

ROLE OF TEACHERS' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING 21ST CENTURY SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

Muhammad Ghafoor¹, Dr. Mobeen-ul-Islam²

Abstract

The purpose of the study to investigate the role of university teachers' transformational leadership in developing 21st century skills among the students. This is era of transformational leadership and 21st century skills. However, the teachers are lacking transformational leadership skills and consequently, the students are also lacking 21st century skills. So, the lack is either on the part of the teachers or on the part of the students. Correlational research design was employed to fulfil the research objectives. Population of the study was consisted of all general public universities of Punjab while accessible population was university of Gujrat. Random sampling was used to select 500 students. Two questionnaires; Transformational Leadership of the University Teachers (TLUT) and 21st Century Skills of the University Students were formulated to collect the data. It was found that university teachers are playing their significant role in developing 21st century skills among the students. It is recommended to the concerning authorities to focus on development of transformational leadership among the teachers that will enhance the level of 21st century skills among the learners.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, 21st-Century Skills, University Education, Student Development, Teaching Strategies

Background of the Study

Teachers should educate the students in such a way to help them in becoming constructive member of the society. Since the world is changing so quickly, leaders must constantly acquire new skills and information. The 21st century is very different from the 20th due to the development of modern information and communications technologies (Dede, 2009). The role of teacher as a leader is more challenging because focus is on developing such skills among the students which are helpful in making them critical and creative thinkers, communication, and collaborative. Moreover, According to Zhao (2020), in the wake of COVID-19, leadership positions at universities and education have undergone a redesign and reworking to become technology-enabled online activities.

There are different leadership styles which the leaders follow. Among these styles innovative, situational, charismatic, pace setter, command and control, laissez-faire, transformational, and servant leadership are the common (Blanken, 2019). Furthermore, follower-centered and leader-centered are the two categories of leadership styles. As per Maslennikova's (2007) analysis, leadership styles that are centered on followers comprise participative, transformational, and servant leadership, whereas those that are centered on leaders comprise transactional, authoritarian, and charismatic leadership.

Attempts to induce followers to reorder their needs by transcending self-interests and strive for higher order needs" is how Bass (1985) describes a transformational leader. Numerous studies demonstrate that principals who enhance strong expectations-based linkages encourage

¹ PhD Scholar, Department of Education, University of Gujrat, Pakistan

² Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Gujrat, Pakistan

instructors and pupils to embark on difficult and challenging jobs. These characteristics have a direct correlation to those of a transformational leader. A transformational leader possesses the following four traits: intellectual inspiration, individualized care, motivating desire, and personal encouragement. The ideal situation for classroom teachers is one in which pupils are motivated to do their best work and overcome obstacles thanks to a believing relationship with the teacher and the guidance of transformational leaders (Stuhلمان, & Pianta, 2009).

The world is changing rapidly, demanding new expertise and skills from leaders. The 21st century is completely dissimilar from the 20th century due to the expansion of cultured information and communication technologies (Dede, 2010). The 21st century sees a rise in the globalization and unification of life, and the achievement of goals at work in the field of education calls for new skills (Suto, 2013). Despite the fact that it is widely acknowledged that specific 21st-century talents are necessary for success, leaders have claimed that students "lack" these skills and that the lack of these skills in our culture "will meaningfully influence forthcoming financial development in the United States". Keeping in view the importance of 21st century skills, researcher planned this study to investigate that whether transformational leaders are playing their role in developing these skills among university students.

Statement of the Problem

In the researcher's context, universities and university teachers are facing the challenge and they must have to transform the traditional classroom into 21st-century learning environments to develop 21st-century skills among the students (Bellanca, 2015). Moreover, transformational leadership is considered effective to impart knowledge and develop skills among the learners. However, there is a gap in the research that precisely investigates the impact of a teacher's leadership style on promoting students' 21st-century skills among students at the university level. So, the researcher decided to investigate the predictability of 21st-century skills through the transformational leadership styles of teachers.

Research Objectives

- To determine the role of teachers' transformational leadership skills on development of 21st century skills among students at university level.

Research Question

The following research question was addressed in this research:

- Is there significant role of teachers' transformational leadership on development of 21st century skills among students at university level?

Review of Literature

Transforming leadership

Effective leadership is a critical component of school improvement. However, leaders in schools undergoing transformation frequently face challenges in effectively guiding their staff and students towards improved outcomes. The key steps that leaders take to successfully lead school

transformations were identified by research on leadership actions for transforming schools. By taking these steps, schools can establish the ideal environment for improved teaching and learning. These include defining and pursuing your ideal future, enhancing organizational coherence, clearly communicating the school's mission, keeping an eye on, assessing, and reviewing progress, offering resources and assistance, and growing the number of leaders in the community and at the school (Pirtle & Doggett, 2013).

The strategic vision for improved teaching and learning presented by the principal creates an efficient framework for initiatives aimed at improving education. Thus, directing employees and other stakeholders toward a shared definition of the school's vision is an expression of leadership. These leaders make sure that their practices are in line with enabling staff members to meet school objectives, so that their vision endures long after they leave the institution. The definition of roles and the assignment of responsibilities are crucial aspects of staff involvement in achieving this vision and school goals (Valli et al., 2014).

Effective principals, in the opinion of Day (2014), take the initiative to determine the strengths of their teachers and help them refine their techniques in order to raise student achievement and the standard of teaching and learning. This necessitates setting high performance standards and monitoring and evaluating the accomplishment of learning goals. Consequently, successful school principals are risk-takers who actively look for new opportunities, challenges, and experiences to aid in the learning and development of their institutions. School systems that support teachers' ongoing professional development foster better teamwork, work coordination, and the exchange of best practices in education. Education systems that provide support for teachers' continuous professional development encourage improved collaboration, coordination of tasks, and sharing of best practices (Bierly, Doyle, & Smith, 2016).

It has been reported that principals serve their vision of success for every student. By their deeds, they communicate this vision to parents, teachers, and students. It deals with the way, how principals affect this part of the learning process is significant because teacher-student interactions are so vital (Getha-Taylor et al., 2015). Through their observations of classroom instruction, conversations about instructional issues with teachers, and interactions with teachers when reviewing student data, principals take part in the educational process. Effective principals, therefore, need to build relationships with teachers by providing individualized consideration and acting as mentors in order to affect students' academic performance. The understanding of direction setting by effective principals was studied by Hussain, Ahmad, and Qadir (2016). They found that teachers are far more likely to follow their leader's lead when they communicate with the principal in an honest and open manner, offer suggestions, and voice their concerns. They came to the conclusion that schools can take a variety of approaches in helping students grow as individuals. Subject matter experts have the ability to observe classes, model lessons, and give teachers helpful criticism. Teachers can also benefit from peer observations, principal feedback, and debriefing sessions with colleagues. Mentor teachers are specially assigned to help new teachers, especially during their first few years of teaching, and they provide them with support.

Grin et al., (2018) proposed transformative leadership as a novel kind of leadership that stimulates organizational change based on the transformational leadership theory Bass (1985). According to A teacher is an individual who assumes responsibility for molding the personalities of children. About the teacher, the students experience self-assurance, pride, and genuine happiness in their lives. They dedicated their entire lives to giving students a top-notch education. They inspire students to put up their best effort in their studies. They add depth, interest, and creativity to the learning procedures. The teacher puts every student on a constructive and right path. A good teacher leaves a positive image on their academic progress. Teachers evaluate their students based on their performance; they may give rewards for active participation or administer punishments. They help their students distinguish between right and wrong so they can make the appropriate decision based on their sense of humor. Teachers have knowledge of the problems faced by their students and work to find workable solutions. He added that the process of learning also includes long-term behavioral changes. Every teacher is unique, and they all play different roles based on their innovative thinking and nature (Ngalim, 2020).

Educational Leadership for 21st Century Organizations

Understanding the theories of leadership is crucial for educators to be ready with solutions for a variety of scenarios as the difficulties that they face become more complex. It is imperative that leaders comprehend the intricacies of groups, their operational settings, and the interplay between their tasks and the requirements of their subordinates. To ascertain which behaviors constitute effective leadership, behavior theorists have studied a variety of leader behaviors. Research indicates that no one behavior will make a successful leader. But strong communication skills, dedication, adaptability, motivation, efficiency, results-focus, planning, relationship-building, self-development, problem-solving, strategic thinking, teamwork, innovation, and conflict management are just a few of the traits of effective leaders (Hughes, & Hubbard, 2001).

Application of behavioral theory of learning in standardized accountability environments involves striking a balance between the interests of the organization and its workers. "Educational leaders face significant pressure to deliver results in schools facing difficult circumstances while also being sensitive to employees who are frequently safeguarded by laws and collective bargaining agreements that require collaboration to attain the desired outcomes." Comprehending behavioral theories can assist leaders in adopting a well-rounded leadership approach, which is essential in 21st-century educational institutions (Adefolalu, 2018).

"To effectively function in the workplace of the twenty-first century, leaders must recognize the changing times and adjust their leadership styles." The goals of organizational leadership in the modern era are knowledge expansion, employee empowerment, and employee motivation to work toward organizational improvement. The global environment brought about by the internet has had a significant impact on leadership and organizations. Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have made it possible for the world to instantly learn about the

actions of world leaders. Using programs like "Skype" or "Zoom," remote teams can collaborate on significant projects at any time of day for multinational corporations (Kimmelman, 2010).

Twenty-first century skills

A framework for 21st century learning was created by the Partnership of Education for the 21st Century, a well-known advocacy group that supports the integration of 21st-century skills in education (Ayad, & Ajrami, 2017).

The precise content and definition of 21st century skills can be viewed in a variety of ways, but they all generally focus on the abilities of students and how they apply what they learn in real-world situations. Their core competencies include effective teamwork and communication abilities, technological know-how, the capacity for original and creative thought, and problem-solving abilities. Many of the competencies required for success in the technological world are included in the category of 21st Century Skills. 21st century skills help students develop lifetime knowledge, enabling them to better understand and respond to the vicissitudes of the outside world while also fostering self-improvement. Success in the global workplace increasingly depends on one's ability to adapt to the fast-paced lifestyle of a global community as workplace and culture change constantly. As a result, it's critical that students develop the whole spectrum of 21st century skills so they can adapt and change with the times. While there were slight differences among the different theoretical frameworks for teaching 21st century skills, such as creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, and teamwork (Dede, 2010).

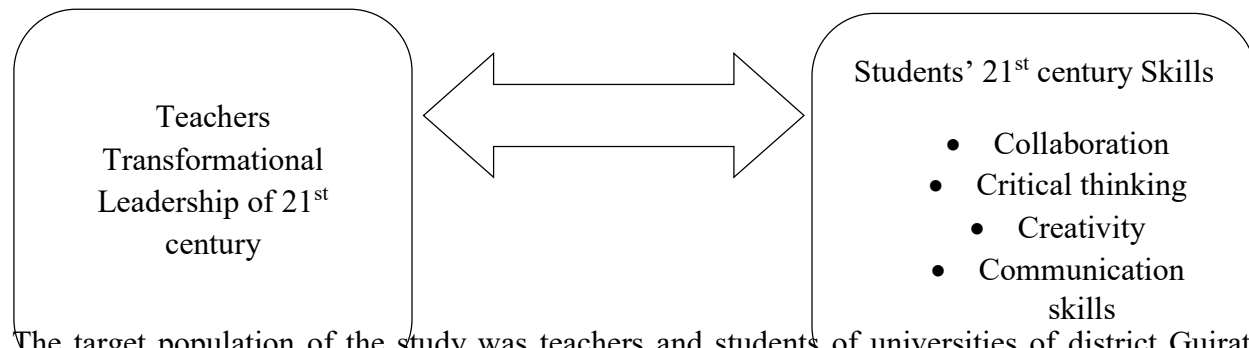
Leaders have stated that students "lack" these skills and that the lack of these skills in our culture "will meaningfully influence forthcoming financial development in the United States," despite the fact that it is widely acknowledged that specific 21st-century skills are necessary for success. Furthermore, American academics are falling behind in the more archaic areas of science, math, and reading. According to a study led by the Organization for Economic Cooperation, the biggest obstacle to teaching 21st century skills is scheduling enough time for these lessons within an extensive core curriculum. Students may therefore lose out when teachers interact with students during tests or when they employ teacher-centered methods to instruct a curriculum that enhances performance on state exams. Opportunities to hone skills in creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and teamwork. Despite appearing successful on tests, students might not possess the skills needed to succeed in the workforce. Because of this, students can now pass standardized reading, writing, and math tests, but these assessments don't tell us whether or not a student has all the skills required (Crutzen et al., 2016).

Research Design

According to the nature of the study quantitative research method was used to better understand and anticipate the phenomena. In quantitative method, correlational research design was implied to find out the role of teachers' transformational leadership on development of 21st century skills among university students. The 21st-century transformational leadership abilities of instructors and pupils served as the research's variables. Additionally, the researcher systematically

examined the coefficient correlation of variables in this study; the model describing the link between two variables is as follows:

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The target population of the study was teachers and students of universities of district Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. The 500 individual students from the University of Gujarat made up the study's sample. The researcher used a random sampling procedure to choose the sample for the quantitative method. Two questionnaires; Transformational Leadership of the University Teachers (TLUT), and 21st Century Skills of the University Students were formulated to collect the data. First questionnaire was consisted of 8 items to find out level of teachers' transformational leadership while second questionnaire was consisted of 20 items. The items were constructed through reviewing literature. Questionnaires were aligned with these 21st century skills; collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills. Instrument was validated through expert opinion. Content validity index of TLUT was calculated as .90 while .85 of the questionnaires for students. Moreover, reliability was ensured through Cronbach alpha and was calculated as .87 and .85 respectively.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics; mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. Moreover, inferential statistics (Pearson r) was also used to find out the effects of transformational leadership among university teachers on development of 21st century skills among university students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Level of Transformation Leadership

N	492
Mean	3.85
Std. Deviation	0.77

Table 1 describes that level of teachers' transformational leadership was found near the maximum mean score i.e., 5. Which showed that teachers have high level of their transformational leadership.

Table 2: Level of 21st Century Skills

	Collaboration Skills	Critical Thinking Skills	Creativity Skills	Communication Skills
Mean	3.83	3.81	3.83	3.84
S.D.	0.76	0.80	0.79	0.82

Table 2 depicts the level of 21st century skills among the students. Analysis of data showed that each skill was found at high level as mean score of collaboration skill was found 3.86 with S.D. 0.76. Similarly, mean score of critical thinking skill was calculated as 3.81 with S.D. 0.80, Creativity skill, mean score 3.83 and S.D. 0.79, and mean score of communication skills 3.84 with S.D. 0.82.

Table 3: Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Collaboration Skills

		Transformation Leadership	Collaboration Skills
	r	1	.57**
Transformation Leadership	Sig.		.00
	N	492	492

Table 3 demonstrates the results of relationship between transformational leadership and collaborative skill of the students. It was found significant relationship between teachers' transformational leadership and the collaborative skill of the students ($N = 492$, $p = .00 < .05$). Moreover, the magnitude of this relationship was found strong ($r = .57$). Furthermore, the dimension of this correlation was found positive which shows that teachers' transformational leadership has its significant role in developing students' collaborative skills.

Table 4: Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Critical Thinking Skills

		Transformation Leadership	Critical Thinking Skills
	R	1	.58**
Transformation Leadership	Sig.		.00
	N	492	492

Table 4 demonstrates the results of relationship between teachers' transformational leadership and critical thinking skill of the students. It was found significant relationship between teachers' transformational leadership and the critical thinking skill of the students ($N = 492$, $p = .00 < .05$). Moreover, the magnitude of this relationship was found strong ($r = .58$). Furthermore, the

dimension of this correlation was found positive which shows that teachers' transformational leadership has its significant role in developing students' critical thinking skills.

Table 5: Relationship between Transformational leadership and Creativity Skills

		Transformation Leadership	Creativity Skills
	r	1	.61**
Transformation Leadership	Sig.		.00
	N	492	492

Table 5 determines the results of relationship between teachers' transformational leadership and creativity skills of the students. A significant relationship between teachers' transformational leadership and the creativity skills of the students was found ($N = 492, p = .00 < .05$). Moreover, the magnitude of this relationship was found strong ($r = .61$). Furthermore, the dimension of this correlation was found positive which shows that teachers' transformational leadership has its significant role in developing students' creativity skills.

Table 6: Relationship between Transformational leadership and Communication Skills

		Transformation Leadership	Communication Skills
	r	1	.63**
Transformation Leadership	Sig.		.00
	N	492	492

Table 6 demonstrated the results of relationship between teachers' transformational leadership and communication skill of the students. It was found significant relationship between teachers' transformational leadership and the communication skills of the students ($N = 492, p = .00 < .05$). Moreover, the magnitude of this relationship was found strong ($r = .63$). Furthermore, the dimension of this correlation was found positive which shows that teachers' transformational leadership has its significant role in developing students' communication skills.

Findings

1. Results showed that there is significant correlation ($p < .05$) between teachers' transformational leadership and collaboration skills of the students at university level.
2. Findings of the study showed that there is significant correlation ($p < .05$) between teachers' transformational leadership and critical thinking skills of the students at university level.
3. Results showed that there is significant correlation ($p < .05$) between teachers' transformational leadership and creativity skills of the students at university level.

4. Finding revealed that there is significant correlation ($p < .05$) between teachers' transformational leadership and communication skills of the students at university level.

Conclusions

1. First research question was about the level of teachers' transformational leadership at university level. Mean score on the transformational leadership was tending towards maximum. On the basis of these findings, it was concluded that university teachers have high level of transformational leadership.
2. Next research question was about the current level of university students' development of 21st century skills. These skills were included collaboration skills, critical thinking skills, creativity skills, and communication skills. Mean score of each skill were near to maximum mean score i.e., 5. So, it was concluded that students are at high level of each skill.
3. Results showed that there is significant correlation between teachers' transformational leadership and collaboration skills of the students at university level. As the level of teachers' transformational leadership enhanced, the level of students' collaboration skills was significantly improved. Both have positive strong and significant relationship. It was concluded teachers' transformational leadership is playing its role in developing collaboration skills among university students.
4. Findings of the study showed that there is significant correlation between teachers' transformational leadership and critical thinking skills of the students at university level. As the level of teachers' transformational leadership enhanced, the level of students' critical thinking skills was significantly improved. Both have positive strong and significant relationship. It was concluded teachers' transformational leadership is playing its role in developing critical thinking skills among university students.
5. Results showed that there is significant correlation between teachers' transformational leadership and creativity skills of the students at university level. As the level of teachers' transformational leadership enhanced, the level of students' creativity skills was significantly improved. Both have positive strong and significant relationship. It was concluded teachers' transformational leadership is playing its role in developing creativity skills among university students.
6. Finding revealed that there is significant correlation between teachers' transformational leadership and communication skills of the students at university level. As the level of teachers' transformational leadership enhanced, the level of students' communication skills was significantly improved. Both have positive strong and significant relationship. It was concluded teachers' transformational leadership is playing its role in developing communication skills among university students.

Recommendations

1. Results reflect that university teachers transformational level falls in the high range but not very high. It is assumed that the teachers should have very high level of

transformational level. Hence, the authorities may conduct professional development sessions and awareness seminars on teachers' transformational leadership.

2. Results reflect that mean score of each skill i.e. collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and communication were near to maximum mean score but not above 4 i.e. high level. So, the teachers may focus on development of 21st century skills among the students through innovative teaching methods.
3. Results showed that teachers' transformational leadership is playing its role in developing collaboration skills among university students. Hence, the teachers may use group discussions, project method, and democratic methods to boost students' collaboration skills.
4. Results revealed that teachers' transformational leadership is playing its role in developing critical thinking skills among university students. Therefore, the teachers are recommended that they may use problem solving method and open book assignments to enhance critical thinking skills of the learners.

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