

# Exploring Primary Education in China: Approaches to Improving Teachers' Job Satisfaction

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## Abstract

The job satisfaction of primary school teachers in Shandong Province is an issue that demands urgent attention. Research has shown that teacher job satisfaction directly impacts their professional development and the quality of education, with the principal's leadership style potentially exerting significant influence. Although transformational leadership is theoretically advantageous, its practical application within China's basic education system requires further empirical validation. This study collected quantitative data from 389 primary school teachers in Shandong Province via an online survey to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. The findings indicate that, first, significant differences exist between various dimensions of job satisfaction, suggesting that teachers have inconsistent perceptions regarding aspects such as working environment and compensation. Second, while certain aspects of transformational leadership, such as concern for the subordinates' quality of life, received positive evaluations from teachers, other areas, like compensation and promotion opportunities, show considerable room for improvement. Lastly, the data reveal a strong positive correlation between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, particularly in leadership practices that promote teachers' well-being and personal development. These results challenge the idealized view of transformational leadership as a panacea for all organizational challenges. The study suggests that while transformational leadership can motivate teachers, its effectiveness is limited when not aligned with broader organizational policies and practices. Therefore, for transformational leadership to be genuinely effective, it must be complemented by structural reforms, especially in addressing the specific needs and concerns of teachers.

**Keywords:** Transformational leadership, Job satisfaction, Primary school teacher, China, Education

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the study

Teacher quality is a critical factor in enhancing the quality of education, which is directly linked to a nation's future development (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020). The Chinese government has invested substantial resources in the field of basic education, with the total national education expenditure reaching 5,787.36 billion CNY in 2021, accounting for 4.01% of the GDP. Despite these investments, the issue of teacher job satisfaction remains a significant concern, particularly at the primary school level (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). For example, Dong (2020) found that the average job satisfaction of primary

school teachers in Qingdao was 3.791, below the average level. Similarly, Zhang (2022) reported that teacher job satisfaction in Shanghai was generally at low to moderate levels. Teacher job satisfaction not only influences their professional performance but also has profound implications for student academic outcomes and overall education quality (Dicke et al., 2020). Therefore, improving primary school teacher job satisfaction has become a critical topic in current educational research.

Studies have shown that principals' leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, are closely related to teacher job satisfaction (Ahmad, 2020). Transformational leadership enhances teacher job satisfaction by advocating a shared vision and values, thereby stimulating teachers' intrinsic motivation (Rizkie & Suriansyah, 2022). However, despite the theoretical advantages of transformational leadership, its practical effectiveness within China's basic education system requires further empirical validation.

Against this backdrop, this study focuses on Shandong Province to explore the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction among primary school teachers. By analyzing empirical data, this study aims to provide actionable leadership strategies for principals, helping to enhance teacher job satisfaction and, consequently, promote overall improvements in education quality.

## 1.2 Research Questions

- What is the level of transformational leadership among primary school teachers in Shandong Province, China?
- What is the level of job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Shandong Province, China?
- What is the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Shandong Province, China?

## 1.3 Significance of the Study

This study makes a significant theoretical contribution to the existing body of knowledge on the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction among primary school teachers. By introducing transformational leadership theory into the context of primary education, the study explores how transformational leadership influences teacher job satisfaction within a specific educational environment from a novel perspective. This not only enriches the application of transformational leadership theory in the field of education but also deepens the understanding of the complex relationship between leadership behaviors and teachers' psychological experiences.

In terms of practical application, this study provides practical guidance for primary school principals. The research reveals how teachers perceive transformational leadership and identifies the specific elements of transformational leadership that significantly enhance teacher job satisfaction. These findings offer strong support for principals in optimizing their leadership strategies, enabling them to adjust their leadership styles based on teacher feedback and needs. Ultimately, this approach aims to improve teacher job satisfaction, consequently, elevate the quality of education.

## 1.4 Scope and limitations

This study primarily focuses on several regions within Shandong Province. Although random sampling was employed, the extent of sample collection might impact its representativeness, limiting the ability to capture differences across various regions and schools within the province. Despite the sample having a certain degree of representativeness, limitations related to sample size still exist.

Secondly, due to time and cost constraints, data collection in this study was conducted at a single point in time, lacking longitudinal research and subsequent feedback. As a result, the findings only reflect the

current job satisfaction levels of teachers and fail to capture any trends over time. Future research could address this limitation by employing a longitudinal approach.

Lastly, this study only collected and analyzed quantitative data, without incorporating qualitative research, which limits the depth of exploration into teachers' subjective experiences. However, the researchers believe that the existing quantitative data are sufficient to support the study's conclusions and lay a foundation for future qualitative research.

## 1.5 Variable Term Definition

### 1.5.1 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership serves as the independent variable in this study. According to Burns, transformational leadership is characterized by “leaders and followers raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (Adigwe, 2024). In this study, transformational leadership refers to the leadership style adopted by principals toward teachers, aimed at inspiring teachers' enthusiasm, efficiency, and professional development through four dimensions: motivation, role modeling, capacity building, and individualized consideration. The term "principal" specifically refers to primary school principals in China, and the relevant data are derived from teachers' evaluations rather than self-assessments by the principals themselves.

### 1.5.2 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is the dependent variable in this study. According to Edwin (1976), job satisfaction is defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Nathwani, 2021). In this study, job satisfaction is defined as primary school teachers' subjective evaluation of their profession, work conditions, and circumstances, encompassing five specific aspects: job cognition, environmental assessment, compensation and benefits, interpersonal relationships, and perceptions of the promotion system.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Theoretical and Empirical Research on Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership theory was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns in 1978. He posited that transformational leadership is a style that achieves higher goals by elevating the values, behaviors, and organizational culture of both leaders and followers (Eaton et al., 2024). Transformational leadership comprises four key dimensions: charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Shrestha, 2020). These dimensions motivate followers in various ways, fostering their professional development and personal growth. Since its introduction, transformational leadership has rapidly become a vital theoretical framework in leadership research and has been widely applied across different industries and sectors. However, despite extensive research in corporate management, the application and study of transformational leadership within the educational sector, particularly in primary education, remain relatively limited.

In the educational sector, research on transformational leadership has primarily focused on how principals influence teachers' job performance and satisfaction through transformational behaviors. Wang and Duan (2018) found that transformational leadership promotes exploratory innovation within organizations through knowledge accumulation, providing a reference for leadership practices in educational management. In China, Yu and Wang (2022) study of 1,250 primary and secondary school teachers revealed that transformational leadership not only predicts teachers' educational attitudes but

also that teachers' self-efficacy acts as a mediating factor. Additionally, Zhao (2022) explored the relationship between transformational leadership and employee innovative behavior, emphasizing the mediating role of psychological empowerment, further validating the positive impact of transformational leadership on educators.

## 2.2 Theoretical and Empirical Research on Job Satisfaction

The concept of job satisfaction was first introduced by Hoppock in 1935, who defined it as a subjective perception of the work environment, emphasizing the psychological and physical fulfillment individuals derive from various factors within their work environment (Guo, 2022). Since then, research on job satisfaction has evolved through multiple stages, gradually forming several theoretical schools of thought. Currently, research on job satisfaction can be broadly divided into two main schools: the "unidimensional theory," such as the overall measurement standard proposed by Porter et al., and the "multidimensional theory," which posits that job satisfaction comprises multiple internal and external dimensions (Zhang, 2020). In the field of education, teacher job satisfaction is typically assessed through quantitative methods such as surveys, focusing on dimensions including job content, work environment, compensation and benefits, interpersonal relationships, and promotion opportunities (Lopes & Oliveira, 2020).

In recent years, research on job satisfaction has increasingly focused on its relationship with other variables, particularly in studies on educational management and teacher professional development. For instance, Yang (2022) examined the impact of transformational leadership on rural teachers' work enthusiasm and found that transformational leadership significantly enhances teacher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Zhang et al. (2022) study of 1,814 teachers demonstrated that school climate has a significant impact on teachers' socio-emotional competence, which indirectly affects their job satisfaction. Furthermore, Wei (2022) explored the relationship between secondary school teachers' professional resilience and job satisfaction, finding that job satisfaction plays a critical mediating role between professional resilience and burnout.

## 2.3 The relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction

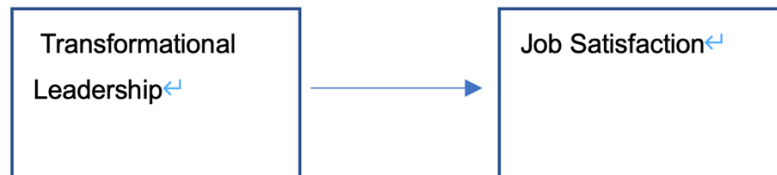
Numerous studies have demonstrated a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. For example, an empirical analysis by Zhang and Mao (2022) showed that principals' transformational leadership significantly enhances teachers' organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Additionally, another study by Zhang et al. (2024) found that teachers' socio-emotional competence moderates this relationship. Ji et al. (2022) used structural equation modeling to analyze data from 336 primary and secondary school teachers, discovering that affective commitment partially mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction, with emotional intelligence acting as a moderating factor in this process. These findings suggest that the impact of transformational leadership on teacher job satisfaction is multi-layered and influenced by various factors.

Although existing research has uncovered the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction, most studies have concentrated on secondary and higher education, with limited research on primary education. Moreover, most studies have focused on macro-level analyses, lacking in-depth exploration of the mechanisms through which different dimensions of transformational leadership operate within specific educational environments.

This study aims to investigate the application of transformational leadership in primary education, particularly its impact on primary school teachers in Shandong Province, thereby providing new

evidence for existing theories. Furthermore, the study will explore the specific effects of different dimensions of transformational leadership on job satisfaction, offering targeted recommendations for principals in leadership strategies within primary education.

## 2.4 Research Framework



**Figure 1. Research Framework**

This figure shows transformational leadership as the independent variable on the left and job satisfaction as the dependent variable on the right. The unidirectional arrows indicate that the independent variable will impact the dependent variable.

## 3. Research Methods

This study collected and analyzed quantitative data through an online survey. On one hand, descriptive statistical analysis was employed to summarize the characteristics of different groups and assess their attitudes and perspectives. On the other hand, the researcher conducted correlation analysis to explore the relationships between the survey variables in depth, thereby revealing their mutual influence and potential connections within specific educational contexts.

### 3.1 Population and sampling

Shandong Province, the birthplace of Confucian culture and a significant cradle of Chinese civilization, has long been committed to the education of traditional Chinese culture (Wei & Wang, 2024). Shandong's educational initiatives have consistently been at the forefront nationwide (Stewart, 2015). As one of the provinces with the highest investment in education, Shandong ranks among the top in China, reflecting the province's strong emphasis on education (Li, 2022).

According to the 2023 Shandong Provincial Statistical Yearbook, there are 467,563 primary school teachers currently employed in Shandong Province (Shandong Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2023). This study employed a simple random sampling method, and using a 95% confidence level, the sample size required for teachers was calculated to be 384, based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table. A total of 389 usable questionnaires were ultimately collected. Simple random sampling was chosen because it ensures that everyone in the population has an equal chance of being selected as a participant (Acharya et al., 2013). Additionally, existing differences are unlikely to impact the test results.

### 3.2 Survey instrument

The survey was distributed directly to respondents via the "WenJuan star" platform, allowing them to answer questions online through mobile devices. The questionnaire consisted of three parts: the first part covered "Basic Information," the second part addressed "Transformational leadership" and the third part focused on "Job satisfaction".

Prior to administering the questionnaire, the researcher explained to the subjects the basics of the survey and the study through an 'informed consent' form, and the survey was administered after the subjects had given their consent.

#### 3.2.1 Basic Information

This section collected basic personal information about the teachers, covering five aspects: Gender, Pos-

ition of Teacher, Highest Qualification, Position Level, and Position Category. The "Gender" question included two options: A: Male, B: Female. "Position of Teacher" was categorized into five levels: A: 5 years and below; B: 6-10 years; C: 11-20 years; D: 21-30 years; E: 31 and above. "Highest Qualification" offered four options: A: High School and below; B: Diploma; C: Bachelor's degree; D: Master's degree and above. "Position Level" encompassed three levels: A: Junior teachers and below, B: Intermediate Teacher, C: Senior Teacher and above. "Position Category" included four options: A: General teacher; B: Core teacher (lesson leader/teaching and research team leader/grade leader); C: Mid-level officer; D: Senior officer.

### 3.2.2 The transformational leadership of principals from the perspective of teachers

This section addresses four key aspects: The motivation for the future work of subordinates, Role modelling regarding the ethics of leadership, Improvement of subordinates' ability to work, and Concern for the quality of life of subordinates. There are a total of 16 questions.

For "The motivation for the future work of subordinates" the questions are as follows: The principal usually gives us the impression that... Question 1: The principal painted an aspirational future for everyone; Question 2: The principal is able to keep teachers informed about the future of the schools; Question 3: The principal will explain to teachers the long-term significance of the work they do; Question 4: The principal can give teachers direction and direction to strive for goals. For "Role modeling regarding the ethics of leadership" the questions are Question 5: Integrity and self-interest; Question 6: Suffering before enjoying; Question 7: Work to the best of your ability without regard to personal gain or loss; Question 8: Can sacrifice personal interests for the good of the school. For "Improvement of subordinates' ability to work," the questions are: Question 9: The principal would often encourage us to take on challenges; Question 10: The principal often guides us to think in new ways about old problems; Question 11: The principal was able to create a creative environment where we could observe each other, share experiences and stimulate learning; Question 12: The principal does not stick to the rules and stimulates us to be inspired and use our imagination. For "Concern for the quality of life of subordinates" the questions are: Question 13: The principal often communicates with teachers in order to understand their work, life and family situation; Question 14: The principal is willing to help teachers with their lives and families family problems; Question 15: The principal dealings with teachers, he takes into account the individual teacher's circumstances; Question 16: The principal patiently teaches teachers and gives them answers to their questions.

### 3.2.3 Job satisfaction

This section addresses five aspects: The perceptions of the job, Evaluation of the working environment, Satisfaction with pay and benefits, Consideration of interpersonal relationships, and Opinions on the promotion system. There are a total of 20 questions.

For "The perceptions of the job" the questions are as follows: Question 1: I think my job as an opportunity to showcase my ideals and ambitions; Question 2: I believe that my work contributes to the development of all my skills development; Question 3: I think I can get a sense of achievement from my work; Question 4: I think the work I am currently doing matches my interests. For "Evaluation of the working environment" the questions are Question 5: I think that the cleanliness and hygiene on campus is good; Question 6: I think the natural environment within the school makes me feel comfortable. Question 7: I think that the teaching facilities and office conditions provided by the school make me satisfied; Question 8: I think my work environment is stable and gives a sense of security. For "Satisfaction with pay and benefits" the questions are: Question 9: I think my salary meets expectations

and satisfies me; Question 10: I don't think my income compared to a non-teaching career is considered low; Question 11: I think I feel that the amount of work I put in is commensurate with my actual wage income is commensurate; Question 12: I think I'm more than happy with my latest pay rise. For "Consideration of interpersonal relationships" the questions are: Question 13: I think that colleagues in the school communicate well with each other and get along well good; Question 14: I think there is a team spirit of division of labour and collaboration among colleagues in the school; Question 15: I think colleagues can facilitate learning from each other and share new knowledge, Question 16: I think my colleagues are eager to help when I have difficulty. For "Opinions on the promotion system" the questions are: Question 17: I think the school's grading of teachers is fair and reasonable; Question 18: I believe that the school places great importance on the training and knowledge and competence of teachers development is taken very seriously as the question; Question 19: I think the training approach and methods used by the school are both reasonable and efficient; Question 20: I think the approach to talent development in the school is fluid.

### 3.3 Reliability and validity

For the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire, the study primarily referenced the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire developed by Bass et al., (1996) and Jia (2020). The existing items and structure of the Transformational Leadership Questionnaire were analyzed, and the dimensions and structure of transformational leadership were reviewed. Based on these findings, the measurement structure for this study's Transformational Leadership questionnaire was preliminarily determined, and specific measurement items were formulated. The collected items were categorized and summarized, resulting in a final questionnaire consisting of 20 items.

For the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, the study primarily referenced the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by Jia (2020). The existing items and structure of the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire was analyzed. Based on this analysis, the structure of the questionnaire for this study was preliminarily determined, and specific measurement items were formulated. The scientific accuracy of the questionnaire was assessed by professional advisors, resulting in a final draft questionnaire with 16 items.

## 4. Data analysis

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistical analysis was used in this study to determine the mean and standard deviation of each variable and to rank them. This method helped to understand the relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. The study used a five-point Likert scale, where the scale consisted of a set of statements with five responses: "Strongly disagree," "Disagree," "Neither agree nor disagree," "Agree," and "Strongly agree," scored as 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively.

**Table 1 Mean Score Interpretation**

Level	Score
Very Low	1.00-1.80
Low	1.81-2.60
Moderate	2.61-3.41
High	3.42-4.22

Very High	4.23-5.00
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(Source: Sanjaya & Hidayat, 2022)

According to the Table 1, a mean score between 1.00 and 1.80 was classified as "Very Low," 1.81 to 2.60 as "Low," 2.61 to 3.41 as "Moderate," 3.41 to 4.22 as "High," and 4.23 to 5.00 as "Very High."

#### 4.1.1 Transformational Leadership

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Transformational Leadership Dimensions**

Dimensions	Categories	Mean	SD	Level
TL 1	The motivation for the future work of subordinates.	3.7179	0.73695	High
TL 2	Role modelling regarding the ethics of leadership.	3.3586	1.34411	Moderate
TL 3	Improvement of subordinates' ability to work.	3.2526	0.77990	Moderate
TL 4	Concern for the quality of life of subordinates.	3.1401	0.74243	Moderate
Total		3.3673	0.73853	Moderate

As shown in Table 2, the motivation for future work of subordinate’s dimension of transformational leadership holds the highest mean score ( $M = 3.7179$ ,  $SD = 0.73695$ ). This suggests that participants perceive leaders as most effective in inspiring and motivating subordinates to achieve future goals. Conversely, the dimension concerning the concern for the quality of life of subordinates records the lowest mean score ( $M = 3.1401$ ,  $SD = 0.74243$ ). This lower score may reflect a perceived deficiency in the leaders' attentiveness to the personal well-being and work-life balance of their subordinates, which is a crucial yet sometimes overlooked component of transformational leadership.

The combined mean score across all dimensions is 3.3673 ( $SD = 0.73853$ ), pointing to an overall moderate perception of transformational leadership among the participants. This score suggests that while there is a recognition of transformational practices, there may be inconsistencies or areas that require further development to fully harness the potential of transformational leadership.

**Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of Transformational Leadership**

Dimensions	Categories	Questions	Mean	SD	Level
TL 1	The motivation for the future work of subordinates.	The principal painted an aspirational future for everyone.	3.68	0.991	High
		The principal can keep teachers informed about the future of the school.	3.75	0.973	High
		The principal will explain to teachers the long-term significance of the work they do.	3.70	1.039	High
		The principal can give teachers direction and direction to strive for goals.	3.74	1.061	High



TL 2	Role modeling regarding the ethics of leadership.	Integrity and self-interest.	3.53	1.365	High
		Suffering before enjoying.	3.33	1.369	Moderate
		Work to the best of your ability without regard to personal gain or loss.	3.25	1.480	Moderate
		Can sacrifice personal interests for the good of the school.	3.33	1.496	Moderate
TL 3	Improvement of subordinates' ability to work.	The principal would often encourage us to take on challenges.	3.34	0.848	Moderate
		The principal often guides us to think in new ways about old problems.	3.13	0.982	Moderate
		The principal was able to create a creative environment where we could observe each other, share experiences, and stimulate learning.	3.35	0.957	Moderate
		The principal does not stick to the rules and stimulates us to be inspired and use our imagination.	3.19	0.906	Moderate
TL 4	Concern for the quality of life of subordinates.	The principal often communicates with teachers to understand their work, life and family situation.	3.20	0.921	Moderate
		The principal is willing to help teachers with their lives and family problems.	3.01	0.875	Moderate
		The principal deals with teachers, he considers the individual teacher's circumstances.	3.21	0.918	Moderate
		The principal patiently teaches teachers and gives them answers to their questions.	3.14	0.906	Moderate

The following analysis focuses on the descriptive statistics of the transformational leadership dimensions, with particular emphasis on "The motivation for the future work of subordinates," which stands out as a high-level dimension. The other three dimensions—role modeling regarding the ethics of leadership, improvement of subordinates' ability to work, and concern for the quality of life of subordinates—are characterized as being at a moderate level.

On the one hand, for the High-Level Dimension among the four dimensions of transformational leadership, "The motivation for the future work of subordinates" is distinguished by its high mean scores, indicating a strong perception of the principal's effectiveness in this area.

The highest mean score within this category is for the item "The principal is able to keep teachers informed about the future of the school" ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 0.973$ ). This suggests that teachers feel well-

informed and aligned with the school’s direction, which is crucial for maintaining motivation and a shared sense of purpose. Another key item is "The principal can give teachers direction and direction to strive for goals" (M = 3.74, SD = 1.061). This result underscores the principal’s ability to guide teachers toward meaningful goals, enhancing their motivation and commitment to their work. The item "The principal will explain to teachers the long-term significance of the work they do" (M = 3.70, SD = 1.039) further reflects the principal’s success in helping teachers understand the broader impact of their efforts, which can lead to greater job satisfaction and dedication. Finally, "The principal painted an aspirational future for everyone" (M = 3.68, SD = 0.991) demonstrates that the principal is effective in inspiring teachers with a compelling vision, though there may be opportunities to make this vision even more engaging.

On the other hand, for the Moderate-Level dimensions. In contrast to the high-level performance in motivating future work, the other three dimensions—role modeling regarding the ethics of leadership, improvement of subordinates' ability to work, and concern for the quality of life of subordinates—are perceived at a moderate level. These dimensions, while not as strongly rated, still play essential roles in the overall effectiveness of transformational leadership. However, the variability in responses suggests that there is room for improvement in these areas to achieve higher levels of leadership effectiveness.

**4.1.2 Job Satisfaction (JS)**

JS1 means “The perceptions of the job”, JS 2 means “Evaluation of the working environment”, JS 3 means “Satisfaction with pay and benefits”, JS 4 means “Consideration of interpersonal relationships”, and JS 5 means “Opinions on the promotion system”.

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for the various dimensions of teachers' job satisfaction, including perceptions of the job, evaluation of the working environment, satisfaction with pay and benefits, consideration of interpersonal relationships, and opinions on the promotion system.

**Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of Job Satisfaction Dimensions**

Dimensions	Categories	Mean	SD	Level
JS 1	The perceptions of the job.	3.0623	0.74578	Moderate
JS 2	Evaluation of the working environment.	3.3310	1.07133	Moderate
JS 3	Satisfaction with pay and benefits.	2.5289	0.66627	Low
JS 4	Consideration of interpersonal relationships.	3.0508	0.81672	Moderate
JS 5	Opinions on the promotion system.	2.1594	0.71907	Low
Total		2.8265	0.62976	Moderate

As presented in Table 4, the analysis reveals a notable disparity in job satisfaction across different dimensions. The working environment receives the highest mean score (M = 3.3310, SD = 1.07133), signifying that teachers generally perceive their working conditions positively. In stark contrast, the lowest mean score is associated with the promotion system (M = 2.1594, SD = 0.71907). This indicates a significant dissatisfaction among teachers regarding promotional opportunities.

The total mean score across all job satisfaction dimensions is 2.8265 (SD = 0.62976), pointing to an overall moderate level of job satisfaction among the surveyed teachers. This variability suggests that

while some teachers may find their working environment satisfactory, others might experience significant challenges.

**Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of Job Satisfaction**

Dimensions	Categories	Questions	Mean	SD	Level
JS 1	The perceptions of the job.	I think my job as an opportunity to showcase my ideals and ambitions.	3.15	0.848	Moderate
		I believe that my work contributes to the development of all my skills development.	2.96	0.903	Moderate
		I think I can get a sense of achievement from my work.	3.01	0.888	Moderate
		I think the work I am currently doing matches my interests.	3.13	0.992	Moderate
JS 2	Evaluation of the working environment.	I think that the cleanliness and hygiene on campus is good.	3.37	1.042	Moderate
		I think the natural environment within the school makes me feel comfortable.	3.30	1.241	Moderate
		I think that the teaching facilities and office conditions provided by the school make I am satisfied.	3.30	1.186	Moderate
		I think my work environment is stable and gives a sense of security.	3.35	1.260	Moderate
JS 3	Satisfaction with pay and benefits.	I think my salary meets expectations and satisfies me.	2.59	0.840	Low
		I think my income compared to a non-teaching career is considered high.	2.49	0.836	Low
		I think I feel that the amount of work I put in is commensurate with my actual wage income is commensurate.	2.53	0.842	Low
		I think I'm more than happy with my latest pay rise.	2.50	0.869	Low
JS 4	Consideration of interpersonal relationships.	I think that colleagues in the school communicate well with each other and get along well good.	3.15	0.860	Moderate
		I think there is a team spirit of division of labour and collaboration among colleagues in the school.	3.03	1.021	Moderate
		I think colleagues can facilitate learning from each other and share new knowledge.	3.02	0.988	Moderate
		I think my colleagues are eager to help	3.00	1.014	Moderate

		when I have difficulty.			
JS 5	Opinions on the promotion system.	I think the school's grading of teachers is fair and reasonable.	2.13	0.971	Low
		I believe that the school places great importance on the training and knowledge and competence of teacher's development is taken very seriously as the question.	2.15	0.738	Low
		I think the training approach and methods used by the school are both reasonable and efficient.	2.25	0.921	Low
		I think the approach to talent development in the school is fluid.	2.11	0.942	Low

The following analysis focuses on the descriptive statistics of job satisfaction into "moderate" and "low" levels, highlighting representative items within each dimension.

On the one hand, for the Moderate-Level satisfaction. Several dimensions of job satisfaction were rated at a moderate level, reflecting an overall sense of adequacy but with potential areas for improvement.

Firstly, Teachers generally perceive their jobs as moderately fulfilling in terms of personal and professional growth. For instance, the item "I think my job as an opportunity to showcase my ideals and ambitions" received a mean score of 3.15 (SD = 0.848). This indicates that while teachers feel somewhat able to express their ambitions through their work, this area does not fully meet their aspirations. Similarly, "I think the work I am currently doing matches my interests" (M = 3.13, SD = 0.992) suggests that teachers find a reasonable alignment between their job roles and personal interests, though there is room for greater satisfaction. Secondly, the working environment was also rated at a moderate level. Teachers expressed satisfaction with the cleanliness and hygiene on campus, as seen in the item "I think that the cleanliness and hygiene on campus is good" (M = 3.37, SD = 1.042). This suggests that the school environment is perceived as adequately maintained. However, the overall satisfaction with the working environment, including the stability and security it provides (M = 3.35, SD = 1.260), indicates that while teachers feel generally secure, improvements could enhance their overall comfort and sense of well-being. Finally, Interpersonal relationships among colleagues were also viewed as moderately positive. For example, "I think that colleagues in the school communicate well with each other and get along well" (M = 3.15, SD = 0.860) reflects a satisfactory level of collegiality and teamwork within the school. Additionally, "I think colleagues can facilitate learning from each other and share new knowledge" (M = 3.02, SD = 0.988) suggests a collaborative environment, though there may be opportunities to further enhance knowledge sharing and peer learning.

On the other hand, for the Low-Level satisfaction. Certain dimensions of job satisfaction were rated at a low level, indicating significant dissatisfaction and areas that require immediate attention.

The dimension of pay and benefits received particularly low ratings, highlighting a significant area of concern for teachers. For instance, "I think my salary meets expectations and satisfies me" was rated at a mean of 2.59 (SD = 0.840), signaling widespread dissatisfaction with compensation. Furthermore, "I think my income compared to a non-teaching career is considered high" (M = 2.49, SD = 0.836) reveals that teachers do not feel their income is competitive with other professions, which could impact their overall job satisfaction and retention.

The promotion system within the school also garnered low satisfaction scores. For example, the item "I think the school's grading of teachers is fair and reasonable" was rated at a mean of 2.13 (SD = 0.971), indicating a perceived lack of fairness in how teachers are evaluated and promoted. Similarly, "I think the approach to talent development in the school is fluid" (M = 2.11, SD = 0.942) suggests that teachers feel the school's strategies for professional growth and career advancement are insufficiently dynamic or supportive, contributing to their dissatisfaction.

## 4.2 Correlation analysis

### 4.2.1 The Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Pearson correlation analysis was employed to determine the strength of the linear relationship between principal transformational leadership and job satisfaction. The Pearson correlation provides a summary of the linear relationship between two variables, with values ranging from -1 to +1.

**Table 6 Correlation Coefficient (r) Interpretation**

Correlation Coefficient	Strength
0.00-0.199	Very Weak
0.20-0.399	Weak
0.40-0.599	Moderate
0.60-0.799	Strong
0.80-1.000	Very Strong

(Source: Wahyuni & Purwanto, 2020)

According to the Table 6, scores between 0.00 and 0.199 were classified as "Very Weak," 0.20 to 0.399 as "Weak," 0.40 to 0.599 as "Moderate," 0.60 to 0.799 as "Strong," and 0.80 to 1.000 as "Very Strong." Table 7 presents the Pearson correlation analysis between transformational leadership and job satisfaction among the participants. The analysis explores the strength and direction of the relationship between these two variables.

**Table 7 Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis**

	Job Satisfaction		
	r	Sig. P	Strength
Transformational Leadership	0.658**	0.000	Strong

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

As shown in Table 7, the Pearson correlation coefficient between transformational leadership and job satisfaction is 0.658 with a significance level of  $p = 0.000$ . This indicates a strong, positive correlation between these two variables, suggesting that higher levels of transformational leadership are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction among the participants. The correlation is statistically significant at the 0.001 level, which implies that the likelihood of this relationship occurring by chance is extremely low.

Table 8 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between the dimensions of transformational leadership (TL1, TL2, TL3, TL4) and job satisfaction. This analysis evaluates the strength and direction of the relationships between each dimension of transformational leadership and overall job satisfaction.

**Table 8 Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis**

Dimension	Job Satisfaction		
	r	Sig. P	Strength
TL1	0.458**	0.000	Moderate
TL2	0.438**	0.000	Moderate
TL3	0.573**	0.000	Moderate
TL4	0.766**	0.000	Strong

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

The analysis reveals significant positive correlations between all four dimensions of transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Specifically: TL1 shows a moderate positive correlation with job satisfaction ( $r = 0.458, p = 0.000$ ). TL2 also demonstrates a moderate positive correlation with job satisfaction ( $r = 0.438, p = 0.000$ ). TL3 has a stronger positive correlation with job satisfaction ( $r = 0.573, p = 0.000$ ). TL4 exhibits the strongest positive correlation with job satisfaction ( $r = 0.766, p = 0.000$ ). All correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that these relationships are unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Next, let's analyze the correlation between the strong part, TL4, and the JS dimensions (JS1, JS2, JS3, JS4, JS5).

**Table 9 Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis**

	JS1	JS2	JS3	JS4	JS5
TL 4	0.756	0.601	0.596	0.651	0.385

The correlation analysis between the dimensions of job satisfaction (JS1 through JS5) and the dimension of transformational leadership (TL4) highlights varying levels of association. The relationship between TL4 and JS1 exhibits a strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.756$ ), indicating that effective transformational leadership, particularly in providing direction and inspiration, significantly enhances teachers' perceptions of their job. Additionally, strong correlations are observed with JS4 ( $r = 0.651$ ) and JS2 ( $r = 0.601$ ), reflecting the positive impact of transformational leadership on satisfaction with interpersonal relationships and the working environment.

The correlation between TL4 and JS3 ( $r = 0.596$ ) is classified as moderate, suggesting that while transformational leadership contributes to job satisfaction, its influence on teachers' perceptions of pay and benefits is less pronounced. The weakest relationship is seen between TL4 and JS5 ( $r = 0.385$ ), categorized as weak, highlighting that leadership alone may not sufficiently address teachers' concerns regarding financial rewards and promotion opportunities. These findings suggest that while transformational leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction, structural improvements in compensation and career advancement are also necessary to achieve higher levels of overall satisfaction.

#### 4.2.2 The Effect of Transformational Leadership on Job Satisfaction

This study further delves into the impact of transformational leadership on job satisfaction.

**Table 10 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.658	.432	.431	.47508

a. Predictors: (Constant), TL

First, the model summary indicates that the correlation coefficient (R) between transformational leadership and job satisfaction is 0.658, suggesting a strong positive correlation between the two variables. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.431 implies that transformational leadership accounts for 43.1% of the variance in job satisfaction. This result highlights that transformational leadership is a significant predictor of job satisfaction.

**Table 11 ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	66.534	1	294.784	.000
	Residual	87.348	387	.226	
	Total	153.882	388		

a. Dependent Variable: JS

b. Predictors: (Constant), TL

Secondly, the ANOVA results further confirm the significance of the regression model (F=294.784, p<0.001). The analysis of variance table shows that the regression sum of squares is 66.534, accounting for 43.2% of the total sum of squares, which further underscores the important role of transformational leadership in explaining teacher job satisfaction.

**Table 12 Coefficients**

Model		B	Std. Error	t	Beta	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.938	.113	8.336		.000
	TL	.561	.033	17.169	.658	.000

a. Dependent Variable: JS

Lastly, in the regression coefficient analysis, the unstandardized regression coefficient (B) for transformational leadership is 0.561, with a standard error of 0.033, and a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.658. This result indicates that, controlling for other variables, each unit increase in transformational leadership is associated with an increase of 0.561 units in teacher job satisfaction. This positive effect is significant (t=17.169, p<0.001), demonstrating that transformational leadership significantly contributes to enhancing teacher job satisfaction.

In summary, the data from this study clearly indicate that transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on teacher job satisfaction. The findings suggest that the enhancement of transformational leadership is closely related to improvements in teacher job satisfaction. Therefore, educational administrators can promote and strengthen transformational leadership practices to further improve teacher job satisfaction and the overall quality of the teaching environment. Future research

may continue to explore the specific effects of transformational leadership on teacher job satisfaction in different educational contexts, as well as the broader application of this leadership style in educational management.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Dimensions of Transformational Leadership

This study delved into primary school teachers' varying perceptions of the dimensions of transformational leadership. The findings indicate that while some aspects of transformational leadership are viewed positively, others have room for improvement, highlighting both strengths and potential problem areas in current leadership practices.

The dimension of "The motivation for the future work of subordinates" emerged as the strongest aspect of transformational leadership, with consistently high average scores across its indicators. This suggests that principals are effectively motivating teachers and aligning them with the school's future goals. This finding aligns with the theoretical framework of transformational leadership, which emphasizes the importance of articulating a clear and compelling vision to inspire followers (Bass & Avolio, 1994). High scores suggest that principals have successfully cultivated a sense of mission and direction among teachers, which is crucial for enhancing job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Sugandi et al., 2021). However, a relatively high standard deviation, particularly in the item "The principal can give teachers direction and direction to strive for goals" ( $SD = 1.061$ ), indicates variability in teachers' experiences, suggesting that perceptions of this aspect of leadership may not be uniform across the school.

In contrast, dimensions such as "Role modeling regarding the ethics of leadership", "Improvement of subordinates' ability to work", and "Concern for the quality of life of subordinates" received moderate scores. These findings raise important considerations about the overall effectiveness of transformational leadership within the school environment.

The moderate scores for "Role modeling regarding the ethics of leadership" are particularly concerning, as ethical leadership is a cornerstone of transformational leadership theory. Lower average scores on items related to integrity and willingness to sacrifice personal interests for the school's benefit suggest that teachers may perceive a gap between the principal's actions and the ethical standards they are expected to uphold. This could impact teachers' trust and respect for the leader, which are essential components of effective leadership (Day, 2020).

Similarly, the moderate scores for "Improvement of subordinates' ability to work" indicate that while there is some encouragement and support for professional development, it may not be sufficient to foster significant growth and innovation among teachers. The relatively low average score for the item "The principal often guides us to think in new ways about old problems" ( $M = 3.13$ ) suggests that opportunities for creative problem-solving and professional growth may be limited, potentially stifling the development of innovative teaching practices (Tan, 2021). This finding is crucial, as the ability to inspire creativity and continuous improvement is a key aspect of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985).

Finally, the dimension of "Concern for the quality of life of subordinates" also received moderate scores, which may reflect a lack of attention to teachers' well-being and personal needs. Lower scores on items such as "The principal is willing to help teachers with their lives and family problems" ( $M = 3.01$ ) suggest that teachers may feel unsupported in balancing their professional and personal lives. This lack



of support could lead to increased stress and lower job satisfaction, ultimately affecting teachers' performance and commitment to the school (Mwakasangula & Mwita, 2020).

Overall, the average score for transformational leadership was moderate (overall  $M = 3.3673$ ), indicating that while principals exhibit some effective leadership behaviors, there is significant room for improvement. The variability in standard deviations across different dimensions suggests that teachers' experiences and perceptions of leadership are not consistent, which could undermine the overall effectiveness of transformational leadership in fostering a positive and productive school environment. The findings suggest that to improve leadership effectiveness, principals need to pay more attention to ethical leadership, professional development, and staff well-being. Addressing these issues could enhance teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment, ultimately contributing to better educational outcomes.

## 5.2 Dimensions of Job Satisfaction

According to the results of this study, there are significant differences in job satisfaction across various dimensions, particularly in areas such as the work environment and compensation and benefits. These findings highlight potential areas for improvement in educational management and provide important insights for enhancing teacher job satisfaction.

On one hand, in the evaluation of "The Perceptions of the Job," "Evaluation of the Working Environment," and "Consideration of Interpersonal Relationships," although overall satisfaction is at a moderate level, teachers expressed a certain degree of affirmation regarding these aspects. For instance, the item "I think that the cleanliness and hygiene on campus is good" received the highest score ( $M = 3.37$ ,  $SD = 1.042$ ), reflecting the school's efforts in maintaining a clean physical environment. This aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the positive impact of a good physical work environment on teachers' psychological and physical well-being (Benevene, 2020). However, while the stability and safety of the work environment are recognized, these high scores have not translated into deeper levels of career satisfaction. Teachers gave relatively low ratings on teaching facilities and office conditions, indicating that there is still room for improvement in the school's investment in infrastructure, particularly in providing technological support and innovative educational resources.

On the other hand, satisfaction with compensation and benefits shows a significantly low level, which contradicts the "Concern for the Quality of Life of Subordinates" dimension of transformational leadership theory. Specifically, the item "I think my salary meets expectations and satisfies me" had an average score of 2.59 ( $SD = 0.840$ ), reflecting widespread dissatisfaction with salary among teachers. Existing research suggests that teachers' compensation not only affects their economic situation but also may influence their professional identity and level of commitment to their work (Ostad, 2019). Low compensation could undermine teachers' professional motivation, leading to reduced engagement in teaching, which in turn could impact the quality of instruction and student outcomes.

Furthermore, the evaluation of the promotion system also appears notably dismal. For example, the item "I think the school's grading of teachers is fair and reasonable" had an average score of 2.13 ( $SD = 0.971$ ), indicating that teachers generally have doubts about the fairness and transparency of the current promotion mechanism. This finding contradicts the "Concern for the Quality of Life of Subordinates" and "Improvement of Subordinates' Ability to Work" dimensions of transformational leadership theory, suggesting that the school's leadership may be lacking in providing career development opportunities and support. A fair promotion system should be able to motivate teachers to pursue career goals, thereby

improving job satisfaction. However, the data indicates that the current promotion mechanism has failed to effectively incentivize teachers, which may lead to burnout and talent loss (Bashir & Gani, 2020).

Finally, the data from this study reflect a moderate level of teacher job satisfaction, highlighting tension with the "Inspiring Motivation" dimension of transformational leadership theory. Although teachers feel some level of support and motivation in certain aspects of their work, overall job satisfaction has not reached an ideal level. The low ratings on job satisfaction, particularly in terms of compensation and the promotion system, suggest that the school administration's efforts in motivating teachers and enhancing their intrinsic motivation are insufficient. These findings indicate that educational managers need to re-examine existing leadership models and policies, particularly in terms of compensation structure, career development support, and work environment optimization, to ensure that these factors more effectively enhance teachers' job satisfaction and motivation.

In summary, this section reveals the key factors influencing teacher job satisfaction within the current educational management framework. Future research and practice should focus more on optimizing the work environment, improving compensation and benefits, and enhancing career development opportunities to comprehensively boost teacher job satisfaction and professional motivation.

### 5.3 The Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction

The analysis reveals a strong positive correlation between Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction, particularly in the TL4 dimension, which is related to the quality of life of subordinates. This strong correlation suggests that when leaders show genuine concern for the well-being and personal development of teachers, overall job satisfaction increases significantly. This finding aligns with the core principles of transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes that leaders motivate and inspire followers by addressing their higher-level needs (Bojovic & Jovanovic, 2020).

However, despite the apparent positive correlation, it is crucial to question the extent to which transformational leadership itself can explain the differences in job satisfaction across various dimensions. For example, the correlation between TL4 and dimensions such as Satisfaction with pay and benefits (JS3) and Opinions on the promotion system (JS5) is relatively weak, indicating that transformational leadership may not fully address structural issues critical to job satisfaction. These findings imply that while transformational leadership can create a supportive and motivational work environment, it may not be sufficient to overcome dissatisfaction related to more specific aspects of the job, such as financial compensation and career development (Hapsari et al., 2021).

Additionally, the moderate correlations between TL1 (The motivation for the future work of subordinates), TL2 (Role modelling regarding the ethics of leadership), and TL3 (Improvement of subordinates' ability to work) and job satisfaction further highlight the complexity of this relationship. While transformational leadership can motivate and inspire, its impact may be weakened if not accompanied by other forms of organizational support, such as fair compensation, recognition, and career development opportunities. This suggests that transformational leadership, while beneficial, cannot operate in isolation; it must be complemented by structural and procedural improvements within the organization (Kwan, 2020).

Given these findings, it is essential to recognize the limitations of transformational leadership. The theory posits that leaders who demonstrate high moral standards, provide inspiring motivation, and offer individualized consideration can significantly enhance job satisfaction (Khan, 2022). However, the results of this study indicate that while such leadership behaviors are necessary, they are not sufficient to

fully address the multifaceted nature of job satisfaction. Teachers' job satisfaction is also heavily influenced by organizational policies and practices, particularly those related to compensation, benefits, and career development opportunities (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020).

Therefore, while the strong correlation between TL4 and job satisfaction underscores the importance of leadership in fostering a positive work environment, it also points to the need for a more comprehensive approach. Schools must not only focus on cultivating transformational leaders but also create an organizational culture that fairly values and rewards teachers, provides clear career paths, and meets their material needs (Opiyo, 2019). Only by addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting job satisfaction can schools achieve higher overall levels of teacher satisfaction.

In conclusion, while transformational leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction, it is not a panacea. Organizational leaders must acknowledge and address structural deficiencies within their institutions to fully leverage the potential of transformational leadership in improving teacher satisfaction. A nuanced understanding of the interplay between leadership and organizational structures is essential for developing effective strategies to improve teacher satisfaction and overall school performance.

## 6. Conclusion

This study highlights the positive relationship between Transformational Leadership and job satisfaction among primary school teachers. The findings indicate that while transformational leadership positively impacts job satisfaction, it does not entirely resolve all the structural issues affecting teacher satisfaction. The strong correlation between TL4 (Concern for the Quality of Life of Subordinates) and job satisfaction underscores the importance of leadership practices that genuinely care about teacher well-being. However, the weaker correlations with aspects such as satisfaction with pay and benefits and opinions on the promotion system suggest that transformational leadership alone is insufficient to overcome dissatisfaction arising from organizational structures.

These results challenge the idealized view that transformational leadership is a panacea for organizational challenges. While transformational leadership can inspire and motivate employees, its impact is limited if not aligned with broader organizational policies and practices. The study indicates that for transformational leadership to be truly effective, it must be accompanied by structural reforms that address teachers' specific needs and concerns, particularly regarding compensation and career development.

## 7. Recommendations

To improve teacher job satisfaction, it is recommended that schools adopt a more comprehensive approach to leadership and management. While developing transformational leadership qualities in principals is important, it should be coupled with tangible improvements in organizational policies and practices.

Specifically, first, schools should improve pay and benefits. By adjusting the pay structure to reflect teachers' contributions and align with their expectations, schools can address dissatisfaction with compensation and benefits. This adjustment is crucial for maintaining motivation and retaining talent. Second, enhance career development opportunities. Establish a clear, fair, and transparent promotion system that provides meaningful career advancement opportunities for teachers. Schools should invest in professional development programs, not only to enhance teachers' skills but also to provide pathways for

career growth. Third, create a favorable work environment. Continue improving the physical and psychological work environment, ensuring that schools are safe, well-maintained, and equipped with necessary resources. Leadership should also focus on fostering a supportive culture that prioritizes teacher well-being. Fourth, align leadership with organizational structure. Ensure that the transformational leadership exhibited by principals is reflected in the broader policies and practices of the school. This integration is necessary to create an environment where leadership initiatives can have a lasting impact.

## 8. Future Research

Future research should explore the interaction between transformational leadership and organizational structure more deeply. Specifically, studies could investigate how different leadership styles interact with various organizational environments to influence job satisfaction. Additionally, research could focus on longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of transformational leadership on teacher satisfaction and retention, considering changes in organizational policies and practices over time.

Furthermore, examining the role of other leadership theories, such as servant leadership or transactional leadership, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how different leadership approaches affect job satisfaction in educational settings. This expanded focus will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of leadership effectiveness and provide more targeted strategies for enhancing teacher satisfaction and overall school performance.

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