Transformational Leadership Training for School Leaders in Pakistan

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Abstract

This research focused on the training of school leaders in transformational leadership - which is recommended for educational leaders all over the world (Alkhasawneh, 2018) - and to determine if it impacts their leadership skills or not. Based on relevant literature and training need analysis, training was planned and given to 120 in-service school heads for one month. The research was quasi-experimental that used a one-group pre-test post-test design because no similar group was available. The experimental group was divided into two groups; public and private, for a comparison. Also, a follow-up study was conducted to keep it nearer to the experimental approach. The training delivered to the school principals comprised of selected content about the concept of leadership and transformational leadership. This content was reinforced by real-world examples and relevant leadership activities. Participants were assessed under pre-defined grading criteria that were their attendance, participation, and performance in quizzes and assignments during the training. After completion, they were observed and evaluated for their leadership skills at their workplaces and awarded with the points. This quantitative data were analyzed by using mean, standard deviation, and paired sample t-test for knowing and comparing the results. It was found that the transformational leadership style training had improved the effectiveness and leadership skills of school leaders. Similar training courses have been endorsed by training participants for enhancing the leadership styles of school leaders.

Keywords: *School Leadership, Transformational Leadership Development, School Leadership Development, Transformational Leadership in Schools*

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1. Introduction

Schools are essential because societies invest in them for their future. Their leadership is vital because it influences teachers, students, and the whole environment of institutions (Nwamae & Kayii, 2018). The success of institutions depends on the leaders because they are the ones who make decisions and ensure their implications for achieving institutional goals. Wearing an appropriate leadership style, school principals help their schools in achieving excellence, so effective school leadership styles and skills are high in demand (Turner, 2019). According to educational researchers, our world is rapidly growing and changing into an international community. Schools have to educate their students to be prepared for living and working in today's advanced organizations (Hao & Yazdanifard, 2015). A sense of morality, collectiveness and constructive alliances are apparent to be taught to the students right in the classrooms and educational institutions to grow in a harmonious world (Razavi, 2016). So, school principals need to adopt the leadership style that is compatible with their leading and evolving; the scarcity of such leadership is also identified, and leadership training or professional development programs are strongly recommended to bridge this gap up (Woulfin & Kruse, 2018).

As the need of the time, school leadership development is more valuable for Pakistan and other under-developed countries (Nwamae & Kayii, 2018 ; Faraz, 2016). Such countries are fighting with several challenges like poor leadership, poor economic conditions, over-population, illiteracy, and terrorism. They are especially striving to improve the quality of their school education as an elixir to all evils (Laleka, 2019). Regarding Pakistan, low quality of education and school leadership was acknowledged as the biggest challenges by the Ministry of Education. Public and private sectors of education in Pakistan have realized that the traditional style of leadership needs advancement (Khan, Bano, Bano, & Khan, 2017).

Nevertheless, the public sector does not have funds, and private institutions prioritize it as per their competitive educational and business needs (Khan, 2018). It was also recognized that school leadership is regressive and incompetent. Leaders were qualified, but their qualification was not enough to meet with their challenges, and the training available to them was not practical (Malik, 2018). Resultantly, continuous professional development was planned and started to provide to principals of public sector schools in Punjab. Prominent leadership styles for school leaders were a part of this development. Transformational leadership was introduced in its modules along with other styles (School Leadership Development Training Program, 2018), but it is still to be presented in more depth and breadth to school leaders.

Transformational leadership is an emerging leadership theory that is an evolved form of charismatic leadership. Leaders could connect to the followers' self-concept and combine all the concepts as a collective self (Northouse, 2016). This very connection was called transformation that set the group free from extrinsic incentives. Once the envisaged transformation was achieved, the members put their heart and soul into their work and deliver (Bryant, 2015). The transformational leadership, in its advanced version by Bass in 1985, was found more focused on followers' needs than leaders (Northouse, 2016). It clearly explained how transformational leadership works in three dimensions. First, by having a vision, sharing it with their followers, and convincing them of the advantages and significance of shared goals. Second, by raising the consciousness of followers, how their self-interest will work as a piece of collective interest. Third, by helping the followers to evolve and move to higher-level goals and needs (Allen, 2018). Its four components, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, make it essential for institutional development. Such leadership ensures an inclusive educational environment within the institutions. There are potential leaders in schools, but social, cultural, and economic constraints confine them to small-mindedness and outdated trends in educational leadership (Asghar, Mang, Ali & Malik, 2016; Aftab, 2015).

Correspondingly, content-loaded training, which is teacher-centered, is not enough to develop school leadership (Bernadine, 2019). The method of training, assessment criteria, and most of all, environment has to be improved to meet the demands of 21st century educational expectations (Nasir, 2019). So, many resources are required, and personal, social, educational and regional needs are factors that need to be considered when designing new training programs for school leaders." Somehow, leadership training is deemed as the only way to develop our contemporary school leaders in becoming transformational (Niqab, Sharma, Kannan, & Ahmed, 2015). So, given all these factors, inclusive and precise training was planned for this research.

Recently, many experimental kinds of researches were conducted in the field of education, but most of them tested various teaching methods and their effectiveness (Minaz, Tabassum, & Idris, 2017). Some investigated the effect of various leadership styles on the performance of teachers or students (Ahmad, Malik & Batool, 2017) and a few studies compared the leadership style of public and private sector leaders (Mehrotra & Sinha, 2017; Khan, 2017; Waqar & Siddiqui, 2015) among laissez-faire, autocratic and democratic (Akhter, Rashid, & Salamat, 2015). They did highlight the need and importance of training. However, not a single research project was undertaken with a complete training

program aimed at transformational or any other style recommended as being appropriate for school leadership. So, considering the above, four-week transformational leadership training program was developed for this research combining the elements essential to leadership training of professional adults and to determine its impact on their leadership.

1.1   Objectives of the Study

The study had the following objectives:

1. To explore if school principals needed transformational leadership training.
2. To design and deliver leadership training to meet the demographic and training needs of school principals.
3. To evaluate the impact of transformational leadership style training on school leaders.

1.2   Hypothesis of the Study

The study hypothesized that in terms of pre-test and post-test scores and performances, there was no significant difference in leadership skills of the school principals who received the Transformational Leadership Style Training from the ones who did not receive the training.

1.3   Significance of the Study

This study explored the transformational leadership theory and practice regarding their effectiveness in leadership development of school principals. It highlighted the leadership development needs of school principals. It provided school principals with an opportunity to adapt to the transformational leadership style, which is the most recommended for school leaders. It assisted school principals in self-improvement to benefit not only themselves but, also their schools as important social institutions. The training can be personalized and used for leadership development of principals.

1.4   Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to school principals and heads of Public and Private schools of Wazirabad (Gujranwala, Pakistan).

2.   Literature Review

Leadership is looked upon as the most prominent determining factor in the success of an organization (Northouse, 2010). This statement underlines its uniqueness and diversity. Due to its complexity and variety, it is not easy to define what leadership exactly is in a few words. Thinking of leadership as a trait, behavior or skill-set places the focus on the personality of the leader. Viewing leadership as a relationship or ongoing process (Northouse, 2016) highlights its interpersonal aspects adding followers into the equation (Ahmad, Malik, & Batool, 2017; Mehrotra, 2005). As an action, leadership turns plans into decisions and decisions into actions. The action mobilizes resources to inspire,

engross and realize the desired objectives of followers (Waqar & Siddiqui, 2015).

Good leadership can enhance the quality of work and life. Correspondingly, poor or immoral leadership can be harmful to the people and institutions. Effective leaders are the ones who take responsibility for their actions and decisions. They value each person and level to be improved and transform the whole set-up (Turner, 2019). Therefore, leaders with refined skills are valuable and scarce at the same time (Hao & Yazdanifard, 2015).

Leadership becomes more sensitive in an education setting. While leading the institutions where it educates the educators and students, it becomes more critical (Gunduz, 2016). Children require holistic growth and development that is not possible without a valid and inclusive school environment. School principals are the leaders who play an important role in providing such a learning environment for their students. If they are not sufficient enough to perform their roles due to working in small cities or having no training and development, it is a significant loss for the whole nation to waste their leadership potential (Aftab, 2015).

Transformational leadership is an emerging leadership style that is an evolved form of charismatic leadership. It allows leaders connect to the self-concept of their followers and combine all the concepts as a collective self (Northouse, 2016). This very connection was called transformation that set the group free from extrinsic incentives. Once it was made, the members put their heart and soul into their work and deliver (Bryant, 2015). Transformational leadership was more focused on the need of followers than leaders in research work done by Bass in 1985 (Northouse, 2016). It went by the connection factor of charisma and not accepted as an indispensable element of transformational leadership. It clearly explained how transformational leadership works (Allen, 2018). First, creating a vision for collective interest and wellbeing and sharing it with the group so they can make the team with him. Second, leading the followers to work dedicatedly towards achieving the collective interest. Third, supporting the team to shift to the needs that are of high levels, i.e. self-fulfillment and self-efficacy.

What makes the transformational leadership significant compared to the other leadership styles is its focus on the overall development of the followers. It never settles until it takes this transformation to its highest potential through reliable moral and professional guidance and support (Bush, 2018).

Idealized Influence is the first characteristic of transformational leaders. It can be called charisma in that it describes the leaders as role models. Due to this characteristic, the followers count on their leaders and follow their decisions blindly because they expect extraordinary morality and authenticity form such

leaders.

Inspirational Motivation is the second characteristic that portrays the leader's skillfulness in communication and interpersonal skills. Such leaders are motivators who convince their followers to combine their strengths to achieve a goal of collective interest (Northouse, 2016).

Intellectual Stimulation is more like a reconstruction of ideas and actions. The leaders stimulate their followers to think big and challenge their limitations. They are also stimulated to be original, innovative, and find creative solutions to their problems.

Individualized Consideration represents the leader's care for the followers' individual needs and differences. This works for a supportive environment promoting work and life balance for all the team members (Northouse, 2016).

Thus, transformational leadership has all the elements which are essentials to leadership. Naturally, it combines a variety of talents and utilizes them to attain prosperity and wellbeing for everyone. Transformational leadership is close to education because education is the transformation to positivity and collective wellbeing. No wonder, it is highly effective as an educational leadership style compared to the others that are focused on an exchange, business, and management (Alkhasawneh, 2018).

Currently, Pakistan is going through educational reforms. Its main challenge is to compete with the world in standards of education. Transformational leadership skills can help to achieve such goals and objectives. Quality education is the only way to enable our next generation to survive in the upcoming eras and to make our country out of economic crises (Nasreen & Odhiambo, 2018).

The importance of leadership development of Pakistani school principals cannot be denied. The latest leadership styles are a must to learn and adapt to become a 21-century school leader (Nasir, 2019). They need to gain competencies like idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration for the transformation of their schools and societies. Such super skills have the potential to lead us to collective goals and interests. Today's students need to be grown as responsible citizens with the ability to make healthy choices for themselves and others (Dinh et al., 2014). School principals can use their influence to transform their schools into beacon houses of education by transforming their existing leadership styles, which is the main idea of this study.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research was quasi-experimental within quantitative methods. One-group, pre-test post-test design, was adopted along with sub-grouping and a follow-up study, which made it closer to an experimental approach (Allen, 2017).

3.2 Sample & Sampling Technique

Principals of 373 public and private schools of Tehsil Wazirabad were taken as the population. They were divided into subgroups; public, and private school principals (Thomas & EdD, 2016), to compare their within-group performance. After the training was developed, 60 principals from each sector were randomly selected for training by using a stratified sampling technique.

3.3 Instrumentation

To assess the transformational leadership competencies of the participants, they were tested by means of a context-based questionnaire having 40 items. It was developed in accordance to related literature and other researchers in transformational (Northouse, 2016) and school leadership. The four key traits of transformational leadership were divided into further parts (figure 1) and merged into the instrument.
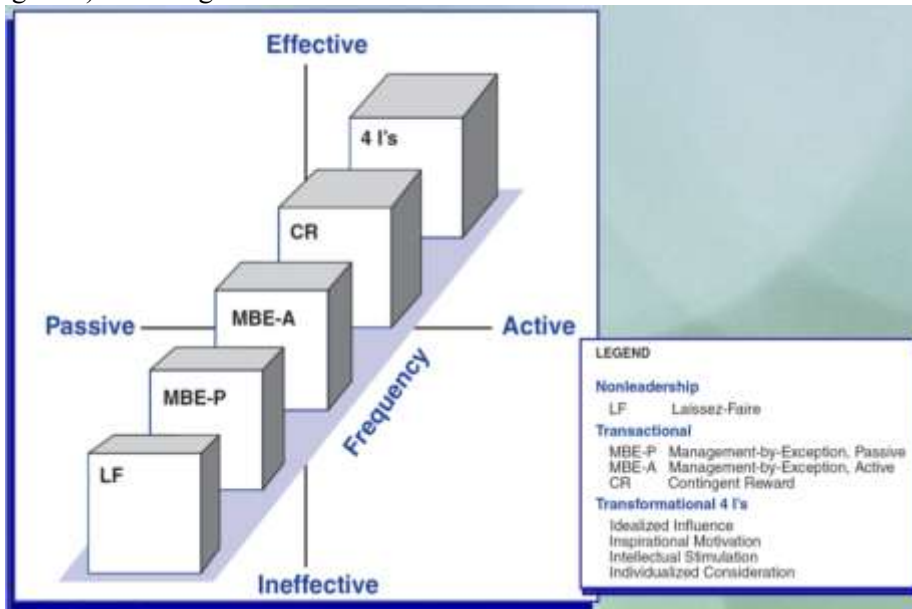

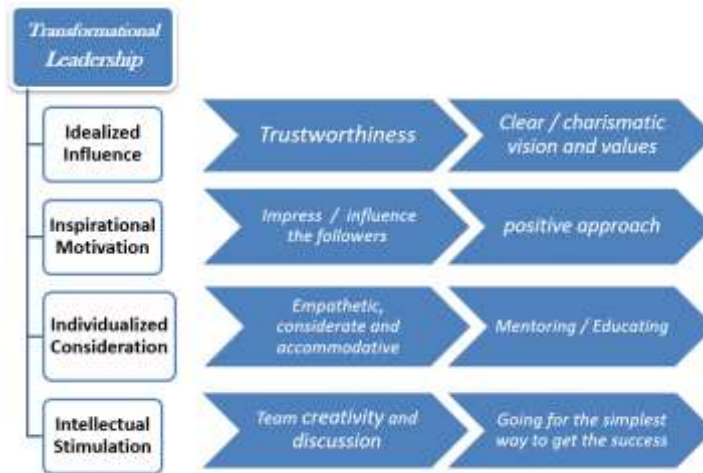*Figure 1* Four Traits of Transformational Leaders

Figure 2 Components and sub-components of Transformational Leadership

3.4   Validity and Reliability

A panel of experts approved the content and face validity of the research instrument. It was also improved through pilot testing and improved by five principals before use as the research tool. After using it as the pre-test, its reliability was tested through Cronbach alpha calculation (Table 1).

Table 1
Reliability Statistics of Transformational Leadership Style Test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.75	40

Table 1 indicates the Cronbach's Alpha for Transformational Leadership Style Test, which was more than 0.7. It was therefore accepted as a reliable instrument to be used in this research.

3.5   Training Development and Administration

Both public and private school principals were subjected to the transformational leadership training with the prior permission of their authorities. Through modeling and several leadership activities, school principals were persuaded to project their dream works, craft a vision for them, and enlist their core values. They were further asked to build a team by convincing others and sharing their vision. The participants were asked to engage their team and work in collaboration practicing the four components of

transformational leadership. They were assisted with monitoring to keep them on track throughout the training. They also provided opportunities for personality and situation analysis to get help in personal transformation. The collaborative methods were applied to deliver the training modules. The English language was used as the only tool of communication, which improved all the language skills of the participants.

After completing their training, they were observed while working at their institutions, and one of their coworkers evaluated them as per the transformational leadership style in a follow-up study. Altogether, their performance was assessed by their score in pre and post-test, attendance, contribution, presentation, observation, and an evaluation (conducted by their coworkers). Table 2, below, represents the research design for the study:

Table 2

Research Design for Transformational Leadership Training

Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test	Observation	Evaluation
O	X	O1	O2	O3

3.6 Grading Criteria during Training

The evaluation of the performance of school principals during the transformational leadership training was conducted through eight components namely; pre-test, post-test, course evaluation, observation, assignments, participation in class, presentation, and attendance. The principals needed to achieve atleast 70% in each of the components. The grading criteria and the grading process is illustrated in Figure 3:
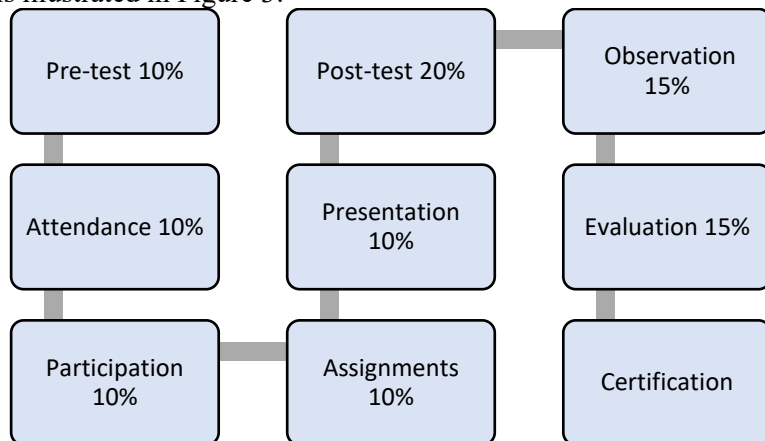

Figure 3 Grading Criteria of Transformational Leadership Training

4. Data Analysis & Interpretation

After the experiment, collected data were analyzed through descriptive & inferential statistics. For the general description, mean, standard deviation, and percentage were used. Paired Samples t-test was used for comparing pre-test and post-test scores. The transformational leadership skills of 120 school principals were scrutinized with the help of pre-test, post-test, and other assessments to judge the impact of the training. The results and tables are given below;

Table 3

Mean Difference between the pre and post-test scores of Public & Private School Leaders

Transformational Leadership Style		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Transform_Pretest	Public	6.78	60.00	1.31	0.16
	Private	2.13	60.00	0.43	0.06
	Difference	4.65	0.00	0.88	0.11
Transform_Posttest	Public	7.68	60.00	0.46	0.06
	Private	6.15	60.00	0.75	0.10
	Difference	1.53	0.00	0.29	0.04

As illustrated in Table 3, the mean scores of public principals were 6.78 in the pre-test while it was 2.13 for private school principals. The mean scores increased to 7.68 for public school principals and 6.15 for privates after the training. The pre-test post-test score difference between public and private school principals was 4.65, which reduced to 4.53. It indicates that the training had effectively impacted the participants' skills.

This table also represents the mean differences in pre-test and post-test scores of public and private school principals. It denotes that public-school principals scored much better than private school principals in their pre-test performance. Principals of both the sectors improved their score in the transformational leadership post-test, but private school principals showed more progress than public school principals.

Table 4

Comparison of School Principals' Performances in Pre-Post test results according to Four Components of Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership Components	Public			Private		
	Pre	Post	Diff	Pre	Post	Diff
Idealized Influence	0.47	1.50	1.04	0.98	1.50	0.53
Inspirational motivation	0.41	1.42	1.02	0.58	1.43	0.86
Intellectual stimulation	0.23	1.37	1.14	0.06	1.36	1.30
Individualized Consideration	0.43	1.50	1.08	0.05	1.50	1.45

Table 4 represents the four components of the transformational leadership and the difference in mean scores (pre-test and post-test) of public and private school principals, according to them. It indicates that private school principals were more deficient in intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration than public school principals before the training. However, they scored higher in idealized influence and inspirational motivation than public school principals. After the training, they achieved a score that is comparable to the score of public school principals. Overall, both of the sectors demonstrated an understanding of rather excellent performance in training.

Table 5

Mean Comparison of School Principals in Transformational Leadership Components

School Sector	Before the Training	During the Training				After the Training		
	Pre-test	Attend-ance	Assign-ments	Class Partici-pation	Present-ation	Post-Test	Observat-ion	Evaluat-ion
Public	45.13	85.00	81.67	85.83	96.22	94.17	89.33	89.00
Private	44.08	90.33	79.67	84.67	96.11	94.92	91.58	91.58
Diff	0.05	4.33	1.00	0.16	0.89	0.25	1.25	1.58

Table 5 presents the overall performance of school principals in transformational leadership training components. They were pre-test, post-test, evaluation, observation, assignments, participation in class, presentation, and attendance. According to this, the public sector was higher in a pre-test, assignment, class contribution, and presentations. Private school principals performed well in attendance, post-test observation, and course evaluation.

5. Discussion

This research study has determined the impact of transformational leadership style training on leadership skills of school leaders. In the beginning, they were examined for their leadership skills related to four components of the transformational leadership style via the pre-test. Based on this analysis, they were provided with a four-week training to improve their leadership practice and evaluated by post-test, observation, and evaluation. The results indicated significant progress in the transformational leadership practice of school principals before and after the training. While comparing the performance of public and private school principals, it was revealed that private school principals were lower than public school principals in their pre-test performance. However, after completion of the training, participants of the both sectors improved their scores in the transformational leadership practice. It was also noted during the observation that private school principals demonstrated a better understanding of and adapted better to the four components of a transformational leadership style. Some differences had been recorded through evaluations done by their colleagues. It could be inferred, at this point, that both public and private school principals had talent and potential to become the transformational leaders, but due to different education systems and set-up, this transformation was harder to apply for public school principals. Since both had institutional and social constraints, securing their jobs remained their top priority regardless of what they thought was right.

Since day one, it was quite a challenge to deliver this training from introduction to evaluation. According to the findings of pre-test results and class-discussions, it appeared that school principals did not have a clear understanding of the concepts of education and leadership. School leadership was taken as management and administration. Two main factors could be held responsible for that. First, the poor quality of education, and second, the social culture of Pakistan, which is almost opposite to the norms of transformational leadership (Yeoman & Koch, 2017). Both affect and damage their organizational culture as well. As a result of injustice, unstable political and economic situations, and low quality of education (Asghar, Mang, Ali & Malik, 2016), it is full of narrowmindedness, discrimination, aggression, and superstitions. From top to bottom, leaders are power-seekers, and clinging to their position is their only priority. Such immoral and self-centered bosses (Nasir, 2019) never allow anyone to be opened or advanced because they take this freedom as a challenge for their incompetency.

Similarly, quality education is pushed back, and open-mindedness is discouraged. Rigidity is preferred to flexibility as a leadership quality, and

visionary people are treated as 'daydreamers' in this society. Charisma is associated with a show of wealth, luxury, and glamour. So, the real charismatic principals and teachers are confined in an imperfect system. They are forced to practice authoritarian, democratic, and transactional leadership styles (Akhter, Rashid & Salamat, 2015), which suit their social and educational set-up. The content-focused curriculum and examination system left no space for student-centered pedagogy or creativity (Aftab, 2015). So, principals as a very part of this society and education systems (Faraz, 2016) are not expected to go against the flow (Awan & Zia, 2015). Many evils have penetrated in the education systems of Pakistan (Khan, 2019) in forms of corruption, nepotism, incompetence, and favoritism (Faraz, 2016; Aftab, 2015). Given that, the four components of transformational leadership (individualized, intellectual, idealized and inspirational) seem in contrast to local culture. However, it is essential and urgent for school leaders to adopt them so they can transform themselves and their students into 'truly enlightened' human beings.

6. Conclusion

In short, transformational leadership style training was productive and improved the transformational leadership practice of school principals. They demonstrated a better understanding and appreciation of the concept and core values associated with transformational leadership after completing the training. Moreover, they showed their determination to extend this learning to their teachers and students. The findings also emphasized the need of interactive methods for training. Simple and clear instructions, relevant aids and activities, alternative assessment methods, and follow-up fulfill the conditions for practical leadership training. The importance of creating a learning environment also has been highlighted. The transformational leadership training was a success because of the contribution of both public and private school principals. So, uniformity is the key to any successful education system, which, in this case, is missing. Based on the research findings and the discussion, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the leadership styles of the school leaders who were provided with the transformational leadership training.

7. Recommendations

The study drew out the following recommendations:

1. School principals needed to be transformational to keep pace with other worlds and to inspire their teachers, students, and future leaders among them. Transformational leadership training should be incorporated into school leadership programs to give them exposure to new leadership trends to fulfill their training need.
2. Though transforming themselves is not accessible due to various problems

and issues, they still have to manage to improve and adapt new leadership skills to overcome their deficiencies. Transformational leadership training should be provided to them to achieve their personal and professional growth/goals.

3. Education authorities should assist their leaders in gaining the latest knowledge and skills, such as transformational leadership. Transformational leadership training modules should be used for this purpose.

4. Transformational leadership training can make school principals learn and practice the ideal leadership skills.

5. This transformational leadership style training was designed for school principals. Its modules can be added to school leadership's curriculum and can also be taught to student teachers in workshops.

6. The design and components of transformational leadership were highly interactive for training. Its specified content, assessment criteria, and follow-up should be followed in other transformational and leadership training.

In short, the transformational leadership style training can be useful in developing school leaders wherever needed with similar conditions.

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