

Strengthening Teachers' Innovativeness Through Transformational Leadership Educational Reform Framework

Jeralyn S. Morales ¹

1 – University of Perpetual Help System DALTA, Las Piñas City

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the transformational leadership strategies on educational reforms that can improve the innovativeness of the teachers for a motivating and engaging classroom environment. The study was conducted in public elementary schools in the Division of Rizal, Rodriguez sub-office during the School Year 2023-2024. The respondents consisted of two hundred thirty-two head teachers, master teachers and teachers I-III. They were selected using stratified random sampling based on the sub-offices of the division. The researcher used descriptive quantitative methods research design in gathering data through the researcher-developed questionnaire. The findings revealed that most of the respondents are male, have age ranging from 41 years old and above and hold a position of Teacher I. Majority of them are teaching 6 to 10 years which considered in their mid-career development and pursued their post graduate courses. The transformational leadership strategies on educational reforms that influence

teachers' innovativeness in public elementary schools with respect to emotional aspect, intellectual stimulation, and individualized considerations are all interpreted as "Always". The level of teachers' innovativeness in public elementary schools with respect to 21st century learning skills, personalized learning, integration of technology, project-based hands-on learning, and assessment reform are all interpreted as "Highly Innovative". There is a very strong positive correlation between transformational leadership strategies and the degree of innovativeness exhibited by teachers in public elementary schools which indicates a close relationship between innovative teaching strategies and transformational leadership practices. There is a significant difference in the transformational leadership strategies on educational reforms that influence teachers' innovativeness in public elementary schools with respect to age, sex, number of years in service, work position, and highest educational attainment.

Keywords: *Educational Reform, Educational Framework, Leadership Strategies Teachers' Innovativeness, Transformational Leadership*

INTRODUCTION

Educational reform is the process of renewing and revitalizing an education system to address evolving societal demands, technological advancements, and global challenges. It encompasses curriculum revision, pedagogical innovation, enhanced assessment procedures, and policy frameworks aimed at

improving learning outcomes, equity, and access to quality education. Reform efforts also extend to teacher preparation, school administration, and resource allocation to foster a conducive learning environment. Central to these reforms is the goal of equipping students with critical thinking, creativity, and adaptability—skills essential for navigating the demands of the twenty-first century.

The “Global Education Reform Movement” (GERM), as characterized by Fuller and Stevenson (2019), refers to the emergence of a dominant orthodoxy in education policy worldwide. Sahlberg (2012) likened this phenomenon to a contagious epidemic, driven by corporate management practices, increased standardization, narrowing of curricula to core subjects, and high-stakes accountability systems. Standardized testing has played a central role, serving as the foundation for comparison, ranking, and competition, while creating opportunities for private sector involvement in education. This competitive framework has often accelerated the privatization and marketization of public education systems.

In the Philippine context, educational reforms have prioritized financial restructuring and decentralization, often at the expense of other governance responsibilities (Sagun & Ramesh, 2020). Despite persistent challenges, the Department of Education (DepEd) has continuously revised the K–12 curriculum and issued recommendations for future improvements. Recent analyses of Science, Mathematics, and English curricula within the Education 4.0 framework reveal the need for conceptual and pedagogical enhancements, particularly in constructive alignment, technology integration, and specificity of components (Barrot, 2023). These gaps pose potential challenges in lesson planning, assessment, delivery, school-based projects, and teacher commitment to reform implementation.

The Philippine Basic Education Reform Agenda focuses on removing institutional, structural, and policy barriers to quality education. Its five priority areas—school-based management, teacher education development, national learning strategies, quality assurance and accountability, and administrative modernization—are designed to improve resource efficiency (Oxford Business Group, 2022). A landmark change was the enactment of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10533), which extended basic education from ten to twelve years. This reform requires both innovative teaching and transformational leadership among school heads to navigate the rapid changes in the educational landscape.

Transformational leadership, characterized by vision, commitment, and the ability to inspire change, has gained recognition as a key driver of school effectiveness (Firmansyah et al., 2022). Studies have shown that it enhances teacher motivation, professional learning, and self-efficacy (Özdemir et al., 2024). However, significant research gaps remain. Few studies have examined the direct impact of transformational leadership on teacher creativity in diverse learning contexts, its long-term influence on sustaining educational innovations, or its interaction with other leadership styles. Moreover, the challenges transformational leaders face in varied cultural and educational systems are not well-documented.

The present study addresses these gaps by investigating how transformational leadership strategies influence teacher innovativeness within the framework of educational reforms in Philippine public elementary schools. Specifically, it examines the relationship between leadership approaches—emotional support, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—and teachers’ adoption of 21st-century learning skills, personalized learning, technology integration, project-based approaches, and assessment reform.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design to examine the relationship between transformational leadership strategies and teachers’ innovativeness in the context of educational reforms. According to Creswell (2018), descriptive research is used to systematically describe a population,

phenomenon, or situation by gathering quantifiable data through surveys, interviews, experiments, or observations. It provides answers to “what is” and “what is not” happening, enabling researchers to draw objective conclusions based on empirical evidence. Similarly, Fluet (2021) notes that descriptive research is conclusive in nature, often used to test hypotheses, assess traits or functions, and measure the degree of relationships among variables. In this study, descriptive statistics were used to establish a profile of the research variables, followed by inferential statistics to determine relationships and differences. This approach allowed the researcher to present a detailed picture of the impact of transformational leadership strategies on teachers’ innovativeness while offering new insights into existing literature.

The study respondents were 232 public elementary school educators from the Division of Rizal, Rodriguez sub-office. Participants were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure proportional representation. The sample included 204 Teachers I-III, twelve head teachers, and sixteen master teachers. A researcher-developed questionnaire served as the primary data-gathering tool and was subjected to content validation by two university professors, one master teacher, and one department head to ensure accuracy, clarity, and relevance.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part gathered the profile of respondents in terms of age, sex, work position, years in service, and highest educational attainment. The second part measured transformational leadership strategies in the context of educational reforms, focusing on emotional support, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The third part assessed teachers’ innovativeness in implementing 21st-century educational reforms, covering 21st-century learning skills, personalized learning, technology integration, project-based hands-on learning, and assessment reform. A four-point Likert scale was used, with ratings from “Always” to “Never” for leadership strategies and from “Highly Innovative” to “Not Innovative” for innovativeness.

Data collection began with securing approval from the Schools Division Superintendent of DepEd Rizal. Formal letters were then sent to the principals and school heads of participating schools to obtain permission for questionnaire distribution. Respondents were given up to one week to complete the questionnaire, after which the completed forms were retrieved. Data were encoded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

The statistical treatments employed in this study included frequency and percentage distribution to describe respondents’ profiles, and mean and standard deviation to measure the extent of transformational leadership strategies and the level of teachers’ innovativeness. Pearson r was applied to determine the relationship between leadership strategies and innovativeness, while a t-test was used to assess differences in responses when grouped according to profile variables.

The study adhered to established ethical research standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and official permission to conduct the study was granted by the Division Office. Anonymity and confidentiality of data were maintained at all stages of the research process. All sources used were properly cited, and potential biases were addressed to ensure the credibility and integrity of both the data collection and the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study revealed that most of the respondents were male, aged 41 years and above, and holding the position of Teacher I. A majority had been in the teaching profession for six to ten years, placing them in their mid-career stage, and many had pursued postgraduate studies. This profile suggests that the respondents were generally experienced educators who had already begun advancing their professional

qualifications, potentially influencing their openness to leadership strategies and innovative teaching practices.

In terms of transformational leadership strategies on educational reforms that influence teachers' innovativeness, the findings yielded an overall mean of 3.52 with a consistent standard deviation of 0.47, interpreted as "Always." This indicates that school heads in public elementary schools consistently apply all components of transformational leadership—emotional support, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—to encourage innovation among teachers. These results align with prior studies emphasizing the positive influence of transformational leadership on teachers' professional growth and willingness to embrace change.

The level of teachers' innovativeness in public elementary schools also scored highly, with an overall mean of 3.53 and standard deviations ranging from 0.46 to 0.48, interpreted as "Highly Innovative." This suggests that teachers actively integrate 21st-century learning skills, personalized learning, technology integration, project-based hands-on learning, and assessment reforms into their practice. These findings highlight teachers' strong commitment to engaging learners in real-world, multidisciplinary projects and tailoring instruction to meet individual learning needs, which are essential competencies in modern education.

The relationship between transformational leadership strategies and teachers' innovativeness was found to be very strong, with a Pearson r value of 0.906 and a p -value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.01 significance level. This indicates a significant and positive correlation, meaning that when school heads effectively apply transformational leadership techniques, teachers tend to exhibit higher levels of innovativeness. Such results reinforce the notion that leadership practices play a critical role in shaping teachers' creative and adaptive capacities in the classroom.

Furthermore, when transformational leadership strategies were analyzed based on respondents' profiles—age, sex, years of service, work position, and highest educational attainment—the p -value of 0.000 was less than the 0.05 significance level. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that these profile factors significantly influence how leadership strategies impact teacher innovativeness. This finding suggests that leadership approaches may need to be differentiated to address the diverse needs of teachers effectively.

Based on the study's findings, an educational reform framework was developed to strengthen the application of transformational leadership in enhancing teacher innovativeness in public elementary schools. This framework serves as a guide for school heads in implementing leadership strategies that foster creativity, adaptability, and innovation among teachers.

Conclusions

From the findings, the study concluded that public elementary school teachers often pursue postgraduate studies after more than five years of service, usually as part of their promotion preparation. School heads consistently apply transformational leadership strategies—emotional support, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—which effectively enhance teachers' creativity and innovation. Teachers, in turn, consistently display high innovativeness, engaging learners in real-world, multidisciplinary projects and providing individualized instruction. The positive impact of transformational leadership strategies on teacher innovativeness was evident, although its extent varied significantly based on profile factors such as age, sex, work position, years of service, and educational attainment.

Recommendations

Considering these conclusions, it is recommended that teachers in public elementary schools consider advancing their professional qualifications through postgraduate education as early as five years into their career to prepare for promotions. School heads should maintain the consistent application of transformational leadership strategies, emphasizing emotional support, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration to further enhance innovation in the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to continue involving students in real-world, multidisciplinary projects and individualized instruction to sustain high levels of innovativeness. Moreover, school heads should tailor their leadership techniques to accommodate the diverse needs of teachers based on demographic and professional profile factors to maximize their positive impact on teacher innovation.

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