of Thailand of 1, 130. Determining the sample size by using square blocks of Krejcie and Morgan in the level of significance at 0.05 (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970) on a sample of 285. Collecting data from a sample with a simple random sampling method. Using the questionnaire titled "transformational leadership" developed by

Bass and Avolio (1990). The questionnaire has a scale of about a fifth of translating the respective value of more for less is 5 = highest, 4 = high, 3 = moderate, 2 = little, and 1 = least. The overall reliability of the questionnaire is 0.89. The reliability aspect of Idealized Influence = 4.18, Inspiration Motivation = 4.28, Intellectual Stimulation = 4.20 and Individualized Consideration = 4.27. In data collection, received 234 copies of questionnaires were returned, representing 82.10 percent of all queries sent. Information received was analyzed using a computer program to determine the mean, the standard deviation, t-test and F-test (Tabacnick and Fidell, 2001)

### RESULTS

Considering the criteria of the mean is between 4:51 to 5:00 = highest, 3:51 to 4:50 = high, 2:51 to 3:50 = moderate, 1:51 to 2:50 = less, and 0:01 to 1:50 = least. The result was found the public elementary school principals who face with the 21<sup>st</sup> century paradigm change and the reforming education policy of the Ministry of Education had behavior that reflects transformational leadership over all at "high" level ( $\bar{X} = 4.20$ , S.D. = 0.54). When considering in each aspect, it was found in descending order from the highest to the lowest as follows: 1) Inspiration Motivation ( $\bar{X} = 4.28$ ), 2) Individualized Consideration ( $\bar{X} = 4.27$ ), 3) Intellectual Stimulation ( $\bar{X} = 4.20$ ) and 4) Idealized Influence ( $\bar{X} = 4.1$ ). To compare the behavior of elementary school principals that reflects transformational leadership by gender. No difference was found between male and female elementary school principals, thus rejecting the hypothesis set as indicated in Table 1. To compare the behavior of elementary school principals that reflects transformational leadership by work experiences. The differences are statistically significant at the 0.05 level among the three groups of working less than 5 years, 5-15 years, and more than 15 years, thus accepting the set hypothesis as indicated in Table 2. Table 2 comparison of the behavior of elementary school principals that reflects transformational leadership by work experiences. The results revealed differences as such. The researchers tested the difference in mean coupled with Scheffe's method and found that elementary school principals who have 5-15 years of work experience exhibit behavior that reflects the transformational leadership over the school principals group with work experience less than 5 years and more than 15 years of data analysis in Table 3. To compare the behavior of elementary school principals that reflects transformational leadership by levels of education. The result revealed that elementary school principals who hold a master's degree had behavior reflecting the transformational leadership higher than ones holding a bachelor's degree with the statistically significant at the 0.05 level differences which is based on the assumptions set as indicated in Table 4. Table 4 comparison of the behavior of elementary school principals that reflects transformational leadership by levels of education.

### DISCUSSION

The study found the elementary school principals in KhonKaen province, with overall behavior that reflects the transformational leadership at "high" level.

**Table 1. Comparison of the behavior of elementary school principals that reflects transformational leadership by gender**

Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	142	4.19	.467	-1.514	.131
Female	92	4.29	.530		

\* statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 2. Comparison of the behavior of elementary school principals that reflects transformational leadership by work experiences**

Years of Work Experience	N	Mean	S. D.	F	Sig.
less than 5 years	51	4.15	.396	3.693*	.026
5 - 15 years	102	4.33	.407		
more than 15 years	81	4.16	.619		

\* Statistically Significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 3. Test results, the difference of the paired means by Scheffe 'method**

Years of work experience	less than 5 years	5 - 15 years	More than 15 years
less than 5 years	-	-.178*	-.005
5 - 15 years		-	-.173*
more than 15 years			-

\* statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 4. Comparison of the behavior of elementary school principals that reflects transformational leadership by levels of education**

Education Level	N	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig.
bachelor's degree	48	4.03	.639	7.399	.007
master's degree	186	4.29	.437		

\* statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

That is consistent with the findings of Dechsatan (2014) who made a research on "Transformational Leadership of Institution Administrators Affiliated with Kalasin Primary Educational Service Area Office 3." This may be due to the fact that the elementary school principals in KhonKaen province need to change because of education reform policy of the Ministry of Education, and the 21<sup>st</sup> century paradigm changing as mentioned above. The school principals need transformational leadership to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in school. Ministry of Education also upheld the school principals as a key role in driving policy to achieve a successful outcome thus, transformation leadership is needed to develop all the time. As can be seen from the National Education Act (2553) that school principals must manage educational benefits to learners as much as possible. Improving the quality of education continues to keep pace with the changes which depend on the leadership of school principals as well. In accordance with the definitions and concepts used in this research is that "Leadership is the ability of leaders to create change. School will be manageable to the most effective, right direction and be the sustainably organizational." The result of the research showed the elementary school principals in KhonKaen province, exhibit behavior that reflects the transformational leadership in "Inspiration Motivation" aspect is higher than the others. This may be explained that school principals have visions and can set the right direction to the organizations' goal, also able to convince colleagues to accept and participate in that mission. In consistent with Bass (1999) said that school principals is a person who could challenge colleagues and assigned a new task to accomplish it by using expression, speech, and also inspire them to accomplish their goals. The result of the research showed the elementary school principals in KhonKaen

province, exhibit behavior that reflects the transformational leadership in "Idealized Influence" aspect is even lower than the other but it was at high level as well. It may because of the influential ideology in elementary schools is still attached to the bureaucracy which cause inflexibility in the chain of command. Less understanding of the ideology, lacking the accountability and ideological skill of school principals is consistent with the findings of Bass (1999) found that the transformational leadership is an outstanding commitment to work and the organization's findings showed that according to the ability of leaders; faith and pride to solve problems, followers would eager to work and go to the goal as leader inspire. As a result of comparing elementary school principals in KhonKaen province, exhibit behavior that reflects the transformational leadership by gender, it found that no difference was found between male and female elementary school principals. This may probably because of the result of the school principals' training and leadership development which cause no leadership's differences among them. Consistent with research Thapthimsri (2013) found that there are no different between male and female teacher's attitudes toward the transformational leadership of elementary school principals statistically significant at the 0.05 level in overall. The comparison research result showed that the elementary school principals in KhonKaen province who have 5-15 years of work experience showed behavior that reflects the transformational leadership is at higher level than those elementary school principals in groups of work experience less than 5 years and more than 15 years. Probably due to the fact that less than 5 years' work experience elementary school principals has just been to appoint a position. And for those who worked more than 15 years are nearly to be retired, so they have less motivation to work on. This is consistent with

the research of Chaiudom (2014) found that in overall, there are no differences of elementary school principals' behaviors that reflects transformational leadership with statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The comparison result showed that the elementary school principals in KhonKaen province who graduated with a master degree reflects the transformational leadership behavior is at higher level than those who graduated with a bachelor degree. This can be demonstrating the importance of education. The higher level of education would affect to the personal's opportunity for gaining both in depth and width of knowledge that would be helpful to strengthen the transformational leadership better. In consistent with the research of Pho-Oan (2015) found that administrators and teachers under the Singburi Primary Educational Service Area Office who graduated in a higher degree would have a better understanding and higher expectation than those who graduated in the lower education degree.

### Recommendation

Research has found that the behavior of elementary school principals that reflects transformational leadership in KhonKaen province is at high level in overall. Anyway, elementary school principals and higher agencies should be required to develop and strengthen transformational leadership constantly. Upheld the concept is that "Educators never cannot stop learning," "lifelong learning," and "the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the era of all the time changing. If administrators don't improve themselves, it causes school administration couldn't keep up with the changes and be underdeveloped performance," it should be focused on strengthen and enhance the transformational leadership skill to the school administration process and personnel by sharing knowledge, transformational leadership in appropriated and effective way for elementary school principals who has work experience less than 5 years and more than 15 years. Moreover, encouraging school principals study in the higher education level.

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