



Transformational Leadership and Students' Psychological Well-Being: A Thematic Review

Ludy Saibuangpui Sailo¹, Dr. Ashwini Jagannath²

¹MA Education Student, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India

²Assistant Professor, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Punjab, India

¹Email: ludymartz@gmail.com, ²Email: ashwini.mahamuni05@gmail.com

Abstract:

In today's world, psychological well-being has been one of the most important aspects of life in learning institutions as a result of many changes in the academic environment and social environment as well as improvements in technology. Leadership is one aspect which has been very influential in the lives of students and their success in life, especially when considering the use of transformational leadership techniques. This paper seeks to explore the effects of transformational leadership on students' psychological well-being through literature review of available resources on the subject. The review will be carried out based on the direct and indirect relationship between leadership and well-being as well as key mediators such as self-efficacy, psychological need satisfaction, and trust. Gaps in the current research will also be pointed out and recommendations for further studies offered. This paper will apply thematic literature review methodology in its analysis and synthesis of data from relevant sources.

Keywords: transformational leadership, psychological well-being, students, self-efficacy, educational leadership, mental health

INTRODUCTION

It should be noted that nowadays, there is a new trend in education where success does not only depend on academic achievements because there are other important aspects like psychological health and well-being. It is important to note that due to the increased academic workload and competition as well as the rapid development of modern technologies, students experience significant levels of stress that influence their psychological well-being.

Therefore, many researchers and policymakers are interested in the problem of psychological health and well-being in education today. Psychological well-being is considered as a positive state of mental and emotional functioning that involves such qualities as self-confidence,



happiness, resilience, and having a sense of purpose in life. On the other hand, students with poor psychological wellness are affected negatively in terms of motivation and performance.

In this respect, one of the key factors that play an important role in such environments is leadership. For example, when considering education as an environment, both educators and institutional leaders have a great impact on the way how students feel about themselves, their studying process and communication with other people. The type of leadership could create either a positive atmosphere that would provide people with confidence, or the atmosphere filled with stress preventing people from getting involved into the process. One of these leadership types, which becomes increasingly popular, is transformational leadership.

According to experts, transformational leadership is characterized by an attempt to recognize the need for transformation, to shape a vision and motivate others in achieving it by means of encouraging them in their activities. Unlike transactional leadership, which aims at accomplishing some task or goal, transformational leadership attempts to improve people as individuals, considering their uniqueness and helping them reach their full potential. There are several aspects to transformational leadership, which includes idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

In the context of education, the application of such leadership style becomes extremely relevant as it influences the students' educational process and consequently affects their achievements. In particular, empathic leaders who encourage their students to become more independent in their thinking provide a better environment that positively affects their academic engagement and psychological condition.

Empirical studies concerning the influence of transformational leadership on the psychological well-being of students do exist; however, they do not consider all possible dimensions of the problem. While there is enough research on transformational leadership as the factor promoting motivation in students, increasing their sense of self-efficacy, and even influencing their academic achievements, these topics remain separate.

Therefore, the goal of the current paper is to analyze and synthesize existing information concerning the influence of transformational leadership on the psychological well-being of students. Analysis of various issues regarding the phenomenon under consideration will help to identify the directions for further investigation and lay the foundation for a new study.

CONCEPT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational leadership may be defined as leadership in which leaders inspire their followers and bring changes about. The leadership style of transformational leaders is not about telling followers how to go about doing certain things, but instead focuses on developing followers in such a way as to enable them to do a much better job than they did before. The importance of transformational leadership arises from the necessity for the environment of being adaptive and growing.

The core of Transformational Leadership is the capacity that leaders have not only to guide their followers but also to motivate and inspire them to effect not just behavioral changes but value



and goal-based changes as well. Transformational leadership process begins with the recognition of the necessity for change, envisioning and implementation of the vision created.

Transformational leadership is also characterized by a number of distinct advantages that arise from its systematic nature. There are four key aspects to this leadership model:

- **Inspirational Individuals:** Such individuals act as inspirational people for the performance of the activity. People admire such individuals due to their performance of the activity because it becomes easy for them to build up their credibility among others. This credibility makes other people emulate what they do.
- **Motivation of Others:** Leaders with this trait can inspire others to work towards their objectives and motivate them to reach their goals. People like this can motivate other people so that they can progress towards their goals.
- **Thinking Differently:** Such leaders motivate people to think differently. They encourage people to think innovatively so that they come up with something different. This practice is called as Intellectual Stimulation, in which leaders use intellectual stimulation to motivate others.
- **Individualized Consideration:** The leaders recognize individual differences and attend to individual needs.

All these elements come together to form an atmosphere in which people not only receive guidance but are also empowered. Instead of exercising authority, transformational leaders develop positive relationships and promote involvement, leading to personal and group growth.

In schools this kind of leadership is really good because it is what students need to grow. Teachers and leaders who use this style can change how students think about learning how they handle situations and how they feel about what they can do. Transformational leadership is helpful because it makes students trust them. Teachers and leaders who use leadership encourage students to ask questions and help them when they need it. This helps make a classroom where students can get better at school work and also feel good about themselves. Transformational leadership is important, for students. It helps them learn.

In addition, transformational leadership provides long-term benefits through growth and does not seek short-term advantages. Such leadership encourages independent thinking and promotes greater self-awareness and accountability. Such qualities are important for the students because these will not only increase their academic results but also psychological ones.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

Psychological well-being is a multifaceted concept involving the thoughts and feelings that individuals hold about their psychological and emotional states. The term in the field of education involves not only the absence of stress and anxiety but also includes aspects like confidence, emotional balance, life focus, and effective handling of problems. As far as learners are concerned, well-being is an essential element in influencing their approach towards learning and social interactions within educational institutions.

As opposed to academic accomplishments, the psychological well-being of individuals depends upon a mixture of personal and environmental conditions. Some such variables are interactions



among peers, classroom environment, teaching methods, and the support mechanism available in the institution. Individuals who are made to feel valued, supported, and appreciated become positive about their learning experience. Conversely, an environment where there is neither any appreciation nor any support for the individual results in negative outcomes.

One of the aspects of psychological well-being entails the acquisition of inner qualities including resilience, self-efficacy, and emotional regulation. Such capabilities allow individuals to handle their challenges, adjust, and have a sense of control in their situations. Learning settings where these capabilities are cultivated usually foster not only competent learners but psychologically healthy individuals as well.

In such a framework, the importance of leadership is greatly highlighted. Leadership functions are not separate from the day-to-day activities of students. Rather, they determine the circumstances in which students learn. The mannerisms, actions, and styles employed by teachers and educational leaders affect the ways in which students feel supported, treated fairly, and motivated. When leadership practices promote comprehension, motivation, and personal development, stability can be promoted psychologically.

Psychological well-being is also associated with long-term development among students. This is because it does not affect short-term academic performance alone but is also related to future confidence levels, decision-making skills, and life satisfaction. The development of psychological well-being leads to independence, competence, and social responsibility among learners.

Because of its significance, psychological well-being cannot be left behind as a side effect of education; on the contrary, it should be seen as an important part which contributes to the processes of learning and growth. Such an approach allows one to consider the issue of the influence of various types of leadership, including transformational leadership.

THEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational Leadership and Psychological Well-Being

A large number of studies in recent times have found a positive correlation between transformational leadership and psychological well-being within educational organizations. In contrast to conventional leadership styles which focus on productivity and control, transformational leaders concentrate on providing an environment that meets the emotional requirements of individuals.

In school contexts, Purwanti et al. (2025) found that leadership practices such as individualized attention, openness to innovation, and motivational support significantly enhance key aspects of psychological well-being, including autonomy, personal growth, and positive interpersonal relationships. Similarly, Sutinah et al. (2025) reported that transformational leadership fosters trust, collaboration, and emotional support among school members, thereby contributing to a more positive and stable learning environment.

In regards to the teacher being a transformational leader, there has been much discussion in this regard. According to Nainggolan (2024), the learning process associated with inclusiveness, motivation, and centrality of students can help in building a positive atmosphere within schools



and improve the well-being of students. Another important point which should be considered is that, according to Ucheagwu-Okoye (2025), school administrators play an important role in fostering mental health within the schools.

These similar trends have been identified in higher education contexts as well. Transformational leadership behavior is seen to have a positive effect on the adaptation and satisfaction of students, especially for international students who are adapting to a new environment. In support of this notion, Sanchez-Garcia et al. (2024) showed that transformational leadership boosts the self-esteem, motivation, and joy of students, all of which constitute psychological well-being.

Support for these conclusions were also provided in previous literature. According to Bryant et al. (2018), inspirational motivation and idealized influence can be regarded as examples of transformational leadership approaches positively impacting self-confidence and emotional stability of followers, which positively affect their well-being. All in all, both sets of results show that transformational leadership fosters psychological well-being.

Psychological Mechanisms Linking Leadership and Well-Being

Although the positive relationship between transformational leadership and psychological well-being is well established, research suggests that this relationship is often influenced by underlying psychological mechanisms.

The most important mediator that emerges from the literature review is self-efficacy. In a study conducted by Wang et al. (2020) within the context of social cognitive career theory, it was observed that transformational leadership positively impacts the self-efficacy of students, leading to their better development and welfare. Malik & Tariq (2015) also stated that self-efficacy fully mediated the link between transformational leadership and psychological well-being, which implies that well-being can be achieved by enhancing the efficacy of an individual's self-perception skills.

An additional significant factor is the fulfillment of certain basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Torres-Moya et al. (2026) have shown that transformational leadership plays an important role in enhancing the fulfillment of those needs and reduces frustration associated with their lack of fulfillment, resulting in reduced burnout in adolescents.

Other than all the above, trust and emotional support are equally important. Trust and psychological well-being have been found to be important mediators of transformational leadership and organizational commitment by Jain et al. (2019). The implication is that leadership behavior improves employee psychological well-being, which leads to better behavior. Moreover, Pusvitasari et al. (2023) mentioned that teacher well-being works as a mediator between transformational leadership and academic performance. This finding indicates that leadership affects students indirectly by influencing the psychological condition of teachers.

Together, these studies demonstrate that transformational leadership influences psychological well-being through multiple interconnected psychological pathways. While most studies report a



positive relationship, some findings suggest that the effectiveness of certain leadership components may vary across different cultural and educational contexts (Park & Lee, 2024).

Transformational Leadership Across Diverse Contexts

Transformational leadership is effective not only in the traditional educational environment but also in diverse settings that emphasize distinct aspects of psychological well-being promoted by transformational leadership.

For instance, in the digital learning environment, Shorouk et al. (2026) investigated the influence of leadership in addressing cyber behavior issues and ensuring psychological well-being of learners. As a result, the role of transformational leadership in emotional regulation, appropriate use of technology, and creation of collaborative learning environments was identified.

Leadership, on the other hand, is equally important in sports and after-school activities. Torres-Moya et al. (2026) revealed that transformational leadership in coaches and parents contributes to lower levels of burnout and better psychological results due to adolescents' fulfillment of their basic psychological needs.

As for more general educational environments, Ucheagwu-Okoye (2025) highlighted the role of leadership in fostering awareness about mental well-being, whereas Sánchez-García et al. (2024) reported that leadership skills have a positive influence on students' physical education experience.

Additionally, Park and Lee (2024) highlighted the importance of culturally responsive leadership in supporting international students' adaptation and satisfaction, showing that leadership effectiveness can vary across cultural contexts.

These findings collectively indicate that transformational leadership is adaptable and effective across diverse environments, making it a valuable approach for enhancing psychological well-being in different educational settings.

Impact on Academic and Developmental Outcomes

Aside from its positive impact on psychological well-being, there have been other positive outcomes that can be achieved through transformational leadership. In their studies, Wang et al. (2020) have discovered that transformational leadership helps increase the employability of students because it increases self-efficacy and enhances problem-solving abilities. In another study conducted by Pusvitasari et al. (2023), it was found that the influence of leadership on academic performance was indirect due to the role of teacher well-being.

Bryant et al. (2018) further demonstrated that transformational leadership enhances motivation and emotional stability, which are essential for sustained academic engagement and personal development. These findings indicate that psychological well-being acts as a bridge linking leadership practices to broader educational outcomes.

Theoretical Perspectives Supporting Transformational Leadership

Aside from empirical data, theoretical frameworks offer additional insights into how transformational leadership affects psychological well-being.



As noted by Mbindyo et al. (2021), the application of transformational leadership practices is possible in the area of academic advising since the role of advisor in this regard is similar to that of mentor in promoting students' progress in education, personal and professional life.

Similarly, Perreault et al. (2015) explored how the fulfillment of fundamental psychological needs affects the development of transformational leadership behavior. The authors' results indicate that the support offered helps in developing leadership skills as well as psychological well-being. These theoretical insights are in agreement with empirical observations because they give a more profound insight into the way transformational leadership promotes psychological well-being.

Research Gap

Nevertheless, certain research lacunae exist even today. First of all, most empirical studies analyze particular cases separately without considering different environments. Moreover, despite the vast number of empirical studies dealing with such outcomes as performance, motivation, or engagement, there are few studies where psychological well-being was the primary construct under consideration.

Finally, even though such mediating variables as self-efficacy, psychological needs, and trust have already been considered in relation to transformational leadership, there is no comprehensive model that analyzes their role together.

Thus, further research might address all these lacunae in order to get a better picture of the relationship between transformational leadership and students' psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION

This review reveals the important role played by transformational leadership in creating students' psychological well-being in various educational settings. Focusing on motivation, personalized consideration, and stimulating intellect of students is what transformational leadership involves, which helps students learn not just academically but psychologically and socially as well. It becomes evident through this literature that the leadership approach based on inspiration and trust always yields positive results in terms of psychological well-being.

One of the key takeaways from this review paper is the fact that the role of transformational leadership does not depend on direct contacts. In other words, this concept affects people in various psychological ways such as developing self-efficacy, satisfaction of their psychological needs, and building trust. Such a set of personality traits helps the students cope with challenges, remain active participants in the learning process, and remain calm when facing tough situations. Hence, one may say that psychological health is both the effect and the foundation of leadership. The review also demonstrates that transformational leadership is effective across diverse settings, including schools, higher education institutions, sports environments, and digital learning spaces. This adaptability highlights its relevance in addressing contemporary educational challenges, where students must navigate not only academic expectations but also social and technological complexities.

However, the study points out the importance of gaining a deeper insight into the relationship between contextual and cultural differences and their impact on the efficiency of transformational



leadership. Future research may focus on these differences, as well as develop a model that will take into account these aspects in addition to the interaction of leadership, psychology, and education. Educational establishments need to support leadership development programs to foster transformational behavior among educators.

Overall, transformational leadership emerges as a meaningful and practical approach for fostering environments that support students' psychological well-being. Its emphasis on growth, support, and engagement makes it particularly suited to modern education, where the goal is not only to achieve academic success but also to nurture resilient, confident, and well-rounded individuals.

REFERENCES

- Bryant, P., Butcher, J. T., & O'Connor, J. (2018). *Improving school leadership: The connection of transformational leadership and psychological well-being of the followers*. *School Leadership Review*, 11(2), Article 6. <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr/vol11/iss2/6>
- Malik, S. Z., & Tariq, S. (2015). Relationship of transformational leadership, psychological well-being and self-efficacy: A mediation analysis in university faculty. *Journal of Quality and Technology Management*, 11(2), 93–109.
- Purwanti, J., Santosa, A. B., Zuhaery, M., & Uye, E. E. (2025). Transformational leadership and its impact on the psychological well-being of school members. *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 9(4), 1188–1202. <https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v9i4.12261>
- Perreault, D., Cohen, L. R., & Blanchard, C. M. (2015). Fostering transformational leadership among young adults: A basic psychological needs approach. *Journal of Adolescence*, 45, 341–355. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2015.1083451>
- Sutinah, T., Ismaya, B., & Sholeh, S. (2025). Transformational leadership for school well-being: Building a positive learning environment. *Ruhama: Research & Humanities*, 5(6). <https://doi.org/10.54518/rh.5.6.2025.919>
- Shorouk, A., Taddese, E. T., Nalliah, M. M., & Saidin, K. (2026). The role of transformational leadership in managing cyber behavior and promoting mental well-being in early childhood education in the digital age. In *Implications for students' mental health in the digital age: AI and cyber behavior*. IGI Global. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-4222-1.ch018>
- Torres-Moya, N., Arias-Casasús, L., Celsi, I., Tomás, I., Castillo, I., & Alvarez, O. (2026). Transformational leadership styles, adolescent burnout, and the mediating role of basic psychological needs: A cross-sectional study on family and sport contexts. *Sports*, 14(2), 48. <https://doi.org/10.3390/sports14020048>
- Ucheagwu-Okoye, O. M. (2025). Role of school leaders in promoting mental health awareness among secondary school students in Anambra State for sustainable



development. *African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies*, 14(1). <https://www.ajemates.org/index.php/ajemates/article/view/624>

- Park, J.-C., & Lee, B.-S. (2024). Transformational leadership and its effects on college life adaptation and satisfaction among Vietnamese international students. *Journal of Wellbeing Management and Applied Psychology*, 7(5), 73–83. <https://doi.org/10.13106/jwmap.2024.vol7.no5.73>
- Sánchez-García, C., Reigal, R. E., Hernández-Martos, J., Hernández-Mendo, A., & Morales-Sánchez, V. (2024). Engagement in transformational leadership by teachers influences the levels of self-esteem, motor self-efficacy, enjoyment, and intention to be active in physical education students. *Sports*, 12(7), 191. <https://doi.org/10.3390/sports12070191>
- Nainggolan, L. (2024). The role of transformational teachers in school climate improvement and students' well-being in SMP Negeri 1 Raya. *Journal of Language Education (JoLE)*, 2(4), 257–264. <https://doi.org/10.69820/jole.v2i4.253>
- Pusvitasari, R., Viriyavejakul, C., & Sumettikoon, P. (2023). The impact of leadership on teacher well-being and student achievement in Islamic private schools in Southern Thailand. *Journal of Positive Psychology & Wellbeing*, 7(1), 701–715.
- Mbindyo, M., O'Connor, R. J., & Nandedkar, A. (2021). Linking transformational leadership theory to the practice of academic advising: A conceptual paper. *Journal of Higher Education Theory & Practice*, 21(12), 172–180. <https://doi.org/10.33423/jhetp.v21i12.4710>
- Wang, S., Peng, M. Y.-P., Xu, Y., Simbi, V. T., Lin, K.-H., & Teng, T.-C. (2020). Teachers' transformational leadership and students' employability development: A social cognitive career perspective. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 48(5), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.8594>
- Jain, P., Duggal, T., & Ansari, A. H. (2019). Examining the mediating effect of trust and psychological well-being on transformational leadership and organizational commitment. *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 26(5), 1517–1532. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BIJ-07-2018-0191>

Cite this Article:

Ludy Saibuangpuii Sailo¹, Dr. Ashwini Jagannath², “Transformational Leadership and Students' Psychological Well-Being: A Thematic Review” The Research Dialogue, Open Access Peer-reviewed & Refereed Journal, Pp-446-454, Volume-05, Issue-01, April-2026, <https://theresearchdialogue.com/>



This is an Open cess Journal / article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License CC BY-NC-ND 3.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. All rights reserved.



CERTIFICATE

of Publication

This Certificate is proudly presented to

Ludy Saibuangpui Sailo¹, Dr. Ashwini Jagannath²

For publication of Research Paper title

**Transformational Leadership and Students'
Psychological Well-Being: A Thematic
Review**

Published in 'The Research Dialogue' Peer-Reviewed / Refereed Research Journal
and E-ISSN: 2583-438X, Volume-05, Issue-01, Month April, Year-2026, Impact
Factor (RPRI-4.73)

Dr. Lohans Kumar Kalyani
Editor- In-chief



Dr. Neeraj Yadav
Executive-In-Chief- Editor

Note: This E-Certificate is valid with published paper and the paper
must be available online at: <https://theresearchdialogue.com/>
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.64880/theresearchdialogue.v5i1.49>