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Section 1. Education system

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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES WITHIN SPECIALIZED EDUCATIONAL SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This paper explores the unique educational context of specialized schools, focusing on the psychological, pedagogical, and organizational factors that contribute to the development of students' professional abilities. It also offers a concise overview of recent research in this field.

Keywords: *profiling, educational process, specialised school, professional skills, differentiated approach*

In the modern educational environment, especially in the conditions of growing demands of the labor market and rapid development of technologies, the formation of professional skills of students' personality has become a key priority. This undoubtedly contributes to their successful socialization and professional self-determination.

In our country, specialized schools that provide in-depth training in certain areas are given much attention. Accordingly, the study of conditions for the formation of professional skills of the individual in the educational process of these institutions is an urgent scientific and pedagogical task.

This is confirmed by the fact that in recent years in the Republic of Uzbekistan the issue of development of specialized schools of creative, technical or sports orientation has been given priority attention at the state level. This is reflected in a number of legislative documents such as the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan № UP-5847 "On approval of the Concept of development of higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030" dated September 8, 2019 (Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-5847), Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan № UP-6108 "On measures to develop the spheres of education and upbringing, and science in the new period of development of Uzbekistan" from November 06, 2020 (Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan № UP-6108), Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

№ UP-55 "On measures to expand the network of specialized schools and further improvement of their activities" from April 01, 2024 (Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-55). These normative-legal documents emphasize the urgent need to form a talent pool from among gifted students, pay special attention to project and profile-based learning, as well as the creation of individual trajectories of professional development within secondary education.

The methodology of the selected topic is based on several firmly established educational theories that help us to understand the process of development of professional skills of an individual in a specialized school. First, it is the activity theory of A. N. Leontiev (Leontiev A. N., 1975), which emphasizes the role of purposeful activity in the formation of consciousness and personality. According to this theory, the learning process is effective when students are involved in the fulfillment of tasks set before them, reflecting the real professional context. This concept implies the fact that professional skills are formed in the process of active participation in educational practices that model or reflect future professional activities.

Secondly, we rely on the principles of personality-oriented education developed by V. V. Serikov (Serikov, V.V., 1994), which emphasize the importance of individualization of the educational process. This approach implies that education should not only transfer knowledge, but also contribute to the holistic development of the learner's personality. In turn, it includes everything that is the basis of professional competence – motives, values, creative abilities, self-awareness.

It is also necessary to note the directions in which such scientists as V. A. Slastenin (Slastenin V. A., 2014), A. G. Aslomov (Asmolov A. G., 2007), J. Raven (Raven J., 2002) worked. In their works they emphasized the need for professional orientation of education, the issues of personality formation in the educational environment, as well as the structure of competencies and their assessment.

The study also mentions contemporary educational standards, including those promoted by the WorldSkills movement and the 21st Century Skills Framework. These standards emphasize adaptability, problem solving, collaboration and technological literacy – skills that are increasingly needed in both global and local labor markets, especially in the arts and culture.

It should be noted that specialized schools provide just such an environment in which the content, conditions, methods and objectives are adapted to the profile (e.g. music, mathematics, technology). Such schools offer:

– firstly, advanced and specialized curricula;

– secondly, access to professional tutors and practitioners;

– thirdly, early exposure to industry-specific practices.

In turn, effective skills development requires motivational support and career guidance, an individualized approach to learning based on personal interests and pace, formative assessment and reflection to encourage students to evaluate their own progress, and the development of self-regulation and responsibility for learning.

The key conditions for organizational and methodological factors are: qualified personnel, including specialists from relevant fields, material and technical resources such as workshops, laboratories and studios, interdisciplinary learning combining theoretical knowledge with practical tasks. The use of modern educational technologies, including simulation tools, virtual laboratories and digital platforms, is also very relevant.

In the process of analysis it was also revealed that practical and extracurricular activities are also included in the special conditions of formation of professional skills of personality in the educational process of specialized schools. These include participation in projects, competitions and exhibitions. realization of student portfolios and projects, participation in internships, field trips and practical training, development of teamwork and communication skills through cooperative learning.

In the process of writing the article it was revealed that the educational environment and methodological structure of specialized schools has an important influence on the development of professional skills of students. After all, it is these educational institutions provide an opportunity for successful

integration of theoretical knowledge, skills and abilities with practice-oriented learning. This in turn contributes to the development of individual interests in early professional self-determination.

Consequently, it becomes obvious that in order to ensure the effectiveness of vocational training at the secondary level, a systematic approach oriented to the personality of the learner is necessary. In turn, the inclusion of activity-based, competence-oriented types of training and individual trajectories of personal professional development allows specialized schools to serve as an important link between general and future professional routes.

In addition, taking into account the need for compliance of educational programs with modern world standards, such as 21st century skills and WorldSkills framework, guarantees the equivalence of acquired competencies to the real requirements of the labor market. This state of affairs confirms the need to constantly search for innovative approaches in the context of preparing students for careers in areas requiring creativity, adaptability and, most importantly, applied knowledge.

Based on the above, specialized schools need to be seen not just as a new type of educational institution, but also as platforms for educating a modern generation of professionals with both fundamental knowledge and practical skills. It is necessary to further explore different types of specialized schools in order to compare them and to identify their long-term impact on career development.

Thus, it should be noted that the development of professional skills of students' personality in the educational environment of specialized schools primarily depends on the direct integration of pedagogical-psychological, organizational and technological factors. It is not unimportant that the focus on differential approach to the learner provides practice-oriented learning and forms motivation, is a key point in the formation of strong professional competencies. Consequently, specialized schools should become a link between education and the professional world, offering an educational environment in which students will explore, try and improve their professional interests under the guidance of experts.

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Section 2. General psychology

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ANXIETY LEVEL IN PARENTS OF CHILDREN ENGAGING AND NOT ENGAGING IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS

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Abstract

This paper aims to study the level of anxiety and emotional state of parents. Anxiety level refers to the degree of nervousness, worry or fear experienced by parents. It includes both general anxiety and specific apprehension that parents may experience in different situations. This study includes 100 parents, 50 whose children practice sports several times a week after school, and 50 parents of children that do not do not engage in any sport or physical activity except curricular Physical Education classes at school. The study was carried out in the city of Tirana. The instrument used to measure the level of anxiety was the Screen for Child Anxiety Related Disorders (Birmaher, B; Khetarpal, S; Cully, M; Brent, D; McKenzie, S. 1997). The instrument is a self-reported one, meaning that the pupils answered about their level of anxiety along the past three months. The instrument is designed to target the group of parents that have children aged 9–11. The gathered data were processed using SPSS. The results of the study showed that parents whose children engage in extra-curricular sports have a lower level of anxiety and a better emotional state than those whose children who engage only in physical activity classes at school.
Keywords: *parents, children, anxiety, sport and physical activity*

Introduction

Analyzing the prevalence of anxiety and mood swings in children who participate in sports and those who do not participate in sports may provide insights into the potential impact of sports engagement on mental health and, consequently, on the mental health of their parents. However, it is important to note that individual experiences and different factors may contribute to anxiety and mood swings, and the relationship between sports participation and these outcomes may be complex.

Studies in this area have examined the relationship between sports participation and anxiety/emotional state in children. Some findings from studies in the field are:

(Adams, 2019) suggests that children who participate in sports tend to have lower levels of anxiety compared to those who do not participate. Engaging in physical activity and sports has been associated with reduced general anxiety symptoms and lower levels of social anxiety in children.

Research suggests that participation in sports can have a positive impact on children's emotional well-being. It has been associated with higher levels of positive emotions, increased self-esteem, improved mood, and better overall emotional health (Carter, 2018).

Participation in sports has been identified as a potential protective factor against the development of anxiety in children. Children who participate in sports may have better coping mechanisms, higher levels of resilience, and improved stress management skills, which may help reduce the risk of anxiety disorders (Ellis, 2020).

Sport participation provides opportunities for social interaction, teamwork and the development of social skills. Studies have shown that these social aspects of sport can contribute to better social-emotional development, increased social support and improved emotional well-being in children (Daniels, 2018).

It is important to recognize that not all children who participate in sports will experience lower levels of anxiety or better emotional states. Individual differences, such as personal temperament, previous experiences, and external factors, may influence the relationship between sports participation and anxiety/emotional states. Some children may still experience anxiety or have different emotional states despite participating in sports (Mason, 2017).

These findings suggest that participation in sports may have positive effects on anxiety levels and emotional well-being in children aged 10–12 years. However, it is essential to consider the limitations of individual studies and the complex nature of the relationship between sports participation and mental health outcomes. Further research is needed to gain a more complete understanding of this topic and to identify the specific mechanisms through which sports may influence anxiety and emotional states in children. Children's emotional well-being may influence the emotional state of their parents.

Materials and Methods

The sample of this study are 100 parents of 10-year-old children living in the city of Tirana, studying at the secondary school "Siri Kodra". The sample of 100 parents is devided in two equaly numbered groups i.e. 50 parents of children engaging and actively participating in extra-curricular sports and physical avtivity at a frequency of 3 or more times a week, and the other group of 50 parents of children who are active only during the PE classes at school.

The instrument used to assess anxiety levels in children is the 'Screen for Child Anxiety Related Disorders' (SCARED) questionnaire (Birmaher, B; Khetarpal, S; Cully, M; Brent, D; McKenzie, S. 1997). This questionnaire is composed of 41 statements with a Likert scale of 3 used to assess children's anxiety levels, the scales are as follows "Not true or sometimes true – 0", "Somewhat true or sometimes true – 1" or "Very true or often true – 2".

Findings and Discussion

Regarding the questionnaire with parents, data has been identified where we have 100 parents in total, of which 50 are parents of children who are active in sports and 50 are children who are not active in sports**.**

Parents were asked 41 statements about their children, with each of them giving the corresponding answers based on the responses not true, somewhat true and very true. The following table shows the percentage data on the total answers given by parents of children who play sports and parents of children who do not play sports:

By analyzing the data in the table, we can identify some differences in the experience of anxiety between parents of children who play sports and those who do not play sports. Here are some key differences:

For most of the experiences shown, parents of children who play sports report a lower percentage of anxiety compared to parents of children who do not play sports. This applies to experiences 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, 21, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41. This suggests that children who play sports tend to have fewer anxiety problems in these aspects of their lives according to the parents.

In some of the experiments shown, parents of children who play sports and those who do not play sports report similar levels of anxiety. This applies to experiments 4, 8, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23 and 35. In these cases, playing sports has no significant impact on the children's experience of anxiety.

In some of the experiments, parents of children who do not play sports report a higher percentage of anxiety compared to parents of children who play sports. This applies to experiments 20, 25 and 28. This shows that children who do not play sports tend to have more anxiety about these aspects of their lives.

Overall, the results show that according to parents, children who play sports tend to have less anxiety in most of the experiences analyzed compared to those who do not play sports. This suggests that playing sports can have a positive impact on children's emotions and anxiety levels.

The t-values indicate the differences between the two groups of parents. If the t-value is positive, group 1 (parents of children who play sports) has a higher mean than group 2 (parents whose children do not play sports). If the t-value is negative, group 1 has a lower mean than group 2.

The p-value indicates the chances that the differences between the groups are due to chance. In general, a p-value less than 0.05 (the level of p-value restriction) indicates a statistically significant difference between group 1 and group 2.

Both t-values and p-values vary for each group, and it is important to evaluate them in the context of the study and the level of p-value restriction.

For statements 25–30, there are no significant and very substantial differences between the opinions of parents of children who practice sports and those who do not practice sports. The mean values and t-test values (t-value) are relatively similar and the p-values are above the level of statistical significance ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that the differences in their statements are not significant, we must say that with small differences where parents of children who practice sports present lower levels of anxiety or aggravated emotional states in their children than parents of children who do not practice sports.

For statements 31–34, there are some significant differences in parents' perceptions. Parents of children who do not play sports tend to report a higher level of anxiety and worry compared to parents of children who do. The t-test values are positive and the p-values are below the level of statistical significance ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the differences are statistically significant.

For statements 35–41, there are no significant differences between the two groups of parents. The mean values and t-test values (t-values) are similar and the p-values are above the level of statistical significance ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that the differences in their statements are not significant.

For statements 31–34, where there are significant differences between parents in the sports group and the non-sports group, it may be interesting to understand how sports practice affects the level of anxiety and worry in parents about their children. Additional analysis may be required to understand what specific factors of sports may be associated with differences in the perception of anxiety.

Conclusion

Studying the level of anxiety and emotional state of children aged 10–12 is an important aspect to understand the impact of sports engagement on their emotional health. Parents of children who play sports prove that their children are less affected by anxiety and emotional state management is more effective in children who play sports.

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Section 3. Higher professioan education

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DEVELOPING COMPETENCE IN MANAGING CHANGES IN TEACHING ACTIVITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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Abstract

The principal plays an important role in school reform in general and in managing changes in teaching activities in particular. To effectively fulfill the role of captain, leader, and strategic navigator of teaching change, principals must possess competencies in managing changes in teaching activities. Based on Fullan's change management model, the research team identified three core competencies and fifteen component competencies that high school principals need to manage changes in teaching activities. From there, the team also proposed four measures to foster these management competencies for high school principals.

Keywords: *Change, teaching activities, management, managing change in teaching activities, principal*

1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, many international studies have focused on the role of principals in leading changes in teaching activities. A common feature of these works is the examination of the actual management of change in high schools across various countries, from which they derive conclusions and propose measures to strengthen the principal's role. Acton (2021) investigated the perceptions of experienced principals regarding their readiness to become change agents. The findings showed that most principals had not received formal training in change leadership but had learned primarily through professional experience and peer exchange. This created a knowledge gap in understanding and managing the process of teaching change. Principals believed that reforms would be more successful if responsibility was shared by higher management levels. Therefore, the experiences of seasoned principals should be disseminated to improve school change management. Molefhi & Pheko (2023), in their study in Botswana, emphasized that principals play a central role in implementing effective management systems for teaching activities. They must communicate vision, motivate teachers, address challenges, and ensure that systems align

with the school's mission. However, implementation faces difficulties related to culture, teaching philosophy, facilities, and technological infrastructure. Thus, principals need suitable skills, knowledge, and attitudes to lead change effectively, while being aware of the benefits, limitations, risks, and opportunities that such systems entail. Other studies by Michael & Newton (2008), Woolner (2014), and Morrison & Cooper (2015) also confirmed that principals are decisive factors in leading changes in curricula, methods, and teaching forms. The authors suggested that principals should design change plans linked with the school's mission, consult widely, adopt a student-centered approach, inspire innovation in teachers and students, encourage creative solutions, and regularly assess and adjust the change process.

In Vietnam, research by Nguyễn Thị Thúy Dung (2018), Nguyễn Long Giao (2021), and Nguyễn Văn Nguyên (2023) emphasized that principals are the main actors in change management, expressed through functions such as forecasting, planning, organizing, evaluating, and adjusting. Principals need qualities such as adaptability, innovation, pioneering spirit, decisiveness, persistence, responsibility, ambition, and humility. In terms of skills, they must analyze contexts, identify and prioritize changes, make concrete plans, build relationships, persuade and motivate, communicate and train, work in teams, solve problems, mobilize resources, evaluate, and sustain outcomes.

From these studies, it can be seen that principals play a pivotal role in managing changes in teaching activities. To succeed, they need to be equipped with competencies in change management, including knowledge, skills, and personal attributes. This is also the focus of this study, which aims to propose measures for developing competencies in managing changes in teaching activities for high school principals in Vietnam.

2. Research Methods

In this study, the authors employed several theoretical research methods:

Document collection using keywords such as "change," "change management," "managing changes in teaching activities," and "competence in managing changes in teaching activities" to search databases such as ResearchGate, Google Scholar, and JSTOR.

Document evaluation based on criteria including type of document (books, articles, theses), type of research (theoretical or empirical), and year of publication.

Analysis and synthesis of all collected information, generalizing independent findings to identify the competencies required for managing changes in teaching activities by principals, and proposing measures for developing these competencies among high school principals.

3. Research Results

3.1. Competencies in managing changes in teaching activities that need to be developed for high school principals

Developing competencies in managing changes in teaching activities for high school principals is crucial in the current context of comprehensive educational reform. The research team drew on Fullan's (2006) change management model, which includes three stages: **Initiation – Implementation – Institutionalization**. Each stage requires principals to possess specific management competencies to successfully lead schools through improvements in teaching activities.

3.1.1. Competencies in managing the initiation stage of change

Initiation lays the foundation, creating consensus and preparing teachers, students, and the school community for change. At this stage, principals need to:

Initiate the direction of change: Principals act as "pathfinders," clearly defining directions for improvement – for example, shifting from knowledge transmission to competency-based teaching, applying information technology, encouraging experiential learning and critical thinking. The key is to engage the school community in sharing the vision, fostering participation rather than imposing mandates.

Organize communication: Sustainable change requires thorough communication. Principals must employ diverse channels such as meetings, emails, newsletters, and guidelines so that teachers fully understand the rationale, goals, and direction. Communication must be coupled with explanation

and listening to address concerns, thereby building trust.

Create a sense of urgency: Change occurs only when people perceive it as necessary. According to Luckin (2016), emotions play a key role in decisions about change. Principals must help teachers recognize urgency, see the benefits, and build motivation and confidence in reform. At the same time, supportive environments should be created to minimize psychological barriers.

Mobilize subject groups and core teachers: These groups form the backbone of preparation. Principals must assign responsibilities clearly and encourage them to participate in designing and disseminating innovations throughout the school.

Develop an action plan: A plan serves as the roadmap for change, including context analysis, goal setting, resource planning, action program design, and official promulgation. A good plan ensures proactive resource use and allows flexible monitoring and adjustment.

Foster an innovation spirit: Principals should directly model new teaching methods, join training sessions and workshops, and inspire teachers. Through concrete actions, innovation is spread, encouraging whole-school participation.

3.1.2. Competencies in Managing the Implementation Stage of Change

In this stage, the main tasks are organizing, monitoring, and supporting so that change becomes a reality in teaching practice. Required competencies include:

Clear assignment of responsibilities: Teachers directly innovate teaching methods, while subject groups provide support. Principals must assign specific tasks, helping teachers understand objectives, take initiative in researching and applying new methods, and clarify the advisory and professional development roles of subject groups.

Monitor progress with concrete tools: Teaching reform must be tracked with detailed plans and modern management tools such as LMS, classroom management software, and online assessments. Continuous monitoring allows timely adjustments, replication of effective models, and prevention of deviations.

Provide support and professional consultation: Teachers often face challenges when adopting new practices. Principals should organize training on active teaching methods, competency-based assessment techniques, and technology applications, while offering individual consultation (in person or online) and providing learning materials and guidelines.

Feedback and plan adjustment: When teachers face difficulties, principals must observe, listen, provide concrete feedback, identify strengths and weaknesses, and suggest feasible solutions. Plans must then be promptly and flexibly adjusted to suit real situations.

Create opportunities for sharing initiatives: Teacher creativity is a valuable resource. Principals should encourage the sharing of experiences through workshops, professional meetings, class observations, or online forums. This not only enhances reform effectiveness but also builds a professional and collaborative working environment.

3.1.3. Competencies in managing the institutionalization stage of change

Institutionalization is the final step, ensuring sustainability and scaling up achieved results, turning innovation into routine practice. At this stage, principals need to:

Develop strategies for sustaining and expanding results: Without a strategy, reforms can easily revert to the original state (Champlain College, 2022). Principals must clearly define long-term goals, directions, resources, and specific actions to ensure sustainability.

Integrate reforms into regulations and evaluation criteria: Changes must be included in official regulations to guarantee compliance and consistency. Principals should update regulations, add provisions regarding innovative methods, assessments, and teacher responsibilities/rights, and develop internal evaluation criteria that reflect new standards.

Build a school culture that encourages creativity: Culture is the fertile ground for innovation to take root. Principals must create a friendly, open environment, acknowledge contributions, and encourage autonomy and creativity. At the same time, they should motivate teachers to keep learning and improving.

Maintain a continuous innovation environment: Reform is not a short-term event but a long-term process. Principals must pro-

vide resources, tools, professional activities, and mechanisms for incentives and rewards. Regular dialogue and timely feedback foster continuous improvement and enhance teaching quality.

3.2. Measures for developing competencies in managing changes in teaching activities for high school principals

Measure 1. Define the objectives of developing competencies in managing changes in teaching activities for high school principals

The objective is to enable principals to analyze and evaluate the current situation, identify the right problems to change, and build flexible, focused plans for change. Principals should also create supportive environments and motivation for teachers, foster teacher initiative, ensure democratic governance, mobilize stakeholder participation, and strengthen leadership and management capacity in teaching, thereby contributing to the successful implementation of the 2018 General Education Curriculum. To set such objectives, training providers must grasp the theoretical and practical foundations of managing changes in teaching activities and accurately analyze and evaluate the current state of schools.

Measure 2. Develop training content for competencies in managing changes in teaching activities for high school principals

Knowledge of managing changes in teaching activities at high schools: Principals should be trained in knowledge relevant to each stage. In the initiation stage, this includes knowledge about starting change directions, communicating reasons, goals, and orientations, creating urgency, persuading teachers of the necessity of change, and developing action plans. In the implementation stage**,** principals need knowledge of monitoring progress with plans and tools, supporting and advising teachers, providing timely feedback, adjusting plans, and creating opportunities for sharing initiatives and experiences. In the institutionalization stage, principals need knowledge of building strategies for sustaining and expanding results, integrating reforms into regulations and evaluation criteria, building a creative school culture, and maintaining an environment that encourages continuous innovation in methods, assessment, and content to meet new educational objectives.

Skills in managing changes in teaching activities at high schools: Principals should also be trained in skills corresponding to each stage. In the initiation stage, these include skills in starting change directions, communicating reasons, goals, and orientations, creating urgency, persuading teachers, and developing action plans. In the implementation stage, principals need skills in monitoring progress with plans and tools, providing professional support, offering timely feedback, adjusting plans, and creating opportunities for sharing initiatives. In the **institutionalization stage**, principals need skills in building strategies for sustaining and expanding results, integrating reforms into regulations and evaluation criteria, building a school culture that encourages creativity, and maintaining an environment that fosters continuous innovation in teaching methods, assessment, and learning content.

Measure 3. Combine methods of developing competencies in managing changes in teaching activities for high school principals

In many countries around the world, the professional development of educational managers in general, and high school principals in particular, is often carried out through the following methods:

Expert-centered method: In this approach, experts provide knowledge and experience, while principals receive and apply them.

*Learner-centered method***:** Here, principals independently implement the training program with the support of facilitators.

Media-centered method: In this case, information and communication technologies are used to deliver training content to principals.

Each of these methods has its own strengths and limitations. Therefore, in developing competencies for managing changes in teaching activities, it is necessary to combine all three approaches.

Measure 4. Evaluate the development of competencies in managing changes in teaching activities for high

school principals through a systematic process

The evaluation process consists of the following steps:

*Step 1. Define evaluation objectives***.** The goal is to determine the extent to which principals have achieved knowledge and skills in managing changes in teaching activities, and how these have been transformed into actual competencies.

*Step 2. Select evaluation methods and forms***.** A combination of traditional and non-traditional methods should be employed, ensuring appropriateness for assessing outcomes in developing principals' competencies in managing teaching changes.

*Step 3. Conduct the evaluation***.** This requires developing clear and specific evaluation criteria and using appropriate evaluation tools.

Step 4. Process evaluation results. Results should be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively to determine the level of competency development achieved by principals.

*Step 5. Provide feedback to trainees and stakeholders***.** Information on both the training process and outcomes should be shared with principals and relevant stakeholders, enabling necessary adjustments in content, methods, and forms of professional development.

4. Conclusion

In high schools, the principal is the captain, leader, and strategic navigator of reform – creating supportive environments, inspiring teachers, supervising implementation, and providing timely evaluation and adjustments to ensure the success of school innovation in general and teaching activities in particular. To fully realize this role, principals must possess competencies in managing changes in teaching activities. Based on Fullan's change management model, the research team identified three core competencies (managing the initiation stage, managing the implementation stage, and managing the institutionalization stage) along with fifteen component competencies. From this foundation, four measures were proposed to develop competencies in managing changes in teaching activities for high school principals.

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Section 4. Preschool education

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DESIGNING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GAMES FOR OVERWEIGHT CHILDREN AGED 5–6 IN PRESCHOOLS

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Abstract

This study was conducted to design and verify the effectiveness of a system of physical activity games for overweight children aged 5–6 at Tam Hiep Kindergarten, Chau Thanh District, Tien Giang Province. Based on theoretical foundations regarding the role of physical activity games in physical, psychological, and social development, the research team selected seven optimal games through surveys, expert consultation, and initial trials. The official experiment was implemented over 12 weeks (three sessions per week) with 12 overweight children, focusing on three core criteria (comfort level, participation, and activity density) as well as physical indicators (weight, height, BMI). Results showed that the children's average weight decreased by 0.91 kg, height increased by 0.7 cm, and BMI decreased by 0.83 points, with all changes being statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, the children participated more enthusiastically and confidently, while cooperation and positive exercise habits were cultivated. Games G6, G8, and G1 were particularly outstanding, achieving high scores in all three criteria. The study confirms that the system of physical activity games not only contributes to safe control of overweight and obesity but also enhances health and holistic development, and can be replicated in early childhood education.

Keywords: *physical activity games, overweight children, preschool, BMI, physical development*

I. Introduction

In the current context, childhood overweight and obesity have become major concerns for families, schools, and society at large. According to statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023), the rate of overweight and obese children worldwide is rapidly increasing, particularly among preschool-aged children. In Vietnam, recent studies also reveal a rising prevalence

of overweight and obesity in urban areas, especially among children aged 5–6 – the age group preparing to enter primary school. This stage is crucial for forming and developing basic motor skills, laying the foundation for children's future health, physical fitness, and personality development. However, in practice, most overweight children tend to be shy, reluctant to exercise, and less likely to participate in collective physical activities. This not only affects physical development but also hinders children's cognitive, emotional, and social growth.

Therefore, finding suitable interventions that are both educational and motivating is essential in current preschool education. Physical activity games, combining fun, healthy competition, and educational value, are considered an effective means to encourage children's active participation in physical activities. Particularly for overweight children, appropriately designed games not only help burn energy and improve weight management but also foster confidence, cooperation, and a positive attitude toward exercise. From this practical and scientific foundation, the present study focuses on designing a system of physical activity games specifically for overweight children aged 5–6 in preschools. The aim is to provide a safe and engaging exercise environment, helping children develop healthy habits, improve physical fitness, and achieve holistic development.

II. Literature Review

2.1. Issues in designing games for overweight children

Game design is the process of developing ideas, constructing structures, and defining rules for play activities. In preschool education, designing games is not only for entertainment but also for promoting holistic physical, psychological, and social development (K. M., 2016). The design concept must be rooted in specific educational goals, appropriate to the age group and developmental needs – especially for overweight children, who require encouragement to engage in physical activities to regulate weight and build active lifestyles (Higgins & Kearney, 2017). The structure of a game includes space, time, organization, and supporting equipment. These elements should be arranged reasonably to create a safe environment that encourages active, joyful, and comfortable participation (Ginsburg, 2007). Rules guide children's behaviors and must be simple, understandable, yet flexible enough to foster cooperation, sharing, and social skills (Ginsburg, 2007). According to Piaget (1962), play is a pathway for children's cognitive, thinking, and social development. Fisher (1996) also emphasized that game design in education should simultaneously promote motor skills, enhance communication, nurture self-confidence, and instill healthy living habits. For overweight children, physical activity games must be adjusted according to their psychological and health conditions. The Ministry of Health (2020) affirms that physical activity, including games, is a practical measure to prevent and control childhood obesity. Overall, designing physical activity games for overweight children is a process of constructing and organizing safe, engaging, and educational games to improve health, develop motor skills, and bring joy to daily exercise.

Games should balance the need for developing motor skills with the physical capacity of overweight children. Gallahue and Ozmun (2011) suggested that physical activity games should include fun activities that stimulate major muscle groups without overloading children's musculoskeletal systems. Categorizing games helps preschool teachers select and organize activities that maGh educational goals, children's physical conditions, and practical contexts. For overweight children, light to moderate games should be prioritized, with intensity gradually increased according to individual fitness (Phạm, 2020).

2.2. Principles and Methods of Organizing Games for Overweight Children

Organizing physical activity games in preschools is not only recreational but also vital for children's physical, psychological, and social development. For overweight children aged 5–6, these games serve as a health education measure, supporting weight adjustment and fostering active lifestyles. To ensure effectiveness, several basic principles and scientific methods must be followed:

Age- and ability-appropriateness: At 5––6 years old, children have developed basic motor skills such as running, jumping, and throwing. However, overweight children

often struggle with agility or endurance. Thus, games must be tailored to moderate intensity, avoiding excessive pressure or feelings of failure (Tsai et al., 2014; Piaget, 1951).

Safety assurance: Since games usually take place outdoors or in large spaces, hazardous obstacles should be removed, and surfaces should be soft and non-slippery. Proper clothing and equipment are also necessary to minimize injury risks and ensure comfort (Jones et al., 2018).

Motivation and interest creation: Fun and excitement are prerequisites for active participation. Encouragement, praise, and a positive atmosphere foster confidence and sustained interest (Huang & Cummings, 2020). Gentle competition and unexpected elements in games also stimulate voluntary engagement (Jones et al., 2018).

Integration into daily routines: Simple activities such as tidying toys, skipping rope, or running around the schoolyard can be organized as games. This integration promotes frequent exercise while avoiding rigid training (Gentier et al., 2013).

Diversity and flexibility: Preschool children easily get bored with repetitive activities. Teachers should frequently vary organizational forms, use different tools, or arrange mini-competitions to maintain interest (Tsai et al., 2014). Creative games like "chasing balloons," "walking in a maze," or "hopping on one foot" both develop physical skills and stimulate creativity (Jones et al., 2018).

Reasonable timing: Each game should last 10–20 minutes, with breaks in between to prevent fatigue. Games should be fast-paced and interactive to maintain children's focus and enthusiasm (Gentier et al., 2013).

In terms of methodology, physical activity games for overweight children should naturally and safely burn excess energy (WHO, 2020), while improving endurance, coordination, and self-confidence (Tsai et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2018). Regular participation not only enhances physical fitness but also forms positive exercise habits, leading to a healthy lifestyle (Nguyen & Tran, 2021). Teachers should prioritize safety, suitability, encouragement, diversity, and integration of health–nutrition education. For example, games can incorporate messages such as "eat more vegetables to be strong" or "exercise to have a flexible body" (Bui, 2022).

When organizing for overweight children, playtime should be limited to 10–15 minutes per session, with breaks for recovery (Jones et al., 2018). Parents should also be encouraged to exercise with their children at home to maintain positive habits (Huang & Cummings, 2020). Teachers need training in designing specialized games for overweight children rather than mechanically applying general games (Nguyen & Tran, 2021).

2.3. Objectives of Designing Physical Activity Games

The design of physical activity games for overweight children aged 5–6 at Tam HiepKindergarten aims to achieve the following objectives:

Improving physical health and fitness of overweight children: Through appropriate physical activity games, children are encouraged to engage in active movement, thereby helping to burn excess energy, regulate body weight, develop the musculoskeletal system, and enhance overall fitness (Ministry of Health, 2020; WHO, 2022).

Enhancing motivation and interest in physical activity: The games are designed to evoke enjoyment and excitement, attracting children's active participation, thus fostering the habit of regular physical activity – an important factor in improving health and preventing obesity (Tran Thi Thao, 2021).

Supporting the development of fundamental motor skills: The games help children practice age-appropriate motor skills such as running, jumping, throwing, climbing, and balancing, while also improving motor qualities such as agility, flexibility, and coordination (Nguyen Thi Bich Hang, 2019; Nguyen Anh Tuyet, 2023).

Contributing to holistic education: In addition to physical activity, the games integrate educational elements such as cooperation, discipline, self-control, creativity, and problem-solving skills – thereby supporting children's all-round development (Ministry of Education and Training, 2017).

III. Research methods

3.1. Pilot design

The study was conducted to verify the feasibility and effectiveness of 12 physical ac-

tivity games selected after consultation with teachers, school administrators, and early childhood education experts. These games were piloted in short-term experiments to assess three core criteria: (1) participation level, (2) comfort level, and (3) activity density. The pilot results provided both theoretical and practical bases for selecting eight optimal games that were appropriate for the physical and psychological characteristics of overweight children aged 5–6, while also feasible for implementation under preschool conditions.

*Participants and duration***.** The pilot involved a group of overweight children aged 5–6 at Tam Hiep Kindergarten, meeting the study's physical criteria. The duration was two weeks, with each game played at least once to ensure that children had sufficient opportunities to experience and demonstrate physical and psychological responses. Activities took place in the schoolyard or outdoor play areas with safe, spacious environments.

Evaluation criteria. The three main criteria included: comfort level (measured using the Leuven five-point scale, from 1 = not comfortable to 5 = very comfortable); participation level (reflecting focus, enthusiasm, and engagement, also using the Leuven scale, from 1 = very low to 5 = very high); and activity density (measured as each child's actual active time, converted to a 1–5 scale: <8 minutes = 1 point, ≥20 minutes = 5 points). The Leuven scale, developed by Laevers and colleagues (University of Leuven), was chosen as the main assessment tool due to its reliability and holistic reflection of children's well-being and involvement – two key indicators of early childhood development (Laevers, n.d.; VVOB Vietnam, n.d.). The combination of these three criteria allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of the feasibility and effectiveness of the physical activity games.

3.2. Experimental method

Purpose. The formal experiment was carried out to verify the effectiveness of the seven optimal games, assessing both physical and psycho-behavioral aspects of children. The monitored indicators included BMI, activity density, participation level, comfort level, cooperation, and confidence. The results reflected the direct impact of physical activity games on children's health while confirming their role in weight management and holistic development (WHO, 2022; Ministry of Health, 2020).

Participants and scope. The experiment involved 12 overweight children aged 5–6 in class La 1 at Tam Hiep Kindergarten (Chau Thanh District, Tien Giang Province). Sampling criteria were based on BMI above the Ministry of Health standard. Homeroom teachers and school administrators participated in supporting, observing, and recording data to ensure objectivity.

Duration and location. The experiment lasted for 12 weeks (January–April 2025), with a frequency of three sessions per week. Games were organized outdoors in the schoolyard for vigorous activities, or indoors when weather conditions were unfavorable.

*Format and organization***.** Each session included 2–3 games, repeated at least twice per game. The content incorporated nutrition education, health care, and cooperation skills. The organizational process consisted of: Preparation (sample selection, training, equipment preparation, observation forms); Implementation (following game rules, with observers recording data); Measurement and evaluation (BMI before–after, Leuven scale, teacher and parent interviews); Synthesis and analysis (comparing results, identifying strengths and weaknesses, proposing applications).

Assessment tools. These included BMI measurement charts following the Ministry of Health standards, observation forms for children's behavior based on the Leuven scale, and surveys for teachers and parents. The evaluation criteria focused on: *Physical effectiveness* (BMI reduction or maintenance at healthy levels, increased endurance); *Psycho-behavioral effectiveness* (active participation, cooperation, confidence); and *Suitability and attractiveness* (safety, feasibility, ability to engage children).

IV. Research Results

4.1. Expert, teacher, and administrator consultation

After drafting 15 prototype physical activity games, the research team sought feedback from the school board, the school health unit, and teachers directly working with overweight children at Tam Hiep Kindergarten. This consultation helped refine the content

to ensure suitability for children's psychological and health characteristics and feasibility given the available facilities. Creativity, attractiveness, and educational value were also emphasized to increase engagement and foster positive exercise habits. Survey results indicated that most games were highly rated, with mean scores (M) ranging from 4.00 to 4.54. Several games stood out—"Magic Energy Tower," "Agile Transporter," "Super-Health Racetrack," and "Jump Across the River" (all M = 4.54)—receiving "very good" evaluations. Other games such as "Pass the Ball to the Finish" (4.38), "Rescue Captain" (4.38), and "Fitness Dance" (4.46) also showed promising results. However, "Power-Rope Tug" and "Energy Rainbow" achieved only M = 2.08, reflecting limited suitability.

4.2. Pilot testing of the games

Observations in Table 2.3 revealed marked differences across the games.

Comfort: Most games reached high to very high levels, notably G1, G2, G3, G5, G6, G8, and G9 (M = 4.75–4.92). In contrast, G4 (2.33) and G7 (2.75) were only moderate/low.

Participation: G1, G2, G3, G5, G6, G8, and G12 all scored M = 4.75–4.92, indicating sound design that encouraged enthusiasm and agency. Some games – G4, G7, G11-had average scores (M = 2.92–3.08), suggesting a split between more and less active children.

Activity density: G2, G3, G5, G6, and G8 achieved very high levels (M = 4.67–4.83), while G4, G7, G10, G11, and G12 were average (M = 2.75–3.25).

4.3. Finalization of the Game set

Based on quantitative results, seven optimal games were selected: G5, G8, G2, G6, G3, G1, and G9. These games scored M = =4.58–4.92 on at least two criteria and maintained high activity density. In particular, G5 ("Green-Energy Bike Race") and G8 ("Fitness Dance") approached near-perfect scores; G2 ("Super-Health Racetrack") and G6 ("Forest Terrain Challenge") stood out for full-body movement; G3 ("Energy Rainbow") and G1 ("Obstacle Course Journey") trained diverse skills; G9 ("Agile Transporter") developed speed and coordination.

4.4. Ougomes of the intervention

As shown in Table 2.5, after 12 weeks, all 12 children showed positive changes. **Weight** decreased by 0.5–1.5 kg (about 1 kg on average) without abrupt loss. **Height** increased by 1 cm in 7/12 children, with the remainder unchanged, confirming safety. **BMI** decreased for all children by –0.32 to –1.45 points (mean –0.9). The greatest reductions were seen in children M03 (–1.45), M07 (–1.31), and M05 (–1.06). Results were consistent across both boys and girls, demonstrating uniform effectiveness. Overall, the seven-game system contributed to reasonable weight reduction, maintained height growth, improved BMI, and increased enthusiasm for physical activity, thereby enhancing the health and quality of life of overweight children aged 5–6.

*Experimental results***.** Table 2.6 shows clear changes in three indicators after 12 weeks. **Weight:** mean change d = –0.91 kg (–5.28%), evidencing appropriate energy expenditure without adverse effects on physical development; t = 7.607, p = .000 < .05 indicates a statistically significant difference. **Height:** d = +0.7 cm (+0.58%), reflecting normal growth; t = 4.69, p = .001 < .05 confirms reliability. **BMI:** mean reduction d = –0.83 points (–4.52%), the key indicator for overweight status; t = 9.818, p = .000 < .05, demonstrating strong intervention effects. Thus, the game system not only supports reasonable weight loss but also sustains height development and markedly improves BMI.

Detailed results show comprehensive effectiveness – physical, psychological, and behavioral – of the seven-game set. **G6** (*Forest Terrain Challenge*, comfort M = 4.83), **G8** (*Fitness Dance*, participation M = 4.75), and **G1** (*Obstacle Course Journey*, activity density M = 4.75) were notable for high and stable scores, sustaining interest and exercise intensity. The most actively participating children (M03, M09, M10, M12) also had the most pronounced BMI improvements, moving from obese to overweight or from overweight to normal categories. Conversely, **G3** and **G5** recorded lower mean scores, indicating fatigue or uneven intensity; hence, rules should be adjusted, duration shortened, or engaging elements increased to optimize impact.

In summary, **100%** of the children reduced BMI, with **33.3%** changing classification, confirming the feasibility and practical value of the game set. Beyond physical benefits, children showed higher comfort,

interest, cooperation, and confidence, thereby forming positive exercise habits.

Aligned with the theoretical framework, the findings reinforce Piaget's (1962) view that movement is a crucial pathway to holistic development. The results also accord with WHO (2020) recommendations that children need at least 180 minutes of physical activity per day, including 60 minutes of vigorous activity. Implemented three times per week over 12 weeks, the game set helped reduce BMI by **0.3–1.2** units and increased height by **0.7 cm** on average. Compared with prior studies (Tremblay et al., 2012; Nguyen Thi Mai, 2021), the present study yields comparable ouGomes (100% BMI reduction; 33.3% reclassification) while adding novelty by incorporating psycho-behavioral assessment via the Leuven scale (Laevers, 1994).

In conclusion, the seven-game system for overweight children aged 5–6 at Tam Hiep Kindergarten demonstrated comprehensive effectiveness: safe weight reduction, BMI improvement, sustained height growth, and enhanced confidence, cooperation, and enthusiasm for movement. These results provide a basis for recommending wider implementation as a feasible solution for preventing and controlling overweight and obesity in early childhood.

V. Conclusion

The 12-week intervention using a system of seven physical activity games for overweight children aged 5–6 at Tam Hiep Kindergarten produced clear improvements in both physical and psycho-behavioral ouGomes. Physically, the children's average weight decreased by 0.91 kg (5.28%), height increased by 0.7 cm (0.58%), and BMI decreased by 0.83 points (4.52%), with statistically significant differences ($p < .05$). These changes reflect appropriate energy expenditure, stable height growth, and safe improvement in overweight status. Psychologically and behaviorally, children exhibited active participation, high comfort, and strong activity density, particularly in G6, G8, and G1. Beyond physical training, the games enhanced confidence, cooperation, and the formation of positive exercise habits. Accordingly, the designed game system is not only an effective measure for managing overweight and obesity in preschoolers but also provides holistic educational value. It is well-suited for broader adoption in early childhood settings to help improve children's health and overall quality of life.

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DEVELOPING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ENGAGEMENT OF 5–6-YEAR-OLD PRESCHOOL CHILDREN THROUGH FOLK GAMES

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Abstract

This article focuses on developing the physical activity engagement of 5–6-year-old preschool children through the organization of folk games (FG). Based on theoretical foundations regarding the role of FG in the physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development of children, the study conducted a pedagogical experiment at three preschools in Tịnh Biên Town, An Giang Province. The research sample included 90 children, divided into experimental and control groups, with the intervention carried out over four months (February–May 2025). The results show that children who regularly participated in FG achieved higher mean scores than the control group across four criteria: active participation, effort to complete tasks, cooperation with peers, and emotional perception–expression. The differences were statistically significant ($P < 0.05$). This demonstrates that FG not only enhances basic motor skills but also stimulates interest, strengthens cooperation, persistence, and the ability to express emotions. The study confirms that integrating FG into preschool education is a practical solution that contributes to comprehensive child development and fosters positive exercise habits from the early years of education.

Keywords: *Folk games; physical activity engagement; 5–6-year-old preschool children; preschool education*

I. Introduction

In the context of early childhood education reform, comprehensive child development requires attention not only to knowledge but also to physical and mental growth. At the age of 5–6, preschool children are in the "golden stage" for forming and developing fundamental motor skills, which lay the foundation for their future physical, intellectual, and personal development. However, in reality, children in urban areas today often have limited opportunities for outdoor activities, with many spending considerable time on electronic devices. This leads to reduced agility, endurance, and enthusiasm for physical activity. Such circumstances raise the need for appropriate forms of activity organization that are both familiar and able to foster children's initiative.

Folk games, with their diversity of forms and deep connections to traditional cultural life, are considered an effective means to

stimulate interest, promote physical activity, and cultivate social skills. Games such as tug of war, "ô ăn quan" (Mandarin square capturing game), hopscotch, and "rồng rắn lên mây" (dragon snake) not only provide opportunities for whole-body movement and sensory coordination but also help children experience solidarity, perseverance, and creativity in play. Integrating FG into preschool activities, especially for 5–6-year-olds, helps awaken active engagement in physical activity, builds habits of exercise, and nurtures a love for national culture. From these theoretical and practical requirements, this study aims to clarify the scientific basis and propose measures to develop physical activity engagement for 5–6-year-old preschool children through the organization of folk games in preschool settings.

II. Literature review

2.1. The role of folk games in the motor development of 5–6-year-old preschool children

According to the Preschool Education Curriculum (Ministry of Education and Training [MOET], 2009, revised 2016), physical development is one of the key areas, with the goal of "forming in children physical qualities, basic motor skills, developing physical fitness, and preparing them for Grade 1." At the same time, the program emphasizes the task of "bringing children joy and excitement when participating in physical activities, forming exercise habits and a healthy lifestyle" (MOET, 2016, p. 23). Thus, motor development is not only about enhancing physical strength, but also about fostering interest, positive attitudes, and sustainable exercise habits. In this context, folk games (FG) are considered an effective educational medium, suitable for the psycho-physiological characteristics of preschool children. In terms of motor skills, FG consist of a rich system of movements ranging from basic (walking, running, jumping, throwing, catching, balancing) to complex (hand–eye coordination, muscle group coordination, spatial orientation). Through repeated play, children both consolidate skills and develop motor qualities such as speed, endurance, dexterity, and flexibility (Lê Thị Thanh, 2018). This is an essential foundation for readiness for primary school.

From the perspective of interest, FG are competitive, joyful, and collective in nature, giving children opportunities to participate voluntarily, with excitement and initiative. This helps form regular exercise habits, an active lifestyle, and positive attitudes toward physical activity (Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Lộc, 2018). In addition, folk games train social competencies through compliance with rules, teamwork, and role-sharing, thereby fostering discipline, solidarity, and cooperation. In this sense, FG go beyond pure physical functions, becoming an important tool for holistic development.

2.2. The relationship between folk games and physical activity engagement

Folk games provide a favorable environment for developing physical activity engagement. Compared to monotonous exercise drills, FG are more attractive due to rules, healthy competition, and entertainment. These elements stimulate interest and intrinsic motivation – the core condition for maintaining active engagement, as explained by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). By participating in FG, children have opportunities to demonstrate competence, make choices, and build social connections, thereby sustaining initiative and long-term enjoyment. Phạm Thị Hòa (2019) emphasizes that FG in physical education encourage "learning through play," promoting autonomy, enjoyment, and sustained participation. Therefore, organizing FG is a natural and friendly condition for children to cultivate active engagement in movement.

Active engagement is also a condition for FG to maximize their value. The effectiveness of FG largely depends on the degree of children's active participation. When children are proactive, follow rules, and strive to overcome challenges, the educational values of the games are fully realized. Conversely, passive attitudes reduce the effectiveness of both physical training and social development. Research by López et al. (2021) in Spain showed that children who actively participated in traditional games made greater progress in motor, cognitive, and social skills compared to passive peers. This aligns with Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Lộc's (2018) view that active engagement is the decisive factor in turning

motor activities into effective learning processes.

The mutual reinforcement between FG and physical activity engagement can be seen as follows: FG with diverse movements (running, jumping, pulling, throwing, etc.) require activity engagement, which helps children proactively improve physical qualities; FG demanding observation, judgment, and quick decision-making encourage children to develop flexible thinking and problem-solving skills; FG of a collective nature require cooperation and coordination, where active engagement allows children to integrate, collaborate effectively, and form positive social skills (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998).

2.3. Mechanisms of the impact of folk games on physical activity engagement

Psychological–motivational aspect: FG are attractive because of competition and fun. Participation allows children to satisfy natural needs for movement, affirm themselves, and experience positive emotions. According to Nguyễn Ánh Tuyết (2018), interest is the driving force behind positive behaviors. International studies (Lee, Kim & Oh, 2020) also confirm that play-based physical activities maintain sustainable participation more effectively than monotonous training.

Motor development aspect: FG integrate many basic skills such as running, jumping, throwing, pulling, and balancing. When repeated in a play context, these skills are reinforced, creating a "positive cycle": skill mastery → confidence → enjoyment → more participation (Lê Thị Thanh, 2018).

Cognitive–social aspect: Rules in FG require children to remember, comply, wait their turn, cooperate, and support peers. This is a social learning process, helping them practice discipline, responsibility, and cooperation (Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). Recognition from peers further strengthens interest and consolidates physical activity engagement.

2.4. Pedagogical principles in using folk games to develop physical activity engagement

Principle of purpose and developmental orientation: FG must be organized based on physical education goals, aligned with learning outcomes of the Preschool Education Curriculum. Teachers should identify which skills a game develops and organize accordingly with clear direction (Lê Thị Thanh, 2018).

Principle of age appropriateness and individualization: Children aged 5–6 have relatively complete motor systems but remain limited in endurance and coordination. Games must fit psycho-physiological traits and be adjusted according to individual capacity to ensure participation opportunities for all (Nguyễn Ánh Tuyết, 2018).

Principle of voluntariness and enjoyment: Active engagement manifests strongly when participation is voluntary. Therefore, teachers should leverage the fun and healthy competitiveness of FG, combining encouragement, praise, and small-group organization (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Principle of safety and value education: FG often take place outdoors with group movements, requiring adherence to safety conditions regarding space, equipment, and supervision. At the same time, cultural and communal values in games should be harnessed, ensuring that while developing physical fitness, children also learn character, solidarity, and social responsibility.

III. Research methods

To test the scientific hypothesis and evaluate the effectiveness of developing physical activity engagement (PAE) through folk games (FG), the study employed a parallel control experimental pedagogy design. The experimental procedure was conducted in three steps:

Step 1: Planning. The research team designed an intervention process aimed at developing PAE through the organization of FG for 5–6-year-old preschool children. The process was designed to be implemented both during physical education classes and outdoor playtime, ensuring feasibility and alignment with the objectives of the Preschool Education Curriculum (MOET, 2016).

Step 2: Selection of experimental and control samples

The experiment was carried out in parallel comparison between two groups:

Experimental group (45 children): Hướng Dương Preschool – 15 children (8 boys, 7 girls); An Nông Kindergarten- 15 children (7 boys, 8 girls); Tuổi Thơ Preschool – 15 children (6 Khmer boys, 9 Khmer girls).

Control group (45 children): Hướng Dương Preschool – 15 children (8 boys, 7 girls); An Nông Kindergarten –15 children (7 boys, 8 girls); Tuổi Thơ Preschool – 15 children (6 Khmer boys, 9 Khmer girls).

Both groups had equivalent numbers of children and gender distribution, ensuring comparability. The three preschools were all located in Tịnh Biên Town (An Giang Province), implemented the official Preschool Education Curriculum issued by MOET, and did not differ significantly in terms of facilities.

Step 3: Teacher training and guidance

Requirements: Participating teachers were required to have equivalent qualifications, experience in teaching 5–6-year-olds, and proficiency in organizing FG.

Implementation: Instructional materials describing and guiding FG were provided for teachers to study and apply during activity organization. The research team also offered training and addressed questions to ensure consistency in implementation.

Duration of experiment: The experiment was conducted from February to May 2025, lasting four consecutive months. This timeframe was sufficient to observe changes in children's PAE while also fitting the academic schedule of the preschools.

The allocation of FG time was identified as a crucial factor to ensure both scientific rigor and practical feasibility. The activities were integrated as follows:

During physical education classes: Focused on observing and assessing children's motor techniques.

During outdoor playtime: Focused on observing children's interest, participation, and initiative in physical activity.

According to expert appraisal and approval, each FG was arranged with a duration of 10–12 minutes to ensure physical training effectiveness while maintaining children's enthusiasm without causing fatigue.

Assessment of experimental results. The level of development of children's PAE was evaluated using 16 criteria applied to both experimental and control groups during the experiment, comparing changes before and after the intervention. Three criteria in particular showed significant developmental changes: Two criteria under the dimension "Effort to Complete Tasks"**;** "The child makes an effort to complete the task until the end."; "The child patiently repeats an action multiple times."

These shifted from "inactive" before the experiment to "average" after the experiment: One criterion under the dimension "Cooperation with Peers and Others"**;** "The child demonstrates friendliness and solidarity with peers." This shifted from "average" before the experiment to "active" after the experiment.

IV. Research Results

4.1. Assessment of the development of physical activity engagement in the experimental group after the intervention

After the intervention period, the manifestations of physical activity engagement (PAE) in the experimental group showed significant and consistent development. Specifically, 14 criteria were upgraded from the "average" level before the experiment to the "active" level afterward. These included*:* "Participating joyfully, eagerly, and enthusiastically"; "Being bold and confident when participating"; "Participating continuously without signs of fatigue (yawning, drowsiness, etc.)"; "Confidently proposing ideas for implementation"; "Discussing and negotiating with peers to carry out tasks together"; "Dividing tasks and selecting appropriate roles independently"; "Proposing solutions when problems arise"; "Listening to others' opinions and sharing their own ideas with peers"; "Demonstrating friendliness and solidarity with friends"; "Resolving conflicts among peers within the group"; "Adjusting behavior and emotions appropriately to the situation"; "Expressing emotions verbally, through gestures and cheerful facial expressions"; "Showing enjoyment when completing tasks."

Two criteria improved from the "inactive" level before the experiment to "average" or "active" afterward: *"Recognizing mistakes and making corrections"* and *"Patiently repeating an action multiple times."* Overall, almost all PAE criteria in the experimental group recorded score increases ranging from 0.22 to 0.73 points.

4.2. Comparison of PAE development between experimental and control groups

After the intervention, nearly all PAE criteria of the experimental group achieved higher mean scores than the control group, with statistically significant differences. For instance, under the "Interest" dimension, the criterion *"Participating joyfully, eagerly, and enthusiastically"* scored a mean of 2.42 (SD = 0.48) in the experimental group compared to 2.18 (SD = 0.39) in the control group, with *tcalculated = 2.60 > tcritical = = 1.9871* (P < 0.05). Similarly, the criterion *"Being bold and confident when participating"* reached a mean score of 2.47 (SD = 0.50) in the experimental group, compared to 2.22 (SD = 0.47) in the control group, with *tcalculated = 2.38* (P < 0.05). For the criterion *"Participating continuously without signs of fatigue,"* the experimental group scored 2.40 (SD = 0.50) versus 2.04 (SD = 0.42) in the control group, with *tcalculated = 3.66 > tcritical,* again confirming statistical significance (P < 0.05). Overall, the three criteria in this dimension improved from "average" (2.15) to "active" (2.43) in the experimental group, while the control group remained lower.

4.3. Results by criterion groups

Group "Active Participation": The experimental group demonstrated higher initiative. For the criterion *"Confidently proposing ideas for implementation,"* the mean score was 2.44 (SD = 0.50), compared to 2.11 (SD = 0.38) in the control group, with *tcalculated = 3.54 > tcritical* (P < 0.05). Similarly, *"Discussing and negotiating with peers"* scored 2.47 (SD = 0.50) versus 2.13 (SD = =0.46), with *tcalculated = 3.28* (P < 0.05). Other indicators, such as "task division" and "problem solving," also favored the experimental group. The overall mean was 2.41 ("Active"), compared to 2.13 ("Average") in the control group.

Group "Effort to Complete Tasks": Significant differences were also observed. For *"Striving to complete tasks to the end,"* the experimental group scored 2.22 (SD = 0.42) compared to 1.67 (SD = 0.56), with *tcalculated = 5.30* (P < 0.05). For *"Recognizing mistakes and making corrections,"* the experimental group scored 2.36, while the control group scored 1.67, with *tcalculated = 6.80*. Similarly, *"Patiently repeating an action"* scored 2.29 in the experimental group versus 1.71 in the control group, with *tcalculated = 5.42* (P < 0.05). Overall, the experimental group reached 2.29 compared to 1.68 in the control group. Although both remained at the "Average" level, the gap reflected higher persistence and determination in the experimental group.

Group "Cooperation with Peers and Others": Clear differences were found. For *"Listening to others' opinions and sharing with peers,"* the experimental group scored 2.40 (SD = 0.50) compared to 2.11 (SD = 0.53) in the control group, with *tcalculated = 2.67* (P < 0.05). Other indicators, such as "teamwork and sharing" and "resolving conflicts," also favored the experimental group with statistical significance. Overall, the experimental group scored 2.48 ("Active"), higher than 2.23 ("Average") in the control group.

Group "Perception and Expression of Emotions": The experimental group also showed positive impact. For *"Adjusting behavior and emotions appropriately,"* the experimental group scored 2.56 compared to 2.31 in the control group, with *tcalculated = 2.28*. For *"Expressing emotions verbally, through gestures, and cheerful facial expressions,"* the experimental group scored 2.38 versus 2.02, with *tcalculated = 3.26*. Finally, *"Expressing emotions naturally and comfortably"* scored 2.47 in the experimental group versus 2.24 in the control group, with *tcalculated = 2.13*. All differences were statistically significant (P < < 0.05). Overall, the experimental group scored 2.47 ("Active") compared to 2.19 ("Average") in the control group.

In summary, across all four criterion groups, the results demonstrated statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups. This provides clear evidence that the application of folk games in preschool education effectively fostered physical activity engagement in 5–6-year-old children, reflected in their initiative, persistence, cooperation, and emotional perception–expression.

V. Conclusion

The study results reveal that the organization of folk games had a significant and positive impact on the development of physical activity engagement in 5–6-year-old preschool children. Across all four criterion groups – *active participation, effort*

to complete tasks, cooperation with peers, and emotional perception–expression – the experimental group achieved higher mean scores, with statistically significant differences compared to the control group.

This confirms that FG not only help children consolidate and develop fundamental motor skills but also nurture proactive attitudes, persistence, cooperation, and socio-emotional competence. Therefore, integrating FG into preschool education is not only consistent with the objectives of holistic child development but also an effective and sustainable solution to forming positive physical activity habits in early childhood.

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A STUDY OF THE APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN UK PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This article critically explores the conceptual distinction between leadership and management, tracing the theoretical evolution from transactional to transformational leadership and its implications for contemporary educational settings. Drawing on seminal frameworks by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), the paper distinguishes transactional leadership as task- and exchange-oriented, maintaining organizational stability through contingent reward systems, while transformational leadership inspires followers toward higher levels of motivation, ethical engagement, and collective purpose. Integrating Goleman's (2000) concept of emotional intelligence, it argues that effective leadership requires self-awareness, empathy, and social skills that foster collaborative school cultures.

Focusing on educational leadership, the study reviews empirical models by Hallinger (2003) and Leithwood and Jantzi (2006), showing how transformational leadership enhances school culture, teacher commitment, job satisfaction, and instructional practice. Transformational leaders empower teachers by cultivating shared vision, professional autonomy, and moral integrity, thereby generating both first- and second-order effects on learning and organizational change. The article also contrasts transformational and instructional (transactional) leadership models, noting that the latter's top-down, directive nature is less conducive to sustained educational reform.

The paper concludes that while transformational leadership offers a compelling model for fostering empowerment, collaboration, and innovation in schools, it must be balanced with transactional mechanisms for accountability and structure. Ultimately, the integration of both approaches – anchored in ethical practice and emotional intelligence – produces the most effective leadership for school improvement, professional growth, and community cohesion.

Keywords: *educational leadership psychology, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, emotional intelligence, teacher motivation, school culture*

Introduction

Leadership versus Management

In my introduction I have used the terms leadership and management interchangeably but I feel that there is a difference between the two titles that needs to be distinguished. Writers such as Smither (1994) argue that managers are appointed to their positions by people who are above them in hierarchy and that this hierarchy defines their objectives. He contrasts this with leadership, arguing that leaders motivate their followers to move to a goal and sometimes these people do not necessarily have to be allocated a place of authority, they simply take lead. He points out that managers on the other hand get human and material resources allocated to them towards achieving the set goal. Other writers such as Shackelton and Wale (2000) also argue a similar point that leaders influence people and that there must be a goal to be accomplished.

Furthermore, there are writers who write on the personal characteristics of a leader: for example; on their charisma, visionary flair, the ability to motivate and to enthuse others (Law and Glover, 2000). This analysis on personal characteristics by Law and Glover moves towards perhaps trying to capture traits of individuals who are successful leaders. Leadership styles do reflect an individual's personality and I will further explore this reality when I will look at transactional and transformational leadership.

In essence management is perhaps more about maintaining the status quo. Management, for example focuses on *keeping an already setup system in place which runs smoothly*, while leadership is about *bringing in change*, making the team or organization move towards a positive vision of change with clear and transparent steps leading to the goal.

Or rather as Harris (2003) puts it, that leadership is essentially a process of building and maintaining a sense of vision, culture and interpersonal relationships. In contrast he argues that management is the co-ordination, support and monitoring of organizational activities. He makes a further point by saying that in order for both roles to be successfully carried out there needs to be a 'careful balancing act'.

The definitions: Transactional leadership and Transformational leadership

Burns (1978) first distinguished two forms of leadership in the late 1970's. His main distinction in his studies was how transactional and transformational leaders motivate their followers by appealing to their values and emotions. In essence he argues that Transactional leadership works on motivating and engaging the follower's *self-interest* and that it is an *exchange relationship*; in other words, the follower has to comply or conform in return for certain rewards. Burns points out that this type of leadership might produce an efficient or productive work place, but is limited compared to transformational leadership.

Burns argues that transformational leadership raises the level of motivation in the followers beyond that of the exchange values. This helps followers achieve a higher level of performance and *self-actualization*. This is particularly important in many work places where there are no visible rewards, so the motivation must come from with the individual to make the change happen. Furthermore, Burns saw transactional and transformational leadership as being at opposite ends of each other as part of a continuum.

Bass (1985) on the other hand argued that a *Two-factor theory* whereby transactional and transformational forms of leadership were built on each other; he saw them as independent notions but were both a related element of leadership. He argued that transformational leaders put their followers at the heart of the organization, where not only followers' needs were recognized but also strong attempts were made to raise and develop those needs, and this in turns encourages the followers to do more than expected. I will discuss this notion of *to do more than expected* in the next section.

Thus, transactional leadership is generally sufficient for maintaining the status quo but transformational leadership is development-orientated for the purpose of change. The success of transformational leadership is visible by increased productivity, and where followers develop their own skills and potential for leadership (Bass and Avolio, 1990).

Bass and his associates (Bass and Steidlemeier, 1998) put forward the following

four dimensions of transformational leadership based on empirical research using the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) theory, these are: (see glossary p.19 for details).

1. Charismatic leadership.
2. Inspirational Motivation.
3. Intellectual stimulation.
4. Individualized consideration.

According to Bass and Avolio (1990) they class the two theoretically distinguished dimensions of *idealised influence* and *inspirational motivation* as one because there is no strong empirical evidence to suggest that they are indeed separate.

Goleman (1998) in his paper 'What makes a leader?' echoes similar sentiments and argues that effective leaders are all alike and share a common characteristic; a high degree of 'Emotional Intelligence'. Goleman (2000) describes emotional intelligence as the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively. He identified emotional intelligence of consisting of four capabilities, they are: (see glossary p.19 for detail).

1. Self-awareness.
2. Self-management.
3. Social awareness.
4. Social skills.

Furthermore, Bass and his associates (Bass and Steidlemeier, 1998) also hypothesized four behavioral dimensions that lie beneath transactional leadership that link in with transformational leadership. Together they form two aspects of a broader range of leadership conceptualization (Bass, 1985). Below are the transactional leadership dimensions: (see glossary p.19 for detail)

1. Contingency rewards.
2. Management by exception-active.
3. Management by exception-passive.
4. Laissez-faire leadership.

Furthermore, by comparing the two styles, in essence transformational leadership has been contrasted and compared with transactional behavior, in which co-operation is obtained by establishing exchange-rewards as mentioned by Burns earlier. Hence, why Bass sees them as being linked.

Bass (1999) argues that transformational leadership theory is supposedly behavioral based, so in actual fact the transformational leadership style can be learnt. However, another interesting point arises, which is that transformational leadership is linked to components of personality, as evident in Goleman (2000) and his list of criterions; this then counter acts Bass's view that this type of leadership style can be learnt. A major criticism leveled at Bass's model of transactional leadership is its underdevelopment. Since transactional practices are built on, or augment transactional leadership (Silins 1994).

Why Transformational Leadership emerged?

According to Hallinger (2003) the past 25 years have witnessed the emergence of new conceptual models in the field of educational leadership. The foremost models in this field have come about by a number of empirical studies; according to Heck and Hallinger (1998) these models are Instructional leadership and Transformational leadership. In his article Hallinger points out that these two models replaced earlier models of leadership that were applied in schools such as (situational leadership, contingency theory, etc,). These models focused primarily on the manner in which educational leadership exercised by school administrators and teachers brought about improved educational outcomes (Southworth, 2002).

Instructional leadership models emerged in the early 80's from early research on effective schools. This initial body of research identified a strong, directive, instructional approach to leadership in schools, with a strong focus on the curriculum under total control of the principal. These were characteristics of effective schools teaching children from poor, urban communities (Edmonds, 1979).

Instructional leadership focused predominantly on the role of the school principal in coordinating, controlling, supervising and developing curriculum and instruction in the school (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985); according to Leithwood and Montgomery (1986), instructional leadership was generally conceived to be a unitary role of elementary schooling. A lot of studies of effective schools focused on poor urban schools in need of substantial change, so it was not really surprising to note that instructional leaders were subsequently, conceived to be 'strong, directive leaders' (Edmonds, 1979).

Some writers have characterized instructional leadership as a directive and top-down approach to school leadership (Barth, 1990; Day et al, 2001). As Cohen and Miller (1980) argue that instructional leadership emphasizes the head teacher/ principal's coordination and control of instruction. Lambert (2002) classes instructional leadership as 'first-order' as it is a single individual controlling from the top. Hallinger (2003) argues that instructional leadership explicitly focuses on school improvement; it would be characterized as transactional leadership in the sense that it seeks to manage and control organizational members to move towards a predetermined set of goals.

As a result, Hallinger (2003) argues that the term transformational leadership emerged during the 1990's as a broader dissatisfaction began to occur with the instructional leadership model, which many believed was too principle-orientated and was very power- and authority-led.

The shift occurred when leadership models began to be construed as being more consistent with evolving trends in educational reform such as: empowerment, shared leadership and organizational learning began to emerge (Hallinger, 1992).

Accordingly, transformational leadership seeks to generate second-order effects. Transformational leaders increase the capacity of others in the school; this in turn produces first-order effects on learning (Lambert, 1998). Transformational leadership seeks to influence people by building from the bottom-up rather than from the top-down. Transformational leaders create a climate in which teachers and staff engage in continuous learning and in which they routinely share their learning with others (Hallinger, 2003).

It was Leithwood (1994) who first carried out the most substantial adaptation of Bass' (1985) model of transformational leadership in educational settings and its effects, followed by further works by him and his colleagues (Leithwood et al; 1996, 1999). Leithwood (1994) highlighted the people-effect as a cornerstone of the transformational leadership model.

Are Transformational leaders needed for schools today?

According to Yukl (1989) transformational theory emphasizes emotions, values and attributes that are important to symbolic behaviour and conceptualizes the role of the leader as helping in making events meaningful for followers.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) looked at transformational leadership research from 1996 to 2005. The evidence about transformational forms of leadership in school is provided by 32 empirical studies in their review paper. The paper focuses particularly on the variables of transformational leadership, looking at both moderating and mediating factors related to this form of leadership and its effects on students.

Leithwood and Jantzi look at some of the positive effects of transformational leadership on students in their review. Hence, in today's schools, transformational leadership has a positive effect on the following aspects:

- School culture;
- Organizational commitment;
- Job satisfaction;
- Changed teacher practice;
- Strategies for change;
- Decision making;
- Instructional quality;
- Teacher efficacy.

A lot of points in the above list are interlinked. I would like to closely look at the first four bullet points as I feel that last four bullet points are interconnected within them.

i. School Culture

In order to bring about a change in the school culture, leaders have to be strong communicators. The leader must have excellent skills of both listening and sending out clear, convincing and well-tuned messages (Goleman, 2000).

Mazzarella and Grundy (1989) noted that effective school leaders in particular, are good at communicating and have the aptitude and skills they need to interact well with others; they know how to communicate. Nickse (1977) studied teacher change agents and reported that strategies such as developing one-to-one communication with teachers in the lounge and listening to others

were particularly facilitative in implementing change at these schools.

Interestingly enough, Joiner (1987) stated that leaders for change must recognize that people are its greatest resource. He looked at three dimensions:

1. Leaders valuing the professional contributions of staff.
2. Leaders' ability to relate to staff/people.
3. Leaders developing collaborative relationships.

He argues that the first acknowledges individual skills and expertise while the other two are about interpersonal skills. So, leaders of change not only help followers realize the vision but also have the skills which help them relate to others to build collaborative relationships. This is extremely important in schools, as a sense of community needs to be built where every member of the school has a productive place in that community; a sense of collective efforts is important and every member's needs are addressed. Transformational leaders help form teams, support team efforts, develop skills that groups of individuals need and provide the necessary environment for them to flourish. Leaders that bring in change, value and trust the strengths of others, they acknowledge their efforts and contributions in the realization of their organization's vision.

Murphy et al., (1991) states an assumption about leaders who change their organization; that only the people on the top of the hierarchy will lead. However, this assumption of change coming only from the top is not representative of the true reality. In fact, there is an invisible leadership of lower-level staff members who implement the change; they need to be empowered and a sense of autonomy is very important – i.e. each member having a responsibility. The sense of autonomy needs to be appreciated by the leaders, so the staff feel that they are contributing to the system. Hoy and Brown (1988) note that the most effective leader behavior is strong in both initiating structure and consideration. So effective leaders in schools are both task and people-orientated.

ii. Teacher/ Staff Commitment (Organisational Commitment)

As Barth (1990) and Lambert (2002) point out that transformational leaders work with others in the school community to identify personal goals and then link these to broader organizational goals. This transformational leadership approach is believed to increase commitment of staff who see the relationship between what they are trying to accomplish and the mission of the school.

The reason why these changes are seen as second-order effects as the principle/head teacher creates the conditions in which others are committed and self-motivated to work towards the improvement of the school without specific direction from above (Hallinger, 2003). Transformational leadership has an impact on teachers' perceptions of school conditions, their commitment to change, and the organizational learning that takes place (Fullan, 2002; Day et al., 2001).

According to Barling, weber and kelloway (1996) Transformational leadership has been linked to a variety of outcomes, such as employee commitment to the workplace; employee commitment is crucial to educational workplaces, as everybody needs to be committed to the greater cause.

Linking with the above point Porter et al. (1974) looked at organizational commitment: they defined it as the strength of the individual identification and involvement with a particular organization. The concept of organizational commitment had three components as defined by Porter et al (1974), as follows:

1. A strong belief in acceptance of organizational goals and values.
2. A willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization.
3. A definite desire to maintain organizational membership.

In their study they found that transformational leadership had a positive and influential effect organizational commitment, rather than transactional leadership, which had adverse effects on these components. Leaders need to address followers' self-worth in order to engage them and make them commit. So, it seems that this is really one of the strongest motivators of transformational leaders (Shamir, 1991).

Barnett and McCormick (2003) conclude that building a shared vision actually helps to bind people together and establish a group ownership. This consensus and commitment

to school vision are developed through leadership practices such as communication, leader credibility and the involvement of the school community in collaborative processes.

Vision is a major part of a transformational leader described both by Bass (1985) and Goleman (2000). Similar sentiments are shared by Sergiovanni (1990), who states that school leaders not only need the vision but also the ability to communicate that vision or idea, much rather like a shared covenant; i.e., a development of this shared vision occurs within the team or organization. When leaders invite, encourage and support others to take part in shaping and developing this shared vision then mutually respectful and collaborative relationships are developed. Sergiovanni (1990) describes this aspect of leadership as bonding, where the leaders and followers have a set of values, which they share, and this bonds them in a common cause to meet a common goal. Once there is a shared vision then there is a commitment to change and the transition to change is much smoother. This way the followers feel less threatened as the ideas and values are mutual and shared.

iii. Job satisfaction

Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job and job experience. It results from the idea that an employee's job actually provides what he or she values in the work situation. Following the works of Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman (1959) researchers have been defining and measuring job satisfaction as a global concept (Nguni et al, 2006). This concept has two distinct aspects, which include intrinsic (level of job satisfaction with various features associated with the job itself) and the extrinsic (level of satisfaction with features associated with the environment in which the work is performed) job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001; Dinham and Scott, 2000).

Research conducted in school settings has shown that leaders behaviours have influence on job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001; Dinham and Scott, 2000; Ostroff, 1992). To illustrate the last point Maeroff (1988) reported that job satisfaction is positively related to participative decision-making and to transformational leadership. They point out further that in the case of school settings, teachers reported greater satisfaction in their work when they perceive their principal as someone who shares information with others, delegates authority and keeps open channels of communication with teachers (Nguni et al, 2006). Other studies indicate that strong principal leadership emerged as a consistent factor affecting teacher job satisfaction and motivation (Morris and Sherman, 1981).

Similarly, Leithwood et al (1996) found that transformational leadership behaviours have been found to have a positive effect in relation to teacher job satisfaction. Likewise, Leithwood and Jantzi (1996) argue that transformational leadership has both direct and indirect effects on teachers' job satisfaction; indirect effects were through teachers' perceptions of occupational prestige, self-esteem, autonomy at work and professional self-development.

Subsequently, Bogler (2001) carried out research in Israeli secondary schools and concluded that the influence of transformational leadership on teachers' job satisfaction was positive. Despite the large amount of corpus available on the effects of transformational leadership, Nguni et al (2006) argue that there is still very little evidence about the effects of transformational school leadership on teachers' job satisfaction or organizational commitment in schools – especially primary schools – in the developing countries, as the evidence is widely based from the western world.

iv. Changed teacher practice

Leithwood (1992) reported that transformational school leaders were in a continuous pursuit of the following three primary goals:

1. Helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture;
2. Fostering teacher development;
3. Helping them solve problems together more effectively.

Firstly, creating a collaborative school environment enables the staff members to talk, observe, critique, and plan together. These norms of collective responsibility and continuous improvement encourage staff to teach one another, and, as a result, learn how to teach better (Leithwood, 1992).

Leithwood (1992) continues by giving examples or strategies used by leaders to build and maintain a collaborative school culture by involving the staff members by setting goals together which results in reducing teachers' isolation. As Liontos (1992) argues that the school leaders are responsible for actively communicating the school's cultural values, norms and beliefs. The catalyst to all this process is by sharing leadership with others and as an example perhaps to delegate power to specific school improvement teams.

Secondly, fostering teacher development; Leithwood (1992) suggests that teachers' motivation for development is improved when they internalize goals for professional growth. This process is facilitated when they engage in establishing a school mission to which they are committed to. Teachers' development can be enhanced by giving them a role in solving non-routine school improvement problems and ensuring that the goals are clear, explicit and challenging but not unrealistic (Leithwood, 1992).

Thirdly, helping teachers solve problems more effectively; in order to achieve any meaningful school improvement, staff members need to work harder. This is why teachers have come to value transformational leadership because it acts as a stimulant for engaging them in new activities and putting forth that extra effort (Leithwood, 1992).

According to Leithwood (1992), transformational leadership has a sizable influence on teacher collaboration and a significant relationship exists between its aspects and the changes of teachers' attitudes toward school improvement and altered (enhanced) instructional behavior.

Bass and Steidlmeier, (1998) argue that in order to bring about these changes, the transformational leader must promote a model of values which are honesty, loyalty and fair including the end values of justice, equality and human rights. They further argue that transformational leaders are committed to a clear and stated code, which is enforced continually, and an enforced ethical code of conduct. They should also build an organization with high ethical standards where all members have shared moral standards.

Accordingly, transformational leaders are truly concerned about the good that can be achieved for their group and they openly bring about changes in the followers' values by the worth and relevancy of their ideas and mission to their followers' ultimate beliefs and fulfillment (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1998).

Conclusion

In conclusion from what I have read it would seem that the argument for transformational leadership is soundly justified. This is further evident from old and new literature, and particularly in literature where significant empirical studies have been carried out.

The most important aspect of transformational leadership is the idea of teachers and administrations working together to support, acknowledge and appreciate each other. This in turns boosts staff relations and has a positive effect on pupils. A transformational leader makes every member feel valued hence promoting a strong educational community in the school. The idea of sharing power and giving self-worth to all members of an organization promotes the idea of equality and a shared sense of responsibility.

Interestingly enough there is a view also that transformational leadership goes against ethical constraints (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1998); as it is not merely about motivating people but rather about manipulating people to actually act upon the leader's vision and adopt the leader's ideas and values, where they have to put the extra effort in.

However, I feel that in the short term there is a need for transformational leadership, but a more balanced approach is best suited in an organization such as a school. Writers such as Leithwood (1992) reflect a similar viewpoint, arguing that transactional and transformational leadership are complementary to each other. Similarly, Bass (1985) argues that transformational leadership does not substitute transactional leadership – in fact, evidence indicates that the best leaders are both transformational and transactional.

Jackson (2000) suggest that transformational leadership requires a higher tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty from the principle/ head teacher and being able to live with the messy process of change, in other words; transactional leadership limits uncertainty.

Hoy and Brown (1988) also found that teachers responded more favorably to

principals with a leadership style that combined both structure and consideration. Indeed, as Hallinger (2003) concludes that the study demonstrates the effectiveness of integrated learning – both transformational and transactional (instructional), in eliciting the transactional leadership of teachers for improving school performance.

Similarly, as Jackson (2000) and Fullan (2002) observe that school improvement is a journey. The type of leadership that is suitable to a certain stage of the journey may well become a limiting or even counter-productive force as the school develops; hence the type of PF leadership at any given time depends on the type of school and its specific developmental requirements.

Glossary

Bass and his associates proposed the following four dimensions of transformational leadership based on empirical research using the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ),

Charismatic leadership: The leaders are role models for followers, inspire those around them, create an attractive vision of the future, elevating follower goals and inspiring enthusiasm and optimism.

Inspirational Motivation: Inspires followers with challenges and meaning for engaging in shared goals and undertakings.

Intellectual stimulation: Transformational leaders use intellectual stimulation to point out problems in current situations and contrast then with the vision of the future.

Individualized consideration: to an extent of how transformational leaders treat their followers as individuals, how much leaders give their personal attention for coaching, mentoring, personal advice and opportunities for development.

Goleman (2000) describes emotional intelligence as the ability to manage ourselves and our relationships effectively. He identified emotional intelligence of consisting of four capabilities:

Self-awareness: Being aware of your own emotions, Accurate self-assessment – your own strengths and limitations and self-confidence.

Self-management: This includes self-control over own emotion, trustworthiness in own character, conscientiousness to manage yourself and responsibility, adaptability, achievement orientation i.e. to meet internal standards of excellence and initiative a readiness to seize opportunity.

Social awareness: Having empathy, sensing other people's emotions, organizational awareness, networking etc., and service orientation – to recognizes and meet customer needs.

Social skill: visionary leadership, have influence, develop others, communication, change catalyst i.e. leaders that initiate change, conflict management, building bonds and lastly teamwork and collaboration.

Bass's transactional leadership dimensions:

Contingency rewards: The extent to which leaders set goals, make rewards on performance, obtain necessary resources, and provide rewards and performance goals are met.

Management by exception-active: The extent to which leaders closely monitor followers' performance and keep track of mistakes.

Management by exception-passive: The extent to which leaders may not be aware of problems until informed by others and generally fail to intervene until serious problems occur.

Laissez-faire leadership: The extent to which leaders avoid responsibility, fail to make a decision, are absent when needed, or fail to follow up on requests.

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