



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN BINZHOU CITY, CHINA

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ABSTRACT

High-quality education relies on the efforts of teachers, and teachers' strong organizational commitment is one of the guarantees of work quality. Headmasters with good transformational leadership influence the level of teachers' organizational commitment. The present study was guided by the two research objectives. They were to examine the level of transformational leadership and organizational commitment, and to determine the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, China. This study involved a minimum of 234 teachers as the participant from top 3 primary school in Binzhou City,

Shandong Province, China. They are First Primary School, Qingyi Primary School, and Experimental Primary School. This study used a quantitative approach through an online questionnaire distributed to respondents. The study employed Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) as the instrument. The findings of this study showed that the level of transformational leadership possessed by primary school teachers in Binzhou City is at a high level (mean = 3.74). The level of organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City is at a moderate level (mean = 3.38). The study found a significant and positive correlation between

transformational leadership and organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, China. Specifically, the various dimensions of transformational leadership showed different degrees of positive correlation with organizational commitment, collectively supporting the positive influence of transformational leadership on organizational commitment. The findings of this study on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, China, hold significant implications for educational leadership, policy development, and practice. These implications resonate with the objectives outlined in the National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) and China Education Modernization 2035. The study recommended future research on mixed method on qualitative and quantitative approach. It also recommended future research involve substituting the transformational leadership style with other leadership styles to ascertain the level of leadership practices among primary school headmasters in Binzhou City.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Education is a cornerstone of national development, with teachers playing a pivotal role (Wamalwa & Masibo, 2020). The effectiveness of education is closely tied to teachers' organizational commitment, which impacts their dedication and student outcomes (Sukarmin & Sin, 2022). High organizational commitment among teachers leads to greater passion and better student performance, whereas high teacher turnover, often linked to low commitment, negatively affects school reputation and teaching quality (Omino et al., 2022).

China's educational reforms, including the "National Outline for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020)" and the "14th Five-Year Plan for the Development of National Education," emphasize enhancing education quality and governance (General Office of the State Council, 2011). Teachers who feel a strong sense of belonging and commitment are more engaged, fostering a positive educational environment that supports student progress (Ismail et al., 2022). Effective leadership by headmasters is crucial in nurturing this commitment. Dedicated teachers contribute to organizational effectiveness through innovative solutions and exceptional performance (Mohamed et al., 2019). The "Education Modernization 2035" initiative highlights the role of school principals in driving reforms and ensuring school quality (General Office of the State Council, 2019). Transformational leadership by headmasters is essential for modernizing education and

aligning organizations with clear visions and goals (Nurwati, 2020). This leadership style significantly influences teachers' work ethic, productivity, and organizational commitment (Veraya, 2022).

Primary school teachers in China face significant pressures due to reforms, curriculum changes, and advances in educational technology (Liu, 2022; Lo, 2021). Headmasters must support teachers through these changes, fostering a collaborative environment to achieve educational objectives. A supportive atmosphere enhances teachers' commitment and passion for teaching. Strong relationships between headmasters and teachers, involvement in decision-making, and continuous professional development opportunities significantly improve organizational commitment and school education quality (Zaini & Mansor, 2021). Therefore, the influence of headmasters on organizational commitment is vital for the overall success and quality of education in schools.

Despite the importance of transformational leadership, many teachers in Chinese schools report low levels of commitment (Huang *et al.*, 2020). Research indicates a low willingness among teachers to consistently serve their schools (Tao & Duan, 2021). Teachers' sense of belonging and commitment improves when they feel valued and inspired by their leaders (Nehez *et al.*, 2021). Headmasters need to implement effective leadership strategies to build strong bonds with teachers (Qian & Walker, 2021). Transformational leadership is a powerful tool for supporting team goals and fostering beneficial changes (Rashwan, 2022). However, there is a lack of evidence on the effective practice dimensions of transformational leadership in the Chinese context (Zeng, 2022).

This study aims to fill this gap by examining the relationship between the dimensions of transformational leadership and organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City. Although extensive studies have explored transformational leadership's effects on organizational commitment, it is crucial to examine how specific dimensions influence commitment in the Chinese context. Most studies focus on teachers in universities, vocational colleges, and secondary schools, with few addressing primary school teachers (Yin *et al.*, 2021). This study aims to determine the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among public primary school teachers in Binzhou City.

1.2 Research Questions

This research is designed to address the following questions:

- 1) What is the level of transformational leadership among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, China?
- 2) What is the level of organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, China?
- 3) Is there any significant relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, China?

1.3 Significance of the Study

From a practical standpoint, educational managers and practitioners will benefit from understanding and applying transformational leadership strategies. Headmasters who adopt these strategies can better motivate and support teachers, enhancing their sense of belonging, work ethic, and teaching quality. Additionally, school administrators can identify the most effective transformational leadership strategies, improving their management skills and developing more effective training programs.

Academically, this study offers new perspectives for expanding leadership theory. The results can validate Bass's Transformational Leadership Theory (1985) and Allen and Meyer's Organizational Commitment Theory (1990). The literature review critically discusses previous research, providing important implications for developing transformational leadership and organizational commitment among primary school teachers in prefecture-level cities.

1.4 Scope of Study

This study examines the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, Shandong Province. Respondents include teachers from three public primary schools, Binzhou Experimental Primary School, Binzhou Qingyi Primary School, and Binzhou First Primary School. Moreover, Bass Transformational Leadership Theory (1985) and Allen and Meyer Organizational Commitment Theory (1990) are employed in this study.

1.5 Limitations

This study focuses on three public primary schools in Binzhou City, limiting the generalizability of the findings to the selected teachers and schools. Although these schools may be representative, issues of diversity and regional specificity could affect the broader

applicability of the results. The primary data collection method is an online questionnaire, which may introduce certain biases, such as excluding individuals without internet access or familiarity with online surveys. Additionally, this study relies solely on quantitative analysis, potentially overlooking critical qualitative insights, such as the specific reasons or contextual factors behind certain phenomena. Despite these limitations, the data and methodology used are sufficient to demonstrate the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment.

2. PAST STUDIES

2.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiration, motivation, and individualized consideration, is widely adopted in educational settings. Ozkaya and Akın (2023) analyzed the perceptions of 338 middle and high school teachers in Turkey, finding high levels of transformational leadership among school administrators (mean = 4.25, SD = 0.719). Similarly, Armugam *et al.* (2019) studied 250 teachers in Malaysia, confirming a significant adoption of transformational leadership (mean = 3.86, SD = 0.530).

In China, transformational leadership has been shown to be prevalent and effective. Tian *et al.* (2022) surveyed 990 primary school teachers in Beijing, revealing high levels of transformational leadership (mean = 4.536, SD = 0.604). Fang *et al.* (2023) found similarly high levels among 383 high school teachers in Guizhou Province (mean = 4.576, SD = 1.182). Additionally, Zou and Merritt (2022) reported very high levels of transformational leadership (mean = 4.89, SD = 0.225) in a study of 400 university teachers. Huang *et al.* (2021) explored the effects of transformational leadership among university faculty in China, noting high levels of transformational leadership (mean = 3.11, SD = 0.808) and a significant positive correlation with organizational commitment (mean = 4.97, SD = 1.00).

2.2 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is critical for school effectiveness. Ozkaya and Akın (2023) found that middle and high school teachers in Turkey exhibited relatively high organizational commitment (mean = 3.77, SD = 0.60842). Bashir and Gani (2020) reported moderate levels of commitment among Indian university teachers (mean = 3.8583, SD = 0.53), while Fatimah *et al.* (2022) found high commitment levels among Indonesian university lecturers (mean = 4.25).

In China, Li *et al.* (2022) studied 841 secondary school teachers in rural areas, discovering high organizational commitment (mean = 4.406, SD = 0.333). Zhou *et al.* (2020) reported similar findings among preschool teachers in Guangxi and Inner Mongolia (mean = 3.59, SD = 0.66). Donglong *et al.* (2020) observed very high commitment levels among university teachers in Shandong Province (mean = 4.880, SD = 0.842).

2.3 Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Commitment

Research consistently shows a positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. Ozkaya and Akın (2023) identified a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.444$; $p < 0.01$) between these variables among Turkish teachers. Similarly, Thomas and Hamid (2019) found that transformational leadership significantly enhances organizational commitment among university teachers in Pakistan.

In Chinese educational contexts, Chen (2021) found a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.465$, $p = 0.000$) between principals' transformational leadership and teachers' commitment in Henan Province. YU Bo (2013) reported a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.522$, $p < 0.01$) between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among university teachers across 10 provinces in China. Huang and Hsin (2023) observed a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.809$, $p = 0.000$) between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Guangxi Province. These findings underline the critical role of transformational leadership in enhancing organizational commitment, contributing to improved educational outcomes and institutional stability.

In conclusion, the reviewed studies provide robust evidence that transformational leadership positively influences organizational commitment among educators. This relationship is consistent across various educational contexts, suggesting that fostering transformational leadership can be a strategic approach to enhancing organizational commitment and overall school performance.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative approach, providing a robust framework for statistical analysis, enhancing measurement precision, reliability, and generalizability (Ahmad *et al.*, 2019). Specifically, a correlational design is utilized to examine the relationship between

transformational leadership and organizational commitment using statistical correlation tests (Seeram, 2019).

3.2 Location

The study is conducted in Binzhou City, Shandong Province, China (postal code 256600). Binzhou is chosen for its enough primary school teachers and substantial educational investment, which ensures the feasibility and reliability of data collection.

3.3 Population and Sample

The population includes teachers from the top three primary schools in Binzhou City: First Primary School, Qingyi Primary School, and Experimental Primary School, totaling 621 teachers (People's Government of Bincheng District, 2022). A minimum sample size of 234 teachers is determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table. Stratified random sampling ensures representativeness, followed by simple random sampling ('fishbowl technique') to select respondents.

Table 3.1: Sampling fraction of population.

School	Population	Sampling Fraction	Sample Size
First Primary School	254	$254 \times \frac{234}{621} = 96$	96
Qingyi Primary School	253	$253 \times \frac{234}{621} = 95$	95
Experimental Primary School	114	$114 \times \frac{234}{621} = 43$	43
TOTAL	621		234

3.4 Instrumentation

Data is collected via a structured questionnaire, divided into three parts:

- Part A: Demographic information (5 items).
- Part B: Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) adapted from Cahyono (2020), using a 5-point Likert scale across 22 items.
- Part C: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) adapted from Cahyono (2020), using a 5-point Likert scale across 20 items.

Respondents complete the online questionnaire in approximately 30 minutes. Table 3.2 provides instrument specifications.

Table 3.2: Specification of instrumentation

Section	Variables	Number of items	Adapted From	Scale Range
A	Demographic Profiles	5		-
B	Organizational Commitment	22	Cahyono (2020)	Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)
C	Transformational Leadership	20	Cahyono (2020)	Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1)

3.5 Validity and Reliability

In this study, the Cronbach alpha is applied to verify the reliability of the questionnaire. Although there is no standard for the appropriate alpha value, in practice, according to Saiari and Ali (2020), values of Cronbach alpha above 0.6 and below 0.7 are low reliability, whereas values above 0.7 and below 0.8 are moderate, and reliabilities greater than 0.8 are highly reliable. Alcaide-Aranda and Alcaide (2023) pointed out that, the MLQ proposed by Bass and Avolio in 2000, its validity presents a high index of reliability with Cronbach's alpha of 0.97. According to research conducted by Samancioglu and colleagues in 2020, the OCQ, which was originally created by Meyer and Allen in 1991, demonstrated a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.89 for the entire scale.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULTS

4.1.1 Level of Transformational Leadership

This research assesses transformational leadership through four key facets: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The specific levels for each dimension of transformational leadership are detailed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Mean and Std. Deviation Level of Transformational Leadership.

Dimension	Mean	SD	Level
Idealized influence	3.81	0.579	High
Inspirational motivation	3.81	0.613	High
Intellectual stimulation	3.78	0.642	High
Individualized consideration	3.56	0.809	High
Overall (Transformational leadership)	3.74	0.604	High

In Table 4.2, it is observed that several leadership attributes score highly: idealized influence registers a mean = 3.81, SD = 0.579; inspirational motivation similarly records a mean = 3.81, SD = 0.613; intellectual stimulation is noted with a mean = 3.78, SD = 0.642; and individualized consideration is evaluated with a mean = 3.56, SD = 0.809. Overall, the transformational leadership score (mean = 3.74, SD = 0.604) among primary school teachers in Binzhou City is at a high level.

a) Idealized Influence

Table 4.3 details the mean and standard deviation for each item under the dimension of idealized influence.

Table 4.3: Mean and Standard Deviation for Idealized Influence.

No	Statements	Mean	SD	Level
TL1	My school headmaster is confident in a positive future for this school.	3.86	0.746	High
TL2	My school headmaster is eager to lend a hand when the school faces challenging situations.	3.71	0.855	High
TL3	My school headmaster is a man who upholds the school values.	3.83	0.765	High
TL4	My school headmaster has a clear vision and mission for the school.	3.91	0.770	High
TL5	My school headmaster demonstrates high to advance the school.	3.85	0.833	High
TL6	My school headmaster is proud of the school teachers.	3.71	0.807	High
	Overall	3.81	0.579	High

Table 4.3 indicates that six items scored highly. Of these, the item TL4, “*My school headmaster has a clear vision and mission for the school.*,” achieved the highest mean score (mean = 3.91, SD = 0.770). While item TL2 is “*My school headmaster is eager to lend a hand when the school faces challenging situations.*” (mean = 3.71, SD = 0.855) and TL6 is “*My school headmaster is proud of the school teachers.*” (mean = 3.71, SD = 0.807) recorded the lowest mean. Overall, the idealized influence score (mean = 3.81, SD = 0.579) among primary school teachers in Binzhou City is at a high level.

b) Inspirational Motivation

Table 4.4 presents the mean and standard deviations for each variable within the inspirational motivation dimension.

Table 4.4: Mean and Standard deviation for Inspirational Motivation.

No	Statements	Mean	SD	Level
TL7	The school headmaster is an inspirational leader.	3.80	0.848	High
TL8	The school headmaster encouraged us to pursue excellence.	3.80	0.876	High
TL9	The school headmaster is someone who is optimistic.	3.76	0.777	High
TL10	The school headmaster is able to arouse teachers' morale when working.	3.91	0.784	High
TL11	My school headmaster is an exemplary leader.	3.77	0.774	High
	Overall	3.81	0.613	High

This study indicates that all five evaluated items received high evaluations. Specifically, the item labeled TL10, which states “*The school headmaster is able to arouse teachers' morale when working.*” achieved the highest average score (mean = 3.91, SD = 0.784). Conversely, the item labeled TL11, “*My school headmaster is an exemplary leader.*” showed the lowest average score (mean = 3.77, SD = 0.774). Overall, the scores for inspirational motivation among primary school teachers in Binzhou City are significantly high, with an overall mean of 3.81 and a standard deviation of 0.613.

c) Intellectual Stimulation

Table 4.5 presents the mean and standard deviations for each item within the intellectual stimulation dimension.

Table 4.5: Mean and Standard deviation for Intellectual Stimulation.

No	Statements	Mean	SD	Level
TL12	The school headmaster encourages us to think out of ability (out of the box).	3.85	0.738	High
TL13	The school headmaster supports the school teachers on taking job risk.	3.71	0.942	High
TL14	The school headmaster encourages us to be creative at work.	3.87	0.821	High
TL15	His or her leadership behavior makes us comfortable working at school.	3.60	0.908	High
TL16	The school headmaster encourages us to learn new things.	3.88	0.762	High
	Overall	3.78	0.642	High

The findings of this research indicate that all items achieved high evaluations. Specifically, item TL16 is “*The school headmaster encourages us to learn new things.*” recorded the highest mean (mean = 3.88, SD = 0.762). While item TL15, “*His or her leadership behavior makes us comfortable working at school.*” recorded the lowest mean (mean = 3.60, SD = 0.908). Overall, the intellectual stimulation score (mean = 3.78, SD = 0.642) among primary school teachers in Binzhou City is at a high level.

d) Individualized Consideration

Table 4.6 presents the mean values and standard deviations for each item within the individualized consideration dimension.

Table 4.6: Mean and Standard Deviation for Individualized Consideration.

No	Statements	Mean	SD	Level
TL17	The school headmaster knows my abilities at work.	3.71	0.905	High
TL18	The school headmaster gave positive feedback at work.	3.71	0.883	High
TL19	The school headmaster sets an example through a task that I found difficult to comprehend.	3.26	1.241	Moderate
TL20	The school headmaster is willing to listen to criticism and suggestions from the teachers.	3.58	0.943	High
	Overall	3.56	0.809	High

The findings of this research indicate that three items received high evaluations, whereas the remaining items were rated as moderate. Specifically, item TL17 is “*The school headmaster knows my abilities at work.*” (mean = 3.71, SD = 0.905) and TL18 is “*The school headmaster gave positive feedback at work.*” (mean = 3.71, SD = 0.883) recorded the highest mean. While item TL19, “*The school headmaster sets an example through a task that I found difficult to comprehend.*” recorded the lowest mean (mean = 3.26, SD = 1.241). Overall, the individualized consideration score (mean = 3.56, SD = 0.809) among primary school teachers in Binzhou City is at a high level.

4.1.2 Level of Organizational Commitment

In this research, we assessed organizational commitment using a set of 22 items. The mean and standard deviations for items are presented in Table 4.7. Notably, ten items, which were initially phrased negatively (indicated by an asterisk *), were inverted in the coding process to accurately reflect true levels of organizational commitment in the analysis.

Table 4.7: Mean and Standard deviation for Organizational Commitment.

	No	Statements	Mean	SD	Level
Affective Commitment	OC1	I am glad to spend the rest of my career in this school.	3.90	0.848	High
	OC2	I am proud to share my school achievement with others.	3.94	0.727	High
	OC3	Problems at this school are also part of my problem.	2.79	0.905	Moderate
	*OC4	I believe it would be easier for me to connect with other schools than with my current one.	3.89	0.845	High

	*OC5	I feel that I am not part of this school's organization.	4.09	0.742	High
	OC6	I feel emotionally attached to this school.	3.47	0.748	High
	OC7	This school has many personal meanings for me.	3.57	0.806	High
	*OC8	I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this school.	4.04	0.873	High
Continuing Commitment	*OC9	I am not afraid of what will happen to me if I quit my job.	3.56	0.833	High
	OC10	Even though I wanted to, it was always hard for me to leave this school.	3.48	0.830	High
	*OC11	Too many things will interfere when I decide to leave the school at this time.	2.63	0.809	Moderate
	*OC12	I will not be losing too much if I leave this school.	3.44	0.838	High
	OC13	Work in this school is part of my life.	3.33	0.907	Moderate
	OC14	I feel that I have a little choice to consider leaving this school.	3.70	0.971	High
	*OC15	One of the serious consequences of leaving this school is the scarcity of available alternatives.	2.90	1.051	Moderate
	*OC16	One of the reasons I stayed in this school was the difficulty in finding suitable jobs from other schools.	3.57	1.210	High
Normative Commitment	*OC17	I feel that it is easy for other people to move from one school to another.	3.73	0.781	High
	*OC18	I am not sure when a person must always be loyal to his school.	2.89	0.891	Moderate
	OC19	It is unethical for me when someone is pursuing a career by job hopping from one school to another.	2.45	0.818	Low
	OC20	One of the primary reasons I continue to devote myself to school is the sense of trust; I believe loyalty is a moral imperative essential for survival.	2.93	0.974	Moderate
	OC21	Even though I get a better job offer elsewhere, leaving the school is not an option.	3.14	1.132	Moderate
	OC22	I feel there must be a strong value to stay loyal to the school.	3.19	0.883	Moderate
		Overall	3.38	0.496	Moderate

* Negative statements

The findings of this research indicate that thirteen items received high evaluations, eight items were assessed with moderate ratings, and one item was rated low. Specifically, item *OC5 is *"I feel that I am not part of this school's organization."* recorded the highest mean (mean = 4.09, SD = 0.742). While item OC19 is *"It is unethical for me when someone is pursuing a career by job hopping from one school to another."* recorded the lowest mean (mean = 2.45, SD = 0.818). Overall, the organizational commitment score (mean = 3.38, SD = 0.496) among Primary School Teachers in Binzhou City is at a moderate level.

4.1.3. Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Commitment

The findings presented in Table 4.8 respond to the second objective of the study by examining the correlation between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, as analyzed through Pearson's correlation method.

Table 4.8: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis.

Dimension	Organizational Commitment	
	r	Sig. P
Idealized influence	0.714	0.000
Inspirational motivation	0.690	0.000
Intellectual stimulation	0.644	0.000
Individualized consideration	0.565	0.000
Transformational Leadership	0.706	0.000

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

According to the Pearson Correlation Coefficient matrix presented in Table 4.8, dimensions of transformational leadership show a moderate and statistically significant positive correlation with organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City. These dimensions include idealized influence ($r = 0.714$, $p < 0.05$), inspirational motivation ($r = 0.690$, $p < 0.05$), intellectual stimulation ($r = 0.644$, $p < 0.05$), and individualized consideration ($r = 0.565$, $p < 0.05$). Moreover, the overall effect of transformational leadership on organizational commitment is notably strong and positive ($r = 0.706$, $p < 0.05$), underscoring the significant association across all examined variables.

5. DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Level of Transformational Leadership: This study measures transformational leadership levels through four dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation,

intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The mean levels of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are all high. Overall, the transformational leadership scores of primary school headmasters in Binzhou City, China, are at a high level. The results of this study on transformational leadership levels contrast sharply with the findings of Zou and Merritt (2022), who found that the transformational leadership levels of university presidents in China were very high (mean=4.89, SD=0.225). Additionally, Tian et al. (2022) found that the transformational leadership levels of primary school principals in Beijing, China, were very high (mean=4.536, SD=0.604). However, the results of this study are consistent with the research conducted by Armugam and colleagues (2019), who noted that transformational leadership from the perspective of teachers in national secondary schools in Seremban, Malaysia, was relatively high (mean=3.86, SD=0.530).

Idealized Influence

According to the results of this study, item TL2 *“My school headmaster is eager to lend a hand when the school faces challenging situations.”* has a high mean level, but it is the lowest score for this item. This suggests that although most teachers recognized the headmaster’s willingness to support and intervene when the school was experiencing challenges, the performance of the headmaster still left some teachers dissatisfied.

The headmaster can firmly uphold the school values. This can be seen in the results of the TL3 item *“My school headmaster is a man who upholds the school values.”* This indicates that teachers generally believe that their headmasters demonstrate adherence to and promotion of school values in their work.

The highest numbers of respondents have strongly agreed with the item TL4, which is *“My school headmaster has a clear vision and mission for the school.”* This suggests that teachers generally felt that their headteacher possessed a clear sense of the direction and goals of the school and was able to communicate this vision and mission clearly.

According to Table 4.3, from item TL5 *“My school headmaster demonstrates high to advance the school,”* we can generalize that most teachers felt that their headteacher held a strong commitment and dedication to the progress and development of the school. This indicates that teachers observe and feel the positive actions and sustained efforts of their

headmasters in promoting the development of their schools and reflect the positive attitudes and practical actions of their headmasters in realizing the vision and mission of their schools.

Finally, as with TL2, item TL6, “*My school headmaster is proud of the school teachers.*” had the lowest mean of any item in this category. This suggests that although headmasters may support and recognize the work of teachers, they are not significant in the face of recognizing and celebrating the achievements of teachers in their work, and a proportion of teachers do not receive this recognition.

Inspirational Motivation

The results showed that item TL7, “*The school headmaster is an inspirational leader,* gets respondents’ strong agreement. Teachers feel that their headmasters could motivate them. This means that teachers receive attention and encouragement from their headmasters in their work, and that teachers recognize the headteacher’s attitude and motivational approach.

As with item TL7, the meaning for item TL8, “*The school headmaster encouraged us to pursue excellence.*” was similarly high. This demonstrates a general sense among teachers that their headmasters are actively encouraging them to pursue higher levels of achievement and progress. They felt that their headmasters not only recognized their current efforts and achievements, but also motivated them to set and achieve higher goals.

It is worth noting that item TL9, “*The school headmaster is someone who is optimistic.*” scored high but was the lowest of the group. This suggests that although teachers generally perceive their headmasters to be optimistic and believe that they have a positive mindset, the significance in the eyes of the teachers is relatively low compared to other leadership attributes in this group.

Item TL10, “*The school headmaster is able to arouse teachers’ morale when working.*” have recorded the highest mean where respondents have strongly agreed to the items respectively. This suggests that teachers generally perceive their headmasters as having a significant ability to boost team morale and motivation in their daily work, highlighting the effectiveness of headmasters in creating a positive working environment and promoting teacher motivation.

Finally, respondents also showed a high level of agreement with question TL11, “*My school headmaster is an exemplary leader.*” This suggests that teachers generally view their headmasters as a role model to be followed and emulated, and that teachers recognize the

work of the headmasters, highlighting the success of the headmasters in projecting a positive image and standards of behavior.

Intellectual Stimulation

Item TL12, *“The school headmaster encourages us to think out of ability (out of the box).”* achieved a high mean. This suggests that teachers generally feel encouraged by their headmasters to be innovative and think creatively. Encouragement from headmasters conveys a positive image of leadership that is proactive and innovative.

Teachers generally showed strong agreement with TL13, *“The school headmaster supports the school teachers on taking job risk.”* This suggests that teachers feel that their headmasters not only encourage them to try out new approaches and strategies, even though this may involve a degree of risk, but also provide support and reassurance in the process.

Item TL14, *“The school headmaster encourages us to be creative at work.”* received the second highest level of agreement from teachers. This suggests that teachers generally agreed that their headmasters actively promoted them to show innovation and creativity in their daily work and encouraged them to develop and practice new teaching methods and strategies.

Item TL15, *“His or her leadership behavior makes us comfortable working at school.”*, although demonstrating strong agreement, had the lowest level of agreement in this group. This suggests that although teachers generally agree that their headmasters create a comfortable working environment through his or her behavior, the headmasters influence in creating a comfortable working climate is relatively weak compared to performance in the areas of motivation, support for innovation and risk-taking.

Item TL16 *“The school headmaster encourages us to learn new things.”* received the highest level of agreement, with teachers giving strong agreement. This suggests that teachers generally believe that their headmasters place a high value on lifelong learning and personal development and actively encourage them to explore new knowledge and skills. This encouragement reflects the headmaster’s supportive attitude towards educational innovation and teacher professional growth, as well as the success of leadership in promoting a work culture of continuous learning and progress.

Individualized Consideration

Item TL17, “*The school headmaster knows my abilities at work.*” is to get teachers’ perception on their headmaster whether the headmasters know their ability at work. This item has recorded a high mean level. This indicates that headmasters can identify and utilize teachers’ expertise effectively, thereby contributing to the overall development of the school and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Item TL18, “*The school headmaster gave positive feedback at work.*” showed a high level. The situation shows that the headmaster actively supports and motivates teachers. Teachers feel valued and inspired in a positive and inspiring work environment.

Item TL19, “*The school headmaster sets an example through a task that I found difficult to comprehend.*”, was designed to find out how easy it was for teachers to understand the examples or guidance given by the headteacher in the workplace. The mean for this item was recorded at a moderate mean level, suggesting that a proportion of teachers felt that work examples given by the headteacher were not entirely clear or easy to understand. This situation reflects a gap in communicating and conveying specific job instructions, which leads to teachers experiencing difficulties in understanding the intentions of their leaders or implementing the instructions.

Item TL20, “*The school headmaster is willing to listen to criticism and suggestions from the teachers.*”, was designed to find out how open leaders are to receiving feedback from teachers. The mean level for this item was high, indicating that most teachers feel that their headmaster is open and willing to listen to criticism and suggestions. This reflects a positive communication climate in which headmasters value teacher input and see it as an important resource for school improvement and growth.

5.2 Level of Organizational Commitment

The organizational commitment of primary school teachers in Binzhou City, China, is at a moderate level. In general, the findings of this study suggest that teachers have a certain degree of identification with and responsibility towards their schools, but there are also factors that affect their full engagement and long-term commitment. The results regarding the level of organizational commitment are like those of Bashir and Gani (2020), who found that the organizational commitment of university teachers in northern India is also at a moderate level. However, these findings contrast sharply with those of Fatimah et al. (2022), who

discovered that the organizational commitment of full-time lecturers at public universities in Indonesia is at a high level. Additionally, the study by Ozkaya and Akin (2023) found that the level of organizational commitment among secondary school teachers in the Kızıltepe region of Turkey is relatively high.

Affective Commitment

On the one hand, teachers gave high levels of feedback about the affective commitment of the school in which they worked.

For item OC1, *“I am glad to spend the rest of my career in this school.”*, teachers generally agreed that they were satisfied with their work at their current school and had a strong sense of belonging. This high level of organizational commitment also suggests that teachers are optimistic about their future in this school and are willing to contribute over the long term.

Similarly, for item OC2, *“I am proud to share my school achievement with others.”* Teachers generally felt that they were proud of their school and were willing to positively promote and share their working environment with outsiders. This reflects teachers’ recognition of their schools.

For the negative item *OC4 *“I believe it would be easier for me to connect with other schools than with my current one.”*, the rating changed to high after the data positive scoring treatment. The high score after this treatment suggests that teachers expressed a low propensity on the survey for easily switching to work in other schools. That is, teachers did not believe that switching schools during their careers was an easy decision.

Similarly, for the negative item *OC5 *“I feel that I am not part of this school’s organization.”*, when dealing with this type of question to reflect the results in a positive scoring format, high scores meant that participants felt part of the school family. This reflects the general feeling among teachers that they have developed a strong sense of belonging and connection to the school. This suggests that although the question directly asked about a lack of belonging, the results derived from the data processing show that teachers generally feel that they are an integral part of the school family, emphasizing their positive identification with and engagement in the school community.

For item OC6 *“I feel emotionally attached to this school.”*, teachers gave a high level of agreement, which suggests that they feel a strong emotional connection and sense of

belonging to the school. This reflects the teachers' deep sense of being part of the school family, and this emotional attachment reveals the teachers' deep feelings for the school.

For item OC7 "*This school has many personal meanings for me.*", when teachers have high ratings, this indicates that they saw the school as more than just a place to work, but also as having deep personal and emotional value. Such ratings indicate that teachers are deeply connected to the school on a personal level. The presence of such personal meaning reflects the important role that the school plays in the lives of teachers and their deep commitment to and value of the school community.

For the negative item *OC8 "*I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to this school.*" This item scored the highest level in its group and after the forward scoring conversion indicated that teachers reported an extremely high sense of belonging. This means that despite the question directly asking about a lack of belonging, teachers felt a strong sense of connection and identification with their school. Such results point to the fact that teachers generally feel that they are an important part of the school family and hold positive feelings and identification with the school community.

On the other hand, teachers gave a moderate mean level to the affective commitment of their school, just for item OC3.

For item OC3 "*Problems at this school are also part of my problem.*" It was rated as a moderate mean level in this group, which suggests that teachers hold a degree of personal responsibility and involvement in the problems encountered by the school, but that this feeling is not particularly strong. This rating reflects a limit to the extent to which teachers identify with the challenges and problems encountered by the school as part of themselves. They may be aware of and concerned about the school's problems, but this level of concern and willingness to see the problems as their responsibility is not at a very high level.

Continuing commitment

On the one hand, teachers gave high levels of feedback about the continuing commitment of the school in which they worked.

For the negative item *OC9 "*I am not afraid of what will happen to me if I quit my job.*", teachers gave a high level of agreement after the positive scoring conversion. This suggests that teachers generally expressed some level of concern or consideration about the possible

consequences of leaving their current jobs. This high level of agreement reflects the fact that they weigh various factors and potential impacts when considering the decision to leave their job. This result is a direct demonstration of teachers' attitudes towards their jobs, suggesting that it is difficult for them to make a rash decision to leave.

For the item OC10 *"Even though I wanted to, it was always hard for me to leave this school."*, teachers gave a high level of agreement, which suggests that they feel such a strong connection and deep emotional attachment to the school that contemplating leaving becomes a difficult decision to make. This feedback reflects teachers' high level of commitment and satisfaction with their current work environment and their strong sense of belonging to the school community.

For the negative item *OC12 *"I will not be losing too much if I leave this school."*, teachers gave a high level of agreement after the positive scoring conversion. This suggests that the results after the positive conversion showed that teachers generally agreed that they would lose quite a lot if they left the school. This high level of agreement reflects the teachers' belief that they have an important connection and value to the school and that leaving the school would mean a loss for them.

For the item OC14 *"I feel that I have a little choice to consider leaving this school."*, teachers gave a high level of agreement. This suggests that teachers generally feel that there is little opportunity or reason for them to consider leaving the school under the current circumstances. This high level of agreement reflects the fact that teachers have very little freedom to change jobs and that leaving the school is not an easy or viable option for them.

For the negative item *OC16 *"One of the reasons I stayed in this school was the difficulty in finding suitable jobs from other schools."* Teachers gave a higher level of agreement after the data were adjusted. This suggests that after the positive scorekeeping switch, teachers generally agreed that staying at their current school was not because it was difficult to get a job at another school. This high level of agreement reflects the fact that teachers' decisions to stay in school are not constrained by the external market but may be based on other factors. This result is a direct indication that teachers are thinking positively about staying at their current school and not just because of a lack of other employment opportunities.

On the other hand, teachers gave moderate levels of feedback about the continuing commitment of the school in which they worked.

For the negative item *OC11 *“Too many things will interfere when I decide to leave the school at this time.”* teachers gave a moderate level of agreement after data adjustment. This suggests that after the positive score switch, teachers held some level of concern about the disruptions and barriers they might encounter when leaving school, but this concern was not particularly strong. This moderate level of agreement reflects the fact that teachers do consider the difficulties and challenges they may encounter when thinking about leaving school, but that these potential disruptions are not at a level where they would avoid leaving altogether.

For the item OC13 *“Work in this school is part of my life.”*, teachers gave a moderate level of agreement. This suggests that teachers hold some level of agreement with the view that working at this school is seen as a necessity in life, but this agreement is not particularly strong. The Moderate level of agreement reflects the fact that teachers recognize that working at this school has some importance and value to their lives, but at the same time this importance may not be the only or most important part of their lives. This result is a direct indication that teachers have a balanced attitude towards their work.

For the negative item *OC15 *“One of the serious consequences of leaving this school is the scarcity of available alternatives.”* teachers gave a moderate level of agreement after data adjustment. This suggests that after the positive score conversion, teachers held some level of concern about the lack of alternatives they may face after leaving their current organization, but this concern was not particularly strong. The Moderate level of agreement reflects the fact that teachers do consider the difficulty of finding a suitable alternative job when considering the possible consequences of leaving, but they do not see this as a decisive or insurmountable challenge.

Normative Commitment

Firstly, teachers gave a high level of feedback about the normative commitment of the school in which they worked.

For the negative item *OC17 *“I feel that it is easy for other people to move from one school to another.”* teachers gave a high level of agreement after data adjustment. This indicates that

after the positive score conversion, teachers generally agreed that it is not easy for individuals to move from one school to another. This high level of agreement reflects teachers' perceptions of moving between schools, recognizing that the process can involve several complex factors. This result is a direct demonstration of teachers' deep understanding of the real-life challenges of inter-school mobility and their recognition that such transitions are not easy or feasible decisions.

Secondly, teachers gave a moderate level of feedback about the normative commitment of the school in which they worked.

For the negative item *OC18 "*I am not sure when a person must always be loyal to his school.*" teachers gave a moderate level of agreement after data adjustment. This moderate level of agreement reflects the fact that teachers hold a balanced view on the issue of the relationship between loyalty and the school, recognizing that it is important to remain loyal to the school, but at the same time realizing that there may be circumstances that prompt them to reconsider this loyalty.

For the item OC20 "*One of the primary reasons I continue to devote myself to school is the sense of trust; I believe loyalty is a moral imperative essential for survival.*", teachers gave a moderate level of agreement. This suggests that teachers hold some level of agreement with seeing trust and loyalty as the main motivators for continuing to work at the school, but this agreement is not particularly strong. This result is a direct demonstration of teachers' deep understanding of the complexity of work motivations, and that ethical considerations, including trust and loyalty, are part of their considerations, but are not the only determinants.

For the item OC21 "*Even though I get a better job offer elsewhere, leaving the school is not an option.*", teachers gave a moderate level of agreement. This suggests that teachers hold some level of agreement with the choice to stay in their current school even when faced with a better job offer, but this agreement is not particularly strong. The moderate level of agreement reflects the fact that teachers, when faced with a possible career change decision, consider both the attractiveness of the new opportunity and the responsibility and rightness of staying at their current school. This result is a direct demonstration that teachers weigh a variety of factors when making decisions about whether to leave their current school, and this balanced attitude suggests that teachers are thoughtful despite being confronted with attractive external opportunities.

For the item OC22 *“I feel there must be a strong value to stay loyal to the school.”*, teachers gave a moderate level of agreement. The moderate level of agreement reflects that teachers recognize that it is important to remain loyal to the school throughout their careers and that such loyalty should be underpinned by strong values, but they may also believe that there are other factors that influence their loyalty to the school.

Finally, teachers gave a low level of feedback about the normative commitment of the school in which they worked. For the item OC19 *“It is unethical for me when someone is pursuing a career by job hopping from one school to another.”*, teachers gave a low level of agreement. This indicates that teachers generally do not believe that pursuing a career by changing schools is unethical. The low level of agreement reflects teachers’ openness to career paths. This result is a direct indication that teachers hold a more tolerant view of career mobility and understand that it is not unethical to seek different work experiences within the field of education.

5.3 Relationship between Transformational leadership and Organizational Commitment

To address the second objective of the study, which explores the link between transformational leadership and organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, China, the findings reveal significant correlations. Specifically, the dimensions of transformational leadership—idealized influence ($r = 0.714$, $p < 0.05$), inspirational motivation ($r = 0.690$, $p < 0.05$), and intellectual stimulation ($r = 0.644$, $p < 0.05$)—demonstrate a strong and significant positive association with organizational commitment. Meanwhile, individualized consideration ($r = 0.565$, $p < 0.05$) exhibits a moderate yet significant positive relationship with the same. Collectively, these results affirm that transformational leadership significantly and positively influences organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, China. Hence, the overall correlation analysis relationship with all variables is significant.

Chen (2021) conducted research examining the link between middle school teachers’ views on principals’ transformational leadership and their commitment to their organizations in Yuehe Town, Henan Province. The findings revealed that teachers generally held positive opinions about the transformational leadership qualities of their principals. Additionally, the levels of transformational leadership were relatively high. Similarly, the teachers’ organizational commitment was found to be substantially high. A significant correlation was

identified between the principals' transformational leadership and the organizational commitment within the examined schools.

These findings are consistent with those of Yu Bo (2013), who found that, across ten provinces and cities in China, college teachers exhibited a relatively high level of transformative leadership and a relatively high level of organizational commitment. The research demonstrated a significant positive correlation between transformative leadership and organizational commitment. Similarly, Huang & Hsin (2023) found comparable results in their study, which revealed that primary school teachers in Guangxi province, China, had relatively high levels of transformative leadership (mean = 4.074, SD = 0.474) and organizational commitment (mean = 4.142, SD = 0.472), with a significant positive correlation between the two variables ($r = 0.809$, $p = 0.000$).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE STUDY

6.1 Recommendation

Based on the discussion, respondents indicated the lowest mean score for item TL19, *"The school headmaster sets an example through a task that I found difficult to comprehend."* which was at a moderate level. This suggests that relative to other questions in the survey, teachers were less in agreement with the statement that *"The school headmaster sets an example through a task that I found difficult to comprehend."* This implies that teachers perceive their headmasters may lack clarity or specificity in providing work examples or explaining tasks, leading to difficulties in understanding for the teachers. In other words, this might reflect certain challenges faced by principals in communicating and elucidating job responsibilities, necessitating improvements in how information is conveyed effectively and ensuring comprehension among teachers. It could also point to a broader issue that principals may need to further exert effort in certain aspects of transformational leadership, such as motivating and supporting teachers. To improve clarity and understanding in communication from school leaders, it's advisable to adopt more transparent and interactive communication strategies, such as regular feedback sessions and workshops focused on job responsibilities and expectations. These sessions can offer a platform for teachers to ask questions and for leaders to provide clear, comprehensible examples.

Furthermore, item TL20, *"The school headmaster is willing to listen to criticism and suggestions from the teachers."* scored the second lowest on mean level, indicating that, compared to other questions in the survey, teachers were less in agreement with the notion

that principals are willing to listen to criticism and suggestions. This reveals that teachers feel their principals are not adequately open to or encouraging of expressing opinions and suggestions, suggesting a deficiency in accepting feedback and suggestions. This finding signals the need for principals to invest more effort into establishing a culture of open communication, ensuring that teachers feel their opinions are valued and can be freely shared. Therefore, headmasters are required to take measures to enhance their capabilities in this regard, such as through regular meetings, anonymous surveys, or other means, to encourage and foster more two-way communication.

Simultaneously, the item OC19 *“It is unethical for me when someone is pursuing a career by job hopping from one school to another.”* receiving the lowest mean score and being situated at a low level, indicates that teachers predominantly do not consider frequent school transitions in pursuit of career advancement to be unethical. This might suggest that teachers’ attitudes towards career mobility are potentially more open or understanding than anticipated. To address this issue, schools should prioritize the creation of environments that foster professional development and acknowledge the value of diverse experiences. This entails offering a broader spectrum of internal promotion opportunities, a variety of professional development programs, and cultivating a culture that celebrates a range of educational backgrounds. For instance, a mentorship scheme that pairs teachers with extensive experience with those newer to the profession could leverage the diverse backgrounds and experiences present within the school, fostering a more dynamic and supportive educational community. The item OC3 *“Problems at this school are also part of my problem.”* receiving a moderate mean level, suggests that teachers possess a moderate level of proprietorship and personal investment towards the challenges faced by the school. While certain educators perceive the school’s issues as their own, thereby demonstrating a strong connection and commitment to the organization, there remains a substantial portion of teachers who may not feel as directly involved or accountable for addressing these issues. This could be indicative of various factors, including how empowered teachers feel to implement changes, their sense of community within the school, or their personal engagement with the school’s mission and values. Enhancing this sense of ownership and personal commitment to the school’s challenges may be pivotal in strengthening organizational commitment among teachers. To enhance teachers’ sense of ownership and commitment to school challenges, it’s crucial to empower them by involving them in decision-making processes and solution development for school issues. This can foster a stronger community and deepen their engagement with the

school's mission. For example, creating teacher-led committees to address specific problems can provide them with the agency to enact changes, thereby increasing their personal investment and sense of responsibility towards the school's well-being.

Item OC13, "*Work in this school is part of my life.*" is positioned at a moderate mean level. This denotes that while teachers may perceive their work as significant, it does not constitute the sole focus or necessity within their lives. This reflects a balanced perspective towards their professional and personal lives. In other words, teachers may exhibit a certain level of loyalty towards the school, yet they might not regard their role or the school itself as indispensable to their existence. Factors such as the school's environment, administrative support, and job satisfaction may influence this perception. To enhance the sense of necessity and commitment among teachers, schools should aim to improve the overall work environment by offering robust administrative support and fostering a positive school culture. This can include providing regular feedback, acknowledging teachers' efforts, and creating a collaborative atmosphere. For example, a mentorship program could be introduced, pairing experienced teachers with newer staff to share insights and strategies, thereby strengthening the professional community, and making the work more meaningful and essential to teachers' lives.

Finally, this study's findings illuminate the indispensable role of transformational leadership in augmenting organizational commitment among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, suggesting that headmasters embrace and refine transformational leadership behaviors to cultivate a nurturing and inclusive educational environment. By prioritizing the development of a supportive school culture, facilitating open communication, investing in teacher professional growth, and modeling exemplary leadership, headmasters can significantly bolster teachers' sense of belonging and commitment. Moreover, articulating a strategic vision for school improvement and involving teachers in the decision-making process are pivotal. Collectively, these practices not only enhance teachers' organizational commitment but also contribute to the overarching goal of educational excellence, underscoring the profound impact headmasters' transformational leadership can have on the dynamics of school administration and teacher engagement.

6.2 Future study: This section provides recommendations for further research. The study clearly delineates the relationship between transformational leadership of headmasters and teachers' organizational commitment in Binzhou City. It is suggested that further research

should involve substituting the transformational leadership style with other leadership styles to ascertain the level of leadership practices among primary school headmasters in Binzhou City. Consequently, it is likely that other leadership practices may also have a significant impact on teachers' organizational commitment.

The study utilized a correlational framework and gathered quantitative data using surveys. For future research, it is advised to integrate a mixed-methods strategy, employing both qualitative and quantitative techniques. This approach will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of principals' transformational leadership and teachers' organizational commitment. Interview and questionnaire methods can reflect teachers' level of organization commitment to school. Therefore, the findings can be discussed more thoroughly.

This study was conducted among primary school teachers in Binzhou City, China. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be carried out in various other types of schools (such as secondary schools, universities, or special education schools) to see if the specific findings regarding headmasters' leadership practices and teachers' organizational commitment can be replicated and added to the body of knowledge.

The purpose of this research was to determine the level of organizational commitment among teachers. At the same time, there are many other variables that affect teachers' organizational commitment. Thus, future studies could focus on the work performance, job satisfaction, school culture, and professional identity of primary school teachers in Binzhou City.

Furthermore, this research was only conducted with teachers from three schools in Binzhou City. Therefore, the findings are only applicable to the selected locations and populations. Given the limited number of participants in this study, its findings may not be applicable to other educational institutions. Hence, it is suggested for future research to obtain a larger number of respondents to conduct the study on a broader scale.

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