The Relationship between Principals' Transformational Leadership and Teachers' Work Engagement in Saudi Arabia

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The aim of this study was to explore the effects of principals' transformational leadership on work engagement among teachers in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia. Most of the research on principal transformational leadership has been conducted in western countries and thus, the generalisability of the extent to which transformational principals are contributing to teacher engagement to other contexts is questioned. The perceptions of 407 public school teachers in Saudi Arabia about the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement were identified through descriptive, cross-sectional design. The findings of the study revealed that transformational leadership had significant positive effect on work engagement among teachers. By supporting teachers and recognising their contributions, setting and articulating vision for the future, and encouraging them to take new perspectives and reframe challenges; teachers become more engaged toward their work. The findings of this study have some practical implications for the school principals in Saudi Arabia and other contexts. The results suggest the need for preparing school principals on how to inspire their teachers, motivate them in envisioning future states and increase their dependency. More specifically, professional preparation programs should provide the principals with skills and the knowledge to transfer their inspirational motivation to their teachers and build required power and energy among them. The value of this study resides in two areas. Firstly, this study corresponds with current reform efforts in Saudi Arabia to develop more appropriate principal leadership styles to enhance teacher engagement toward work. Secondly, this study seeks to develop the knowledge base on principal's transformational form of leadership within non-western context.

Key words: *Transformational leadership, principals, work engagement, teachers.*

Introduction

Over the past decades, transformational leadership has become one of the most powerful forms of leadership throughout the world (Bass, 1997). A considerable body of research has accumulated suggesting that transformational leadership has a positive relationship with teachers' self and collective efficacy (Gkolia, Koustelios & Belias, 2018; Liy, Li & Wang, 2019; Ryan, 2007; Schyns, 2001; Windlinger, Warwas & Hostettler, 2020), organisational citizenship behaviour (Handayani, 2018), employee well-being (Bono & Ilies, 2006), principals' life experiences (Nush & Banger, 2013), teamwork innovation, creativity and effectiveness (Agyeman, 2019; Eisenbeiss et al., 2017; Kim, Park, & Kim, 2019; Jung, 2001; Wiyono, 2017), professional learning community (Voelkol Jr, 2019), teacher commitment (Dumay & Galand, 2012) trust (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman & Fetter, 1990), job satisfaction and motivation (Bono & Judge, 2003; Judge & Piccolo 2004), employee's psychological safety (Carmeli et al., 2014; Detert & Burris, 2007), and leadership effectiveness (Sadaghi & Pihie, 2012). The significance of these outcomes lies in the identification of the indirect effect that principal transformational leadership has on student learning and school improvement.

Work engagement has received considerable attention among practitioners and academics. This attention is grounded in research that has revealed the effect of work engagement on organisational performance (Christian et al., 2011; Rich et al., 2010). Although the amount of work engagement has risen recently, the debate is still about which style of leadership can enhance work engagement. Engagement is very essential for school teachers as "learning and development are not only central issues for students but also for teachers" (Nissen et al., 2017). Transformational leadership has "motivating and demanding aspects" (Nissen et al., 2017). Schools need transformational principals who can develop engagement among teachers by supporting them toward gaining valuable vision (Hayati, Charkhabi & Naami, 2014). Supporting, simulating and coaching followers encourage them to view work as a satisfying and involving experience that enhance their engagement with work (Tims, Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2011).

Most of the principal transformational leadership research has been undertaken in western countries (Bass, 1990; Lam, 2002; Barnett, McCormick & Conners, 2001, Day, 2000; Griffith, 2004; Kanungo, 2001; Leithwwod, 1992; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, 2000; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Price, 2003; Roberts, 1985; Stewart, 2006), and thus, the generalisability of the extent to which principal transformational leadership is contributing to teacher engagement to other contexts is questioned (Balwant, Mohammad & Singh, 2020). This study sought to explore how principal transformational leadership influences work engagement among teachers. Data was collected from 407 teachers in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia.

The value of this study resides in two areas. Firstly, this study corresponds with current reform efforts in Saudi Arabia to develop more appropriate principal leadership styles to enhance teacher engagement toward work. Researchers have highlighted limitations in the capacity of school leaders to accomplish the multitude of demands of this role (Hallinger & Murphy, 2012). Traditional models of school leadership do not work anymore (Leithwood, 1992). Secondly, this study seeks to develop the knowledge base on principal transformational form of leadership within non-western context.

This study first indicates the Saudi context of educational leadership and presents the theoretical background that guides the study. The author then describes the methodological approach of the study, followed by the research results. Finally, the author concludes the study with a discussion of the results as well as the limitations of the study and directions for future research.

Education Context for School Leadership in Saudi Arabia

The education system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a hierarchical centralised system. It includes six years in primary school, followed by three years in intermediate and three years in secondary schools, before going to university. Saudi education is managed at three levels: At the kingdom level, the Ministry of Education is responsible for managing the budget, setting the plans and polices, and supervising the professional development programs. At the local level, the General Directorate of Education manages schools. At the school leadership level, the principal is responsible for managing the daily administrative responsibilities of the school. The responsibilities and the roles of the school principals are determined and monitored by the Ministry of Education. An examination of the available documents of the role expectations report that school principals are expected to manage administrative tasks, such as managing staff, school policies and procedures, maintaining student discipline and fulfilling compliance requirements, monitoring teaching plans, addressing the needs of the staff, facilitating professional development for the staff, and appraisals. Other responsibilities include creating partnership with stakeholders and building maintenance (Ministry of Education, 2015).

The Saudi education system is segregated by sex. Separation of the sexes at all levels of education with some exceptions of kindergarten and some private international schools is a consistent feature of Saudi education (Rugh, 2002). The separation of the sexes is related to the respected social status of women accorded them by Islam. Since 1954, the Ministry of Education managed the education system for boys, while the education for girls was managed by the General Directorate for Girls' Education. In 2002, the two entities have been emerged (Marghalani, 2018), and education for boys and girls has become under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. Public schools at all levels utilise the same policies, evaluation techniques and curricula. Education in Saudi Arabia is built on the value where all individuals are granted the right to learn. According to the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia (2020) in 2019 5,119,953 (82.74%) students attended the public schools, 345998 (5.59%) attended the

foreign schools and 721,843 students (11.67%) attended the private schools for their K-12 education. Private schools are usually owned by individuals. Elementary education is compulsory in Saudi Arabia. Families are free to choose the school system they prefer to attend. However, there are restrictions on the enrolment of public education based on the students' residency.

According to the statistical report issued by the Education and Decision Support Centre (2020), there are 31,614 principals in the public schools and 5,687 principals in private schools. Most principals should have teaching experience prior to their appointment. The Ministry usually moves the principals who stayed for six years in the job to another school, except those who gained recognition or the principals who have two years or less before retirement.

Over the past few years, Saudi education reform movement reshaped the responsibilities of the school leadership (The National Transformation Program, 2016). In line with global trends, empirical research of school leadership has recently begun to explore how the behaviours of principals can improve school outcomes. Scholars have focused on exploring the paths through which school leaders can impact student learning. This includes the relationship between the principal transformational leadership and a wide range of role-behaviours such as engagement among school teachers.

Theoretical Background

Work Engagement

A substantial body of research has indicated that work engagement has been associated with a wide range of behaviours such as organisational commitment (Cole et al., 2012), organisational citizenship behaviour and job performance (Rich et al., 2010). Khan (1990) provided the earliest conceptualisation of work engagement which refers to the way in which followers harness themselves in the performance of their work. He elaborated that engagement is being psychologically present in the work (Khan, 1992). Work engagement is also conceptualised as "energy, involvement and efficacy" (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 34). Schaufeli, Salanova & Bakker (2002) defined engagement as the opposite of burnout. Both constructs are different psychological states. Czerw & Grabowski (2015) argue that engagement may be also conceived as "self-standing separate construct…it doesn't constitute an easy opposite" (p. 505-506). Perhaps, the opposite of engagement is "non engagement rather than burnout" (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Others consider engagement as a "psychological state". For example, Wellins & Concelman (2005) argue that engagement is "loyalty, productivity and ownership" (p.1). Additionally, Macey & Schneider (2008) mention that engagement is a psychological state of extra role behaviour. Engagement is "above and beyond simple satisfaction with the employment arrangement or basic loyalty to the employer…engagement is about passion and commitment - the willingness to invest in oneself and expand one's discretionary efforts to help the employer succeed" (Erickson, 2005, p. 14).

In this study, work engagement is defined as a positive emotional work-related state that is represented by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufel & Bakker, 2004). The first dimension of work engagement, vigour, refers to a high-level of mental resilience and energy while working (Schaufel & Bakker, 2004). It is characterised by one's persistence in the face of challenges and the desire to invest effort in work. Shirom (2003) refers to vigour as a cognitive liveliness, psychical strength and emotional energy. The second dimension, dedication, is characterised by having a strong level of enthusiasm, pride, significance and inspiration. Dedication refers to the extent in which one feels involved in his/her work (Brown, 1996). The third dimension of work engagement is absorption which refers to an "optimal state of experience" that is characterised by being happily absorbed/focused in one's job to the extent that the individual losses track of time and finds themselves unable to detach from work (Balwant, Mohammad, Singh, 2019). This dimension can be determined based on Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) notion of international motivation. Work engagement is, thus, best characterised as "the experience of work activity rather than a behaviour that is driven by the connection of work role" (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008). For example, an engaged teacher is the one who approaches work with a high sense of energy, self-investment and passion which is usually reflected into high levels of extra role behaviours (Handayani, 2018).

Although the author found few studies of work engagement in Saudi Arabia, the available research has indicated that employee engagement is an important factor that impacts the success of the organisations (Aldakhil Allah, 1995; Al-Maghribi, 2012).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a meaningful exchange between leaders and followers to guide followers toward "a vision-driven change" (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership is best conceived as a leadership style that transforms the values of the followers, whereby the leader simulates the employees to perform beyond expectation (Yukl, 1989). This form of leadership focuses on the inspiring vision of the school leader (Hartog, Koopman & Van Muijen, 1997). Transformational leadership simulates changes in the followers' value systems, by inspiring them to move from self-interests goals to organisational goals. Transformational leader is a" vision-focus leader who uses behaviours to express a vision in a positive manner and encourage followers to achieve goals aligned with the vision by modelling ways to solve problems creatively, showing concern for followers' individual needs, and providing goals when achieved" (Balwant, 2017, p. 4).

Burns (1978) laid the foundation for transformational leadership theory which was built on by Bass & Avolio (1992). This study adopted Bass & Avolio's model of transformational leadership. Based on this model, transformational leadership comprises four dimensions namely: idealised influence, individual consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. The first component, idealised influence, refers to leading by example.

Transformational leaders are trusted, admired and respected. Leaders provide a vision and display total commitment to it (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders are charismatic leaders who influence their followers by changing the self-focus of the employee to the collective focus (Yorges, Weiss & Strickland, 1999). The second component, individual consideration, refers to supporting, coaching and mentoring followers. Employees are developed to high levels of potential through the provision of a supportive climate and new learning opportunities. Individual needs of the followers are addressed. A transformational leader acknowledges each individual interests and feelings for achievement (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The third component, inspirational motivation, refers to the communication of a vision and the use of symbols to articulate this vision. They encourage the followers and provide meaning for their achievements. Transformational leaders demonstrate total commitment to the vision. Leaders inspire followers and motivate them in envisioning future states. The fourth dimension, intellectual simulation, includes behaviours that motivate followers to analyse "existing conditions" (Bass, 1985), and reframe problems. Creative solutions for problems are encouraged. Followers are motivated and supported to approach problems with new perspectives.

Transformational Leadership and Work Engagement

Among the principal leadership models, the author employed the transformational leadership model for two reasons. First, various lines of empirical research have shown that transformational leadership has a positive influence on school operations and outcomes. Second, unlike other leadership styles, such as transactional and laissez-faire styles, transformational leadership has a direct impact on teacher work attitudes such as work engagement. Van Vugt, Jepson & Hartand de's (2004) experimental study found evidence for this hypothesis. They have found that participants were more likely to leave their team and take their resources elsewhere if they were supervised by a transactional style leader than by a transformational leadership. Additionally, Macey & Schneider's (2008) model argued that employee engagement is positively affected by transformational leadership behaviours.

In addition, there is evidence that principal transformational leadership can enhance teacher engagement toward work. By supporting teachers and recognising their contributions and achievements (individualised consideration), setting a vision for the future (idealised influence), articulating the vision through multiple ways (inspirational motivation), letting them realise how "valuable their efforts toward achieving this vision" (Balwant et al, 2020), encouraging them to take new perspectives and reframe challenges (intellectual stimulation); teachers become more engaged toward their job.

More specifically, transformational school principals can engage teachers in their work by offering a shared vision for the school, challenging teachers to think of their instructional processes, establishing expectations for quality pedagogy, and supporting their professional

growth (Nissen et al., 2017). Thus, it is acceptable to propose that teachers are expected to have high levels of work engagement if reporting to a transformational leader.

It should be noted that although a growing body of research supported the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement in western literature, there is a need to expand the research on principal leadership behaviour and teacher's work engagement to non-western contexts where such studies have not been well explored. This study sought to explore how transformational leadership of school principals influence work engagement among teachers in public schools in Saudi Arabia.

Research Hypothesis

This study sought to test the following hypotheses:
1. Transformational leadership is associated positively with work engagement.

2. Transformational leadership is positively related with vigour, dedication and absorption.

3. Transformational leadership dimensions are predictors of vigour.

4. Transformational leadership dimensions are predictors of absorption.

5. Transformational leadership dimensions are predictors of dedication

Method

This study is descriptive in nature and was conducted using "cross- sectional survey" design. This section describes the instruments, participants, procedures and data analytical methods.

Instruments

The author used Brislin's (1970) "back translation method" to validate the quality of translated measures. The scales were translated into Arabic language by a bilingual scholar. Then, the Arabic version of the scales was translated back into English by another bilingual scholar. A third bilingual scholar compared the back translation and the original document to ensure consistency and clarity.

Bass & Avolio's (1997) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was used for collecting data on principal transformational leadership. MLQ meets high standards of reliability (Bass & Avolio, 1997) between 0.81 and 0.94. MLQ consists of two parts transactional and transformational styles of leadership. In this study, the author used the transformational section. The transformational section is 20 item questionnaire measuring four sub-scales: inspirational motivation (4 items), intellectual simulation (4 items), individual consideration (4 items), and

idealised influence (8 items). The internal consistency rating for the Arabic version of the scale was (0.87) and for each sub-scale (inspirational motivation, intellectual simulation, individual consideration and idealised influence) was 0.85, 0.86, 0.88 and 0.91 respectively.

The measure for work engagement used scale developed by Schaufeli et al., (2002). The scale consists of three sub-scales with 17 items: vigour (6 items), absorption (6 items) and dedication (5 items). The scale first consisted of 24 items. Based on the psychometric analysis, seven items were removed. This scale has been used in many countries across the globe. Sample item for each sub-scale includes: "At my job I feel strong and vigorous" (vigour); "I am proud on the work that I do? (dedication); and "When I am working, I forget everything else around me? (absorption). The psychometric properties of the Arabic version of the scale were tested by calculating alpha coefficient from a pilot study composed of 27 subjects. The internal consistency rating for the Arabic version of the scale was 0.82 and for each sub-scale (vigour, absorption and dedication) was 0.81, 0.78, and 0.92 respectively.

Participants and procedures

This research was conducted in the city of Dammam in the eastern province of Saudi Arabia. The data was collected with the support of General Directorate of Education. The questionnaires were submitted to 954 middle school teachers in eastern Dammam from whom the author obtained 407 valid questionnaires. The rate response rate was 42.6%. The author executed sampling procedures to ensure a representative sample of the primary schools from the city of Dammam. Participants were assured that all responses would be anonymous. The teachers were predominately female (N = 264, 64.8%). Almost 53.3% (N = 306) of the teachers had more than six years of experience.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive (i.e. means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics methods (i.e. correlations and multiple regression). Correlation analysis was used to assess the relationship between the variables included in the study. Multiple regression was used to evaluate the relationship between the dimensions of the transformational leadership (i.e. inspirational motivation, individual consideration, idealised influence and intellectual stimulation), and those of work engagement (i.e. vigour, dedication and absorption).

Results

The descriptive statistics and the correlations of all the variables are displayed in Table 1. It can be noticed that transformational leadership had the highest mean score of 84.09 (SD = 8.70) and work engagement (M = 72.96, SD = 5.24) from the teachers' perspectives. Among the four dimensions of transformational leadership, the mean scores ranged from (34.15 to 16.60). More

specifically, idealised influence had the highest score (M = 34.15, SD = 3.84), followed by intellectual simulation (M = 16.70, SD = 2.71), inspirational motivation (M = 16.65, SD = 2.54), and individual consideration had the lowest mean (M = 16.60, SD = 2.39). For the three dimensions of work engagement, absorption had the highest score (M = 26.22, SD = 2.69), followed by vigour (M = 25.16, SD = 2.75) and dedication (M = 21.57, SD = 2.11). Table 1 also shows the simple correlations among the variables. The analysis shows that transformational leadership has a positive relation with work engagement among the teachers (r = 0.300**). This relationship is accepted at the significant level (p < 0.01), which confirms Hypothesis 1. Table 1 also indicates that transformational leadership has a positive relationship with the three dimensions of work engagement: vigour (r = 0.152), absorption (r = 0.258**) and dedication (r =0.218**), which confirms Hypothesis 2.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations and simple correlations among study variables (N = 407 teachers)

Variable	M	SD	Transformational leadership	Idealised influence	Inspirational motivation	Intellectual simulation	Individual consideration	Work Engagement	Vigour	Dedication	Absorption
Transformational leadership	84.09	8.70	1								
Idealised influence	34.15	3.84	0.747**	1							
Inspirational motivation	16.65	2.54	0.806**	0.461**	1						
Intellectual simulation	16.70	2.71	0.789**	0.335**	0.601**	1					
Individual consideration	16.60	2.39	0.688**	0.243**	0.449**	0.563**	1				
Work Engagement	72.96	5.24	0.300**	0.205**	0.178**	0.224**	0.321**	1			
Vigour	25.16	2.75	0.152**	0.012	0.071	0.135**	0.306**	0.688**	1		
Dedication	21.57	2.11	0.218**	0.194**	0.138**	0.132**	0.187**	0.749**	0.357**	1	
Absorption	26.22	2.69	0.258**	0.235**	0.166**	0.194**	0.166**	0.658**	0.038	0.308**	1

** p < 0.01

As shown in Table 2 and 3, the multiple regression analysis confirms Hypothesis 3 that states that: the dimensions of transformational leadership are positively associated with vigour. The four dimensions of transformational leadership are significantly related to vigour (MR = 0.317) which is significant (F = 11.21 and p < 0.01). Table 2 also indicated that individual consideration (β = 0.349) has the biggest influence in explaining the variance of vigour.

Table 2: Results of the Multiple Regression Between the Dimensions of Transformational Leadership and Vigour

Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig.	R	R Square
(Constant)	20.799		15.578	0.000	0.317	0.100
Idealised influence	-0.030	-0.042	-0.785	0.433		
Inspirational motivation	-0.065	-0.060	-0.937	0.349		
Intellectual simulation	-0.011	-0.011	-0.170	0.865		
Individual consideration	0.401	0.349	6.008	0.000		

Table 3: The Overall Multiple Regression Coefficient Between the Dimensions of the Transformational Leadership and Vigour

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	306.99	4	76.748	11.21	0.000
Residual	2752.307	402	6.847		
Total	3059.297	406			

Hypothesis 4 states that: the four dimensions of transformational leadership are predictors of dedication. As shown in Table 5, the multiple regression is significant between the dimensions of transformational leadership and dedication (MR = 0.242) (F = 6.246 and p < 0.01). So, Hypothesis 4 is accepted. As shown in Table 4, the results of β shows that idealised influence (β = 0.159) and individual consideration (β = 0.152) have the most contributions in explaining the variance of dedication.

Table 4: Results of Multiple Regression Related to Dimensions of Transformational Leadership and Dedication

Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig.	R	R Square
(Constant)	16.432		15.642	0.000	0.242	0.059
Idealised influence	0.088	0.159	2.909	0.004		
Inspirational motivation	0.000	0.000	0.006	0.995		
Intellectual simulation	-0.006	-0.007	-0.107	0.915		
Individual consideration	0.135	0.152	2.565	0.011		

Table 5: The Overall Multiple Regression Coefficient Between the Dimensions of the Transformational Leadership and Dedication

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	105.9	4	26.475	6.246	0.000
Residual	1703.854	402	4.238		
Total	1809.754	406			

Hypothesis 5 states that: the dimensions of transformational leadership have a positive relationship with absorption. As shown in Table 7, the multiple regression between the four components of transformational leadership and absorption is significant (MR = 0.271) (F = 7.986 and p < 0.01). Thus, Hypothesis 5 is confirmed. Additionally, Table 6 indicates that idealised influence has the most contribution in explaining the variance of absorption (β = 0.191).

Table 6: Results of Multiple Regression Related to Dimensions of Transformational Leadership and Absorption

Variable	B	Beta	t	Sig.	R	R Square
(Constant)	18.939		14.283	0.000	0.271	0.074
Idealised influence	0.134	0.191	3.522	0.000		
Inspirational motivation	-0.013	-0.012	-0.193	0.847		
Intellectual simulation	0.098	0.099	1.493	0.136		
Individual consideration	0.078	0.070	1.182	0.238		

Table 7: The Overall Multiple Regression Coefficient Between the Dimensions of the Transformational Leadership and Absorption

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	215.741	4	53.935	7.986	0.000
Residual	2714.912	402	6.754		
Total	2930.654	406			

Discussion

This study sought to explore the relationship between principal transformational leadership and teacher engagement toward work. Data was collected from the city of Dammam in the eastern

province of Saudi Arabia. This study extends prior global research by exploring how principal transformational leadership style can influence the dimensions of work engagement (Balwant et al., 2020; Pounder, Stoffell & Choi, 2018) in non-western context such as Saudi Arabia. The results suggest that teachers' engagement is enhanced in the context of active transformational leadership style. Specifically, the analysis of the results suggested a positive relationship between the components of transformational leadership and the components of teacher engagement. Additionally, the multiple regression indicates that the dimensions of principal transformational leadership are positively associated with the dimensions of teacher engagement: vigour, dedication and absorption. In line with results reported in similar studies in a range of organisations, transformational leadership was found to be the most predictive model of work engagement (Avolio et al., 1999; Balwant et al., 2020; Pounder, Stoffell & Choi, 2018; Tims, Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2011).

Teachers are expected to: invest a high-level of mental resilience and effort while working; persist in the face of challenges; have a strong level of enthusiasm and inspiration; and focus and be involved in one's job to the extent that the individual losses track if they are reported to a transformational principal. In other words, supporting the teachers and providing them with opportunities to experience competence, behave autonomously and feel that they are part of the school team, teachers should become more engaged toward work (Niessen et al., 2017, p. 43).

Additionally, individual consideration is found to have the most contribution in explaining the variance of vigour ($\beta = 0.349$) and dedication ($\beta = 0.152$). Addressing teachers' needs, interests and aspirations can provide teachers with a supportive, caring and motivating school climate whereby teachers' thriving, physical strength and involvement are enhanced (Harter et al., 2003). This dimension can be determined based on social exchange theory which is perceived as "a series of interactions that generate obligations" (Emerson, 1976). The basic assumption of the Social Exchange Theory is that "interactions have the potential of high-quality relationship" (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 875). By supporting the teachers and recognising their achievements, the teachers would respond in kind (Gregen, 1969). In accordance with social exchange theory, teachers' engagement is based on the leaders' support. Engagement is usually based on bidirectional transactions i.e. the leader provides a benefit and the employee dedicates themselves to work. Such mutual interaction is a definite feature of social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 816).

The multiple regression analysis also reveals that idealised influence had the highest contribution in explaining the variance of dedication ($\beta = 159$ and absorption ($\beta = 191$). Research has shown that idealised influence is believed to have positive outcomes on employees' satisfaction and engagement. By inspiring teachers to explore new ways of doing things at work, transformational leaders can support the sense of self-motivation, self-value and contributions, which in turn boost the amount of work engagement (Hayati et al., 2014).

Thus, the transformational leadership model adopted in this study provides insights into the dimensions through which school leaders could impact work engagement among teachers. Transformational school principals' practices focus on addressing teacher's individual needs, supporting their autonomy and control of their work, and inspiring them to think outside the box. These principals can support teacher's physical strength and cognitive liveliness while working, and persistence in the face of challenges, level of enthusiasm, significance, inspiration and involvement in one's work.

This study has some limitations that need to be addressed in future research. First, since the data for teachers' work engagement was collected through self-reports, the findings may be affected by several biases. Future research could complement this study with other research approaches such as qualitative and mixed methods studies. Second, although the sample was chosen randomly, the data was collected with a specific setting, restricting the generalisation of the results to other contexts. Third, this study addressed specific dimensions of transformational leadership and work engagement; it would be interesting if future directions of research addressed other dimensions depicted by these variables. Finally, although this study provides some insights regarding the relationship between the dimensions of principals' transformational leadership and the dimensions of teachers' work engagement in Saudi Arabia, further research is needed to consider the mediator variables for this relationship. The author recommends that further studies on transformational leadership could be undertaken in Saudi Arabia and non-western contexts.

The results of this study have some practical implications for the school principals in Saudi Arabia and other contexts. Among the four dimensions of transformational leadership, idealised influence had the highest mean score (M = 34.15, SD = 3.84) and the highest contribution in explaining the variance of dedication and absorption. These results suggest the need for preparing school principals on how to inspire their teachers, motivate them in envisioning future states, increase their dependency, challenge them, and encourage creativity and new ways of doing their work. More specifically, professional preparation programs should equip the principals with skills to model the way and transfer their inspirational motivation to their teachers and build required power and energy among them (Terry et al., 2000). This manner can encourage teachers to match themselves (Hayati et al., 2014) with their principals' vision and aspirations.

In conclusion, this study aimed to explore the relationship between the dimensions of the principal transformational leadership and the dimensions of work engagement among teachers in public schools in Saudi Arabia. It is hoped that it will contribute to the development of leadership literature in non-western context. Teachers become more engaged when they are identified with their principals' vision, and aspirations. By inspiring teachers, challenging them and setting high expectations, teachers become more engaged in their job through the transformational style of their principals.

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