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Sugunah Supermane, Lokman Mohd. Tahir, Mazlan Aris

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Transformational Leadership in Teacher Education

Sugunah Supermane, Lokman Mohd. Tahir

Department of Educational Foundations and Social Science, Faculty of Education, Universiti
Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Skudai, Johor, Malaysia
Email: sugunah559@gmail.com, lokmantahir@gmail.com

Mazlan Aris

Institut Pendidikan Guru Temenggong Ibrahim, Jalan Datin Halimah, 80350 Johor Bahru, Johor,
Malaysia
Email: mazlan.aris@yahoo.com.my

Abstract

Transformational leadership should be prioritised in order to develop more competent leaders to lead transformation in teachers training colleges. Specifically, transformational leaders can explain the goals and strategies to improve the understanding of teacher educators on how to achieve the vision and missions. In the line with this, transformational leadership is found to be very substantial in transforming teacher education. Despite the significance of this construct, valid instruments have proven yet to be developed in the context of teacher education. Therefore, the absence of valid instrument to assess transformational leadership among leaders in teacher education has obstructed researches in this area. Thus, this study aimed in developing a valid instrument to assess transformational leadership among leaders in teachers training colleges. A survey encompassed of 100 teacher educators was carried out in one of the teacher training college in the southern part of Malaysia. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to identify the underlying factors. Result of EFA formed a 22-item version of Transformational Leadership Inventory (TLI). All the combined 22 items explained 69.469% of the total cumulative variance. The findings showed that TLI can be used as a valid instrument to assess transformational leadership among head of departments in teacher training colleges. Moreover, it provides a wide-ranging guideline for directors to plan a short course on transformational leadership for newly-appointed head of departments.

Introduction

Providing innovative solutions and services that deliver sustained significance to all the students is central to most of the educational institutions. Teachers training colleges are among the educational institutions, which play crucial roles in providing quality and innovative educational services in order to enhance the transformation of education system (IPGM, 2011).

There is a robust need for work collaborations among directors, leaders and academics to achieve the objectives. Generally, there are many contributing factors in attaining the high quality of education system. Chawla and Lenka (2015) pointed out that leadership is the most noticeable factor that drives to a significant transformation in teaching, learning and research. Hence, leaders in teachers training colleges are mainly responsible in leading all the teacher educators to custom best teaching and learning practices as an effort to transform teacher education. Nevertheless, it would be ineffective to motivate the leaders and educators without any framework and guidelines. It is evident that the elements of transformational leadership should be prioritised in order to develop more competent leaders to lead transformation in teachers training colleges. It is also aligned with the view of Soliman (2014), who stated that transformational leadership plays an important role in creating a conducive environment for innovations in learning organisations. Aforesaid conducive environment enable teacher educators to perform better in teachers training colleges.

Transformational leadership In Teacher Education

In this ever changing world, investment in leadership development is the most significant teacher education enhancement plan (Rukspollmuang, 2014; Ross et al., 2011; Gregory, 1996). Development in leadership enable effective ways of objective achievement. Thus, effective leadership development guaranteed a consistent teacher education quality management (Chong, 2014). A past study by Hammond (2013) has shown similarities in the application of teacher enhancement policy in which, the element of leadership was integrated. The same policy has been used on teacher education development in Melbourne, Toronto and Singapore. The implementation of leadership development program in the above-mentioned places has enriched the teacher education by the guidance and assistance from caliber leaders. Hence, leadership development program in teacher education is capable in contributing to the teaching and learning enhancement as well as objective achievement. Besides, Ferreira et al. (2015) claimed that leaders in education sector especially those in teacher education need to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills of leadership in order to implement transformation. In fact, the leaders' ability to influence should always be developed to maintain the competitiveness of educational institutions. Leaders who can explain the vision and missions set out can inspire a high spirit among teacher educators to achieve mutual goals in teachers training colleges. The high spirit and commitment among them can realize teacher education's aspiration in making all the programs planned and implemented.

Bass (2000) also noted that leaders in the education sector should practice transformational leadership in an effort to provide inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration towards educators, students and parents. His research showed that teacher graduates who later became school leaders were able to enhance cooperation and commitment among educators by practicing transformational leadership. The needs of the educators and the target of educational institutions should be met simultaneously to maintain the quality and competitiveness of educational institutions. On the other hand, preliminary study by Myers and Pickeral (1997) had stressed that transformational leadership should be practiced widely in teachers training colleges as an initial step in the process of reforming the national

education system. This evident the great need of transformational leadership in teacher education.

In addition, Beverborg et al. (2015) revealed that there were direct and indirect influence of transformational leadership on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. According to them, the dimension of idealized influence and intellectual stimulation in transformational leadership contribute directly to the ability of teacher educators in practicing self-reflection. Besides that, mutual sharing of goals by transformational leaders and teacher educators enable them to plan effective strategies to achieve the goals. In this situation, the implementation of the planned strategy will be easier as it was structured after getting feedback from leaders and educators. Therefore, leaders are creating opportunities to solve complex teaching and learning problems by encouraging creative and critical thinking among teacher educators.

In that regard, the practice of individualized consideration by transformational leaders is indirectly stimulating teacher educators' self-reflection. The personal attention given by transformational leaders enhances the capabilities the teacher educators. Therefore, they could cooperate well and perform better. Beverborg et al. (2015) found that teacher educators are able to share resources obtained from one another if they are under personal observation by their leaders. Overall, the influence of transformational leadership is believed to enhance the ability of teacher educators in delivering quality education to future teachers.

Most of the developed countries are taking steps to transform the teacher education to improve the overall quality of education. Transformation in teacher education includes the integration of technology in pedagogy. Integration of TPACK (Technology, Pedagogy and Content Knowledge) in the teacher education curriculum (Koehler & Mishra, 2009) is an early initiative of transformation that also requires the support and guidance of leaders. Therefore, transformational leadership is best suited for the success of this transformation. Thomas et al., (2013) has stated that integrating innovation such as TPACK into teacher education curriculum can be implemented smoothly if transformational leaders can explain the transformation strategies, develop the potential of the teacher educators as well as provide support and encouragement to their efforts towards the success teacher education. Hence, the influence of leadership in teacher education can contribute to the establishment of clear vision and missions in bringing up transformation. Specifically, transformational leaders can explain the goals and strategies to improve the understanding of teacher educators on how to achieve the vision and missions.

Thus, transformational leadership plays an important role in the transformation of teacher education. A study by Supermane and Tahir (2017a) has revealed that innovative leaders are needed to enhance the capabilities of teacher educators in teachers training colleges. Given the importance of transformational leadership in teacher education transformation, this study developed a valid instrument to assess transformational leadership in teachers training colleges. Furthermore, four dimensions of transformational leadership were identified in the context of teacher education. By providing instrument and in-detailed information about transformational

leadership, leaders in teachers training colleges will be able to use it as complete guidelines in order to achieve the targeted goals.

Methodology

The population of this study encompassed all the teacher educators from 27 teachers training colleges across Malaysia. Teacher educators were chosen as the population for this study because they are the best persons to know how well their leaders are practicing transformational leadership rather than the directors and head of departments. Samples of 105 teacher educators were chosen from a teacher training college situated in southern part of Malaysia. A clustered sampling technique was employed to obtain the sample for this study. The data of five respondents were excluded from the data analysis as the received data was similar. Therefore, the remaining data of 100 respondents were used to conduct further analysis.

A self-administered questionnaire was used as the instrument for the purpose of data collection. All of the 26 items within the instrument were adapted from Bass and Avolio's Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure the transformational leadership in teachers training colleges. The instrument was based on five point Likert scale. Thereafter, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was carried out to extract the items with factor loadings above 0.5. This is because; extracted items with factor loadings above 0.5 can be practically significant in measuring constructs (Hair et al., 2014).

Findings and Discussion

The study aimed in developing a valid instrument to measure the construct of transformational leadership in teachers training colleges. Thus, all the psychometric properties of TLI were examined and established significant results. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed and all the significant items with factor loadings above 0.5 were extracted. Prior to EFA, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BToS) was used to examine the item level bivariate correlations and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) was used to examine the partial correlations among pairs of items. The value of BToS was very significant as it was closer to 0. The KMO value was 0.855, which is considered good level of sampling adequacy (Norman & Streiner, 2008). Hence, the both values of BToS and KMO revealed that the collected data met the fundamental requirements to conduct EFA.

Thereafter, principal component analysis method was used to estimate the factors that contributed the most variances to the transformational leadership variables. The factor analysis revealed four factors as solution with 69.469 percent of total cumulative variance. Item 1 to 5 explained all the 69.469 % of the cumulative variance as they scored eigenvalues more than one. The analysis showed an adequate percentage of cumulative variance to measure the whole construct of transformational leadership.

Finally, uncorrelated factors were identified by using Orthogonal Varimax rotation. Table 1 shows the final factor loadings for 22 items of transformational leadership in teacher training colleges. The factor loadings for all the 22 items were all in the range of 0.566 to 0.911. Four items were discarded from the inventory as the factor loadings were all below 0.5.

Table 1: Final factor loadings matrix for transformational leadership

Factor	Code	Item	Factor Loadings
1	PT1	is able to obtain the trust of lecturers	0.776
	PT2	maintains sense of respect	
	PT3	is dedicated to the lecturers	
	PT4	acts as the role model	
	PT5	exhibits a high level of self-confidence	
2	IM1	takes the initiative to explain IPG's vision	0.754
	IM2	visualises the IPG's vision using a simple method	
	IM3	explains how to realise IPG's vision	
	IM4	explain the importance of each task given to the lecturers	
	IM5	motivates lecturers in order to achieve IPG's vision	
3	PI1	pays attention to the lecturers' needs on an individual basis	0.653
	PI2	assign individual tasks	
	PI3	gives personal feedback on given tasks	
	PI4	gives special attention to passive lecturers	
	PI5	allocates time for assisting lecturers	
	PI6	allocates time for guiding lecturers	
	PI7	takes effort to develop the lecturers' potential	
4	RI1	encourages lecturers to think creatively when implementing daily tasks	0.617
	RI3	encourages use of various methods when implementing the lecturer's daily tasks	
	RI4	encourages the lecturer to think out of the box	
	RI5	creates a flexible working environment	
	RI6	encourages a self reflection among lecturers	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. Four factors extracted.

Rotation: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

As a final point, all the remaining 22 items were categorized under four factors. The findings of this study were significant as the development of the TLI was an ultimate effort to enhance the practice of transformational leadership in teachers training colleges.

Conclusion

Transformational leaders are playing crucial roles in enhancing the quality of teacher education. In spite of the principal responsibilities in administration, goal attainment and fulfilling teacher educators' needs are leaders' prominent tasks in teacher training colleges. Therefore, they need to practice transformational leadership to achieve the vision and missions without affecting the needs of teacher educators.

In the relation to this, transformational leadership has an immense influence on the transformation of teachers training colleges. Nevertheless, leaders in teachers training colleges face difficulties in practicing transformational leadership without proper guidelines. Thus, leaders can adapt TLI as a complete guide to practice transformational leadership in teachers training colleges. On top of that, directors in teacher training colleges may use this inventory to assess the competency of transformational leadership among head of departments. Moreover, it is useful to identify incompetent head of departments and plan a short course on transformational leadership for them.

There are a few limitations for this study. First, the samples for this study were drawn only from one teachers training college. Therefore, it is quite difficult to make the generalization based on the findings of this study. Future research is recommended to focus on a bigger sample. Next, only teacher educators were chosen as samples in this study. Further studies should emphasize on directors and head of departments from teachers training colleges.

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Corresponding Author

Sugunah Supermane

Department of Educational Foundations and Social Science, Faculty of Education,
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310 Skudai, Johor, Malaysia

Email: sugunah559@gmail.com

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