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Transformational Leadership Qualities of Teacher Candidates in Classrooms: A Study from UAE

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Abstract

Universities have an objective of developing leadership skills in students. This study explores the development of these skills in relation to College of Education teacher candidates' character, personality and performance during teaching in classrooms. The current research is structured around Northouse's (2016) transformational leadership model. He states that transformational leaders possess four components; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In the current study, the four components were identified during teaching and interaction with students in classrooms. Thirty-two teacher candidates were observed during teaching in the classroom and several traits were exhibited most while another set were observed least. The study suggested that the university introduces teacher candidates to new perspectives, courses, and training that may enhance efforts to develop their leadership qualities successfully.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, teacher education, teachers as leaders, field experience

Introduction

The reform of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE's) current education system and teaching methods is one of the main aims of the country's National Agenda 2030 (UAE, 2009). Enhancing the quality of pre-service teachers' skills, strategies, and performance is the cornerstone of transforming the education system. One of the key performance indicators of the UAE's vision is to have more high-quality teachers that have skills and strategies, to perform well in UAE schools. In the UAE's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development established in 2017, one of the key goals identified was prioritizing high-quality education. This goal was aligned with the National Agenda pillars to ensure comprehensive and sustainable development in the country. Accordingly, attention has been paid to the teacher education program in a federal university in the UAE where this study is conducted.

At the federal university, there are six main education learning outcomes that were developed by faculty in 2001, and they are considered as essential elements to assure the future success of the students. These outcomes are what the university values most in the undergraduate education within its unique context. One of the learning outcomes all students must obtain and must undertake is leadership outcome. The federal university is looking to ensure all graduates are able to take on any leadership roles or responsibilities, and are able to interact effectively with others to accomplish shared goals. Similarly, the College of Education at the university believes that leadership is a vital skill for teachers to have and practice in their everyday life.

An educational leader is what the educational field and the school community need in the classrooms (Brandman University, 2019). Leaders are strong influencers who are able to build a strong bond and relationship with different types of people, especially as a teacher in the classroom. Fullan (2002, p.5) states that "leaders must be consummate relationship builders with different people and groups, especially with people different than themselves". Accordingly, all teacher candidates are assumed to be ready to be leaders in their classrooms. When teacher candidates (TC) obtain leadership traits, it allows them to have a good sense of ethics and morals when teaching students, as they have to treat everyone in the classroom equally. In addition, it helps to create a better classroom management and a more effective learning environment. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to answer the following two research questions:

1. What leadership skills are mostly exhibited in teacher candidates during teaching in classrooms?
2. What leadership skills are least exhibited in teacher candidates during teaching in classrooms?

Theoretical Framework

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is an approach that creates valuable and positive change in followers with the goal of transforming followers into leaders'. There are different aspects

that enacted the authentic form of transformational leadership such as: being a role model to motivate and inspire others, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of followers, challenging them to take ownership of their work, and connecting their sense of identity to the vision and mission of the organization. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is a process in which leaders and followers support each other to encourage a higher level of morale and motivation. Bass (1985) elaborated on the work of Burns and explained how transformational leadership can be measured and how it impacts followers' performances. As shown in Figure 1, the study used the transformational leadership dimensions of Bass and Riggio (2006) that include: individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation.

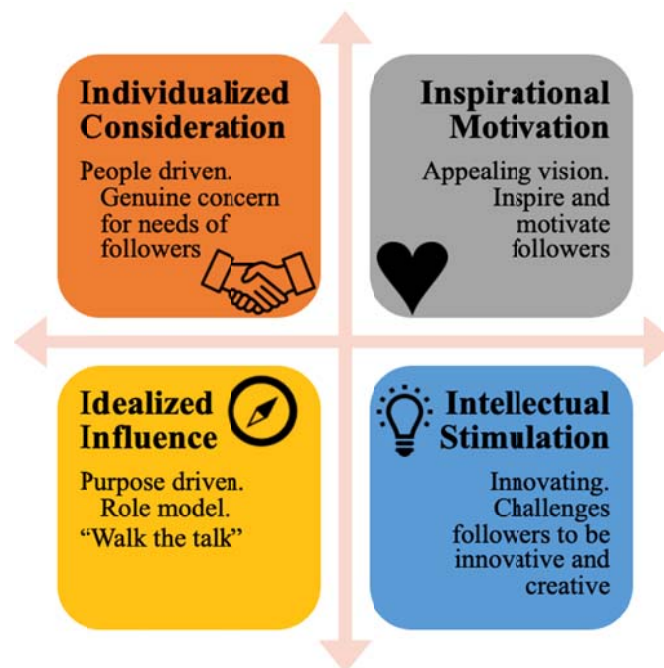


Figure 1. Transformational leadership dimensions of Bass and Riggio (2006)

Individualized consideration is the extent to which the leader focuses on followers' needs, acts as a mentor or coach, and listens to followers' concerns. The leaders provide continuous feedback and link the followers' needs to the organization's mission (Stoffell & Choi, 2018). Teachers with transformational leadership skills work on considering their students' individual needs, abilities, and skills. They help in developing their students' levels of potential through learning opportunities.

Intellectual stimulation is the extent to which the leader challenges assumptions, takes risks and seeks followers' ideas, and stimulates and encourages creativity in others. For transformational leaders, learning is valued and occurs in unexpected situations. Here the followers ask questions, think critically, and find innovative solutions to complete their tasks. Teacher leaders challenge the assumptions of their students' ideas and creativity, as they support them when they try new approaches and develop innovative ways of delivering

lessons (Northouse, 2016).

Inspirational motivation is the degree to which the leader articulates an appealing vision and inspires others. Stoffell and Choi (2018) stated that transformational leaders must have the inspirational motivation and communicate with their followers optimistically and enthusiastically, and provide them encouragement and meaning for their tasks. Such teacher leaders must work hard on encouraging their students to think things out on their own and encourage students to think independently so that they become autonomous.

Idealized influence is the extent to which the leader acts and behaves in a way that results in them being a role model for followers. They also emphasize trust; they are able to take action on difficult issues, present their own values, and point out the ethical consequences of decisions. Towler (2019) asserts that transformational leaders are positive role models regardless of their hierarchy, and they attend to each team member's needs.

Literature Review

Definitions of teacher leadership

When it comes to the definitions of teacher leadership, there are different opinions and a variety of perspectives on this domain, but there is no specific information or consensus on the definition of teacher leadership. Reeves and Lowenhaupt (2016) believed that teacher leadership is a merger of developed roles such as department head, head/master teacher, and administrators' responsibilities. In addition, they stated that when teachers participate more in staff and curriculum development, decision-making, or provide professional development, these elements shape them to be leaders. On the other hand, Cheng and Szeto (2016) expressed their opinion on the definition of teacher leadership by stating that in spite of formal or informal teacher leader roles, the "key idea" of teacher leadership is established within the teachers themselves. They do influence others' opinions when they contribute and work together for school improvement or any educational practice. With this definition, it assumed that all teachers, even the TC, have the ability to be leaders at various times during their school careers and during the classroom teaching. From another point of view, the conceptualization of teacher leadership can be looked at as a collaborative form of leadership between the teachers and the school leaders in their community.

A group of researchers agreed that teacher leaders are those who get involved and engaged in inquiry to develop deeper knowledge about their own daily practices (Ryan et al., 2017). They imply that teacher leaders can feel that leadership is a vital part of their professional role, because they learn to share and enhance their professional learning within their classroom. In contrast, Wenner and Campbell (2017) believe that the definitions of the term "teacher leadership" are widely varied. It might refer to an umbrella term indicating an uncountable number of works that teachers are responsible to do, or it might be a further complicated word that holds a particular title with different responsibilities. Accordingly, Leffler (2019) declared that teacher leadership is more of an act that affords students freedom whenever they need it, and this enables them to develop their innovative skills. The

importance of the “Shift of Power” was pointed out by Leffler as he explained that the teacher-students relationship is important in terms of teacher leadership, which means that the teacher should be able to give the students all the trust, the free rein, and belief in their ability to use their own capacities (Leffler, 2019).

Teacher leadership qualities

Many studies of teacher leadership have discussed different qualities or characteristics of teacher leadership. Cheng and Szeto (2016) believed that those qualities can be identified based on the role of experienced teachers, such as the knowledge concerning the students’ learning and development. Accordingly, Smylie and Eckert (2017) stated that for the teacher to lead, they must have knowledge of the curriculum as well as pedagogical content knowledge. This process aimed to introduce new thinking methods and encourage educators to actively engage with students, providing them opportunities to practice these methods. By doing so, the agenda aimed to create a dynamic and innovative learning environment that fostered students’ growth and development. Also, a teacher leader must be ready to face the students when generating valid and actionable feedback, in providing social-emotional support, and more importantly, they must be authentic in the leadership they perform in the classroom (Smylie & Eckert, 2017).

Additionally, Leffler (2019) indicated that having teacher leadership qualities refers to making use of the emotions and the confidence they have. The TC should be aware of their own as well as their students’ feelings in order for them to be able to express them in a convincing way. They must also be sensitive to their students and able to consider other people’s perspectives in any decisions they are about to make. Leffler (2019) mentioned that further characteristics or qualities teacher leaders must exhibit include being socially responsible and having strong motivation for their actions, meaning they will tend to be more innovative, daring to think out of the box when they face different issues.

Types of leadership

In his book “A Guide to Effective School Leadership Theories” Matthew Lynch (2012) discussed that there are 10 types of leadership which are used in schools or in the educational sector. These are: 1. Transformational Leadership, which was identified as the (un)disputed champion of leadership strategy, 2. Instructional Leadership, which is the catalyst for the rise of teaching and learning, 3. Distributed Leadership, which is the humanistic approach when sharing administrative authority, 4. Ethical Leadership, which refers to using the moral and the ethical structure in the school system and the meaning behind creating one, 5. Emotional Leadership, which includes all the characteristics of emotional intelligence as they pertain to school leadership, 6. Entrepreneurial Leadership, which refers to how schools can learn from business leaders, 7. Strategical Leadership, which focuses on how school leadership requires planning at the micro and macro level, 8. Sustainable Leadership, which is encouraging individuals to work as teams, 9. Invitational Leadership, which focuses on developing a culture of trust, respect, and hope in schools, and lastly 10. Constructivist Leadership, which was identified as a framework to build sustainable school improvement.

From teacher candidates to leaders

As we reached the point of understanding how TC can be leaders in their classrooms, Reeves and Lowenhaupt (2016) have also discussed that recently some school leadership has focused on moving from traditional teaching to administrative roles. This entails changing the traditional method of teaching and lecturing to encourage the student to engage in the lesson. TCs must be ready to face the change occurring in their classrooms; they have to take on the role of leadership. Some studies on teacher leadership focus more on just the experiences teachers face in order to be leaders; however there are teacher candidates who have the ability to lead or learn to lead their students. Cheng and Szeto (2016) stated that there is evidence that shows that even “novice” teachers can possibly lead early on in their career by starting off with a small number of tasks and responsibilities. TCs are definitely able to succeed in the role of leaders in their classroom if they focus more on their surroundings and their students’ needs. By receiving any feedback and reflection from their mentor, TCs can develop their own leadership by working hard on their evaluation during the classroom, and step by step over time they can implement more tasks and responsibilities. Cheng and Szeto (2016) indicated that if the schools are ready to help TCs by providing coaching opportunities for them in the learning environment, it will help them to foster their leadership efficacy early on in their career.

After improving their own leadership skills, TCs will be able to exhibit more of these skills in their classroom by being able to make decisions and do collaborative work with students. After promoting TCs in the classroom to leaders, the improvement efforts, development of professional careers, and fostering of teachers’ individual and collective capacity in understanding the students well, are all evidence of how TCs look like leaders (Smylie & Eckert, 2017). Ryan et al. (2017) also agreed that if the teacher candidate felt the ownership of their learning and their teaching practice, and of owning their students’ different ways of thinking and understanding the lesson of, those factors are effective signs of development of any teacher-to-teacher leader. Campbell (2015) assured that teachers are the great key to support their students’ learning, in order to help them improve their achievement and use their full capacity when engaging in the classroom.

Context of Study

The study was conducted at a federal university in the UAE. Early childhood department in the College of Education at the university seeks to be the leader in the development of innovative bilingual professionals dedicated to providing quality education in the early childhood discipline. The college has a field experience model which has four levels – Practicum 1, 2, 3, and Internship. In practicum 1, TCs visit schools or early childhood centers and observe teachers teaching. Practicum 2 provides gradual progression as students complete several full day placements in an early years classroom setting where they observe, assist mentor teachers, teach mini lessons, and conduct a read-aloud. In practicum 3, TCs progress into teaching full lessons that consist of 45 minutes with a warm up, activities in the middle and a wrap up. TCs complete ten weeks placements in an early years classroom.

Finally, internship mandates that teacher candidates teach as many lessons as possible during the ten weeks of placement in schools. Internship students assume an increasingly significant teaching role and conduct an impact study in a classroom over an extended number of consecutive weeks, demonstrating their readiness to graduate and join the teaching profession.

Methodology

This study used a mixed-methods design where both qualitative and quantitative data is collected. Involving both approaches enhances the strength of the study (Creswell, 2012). The combination of quantitative and qualitative data can offer an in-depth understanding of the research problem, as collecting both kinds of data can overcome the weaknesses related with solely relying on information gathered from either source. Quantitative data can yield results which describe trends in the behavior of a population, and the qualitative data can uncover the complex causes underlying these trends (Creswell, 2012). The combination between quantitative and qualitative research is widely accepted in academia as stated by Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2015, p.11):

its advantages are that by using multiple methods, researchers are better able to gather and analyze considerably more and different kinds of data than they would be able to use just one approach. Mixed-methods studies can emphasize one approach over the other or give each approach roughly equal weights.

Research design

The purpose of the current study is to explore which qualities are observed and exhibited in College of Education students' character, personality, and performance in classrooms. The current research is structured around Northouse's (2016) transformational leadership. He states that transformational leaders possess four factors: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In the current study, the four factors were identified during the observations of specific actions during teaching and interactions with students in classrooms. Quantitative data was collected using observations from the Northouse transformational leadership components and the qualitative data was collected using university supervisors' notes. The notes reflect the situation and incident where that particular leadership trait was exhibited.

Participants and procedure

For the current study, quantitative data was collected through observations. All participants were female students from a federal university. In total, 32 students participated in this study. Of the participants, 32% taught a course in math, 10% taught an English course, 3% taught an Arabic course, and finally 56% taught science. TCs involved in this study were in their practicum 3 and internship courses, as this study required seeing them teach and observe the traits being exhibited. In research studies or evaluations where inter-rater reliability is crucial, it is common for university supervisors or researchers to receive training to ensure consistent and accurate data collection. This training aims to minimize potential bias and discrepancies

that may arise when multiple raters or supervisors are involved in the data collection process. Therefore, university supervisors participate in training sessions or workshops designed to enhance their understanding of the data collection procedures, evaluation criteria, and potential sources of bias. These sessions help ensure that supervisors clearly and consistently understand the study's objectives and data collection protocols.

Data was collected during one full semester. At the commencement of the data collection phase, researchers verbally conveyed to the TCs before the start of data collection that their participation or non-participation would not affect their grades nor would it interfere with scoring assignments or giving feedback. Researchers gave the right of withdrawal to the students and ensured that the data would be used and presented anonymously. The consent form provided a detailed account of the study so that the TCs would be aware and take a decision regarding their participation. The researchers expected that TCs might become a bit self-aware knowing that their actions would be interpreted based on qualities and traits of leadership, however researchers successfully put them at ease and emphasized that their traits would not be evaluated but rather reflected on, and that there was no right or wrong action.

The data was collected while the TCs taught in the classroom. The duration of lessons was 45 minutes. The supervisor would watch the TCs teach and notice the leadership traits being exhibited through actions, words, or both. The supervisor would then write down where, when, and how that traits were exhibited.

Instruments

For the current study, the tool developed was based on Dr. Annette Towler's (2019) discussion of Northouse's (2016) transformational leadership. The researchers conducted observations during lessons, where the tool was being used to grasp the traits of leadership while the TCs were teaching and interacting with her students. Using the tool, the concerning trait could be selected and the researcher would write the context in which that trait or element was exhibited. The below table (1) presents the four scales with the related variables. Each variable was scored based on observations, on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) Never, (2) Sometimes, (3) About half of the time, (4) Most of the time, and (5) Always.

Table 1. Variables

Scale	Variables
Individualized Consideration	Teacher attends to each student's needs
	Teacher is a mentor and a coach and guides her students
	Teacher listens to the concerns and needs of each student
	Teacher provides support and is empathetic towards each student's situation and background
	Teacher supports students in developing and demonstrating their talents, key skills, and behaviors
Inspirational Motivation	Teacher articulates an appealing vision that inspires and motivates students to perform beyond expectations
	Teacher has high standards and expectations for her students
	Teacher is optimistic about student ability to meet goals
	Teacher always provides meaning to her students through showing the importance of all duties and responsibilities
	Teacher provides purpose and meaning to drive her students forward
	Teacher enhances team spirit
Idealized Influence	Teacher is a role model for her students because she engages in high standards of ethical behavior
	Teacher is deeply respected by students
	Teacher places a great deal of trust in students
	Teacher provides students with a sense of vision and mission
Intellectual Stimulation	Teacher challenges assumptions, takes risks, and solicits students' ideas
	Teacher recognizes students through stimulation, creativity, and innovation
	The teacher supports and collaborates with the students as she tries new approaches and develops innovative ways of dealing with the lesson
	The teacher encourages students to think things out on their own and encourages students to think independently so that they become autonomous

Table 1. Scales and variables of the Northouse (2016) transformational leadership tool

Data analysis

Quantitative data collected from the observations was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. Descriptive analysis was computed to extract frequencies, percentages, etc. Tables with percentages were created to present the overall observation scores per variable for each scale. The qualitative data was a set of notes taken by the supervisors while observing the teaching done in the classroom. In front of each characteristic exhibited the supervisors would add notes detailing the situation and incident that triggered it. In the “Results” section below, both quantitative and qualitative results will be discussed.

Results

Individualized consideration

As can be seen in Table 2, the highest percentage of the teachers scored ‘Always’ on individualized consideration: “Teacher attends to each student’s needs” and “Teacher supports students in developing and demonstrating their talents, key skills and behaviors”. Supervisors’ notes indicated that the first trait was seen when the TC would go around working stations and give individual support to students in writing, reading, and solving problems. In addition, the differentiation used in their lessons indicated they attended to everyone’s needs. The second trait was seen when TCs asked students to go to the front of the class and write their answers on the Whiteboard. Also, when TCs distribute work and activities in group tasks, this shows support provided by TCs. The lowest ‘Never’ was mostly related to “Teacher provides support and is empathetic towards each student’s situation and background”.

The provided data details the frequency with which a teacher is observed to exhibit certain behaviors. The behaviors encompassed include attending to students’ needs, functioning as a mentor or coach, listening to students’ concerns, providing support, and helping students develop key skills. Regarding attending to each student’s needs, the data indicates that teachers perform fairly well in this area, with a majority (34.4%) reportedly exhibiting this behavior ‘most of the time’. Furthermore, a substantial portion of teachers (31.3%) consistently meet this standard, demonstrating a high level of individual attention. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement, as the data shows that this need is ‘never’ met 9.4% of the time. The teacher’s role as a mentor and coach is fulfilled effectively in most scenarios. Over half of the responses (53.1%) indicate this guidance is provided ‘most of the time’, making it the dominant behavior. Despite this, the frequency of teachers who consistently serve as mentors and guides is notably less (15.6%), while the same percentage suggests this only occurs ‘sometimes’. This suggests that although mentorship is a commonly observed behavior, there is a need for more consistent execution of this role.

Moving on to the teacher’s ability to listen to the concerns and needs of students, this aspect receives mixed responses. While the behavior is prominent ‘most of the time’ (43.8%), a sizeable number of responses suggest this only occurs ‘half of the time’ (18.8%). Alarminglly,

only 15.6% state that this is an ‘always’ behavior. This implies that teachers should consistently cultivate better listening skills to address student concerns. The findings related to empathetic support show that it is provided ‘most of the time’ (37.5%) or ‘half of the time’ (18.8%), but the percentage of teachers who always display empathy falls to just 12.5%. This indicates that more empathy and understanding of students’ diverse situations and backgrounds could be incorporated into teaching practices.

Finally, in supporting students in developing their talents, key skills, and behaviors, the results are relatively balanced between ‘most of the time’ (37.5%) and ‘always’ (31.3%). This showcases a strong commitment to fostering student growth and development. However, ‘half of the time’ and ‘sometimes’ responses (6.3% and 9.4%, respectively) suggest there are opportunities for more consistent support in this area. Therefore, the data suggests that while teachers frequently display the assessed behaviors, there is room for more consistency across all areas, particularly in listening to student concerns and demonstrating empathy. This would ensure a better-rounded educational experience for students.

Table 2. Individualized considerations

	Teacher attends to each student’s needs	Teacher is a mentor and guides her students	Teacher listens to the concerns and needs of each student	Teacher provides support and is empathetic towards each student’s situation and background	Teacher supports students in developing and demonstrating their talents, key skills, and behaviors
Never	9,4	6,3	3,1	15,6	12,5
Sometimes	9,4	15,6	12,5	9,4	9,4
Half of the time	9,4	3,1	18,8	18,8	6,3
Most of the time	34,4	53,1	43,8	37,5	37,5
Always	31,3	15,6	15,6	12,5	31,3

Table 2. Percentages of scores on individualized consideration per variable

Inspirational motivation

The highest percentage for inspirational motivation was shown in “Teacher enhances team spirit”. This was due to group work in TCs’ lessons. Given that the students did their internship in federal schools, the concept of group work is always promoted in the system. Therefore, building the “team” was easy for them. The lowest percentage was in “Teacher is optimistic about students’ ability to meet goals”. This was shown through TCs’ lesson plans and learning outcomes. The supervisor noticed that the TCs never progressed in formulating learning outcomes where it started with the lower level of Bloom’s Taxonomy to the higher

levels. This shows the degree of uncertainty the TC has in her students' capabilities.

The table provides data about how often a teacher exhibits certain motivational and inspirational behaviors, each aimed at supporting student performance and growth. Beginning with the ability to articulate an appealing vision that inspires students to surpass expectations, the results are mixed. A sizeable number of the responses (28.1%) report this behavior occurring 'most of the time', but a nearly equivalent portion (21.9%) suggest it only happens 'sometimes'. Notably, 15.6% of the responses indicate this never happens, revealing a significant opportunity for teachers to enhance their communication of inspiring visions.

Regarding maintaining high standards and expectations for students, teachers perform relatively well. Most teachers (37.5%) reportedly uphold high expectations 'most of the time', while 21.9% are perceived as always maintaining such standards. However, there is room for more consistency, as 18.8% only meet this standard 'half the time', and 12.5% noted this only happened 'sometimes'.

Teachers' optimism about students' ability to meet goals shows room for improvement. While 'most of the time' was reported by 25% of respondents, 34.4% felt this was only the case 'half of the time'. Moreover, 25% felt this was never the case, highlighting an area that could benefit from increased focus.

Regarding providing meaning to students by emphasizing the importance of duties and responsibilities, most teachers (46.9%) are observed to do this 'most of the time'. However, only 6.3% of teachers constantly instill this sense of meaning, suggesting a need for more consistency in this aspect. When it comes to providing purpose, and meaning to drive students forward, most teachers (43.8%) do this 'most of the time'. It is concerning that only 3.1% 'always' give their students this sense of purpose.

Lastly, enhancing team spirit is something that occurs 'most of the time', according to 43.8% of respondents, and 'always' according to 25%. This indicates that many teachers understand the importance of fostering a cooperative learning environment. Therefore, while teachers often successfully promote motivational and inspirational behaviors, there are areas for improvement. In particular, more consistent optimism about students' abilities and a stronger sense of purpose and meaning could enhance the learning environment. Increased focus on articulating inspiring visions could also boost students' motivation and performance.

Table 3. Inspirational motivation

	Teacher articulates an appealing vision that inspires and motivates students to perform beyond expectations	Teacher has high standards and expectations for her students	Teacher is optimistic about students' ability to meet goals	Teacher provides meaning to her students through showing the importance of all duties and responsibilities	Teacher provides purpose and meaning to drive her students forward	Teacher enhances team spirit
Never	15,6	6,3	25,0	6,3	6,3	3,1
Sometimes	21,9	12,5	12,5	28,1	25,0	12,5
Half of the time	12,5	18,8	34,4	9,4	18,8	12,5
Most of the time	28,1	37,5	25,0	46,9	43,8	43,8
Always	18,8	21,9	21,9	6,3	3,1	25,0

Table 3. Percentages of scores on inspirational motivation per variable

Idealized influence

The highest percentage of TCs scored 'always' on the idealized influence variable that states: "Teacher is deeply respected by students" and "Teacher places a great deal of trust in students". These two traits were visible all the time. TCs never had any disrespect issues and the students in return respected their teachers greatly. The supervisor didn't note any issues in these two traits.

The least in 'never' was "Teacher is a role model for her students because she engages in high standards of ethical behavior" and "Teacher provides students with a sense of vision and mission". These two traits were not exhibited because the situation didn't permit this; usually these traits are more visible in extracurricular activities. The time allocated to observe these traits was too short, however, ethical behavior could be observed through the TCs' language and manners used around the students. In addition, a lesson could include components of mission and vision.

Beginning with the ability to articulate an appealing vision that inspires students to surpass expectations, the results are mixed. A sizeable portion of the responses (28.1%) report this behavior occurring 'most of the time', but a nearly equivalent portion (21.9%) suggest it only happens 'sometimes'. Notably, 15.6% of the responses indicate this never happens, revealing a significant opportunity for teachers to enhance their communication in inspiring visions. Teachers perform relatively well in maintaining high standards and expectations for students. Most teachers (37.5%) reportedly uphold high expectations 'most of the time', while 21.9%

are perceived as always maintaining such standards. However, there is room for more consistency, as 18.8% only meet this standard ‘half the time’, and 12.5% reported this only happening ‘sometimes’.

Teachers’ optimism about students’ ability to meet goals shows room for improvement. While ‘most of the time’ was reported by 25% of respondents, 34.4% felt this was only the case ‘half of the time’. Moreover, 25% felt this was never the case, highlighting an area that could benefit from increased focus. Regarding providing meaning to students by emphasizing the importance of duties and responsibilities, most teachers (46.9%) are observed to do this ‘most of the time’. However, only 6.3% of teachers always instill this sense of meaning, suggesting a need for more consistency in this aspect. When it comes to providing purpose, and meaning to drive students forward, most teachers (43.8%) do this ‘most of the time’. It is concerning that only 3.1% ‘always’ give their students this sense of purpose.

Lastly, enhancing team spirit is something that occurs ‘most of the time’ according to 43.8% of respondents, and ‘always’ according to 25%. This indicates that many teachers understand the importance of fostering a cooperative learning environment. Therefore, while teachers often successfully promote motivational and inspirational behaviors, there are areas for improvement. In particular, more consistent optimism about students’ abilities and a stronger sense of purpose and meaning could enhance the learning environment. Increased focus on articulating inspiring visions could also boost student motivation and performance.

Table 4. Idealized influence

	Teacher is a role model for her students because she engages in high standards of ethical behavior	Teacher is deeply respected by students	Teacher places a great deal of trust in students	Teacher provides students with a sense of vision and mission
Never	15,6	3,1	3,1	15,6
Sometimes	12,5	18,8	18,8	18,8
Half of the time	15,6	15,6	15,6	12,5
Most of the time	40,6	37,5	37,5	34,4
Always	12,5	21,9	21,9	15,6

Table 4: Percentages of scores on idealized influence per variable

Intellectual stimulation

The highest is in “Teachers recognize students through stimulation, creativity, and innovation”. This was seen clearly due to the nature of the curriculum. TCs found the curriculum promoting innovation. As presented in Table 5 below, for intellectual stimulation teachers score lowest in “Teacher challenges assumptions, takes risks, and solicits students’ ideas”. This was observed mostly during story telling time.

Starting with challenging assumptions, taking risks, and soliciting students' ideas, the data indicates that teachers are moderately successful in this area, with 28.1% doing this 'most of the time'. However, the same number of responses suggests that this only happens 'half of the time'. A significant number (15.6%) of respondents feel that this never occurs, indicating an area for possible improvement. Teachers perform reasonably well in recognizing students through stimulation, creativity, and innovation. Most responses (37.5%) report that teachers recognize students in these ways 'most of the time', while 21.9% claim this always happens. However, the fact that a reasonably high percentage (21.9%) feel this only happens 'sometimes' signals a need for more consistent recognition of creativity and innovation. Teachers supporting and collaborating with students as they try new approaches and develop innovative solutions is a strong point, as 40.6% of teachers do this 'most of the time' and 18.8% always exhibit this behavior. However, a proportion of responses (18.8%) still indicate this only happens 'sometimes', suggesting room for more frequent collaboration and support.

When it comes to encouraging students to think independently, teachers are very successful, with half of the responses indicating that they do this 'most of the time'. This is further supplemented by 15.6% of teachers who always encourage this. Still, a small proportion of responses suggest this encouragement occurs only 'sometimes' (12.5%) or 'never' (6.3%), indicating that some teachers could improve in fostering independent thinking. Therefore, while teachers frequently display behaviors encouraging innovative thinking and student autonomy, the data indicates room for improvement. Teachers can focus on challenging assumptions, soliciting students' ideas more consistently, and providing more recognition for creativity and innovation. As in all areas, the goal is to ensure these behaviors are not just occasional but become a standard part of teaching practices.

Table 5. Intellectual stimulation

	Teacher challenges assumptions, takes risks and solicits student's ideas	Teacher recognizes students through stimulation, creativity, and innovation	The teacher supports and collaborates with the students as she tries approaches and develops innovative ways of dealing with lessons	The teacher encourages students to think things out on their own and encourages students to think independently so that they become autonomous
Never	15,6	9,4	3,1	6,3
Sometimes	9,4	21,9	18,8	12,5
Half of the time	21,9	12,5	15,6	12,5
Most of the time	28,1	37,5	40,6	50,0
Always	15,6	21,9	18,8	15,6

Table 5: Percentages of scores on intellectual stimulation per variable

Discussion

This study used Northouse's (2016) transformational leadership model to understand what leadership skills are most and least recognized in TCs during teaching in classrooms. The below table captures the most and least exhibited characteristics in each component:

Table 6. Components and characteristics

Component	Most Exhibited	Least Exhibited
Individualized Consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher attends to each student's needs • Teacher supports students in developing and demonstrating their talents, key skills, and behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher provides support and is empathetic towards each student's situation and background
Inspirational Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher enhances team spirit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher is optimistic about students' ability to meet goals
Idealized Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher is deeply respected by students • Teacher places a great deal of trust in students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher is a role model for her students because she engages in high standards of ethical behavior • Teacher provides students with a sense of vision and mission
Intellectual Stimulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers recognize students through stimulation, creativity, and innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher challenges assumptions, takes risks, and solicits students' ideas

In individualized consideration, the TCs showed more of "Teacher attends to each student's needs" and "Teacher supports students in developing and demonstrating their talents, key skills, and behaviors". This is emphasized by Leffler (2019) who indicated that having teacher leadership qualities refers to making use of the emotions and the confidence they have.

In inspirational motivation, TCs' leadership was obvious in "Teacher enhances team spirit". This is supported by Smylie and Eckert (2017) who believe that teacher leaders must be ready to face the students when generating a valid and actionable feedback, social-emotional support, and more importantly, they must be authentic to the leadership they perform in the classroom. In idealized influence, the TCs exhibited more of "Teacher is deeply respected by

students” and “Teacher places a great deal of trust in students”. This concurs with Stoffell and Choi (2018) who state that transformational leaders must have inspirational motivation, must communicate with their followers optimistically and enthusiastically, and provide them encouragement and meaning in relation to their tasks so that students become autonomous. Finally, in intellectual stimulation, TCs showed more of “Teachers recognize students through stimulation, creativity, and innovation”. This is similar to the statement by Ryan et al. (2017) where he agreed that if the TC felt the ownership of their learning and their teaching practice, and of owning their students’ different ways of thinking and understanding the lesson, those factors are effective signs to develop any teacher-to-teacher leader.

In the least exhibited list the following was obvious. In individualized consideration, TCs didn’t focus on “Teacher provides support and is empathetic towards each student’s situation and background”. This can be overcome by following Cheng and Szeto’s (2016) advice that there is evidence that shows that even “novice” teachers can possibly lead early on in their career by starting off with a small number of tasks and responsibilities. In inspirational motivation, TCs were least dominant in “Teacher is optimistic about students’ ability to meet goals”. This is not in accordance with Burns (1978), where he states that transformational leadership is a process in which leaders and followers support each other to spread a higher level of morale and motivation.

In idealized influence, TCs showed less of “Teacher is a role model for her students because she engages in high standards of ethical behavior” and “Teacher provides students with a sense of vision and mission”. Cheng and Szeto (2016) indicated that if the schools are ready to help TCs by providing coaching opportunities for them in the learning environment, it will help them to foster their leadership efficacy in their early career. Finally, in intellectual stimulation, TCs exhibited less characteristics in “Teacher challenges assumptions, takes risks, and solicits students’ ideas”. Campbell (2015) assured that teachers are the great key to support their students’ learning, in order to help them improve their achievement and use their full capacity when getting engaged in the classroom.

A pattern observed across all assessed behaviors is that while teachers often exhibit positive and beneficial behaviors such as providing individual attention, serving as mentors, and fostering growth, the consistency of these behaviors could be improved. This suggests an additional focus on ensuring that these practices are not merely intermittent but form the foundation of a teacher’s approach. The data further reveals areas in which teachers are influential. Encouraging independent thinking is a common practice, as is supporting students in trying new approaches. Also notable is the prevalence of behaviors such as high ethical standards, earning student respect, and trusting in students’ abilities. However, certain behaviors show room for significant improvement. Optimism about students’ ability to meet goals is one area that could benefit from increased attention. Another key area is providing students with a consistent sense of vision and mission, which is less prevalent. The frequency of challenging assumptions and taking risks could be more optimal, pointing to a potential area of focus for teacher development. These results underscore the importance of consistent, positive teacher behavior. While there are many strengths in current teaching practices,

focusing on increasing consistency, boosting optimism, providing a clear vision and mission, and encouraging risk-taking could further improve the quality of education.

Practical and Managerial Implications

These findings offer several practical and managerial implications for universities, providing insights that can guide policy and procedure development. One primary implication pertains to professional development programs. These findings indicate a need for ongoing training and professional development that focus on consistency, optimism, risk-taking, and providing students with a clear vision and mission. Such programs could offer teachers a structured pathway to improving these skills, ultimately enhancing student experiences. Additionally, the role of a teacher as a mentor and coach emerges as a crucial aspect of effective teaching. In light of this, universities should establish mentorship programs wherein experienced faculty guide newer teachers. Such programs could help diffuse effective teaching practices throughout the faculty, creating a more uniformly positive student experience.

Regarding performance evaluation and feedback, this study's findings suggest universities could benefit from reassessing their current approaches. Given the importance of certain teacher behaviors, evaluation and feedback mechanisms should be designed to capture these aspects. This might involve gathering student feedback on these behaviors and providing a well-rounded view of teachers' performance. Moreover, the insights from this study could also be utilized to inform teacher recruitment strategies. During the hiring process, universities might focus on these specific behaviors, seeking out candidates who naturally exhibit them and have a proven track record in these areas. This proactive approach could help cultivate a faculty body that inherently values and promotes these beneficial behaviors. The implications of these findings also extend to curriculum design. Given the importance of fostering independent thinking and risk-taking, universities should consider these principles in their curriculum design. This could involve including more independent projects, creative assignments, and creative problem-solving opportunities, fostering a learning environment that encourages these skills.

Finally, promoting a culture of trust and respect is another area that universities should address. Given the importance of these elements in the teacher-student relationship, it would be beneficial to host workshops, seminars, or team-building activities to cultivate a culture of mutual respect and trust within the university community. By implementing these recommendations, universities can take proactive steps to enhance the quality of education, providing a more enriching learning experience for students.

Conclusion

This study showed that TCs exhibited certain traits more than others. This indicates that teacher education programs and the current study's institute should create better content focused on leadership, and teach students certain skills such as how to stimulate different traits of leadership. As this paper was created to highlight important and strong points, there were some limitations as well, such as that the number of participants has been limited, which

impacts on the percentage of the expected findings. In addition, observations are usually subjective and built on the observer's perception and understanding, therefore these could be biased.

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