

A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AT ZHUXIANG SCHOOL IN SHENZHEN CITY, GUANGDONG PROVINCE, CHINA

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Abstract: This study aimed to understand the current status of special education teachers' transformational leadership and organizational identification at Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province, China, and to explore the differences and relationships between teachers' transformational leadership and organizational identification. The study used the transformational leadership and organizational identification scales as survey tools, conducting a questionnaire survey of 180 teachers at Zhuxiang School, with 177 valid questionnaires returned. This research employed quantitative methods such as descriptive statistical analysis, independent samples t-test, One-way ANOVA analysis, and correlation analysis. The results showed that the overall special education teachers' transformational leadership and organizational identification at Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province, were at a high level. There were significant differences in educational backgrounds and professional titles regarding teachers' transformational leadership and organizational identification, but no significant differences in gender, age, or teaching age. And there was a significant positive correlation between teachers' transformational leadership and organizational identification. Based on the results, the following suggestions are proposed to strengthen the teacher training system in special education, optimize the incentive mechanism, enhance the sense of organizational identification, and establish interactive mechanisms to promote teachers' professional development.

Keywords: Special Education, Transformational Leadership, Organizational Identification

Introduction

Special education had become a significant indicator of a country's educational advancement, particularly in the context of inclusive education reform and educational equity. With the promotion of

the “Education 2030 Framework for Action” by UNESCO, the quality of special education was emphasized, requiring not only institutional reforms but also professional development of special education teachers (Alsowait et al., 2024). In China, the government continuously improved the educational service system for students with disabilities through policies such as the "14th Five-Year Plan for the Development and Enhancement of Special Education" and the "Professional Standards for Special Education Teachers" (Jiang, 2024). These policies stressed the importance of cultivating teachers with strong leadership capabilities, professional knowledge, and a deep sense of organizational commitment (Cao, 2024).

Teachers in special education schools faced complex challenges in addressing the diverse needs of students with physical, intellectual, or emotional disabilities. To fulfill this role effectively, teachers were expected to demonstrate not only instructional competence but also leadership that could drive educational reform and institutional change (Ye & Wang, 2025). Transformational leadership, originally proposed by Bass and Avolio (1994), was increasingly recognized as a critical leadership model in education. In the context of special education, transformational leadership referred to the ability of teachers to inspire vision, intellectually stimulate others, exhibit leadership charisma, and offer personalized care, thereby enhancing teaching quality and team collaboration (Smith & Johnson, 2021).

Organizational identification also played a crucial role in promoting teacher commitment and performance. It described the psychological connection between individuals and their organizations, influencing teachers' motivation, retention, and job satisfaction (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). A strong sense of organizational identification encouraged teachers to align their professional values with institutional goals and actively contribute to school development (Li et al., 2022). Prior studies revealed that leadership styles significantly affected teachers' organizational identification, particularly in high-stress environments like special education (Chen & Tjosvold, 2020; Hu et al., 2024).

Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, served as a representative special education institution committed to inclusive development and personalized education. Despite policy support and internal reforms, the school still faced difficulties such as low leadership engagement among staff, resistance to instructional innovation, and weak team cohesion. The presence of transformational leadership among teachers remained limited, and some educators lacked a clear sense of organizational belonging. As a result, studying the relationship between teachers' transformational leadership and organizational identification became both timely and necessary. This research aimed to fill the gap by analyzing how demographic factors affected these constructs and how they interacted within the special education context in China.

Research Objectives

- (1) To understand the current status of special education teachers' transformational leadership

at Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province.

(2) To understand the current status of special education teachers' organizational identification at Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province.

(3) To analyze the differences in teachers' transformational leadership under different demographic backgrounds.

(4) To analyze the differences in teachers' organizational identification under different demographic backgrounds.

(5) To determine the correlation between special education teachers' transformational leadership and organizational identification at Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership in the Educational Context

Transformational leadership, first introduced by Downton (1973) and developed by Bass (1985), emphasized the role of vision, intellectual stimulation, and personal care in motivating organizational members to exceed expectations. In education, this leadership style had been adapted to address the evolving needs of schools and teachers. Educational researchers such as Jiao and Liu (2017) noted that transformational leadership in schools fostered collaboration, empowered teachers, and aligned individual goals with organizational visions. Xu (2023) extended the model by proposing that leadership in education occurred not only at the principal level but also among teachers, who actively shaped reform through shared practices.

Four dimensions of transformational leadership had been consistently identified in education: intellectual stimulation, vision motivation, leadership charisma, and personalized care (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Intellectual stimulation encouraged critical thinking and innovation, while vision motivation inspired commitment to long-term goals (Li, 2024; Wang, 2011). Leadership charisma-built trust and admiration among peers (Conger & Kanungo, 1987), and personalized care emphasized individualized support and psychological safety (Bass, 1985). These dimensions were particularly important in special education, where teachers faced complex student needs and required adaptive leadership to navigate daily challenges.

Measurement of Transformational Leadership

The measurement of transformational leadership in educational research had evolved from generalized organizational tools to context-specific instruments. In China, Li and Shi (2005) developed a widely accepted scale tailored to educational settings, which measured the four core dimensions mentioned above. Recent studies further validated this scale's applicability. For instance, Wang et al. (2024) found that transformational leadership significantly predicted teaching self-efficacy among college instructors, with intellectual stimulation being the strongest predictor of engagement. Yu and

Jang (2024) also confirmed the predictive power of vision and recognition for teacher performance. Contextual variables such as organizational climate, empowerment, and role experience moderated the effects of leadership, as evidenced in research by Xiao (2020) and Liu and Kong (2020).

Organizational Identification and Its Theoretical Foundations

Organizational identification stemmed from social identity theory, which emphasized the alignment of personal identity with group membership (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). In educational settings, it referred to the degree to which teachers internalized school values, norms, and goals as part of their self-concept (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Emotional and cognitive components coexisted in this construct, influencing behavior, loyalty, and work engagement.

Wei et al. (2007) and Wan (2013) emphasized the dynamic and multidimensional nature of organizational identification in the Chinese context, suggesting that teachers' identification was shaped by emotional attachment, goal alignment, and cultural resonance. This was especially important in special education schools, where job challenges could either strengthen identification or contribute to detachment if organizational support was insufficient.

Measurement of Organizational Identification

Scholars had proposed various scales to measure organizational identification. Parker and Haridakis (2008) developed a scale including four key dimensions: management relationships, emotional investment, goal-value integration, and colleague relationships. This framework had been widely applied in educational research. For example, Chen (2019) and Zehra and Batuhan (2023) used multi-dimensional tools to explore identification across gender, experience, and school type. Studies found that emotional investment was closely tied to job satisfaction and that strong management relationships enhanced identification and reduced turnover intention (Kahn, 1990; Lee & Peck, 2021). In cross-cultural studies, organizational identification also mediated the effects of leadership on collective psychological ownership and morale (Feng & Li, 2024; Diana et al., 2024).

Differences in Transformational Leadership by Demographic Variables

Multiple studies confirmed that demographic characteristics influenced perceptions and expression of transformational leadership. Xiao (2020) observed that female teachers scored higher on personalized care, while male teachers emphasized intellectual stimulation. Teaching experience also played a moderating role; novice teachers were more responsive to vision and structured goals, whereas experienced teachers valued autonomy and innovation (Wang, 2024; Haifaa et al., 2024).

Cultural and institutional factors further shaped these patterns. In collectivist regions of China, shared goals and collaborative behavior enhanced leadership impact (Zhang et al., 2022). Similarly, the hierarchical structure of professional titles influenced expectations. Professors valued academic freedom, while junior faculty relied more on charisma and team support (Wang et al., 2025).

Differences in Organizational Identification by Demographic Variables

Demographic factors also affected organizational identification. Gender-based differences were

commonly reported, with female teachers placing more emphasis on emotional connection and institutional recognition, while male teachers focused on structure and team alignment (Zehra & Batuhan, 2023). Hu et al. (2024) showed that teaching age negatively correlated with emotional commitment but positively with loyalty. Highly educated teachers tended to emphasize autonomy, while those with less education depended more on leadership support (Ji et al., 2024).

These findings suggested that identification was a socially embedded process shaped by individual attributes, organizational support, and cultural context. Understanding such differences was crucial for designing inclusive leadership strategies and improving staff cohesion.

Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Identification

A growing body of research had demonstrated a strong link between transformational leadership and organizational identification. Kim and Kathryn (2020) found that leaders who practiced clear communication and emotional management during organizational change enhanced identification. Wu et al. (2023) verified that transformational leadership influenced organizational behavior through mediating variables such as emotional passion and safety identification. Studies by Robin et al. (2024) and Ori et al. (2024) also supported the notion that leadership characteristics were predictive of identification, especially when alignment existed between leader identity and organizational culture.

In educational settings, Qin and Nong (2024) and Tunuk (2022) reported that transformational leadership positively predicted organizational identification and indirectly affected job performance and innovation through this path. These findings highlighted the mediating role of identification in linking leadership practices to educational outcomes, underscoring the practical value of fostering leadership at all levels within schools.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research methodology to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational identification among special education teachers. A descriptive and correlational design was used to explore current conditions and test variable relationships based on empirical data. The research process involved structured questionnaire development, sample selection, online data collection, and multilevel statistical analysis. All procedures strictly followed ethical guidelines, and participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Population and Sample

The target population included 180 full-time teachers from Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen, which served children with diverse special education needs. The entire teaching staff was selected using a cluster sampling method, ensuring complete institutional coverage. After data screening, 177 valid questionnaires were retained, achieving an effective recovery rate of 98.33%. The sample presented sufficient heterogeneity: approximately 55.9% were female, and a wide distribution was observed in

terms of age, education level, professional title, and years of teaching experience. These characteristics enabled the study to analyze differences across demographic subgroups in a statistically meaningful way.

Questionnaire Design

The instrument comprised three parts. The first collected demographic information. The second measured teachers' transformational leadership using 26 items categorized into four dimensions. The third evaluated organizational identification with 18 items across four dimensions. All items were scored using a 5-point Likert scale.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested prior to formal distribution to identify and correct ambiguity or redundancy. A small group of teachers from a neighboring special education school completed the draft version, and their feedback was incorporated to ensure clarity and contextual suitability. The finalized instrument was distributed via digital platforms, with response time averaging 8–10 minutes.

Data Collection Methods

The data collection took place from February to April 2025. To ensure full participation, the research team collaborated with school administrators to distribute the electronic link through internal communication platforms. All responses were automatically stored in a secure digital database. Data integrity was ensured by conducting manual inspection and logic checks. Invalid responses were excluded based on two criteria: (1) missing more than 20% of responses and (2) consistent patterning (e.g., selecting the same option for all items). Only complete, logically consistent questionnaires were included in the analysis.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability testing showed excellent internal consistency across all dimensions, with Cronbach's α coefficients exceeding 0.80. The total α coefficient for transformational leadership was 0.866, while that for organizational identification was 0.856. Among the subdimensions, the highest reliability was observed in "Leadership Charisma" ($\alpha = 0.902$) and "Management Relationships" ($\alpha = 0.932$), indicating strong internal coherence.

Construct validity was evaluated using the KMO test and Bartlett's test of sphericity. KMO values of 0.978 and 0.969 for the two main scales indicated excellent sampling adequacy. Bartlett's test results were both significant at $p < 0.001$, confirming that the data were suitable for factor extraction. Factor loadings for all items ranged from 0.62 to 0.81, indicating strong item alignment with latent constructs. No cross-loadings or serious multicollinearity issues were detected, supporting the structural independence of each scale.

Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26.0. Descriptive statistics were first applied to summarize the overall levels of transformational leadership and organizational identification. Means, standard deviations, and interpretation intervals were calculated for each dimension.

Inferential analysis involved two main approaches:

Independent samples t-test: Applied to assess gender-based differences.

One-way ANOVA: Used to examine variations across age groups, teaching experience, academic degree, and professional title. When significant differences were found, post hoc tests (LSD) were applied to locate the specific group differences.

To test the correlation between transformational leadership and organizational identification, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed. Correlation strength was interpreted using conventional thresholds (e.g., $r \geq .5$ as strong). A p-value below 0.05 was considered statistically significant. Prior to correlation analysis, normality and linearity assumptions were checked using histogram plots and scatter diagrams.

All tests were two-tailed, and missing data were treated through listwise deletion to preserve the consistency of sample size across models. No data transformation was necessary, as all variables met the assumptions for parametric analysis.

Results

Demographic Analysis of the Respondents

Table 1: Demographic Backgrounds Analysis for Samples (N=177)

Demographic backgrounds	Group	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	78	44.1
	Female	99	55.9
Age	25 years old and below	26	14.7
	26-35 years old	61	34.5
	36-45 years old	47	26.6
	46-55 years old	32	18.1
	56 years old and above	11	6.2
	Bachelor's degree	153	86.4
Educational background	Master's degree	22	12.4
	Doctoral degree	2	1.1
	5 years and below	25	14.1
Teaching age	6-10 years	61	34.5
	11-20 years	50	28.2
	20 years and above	41	23.2
Professional title	Junior professional title	151	85.3
	Intermediate professional title	17	9.6
	Senior professional title	9	5.1

This study took the special education teachers of Zhuxiang School at Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China as the subjects of the questionnaire survey, ultimately collecting and confirming 177

valid questionnaires. The survey used was the "Questionnaire on Teachers' Transformational Leadership and Organizational Identification." To understand the distribution of the sample, descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze the basic situation of the survey subjects, and the results were as follows:

Among the 177 valid respondents, 44.1% were male and 55.9% were female. The largest age group was 26–35 years (34.5%), followed by 36–45 years (26.6%), 46–55 years (18.1%), 25 years and below (14.7%), and 56 years and above (6.2%). In terms of education, 86.4% held a bachelor's degree, 12.4% had a master's degree, and 1.1% held a doctorate.

Regarding teaching experience, 34.5% had 6–10 years, 28.2% had 11–20 years, 23.2% had over 20 years, and 14.1% had 5 years or less. As for professional titles, most teachers held junior titles (85.3%), while 9.6% held intermediate titles and 5.1% senior titles.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics revealed that the overall level of transformational leadership among special education teachers at Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen was high, with a total mean score of 3.53. Among the four measured dimensions, leadership charisma recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.954$), suggesting that teachers demonstrated strong personal influence and were capable of inspiring others. Personalized care followed closely ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.959$), indicating a high degree of attention to individual needs and emotional support. Vision motivation also reflected a strong presence ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.952$), showing that teachers generally articulated clear goals and fostered enthusiasm for collective progress. Although slightly lower, intellectual stimulation still reached a moderate to high level ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.076$), implying that there remained room for improvement in encouraging innovation and critical thinking. Overall, the findings suggested that transformational leadership was a salient feature among the faculty, particularly in aspects related to charisma and interpersonal engagement, while highlighting the need to further strengthen teachers' capacity for stimulating intellectual growth.

Table 2: Overall Status of Teachers' Transformational Leadership

Dimensions	N	M	SD	Interpretation
Intellectual stimulation	177	3.48	1.076	Moderate
Vision motivation	177	3.52	0.952	High
Leadership charisma	177	3.58	0.954	High
Personalized care	177	3.56	0.959	High
Overall teachers' transformational leadership	177	3.53	0.918	High

Descriptive statistics indicated that the overall level of organizational identification among

special education teachers at Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen was high, with a total mean score of 3.55. Among the four measured dimensions, management relationships had the highest mean ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.916$), suggesting that teachers perceived strong support, trust, and communication from school leadership. Both goal-value integration and colleague relationships followed closely, each with a mean of 3.55, indicating that teachers generally shared alignment with school goals and maintained cooperative peer relationships. The lowest mean was observed in emotional investment ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.056$), though still within the moderate-to-high range, suggesting that while teachers were engaged in their roles, some variation existed in their affective attachment to the organization. Overall, the results reflected a consistently high level of organizational identification, with particularly strong perceptions of leadership support and team cohesion, and a slightly weaker but still stable sense of emotional involvement.

Table 3: Overall Status of Teachers' Organizational Identification

Dimensions	N	M	SD	Interpretation
Management relationships	177	3.57	0.916	High
Emotional investment	177	3.48	1.056	Moderate
Goal-value integration	177	3.55	0.978	High
Colleague relationships	177	3.55	1.049	High
Overall teachers' organizational identification	177	3.55	1.049	High

Difference Statistical Analysis

Through differential statistical analysis, understand the differences in special education teachers' transformational leadership and organizational identification at Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province, in terms of different demographic backgrounds. Therefore, this study used independent samples t-test and One-way ANOVA to analyze the differences in teachers' gender, age, educational background, teaching age, and professional title.

Differences in Transformational Leadership Across Demographic Variables

Gender Differences

Hypothesis H1.1 proposed significant gender-based differences in teachers' transformational leadership. Independent samples t-test results revealed no significant differences in overall leadership or in any of the four dimensions ($p > 0.05$), thus H1.1 was not supported.

Age Differences

To test Hypothesis H1.2, one-way ANOVA was conducted. The results showed no significant differences in overall transformational leadership or its four dimensions across age groups ($p > 0.05$), indicating that H1.2 was not supported.

Educational Background Differences

Hypothesis H1.3 assumed differences in leadership based on educational background. ANOVA results confirmed significant differences in overall leadership and all four dimensions ($p < 0.05$). Teachers with doctoral degrees had the highest scores, suggesting a positive relationship between education level and transformational leadership, supporting H1.3.

Teaching Age Differences

Hypothesis H1.4 suggested differences in leadership based on teaching age. ANOVA results showed no significant differences in overall or dimensional leadership scores across teaching age groups ($p > 0.05$), indicating H1.4 was not supported.

Professional Title Differences

Hypothesis H1.5, ANOVA revealed significant differences in overall leadership and all four dimensions ($p < 0.05$). Teachers with junior titles scored highest, while those with senior titles scored lowest, suggesting that professional title significantly influenced transformational leadership, supporting H1.5.

Statistical analysis of the differences in special education teachers' organizational identification at Zhuxiang school, Shenzhen city, Guangdong Province

(1) Analysis of Gender Differences

To test Hypothesis H2.1, an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether significant gender differences existed in teachers' organizational identification. The results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the overall organizational identification between male and female teachers ($t = 0.970, p > 0.05$). Likewise, no significant gender differences were found in the four dimensions—management relationships, emotional investment, goal-value integration, and colleague relationships—as all p-values exceeded 0.05. These findings suggested that gender had no significant impact on teachers' perceptions of organizational identification, and thus Hypothesis H2.1 was not supported.

(2) Analysis of Age Differences

According to the research hypothesis H2.2: There is a significant difference in teachers' organizational identification with different ages.

To examine Hypothesis H2.2, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess whether organizational identification differed significantly across age groups. The results showed no statistically significant difference in overall organizational identification based on age ($F = 0.296, p > 0.05$). Similarly, no significant age-related differences were found across the four dimensions—management relationships, emotional investment, goal-value integration, and colleague relationships—as all p-values exceeded the 0.05 threshold. These findings indicated that teachers' age did not significantly influence their organizational identification, and thus Hypothesis H2.2 was not supported.

(3) Analysis of Educational Background Differences

According to the research hypothesis H2.3: There is a significant difference in teachers'

organizational identification with different educational backgrounds.

To verify Hypothesis H2.3, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether teachers' organizational identification varied significantly by educational background. The results revealed a statistically significant difference in overall organizational identification ($F = 2.894, p < 0.05$). Additionally, significant differences were observed across all four dimensions—management relationships, emotional investment, goal-value integration, and colleague relationships—suggesting that educational background played a meaningful role in shaping teachers' organizational identification. These findings supported Hypothesis H2.3 and indicated that higher educational attainment may contribute to stronger perceptions of organizational connection and commitment among special education teachers at Zhuxiang School.

(4) Analysis of Teaching Age Differences

According to the research hypothesis H2.4: There is a significant difference in teachers' organizational identification with different teaching ages.

To test Hypothesis H2.4, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to assess whether organizational identification varied across different teaching age groups. The results indicated no significant difference in overall organizational identification based on teaching age ($F = 0.492, p > 0.05$). Similarly, no significant differences were found across the four dimensions—management relationships, emotional investment, goal-value integration, and colleague relationships—as all p-values exceeded the 0.05 threshold. These findings suggested that teaching experience did not have a meaningful impact on teachers' organizational identification, and thus Hypothesis H2.4 was not supported.

(5) Analysis of Professional Title Differences

According to research hypothesis H2.5: There is a significant difference in special education teachers' organizational identification with different professional titles.

To evaluate Hypothesis H2.5, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether teachers' organizational identification differed by professional title. The results revealed a significant difference in overall organizational identification ($F = 2.801, p < 0.05$), supporting Hypothesis H2.5. Significant differences were also found in the dimensions of management relationships, emotional investment, and goal-value integration, while no significant difference was observed in colleague relationships.

Mean comparisons showed that teachers with junior professional titles reported the highest overall organizational identification ($M = 3.5640$), followed by those with intermediate titles, while teachers with senior titles had the lowest ($M = 3.3580$). A similar pattern was observed across the three significantly different dimensions, indicating that lower-ranked teachers perceived stronger identification with their institution.

Correlation Statistical Analysis

To test Hypothesis H3, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between special education teachers' transformational leadership and organizational identification at

Zhuxiang School. The results revealed a strong and significant positive correlation between the two variables ($r = 0.946, p < 0.01$), thus confirming Hypothesis H3. Furthermore, all sub-dimensions of transformational leadership and organizational identification were positively correlated, with coefficients exceeding 0.7, indicating a consistently high level of association.

Among all correlations, the strongest was between overall transformational leadership and overall organizational identification ($r = 0.946, p < 0.001$), suggesting that as teachers' transformational leadership improved, so did their sense of organizational belonging and alignment. These findings emphasized the close and positive linkage between leadership practices and organizational identification among special education teachers.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis of Teachers' Transformational Leadership and Organizational Identification

	Management relationships	Emotional investment	Goal-value integration	Colleague relationships	Overall teachers' organizational identification
Intellectual stimulation	.811**	.845**	.831**	.758**	.895**
Vision motivation	.800**	.774**	.762**	.767**	.846**
Personalized care	.799**	.811**	.813**	.765**	.874**
Leadership charisma	.800**	.819**	.804**	.778**	.877**
Overall teachers' transformational leadership	.868**	.882**	.870**	.828**	.946**

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Discussion

Summary of Key Findings

This study examined the relationship between special education teachers' transformational leadership and organizational identification at Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen City. The descriptive analysis revealed that both transformational leadership ($M = 3.53$) and organizational identification ($M = 3.55$) were at a relatively high level. Among the dimensions of transformational leadership, leadership charisma scored the highest, while intellectual stimulation was the lowest. For organizational identification, management relationships had the highest mean, while emotional investment was the lowest.

Demographic Differences

The hypothesis testing showed that gender, age, and teaching age had no significant impact on either transformational leadership or organizational identification. However, educational background and professional title demonstrated significant differences. Teachers with higher degrees and those with

junior professional titles scored higher across multiple leadership and identification dimensions. These findings suggested that academic qualifications and career stage played important roles in shaping teachers' leadership behavior and alignment with school values. Such results echoed the perspectives of previous studies (Day et al., 2016; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005), which found that teachers with more advanced educational preparation often possessed greater awareness of leadership strategies and institutional alignment.

Correlation Between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Identification

The Pearson correlation analysis indicated a strong and significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and organizational identification ($r = 0.946$, $p < 0.01$). This confirmed that teachers who exhibited higher levels of transformational leadership also had a stronger sense of belonging, emotional investment, and value alignment with their organization. Each sub-dimension of leadership was positively correlated with all dimensions of identification, further validating the interconnected nature of the two constructs. This result was consistent with earlier research emphasizing how transformational leaders cultivate commitment and shared vision among staff (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bogler, 2001).

Implications for Practice

The findings highlighted the critical role of transformational leadership in promoting teachers' organizational identification, especially in the context of special education. School administrators should consider implementing targeted professional development programs to enhance teachers' leadership capacities, particularly in intellectual stimulation and vision motivation. Additionally, more attention should be given to supporting teachers with lower academic qualifications and senior titles, who may require tailored interventions to improve leadership efficacy and organizational connection.

Conclusions

This study investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational identification among special education teachers at Zhuxiang School in Shenzhen City, Guangdong Province, China. Drawing on a total of 177 valid questionnaire responses, the research provided empirical evidence on the leadership behaviors and organizational perceptions of special education teachers within a specific institutional and regional context.

The findings revealed that the overall level of transformational leadership demonstrated by these teachers was high, with the dimension of leadership charisma scoring the highest, followed by personalized care and vision motivation. In contrast, intellectual stimulation had the lowest mean score. Similarly, the level of organizational identification was also high, with management relationships emerging as the most prominent dimension, while emotional investment received relatively lower ratings.

The analysis of demographic variables indicated that gender, age, and teaching age did not

significantly influence either transformational leadership or organizational identification. However, educational background and professional title were found to be significant differentiators. Specifically, teachers holding doctoral degrees and those with junior professional titles exhibited stronger transformational leadership behaviors and higher levels of organizational identification. These findings suggested that academic qualifications and job hierarchy may play a role in shaping teachers' professional conduct and emotional alignment with their institutions.

Most importantly, the results of the Pearson correlation analysis strongly supported Hypothesis H3, revealing a significant and high-level positive correlation between transformational leadership and organizational identification ($r = 0.946, p < 0.01$). This indicated that teachers who exhibited higher levels of transformational leadership—characterized by motivating a shared vision, providing individualized support, and demonstrating intellectual stimulation—were more likely to develop strong emotional and value-based connections with their organization. This reinforces the notion that effective leadership not only influences individual behavior but also cultivates a deeper sense of institutional belonging and shared commitment among teachers.

In sum, this study contributed valuable insights into the leadership dynamics and organizational psychology of special education teachers in China. It emphasized the importance of promoting leadership development and organizational engagement strategies, particularly for teachers with less advanced academic backgrounds or senior professional titles. The findings hold implications for educational administrators aiming to foster a more cohesive, motivated, and professionally aligned teaching workforce within the context of special education.

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