

## A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS PRINCIPAL'S TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AT A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, CHONGQING, CHINA

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**Abstract:** The main purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style and organizational justice at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China. The research objectives were (1) to identify the level of teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style, (2) to identify the level of teachers' perceptions towards organizational justice and, (3) to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style and organizational justice at A Junior High School, Chongqing, China. The total has 91 full-time teachers teaching in different grades from 7th grade, 8th grade and 9th grade during the academic year 2020 (March-August) got involved in this study. This study used Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire developed by Bass & Avolio (1995) and used Organizational Justice Scale adopt by Colquitt (2001) to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style organizational justice at A Junior High School, Chongqing, China. Results of the Pearson correlation indicated that there was a positive significant positive association between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style and organizational justice at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China,  $r(91) = .697, p = .000$ .

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership Style; Teachers; Organizational Justice

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## **Introduction**

How to be improving organizational efficiency is the goal of every leader. There is no doubt that the establishment of positive cooperation, fair working environment, mutual respect and trust are important components to help school organizations improve efficiency (Burns, 2012).

Teaching is a job full of challenges and uncertainties in a school organization (Dampier & Banks, 2019), and teachers all hope to work hard and get recognition from the leader.

Traditionally, the school management is a top-down management model, which focuses more on the relationship between employees' obedience to leaders. Leaders are often the ones who have the voice, so whether it is organizational management, policymaking, salary and other decisions are made by leaders, and even if when teachers suffer from unfair treatment, they generally will not take any action, most of them will bear it silently (Fatimah et al., 2011).

In recent years, while school leaders have reduced the intensity of authoritarian leadership and increased participation of transformational leadership style as a result of the changes in social values and relevant policies in China.

Although the school attaches great importance to how to use organizational policy to retain excellent teachers and make teachers perceived a sense of organizational justice, since most public schools do not establish a comprehensive performance appraisal to fairly evaluate teachers' outcome, this will affect teachers' evaluation of school organization to some extent in the long term.

School organization is one of the organizations that need to pay more attention to organizational justice (Kavanagh, Brown and Benson, 2007). A fair school environment makes teachers more satisfied, more peaceful, and has a good relationship with leaders, feels respected and valued, which in turn improves their work performance and motivates them to work for organizational development.

## **Research Objectives**

There are three objectives.

1. To identify the level of teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China.
2. To identify the level of teachers' perceptions towards organizational justice at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China.
3. To determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style and organizational justice at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China.

## **Literature Review**

### *Leadership Style*

Leadership style is considered to be one of the main factors influencing organizational performance. Leadership style is the process of influencing the behavior of others and trying to motivate employees to achieve organizational goals.

### *Transformational Leadership Style*

Transformational leadership style is a leadership style in which leaders use their charisma to attract employees' trust and willingness to try to provide an innovative environment for employees to achieve organizational success. Ali & Banks (2019) believed that the transformational leadership style is closely related to organizational effectiveness. The transformational leadership style affects the organizational climate, which in turn affects employees' work motivation and behavior, and thus affects the effectiveness of organizational.

Therefore, the transformational leadership style plays an important role in improving the organizational climate and organizational effectiveness.

Compared with other leadership styles, transformational leadership style is an inventive style, which is easier to gain the loyalty and trust of followers because it empowers followers, help employees map out a vision and care about the needs of employees to stimulate enthusiasm and vitality among employees, which can reduce the negative work behaviors of employees in the workplace (Bass, 1990).

### *Transactional Leadership*

Burns (1978) pointed out that transactional leadership style is a way for leaders to reward and motivate employees by rewarding them for their contributions.

Leaders use their authority to put forward requirements to employees, employees need to report job details to leaders, leaders decide employees' compensation and rewards, so that employees show their behavior and attitude of obedience.

Transactional leadership style is a kind of a reward system, which encourages employees to pursue high performance through reward, and pays special attention to employees' fault and punishment. This leadership style focuses more on processes rather than future vision, so transactional leadership style plays a very important role in improving organizational performance in the short term.

#### *Situational Leadership Theory*

Hersey and Blanchard proposed the theory of situational leadership in the 1960s. They believed that leader behaviors must be adapted to the employees' preparation to achieve effective leadership effect. In general, situational leadership requires the leader's style to match team competence and commitment level. Different from transformational leadership and transactional leadership, this leadership style can be changed according to different needs of employees (Rasid, Manaf & Quoquab, 2013).

#### *Contingency Leadership Theory*

Fiedler proposed the first contingency model in the 1950s. Fiedler (1978) thought that any leadership style may be effective or ineffective, and the key is whether it is appropriate for a specific leadership environment.

Fielder (1967) argued that the effectiveness of leadership does not depend on the quality and behavior of the leader, but on (1) the relationship between the leader and the leader (2) the mandate structure (3) the authority of the leader (1) leader-relations (2) task structure (3) leader's position power to decide. Fielder suggested that task motivated style more effective when situation particularly unfavorable, while relationship motivated style is better in general situations.

#### *Organizational Justice*

Greenberg developed organizational justice in 1987 based on the Equity Theory. Organizational justice considered to be an employee's perception of workplace fairness (Greenberg, 1987). The fairer in the organization, the higher the employee's job satisfaction and the higher the commitment to the organization (Hoy and Miskel, 2001; Hoffman et al., 1994).

Organizational justice is a bridge of trust between employees and leaders. Similarly, teachers' expectations of fairness in school organizations make them pay more and more attention to the performance of leaders and organizations (Burns, 2012).

When teachers perceived fairness matches their own inputs (i.e., time, loyalty, skills, etc.) with the outcomes (i.e., pay, promotion, development opportunities), then teachers will have a strong sense of organizational identity (Terzi, Ali Riza, et al., 2017) and organizational commitment (Khalil & Sharaf, 2015).

#### *Equity Theory of Organizational Justice*

The Equity Theory was put forward by Adams. The main point of the equity theory is that employees judge whether they are fair by comparing themselves to the inputs and outputs of others.

Equity theory is one of the motivation theories. Employees generate a sense of fairness and job satisfaction by comparing the proportion of their own inputs and outputs with others (Greenberg, 1990).

In general, the study of the equity theory of organization justice mainly focuses on the perception of the outcomes by employees (distribution justice) and how they obtain the outcomes (procedural justice) (Cropanzano, R., and Greenberg, J., 1997).

#### *Expectancy Theory*

The expectancy theory proposed by Vroom in 1964. The theory is that employees are motivated if they believe that their positive work attitude leads to good performance, which leads to the results that employees expect (Vroom, 1964).

In general, the expectancy theory discussed the increased motivation of leaders by mobilizing employees' motivation through performance and rewards, motivating them to make job satisfaction, and making them feel that their efforts are consistent with expectations or even exceed their expectations.

#### *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory*

Maslow argued that the degree of demand that people demanded at different times is different, and that such demand is the main motivation for people behavior.

Maslow divides needs into *physiological needs, safety needs, love and belongingness needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs*. Once a person needs are met at a certain level, they pursue a higher level of needs, thus driving the motivation to continue their efforts.

If leaders in an organization are aware of differences in employees' needs at different times, they can provide opportunities to meet their real needs, make them satisfied, increase their motivation (Huitt, 2007).

#### *Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory*

Herzberg's two-factor theory is one of the motivation theories that try to identify each person needs and how to achieve them. According to the two-factor theory, motivation is divided into *motivators and hygiene factors*.

Organization leaders need to understand whether the employee negative attitude is related to the job itself, there by using motivator factors to increase employee satisfaction and job performance, and to increase the employee organizational commitment to making a valuable contribution to the organization.

#### *Previous Studies on Transformational Leadership and Organizational Justice*

Akar & Ustuner's (2018) study explored the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards transformational leadership style, organizational support, organizational justice, and quality of work life. The finding showed that a significant positive impact on transformational leadership style, organizational support, organizational justice and quality of work life, while the researcher mentioned that also affected teachers' job satisfaction and motivation.

Mauludin & Endang (2018) studied the influence of transformational leadership style, organizational justice, trust and organizational commitment toward employee performance. The results of this research showed that transformational leadership style has a significant influence on organizational justice and employee performance but did not a significant influence on organizational trust and commitment.

According to Eberlin (2005) on the study of the relationship among leadership style, decision-making and organizational justice. Eberlin's research showed that there is a significant relationship between leadership style and decision-making and organizational justice.

### *Background of the School*

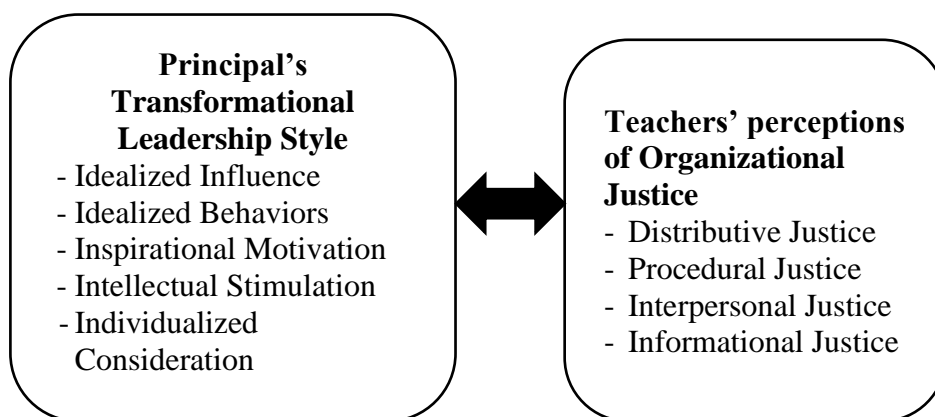
This selected junior high school was founded in 1963. The school has 24 classrooms, one each for physics, chemistry, biological laboratory and storage room, multimedia room, distance education computer room, art room, music room, library, reading room, health room, psychological consultation room.

The school currently has 24 teaching classes with 1214 students, 91 faculty and staff, including 11 senior teachers, 38 intermediate teachers, 73 teachers with bachelor's degrees.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The purpose of this study was investigated the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style and organizational justice at a Junior High School, Chongqing in China.

Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework of this study. The framework shows the teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style based on Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1995), and their perceptions of organizational justice which based on Equity Theory designed by Adams (1965).



**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of this Study**

### **Research Methodology**

#### *Population*

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style and organizational justice at a junior high school, Chongqing, China. The selected

school has 91 full-time teachers teaching in different grades from 7th grade, 8th grade and 9th grade during the academic year 2020 (March-August).

Table 1. *The Number of Participating Teachers from the Junior High School*

Grade \ Gender	Male	Female	Total
7th Grade	11	13	24
8th Grade	16	15	31
9th Grade	20	16	36
Total	47	44	91

### *Instrumentation*

The researcher used one questionnaire which comprised of 2 sections in this research. The survey was divided into two subdivisions:

1. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
2. Organizational Justice Scale

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was used by Bass & Avolio (1995) with 20 questions and has 5 components by used the 5-point Likert scale. The Organization Justice Scale developed by Colquitt (2001) with 20 questions and have 4 dimensions by used the 5-point Likert scale.

The researcher tested the reliability of the two transformational leadership style and organizational justice by using a statistical tool. As shown in the table below, the reliability of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was respectively .96 and Organizational Justice Scale also were at .96. This questionnaire was regarded as reliable.

Table 2. *Reliability of the Questionnaire*

		Alpha
Part 1	Multifactor Leadership Style	.96
Part 2	Organizational Justice Scale	.96

## **Finding/Results**

### *Demographic Results of the Participants*

The researcher distributed questionnaires to 91 full-time teachers at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China, and returned back 100% of the questionnaires, which were 91 questionnaires completed. The demographic profiles had four demographic factors, including gender, age, educational level, and years of teaching experience. These demographics were shown through the use of frequency and percentage as follows.



There were 47 respondents or 51.6% are male, and 44 respondents or 48.4% are female.

There were 43 respondents or 47.3% are in 20-29 years old range. A total of 20 respondents or 22% are in the 30-39 years old range. There were 10 respondents or 19.8% are in the 40-49 years old range. The lowest of the respondents are in the over 50 old range.

The majority of the respondents (65 instructors or 71.4%) have a bachelor's degrees. 9 respondents or 9.9% have diploma in education. 17 respondents or 18.7% have master's degree.

There were 23 respondents or 25.3% have less than 1 year of teaching experience. 22 respondents or 24.2 % have 1-5 years of teaching experience. 12 respondents or 13.2% have 6-10 years of teaching experience. 9 respondents or 9.9% have 11-15 years of teaching experience. 25 respondents or 27.5% have more than 15 years of teaching experience.

#### *Research Objective One*

Table 3. *Means and Standard Deviations of the Level of Teachers' Perceptions towards Principal's Transformational Leadership Style (n=91)*

Leadership Style	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Idealized Attributes	3.22	0.80	Moderate
Idealized Behavior	3.47	0.90	Moderate
Inspirational Motivation	3.48	0.88	Moderate
Intellectual Stimulation	3.41	0.89	Moderate
Individualized Consideration	3.17	1.02	Moderate
Total	3.35	0.79	Moderate

Table 3 presents the summary of the Means and Standard Deviations of the level of teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style at a Junior High School. According to the interpretation scale that teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style at a Junior High School were regarded as moderate (3.35). The mean score of individualized consideration was the lowest (3.17), and the mean score of inspirational motivation was the highest (3.48). Both of them in the level of moderate.

#### *Research Objective Two*

Table 4. *Means and Standard Deviations of the Level of Teachers' Perceptions towards Organizational Justice (n=91)*

Organizational Justice	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
Distributive Justice	3.02	1.05	Moderate
Procedural Justice	3.28	0.97	Moderate
Interpersonal Justice	3.90	0.87	High
Informational Justice	3.49	1.04	Moderate
Total	3.42	0.85	Moderate

Table 4 presents the summary of the Means and Standard Deviations of the level of teachers' perceptions towards organizational justice at a Junior High School. According to the interpretation scale that teachers' perceptions towards organizational justice at a Junior High School were regarded as moderate (3.42). The mean score of distributive justice was the lowest (3.02), and the mean score of interpersonal justice was the highest (3.90).

### *Research Objective Three*

Table 5. *Pearson Product Moment Correlation between the levels of Teachers Perceptions towards Principal's Transformational Leadership Style and Organizational Justice (n=91)*

Transformational Leadership Style & Organizational Justice	Pearson Correlation	Significance Level (2-tailed)
	.697**	.000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).

Table 5 shows the analysis of the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style and organizational justice at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China. Results of the Pearson correlation indicated that there was a significant positive association between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style and organizational justice at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China,  $r(91) = .697, p = .000$ .

## **Discussion**

*Teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China*

According to the research results, the total score of teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China was moderate (3.35).

Based on the research results revealed that Individual Consideration and Inspirational Motivation there was a significant difference in the mean scores. In this school, the principal seldom gives teaching and coaching instruction to

the teachers. When the principal provides instruction to teachers, then it will reduce the teaching pressure of teachers, so as to better improve the quality of teaching. At present, school principal pays more attention to the teaching guidance and training of new teachers, but it is easy to ignore the guidance of teachers with work experience, and the principal's guiding role is in many ways irreplaceable by other managers. Ali & Banks (2019) also emphasized that teaching is a challenging job, with teachers all want to get help and support from principal. School principal should pay special attention to teachers' teaching support to provide teachers with clearer plans and goals.

*Teachers' perceptions towards organizational justice at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China*

In this selected school, teachers' perceptions towards organizational justice were regarded as moderate (3.42).

The allocation of resources within an organization is important to employees, and salary is often used by employees for comparison. Job satisfaction increases if employees perceived salary to match their outcomes (Dymek-Thompson, C. M., 2004). In this school, the mean score of Distributive Justice got the lowest. The principal must have clear salary guidelines and a performance appraisal system, without any biased distribution, and give teachers the expected salary. The expectancy theory of Vroom (1964) suggested that employees believe that their efforts will lead to good performance, thereby increasing work motivation.

*The relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style and organizational justice at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China*

Through analysis of the study data, the researcher concluded that there was a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions towards principal's transformational leadership style and organizational justice at a Junior High School, Chongqing, China.

Mauludin & Endang (2018) reported that the level of teachers' perception of organizational fairness is closely related to the transformational style of leadership. When leaders do not make full use of the transformational leadership style, teachers' perception of organizational fairness will decrease, and teachers' job satisfaction will decrease. Eberlin (2005) believed that transformational leadership style enhanced employees' perceptions towards organizational justice and met teachers' needs; therefore, turnover rate decreased, and organizational commitment increased. Hoy and Miskel (2001)

reported that the fairer in the organization, the higher the employee's job satisfaction and the higher the commitment to the organization.

### **Recommendations**

#### *For the School Principals*

School leaders should establish a sound performance system, a good and fair working environment, which can help school leaders get real results from their employees. Also, school leaders also should keep good communication channels with teachers, always assess teachers' needs, provide full resources and leadership support, and enable teachers to actively participate in the decision-making process of the school.

The researcher also would suggest that school leaders can build a platform for school administrators with transformational leadership skills to exchange management experience with other schools' leaders, and how to use transformational leadership styles to improve teachers' perceptions towards organizational justice and how to promote organizational development.

#### *For the Teachers in the School*

The researcher would suggest that teachers can regularly assess their real personal needs and feedback to the school leadership. Teachers need to understand their main ways and means of professional development to help them establish the right direction to adapt to the changing in educational trends. In this process, if teachers need the help of school leaders and administrators, teachers should consciously take the initiative to seek help, and maintain communication with school administrators.

#### *For the Future Researchers*

The researcher would suggest that future researchers can use a combination of quantitative and qualitative research could be considered to learn more about the details of leadership style and organizational justice.

Future researchers may consider choosing public and private high schools, universities, and research to be able to help school leaders study the importance of principal leadership styles and organizational justice to teachers.

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