

The Relationship between Transformational Leadership, Educators' Confidence in their Heads of Schools and Educators' Dedication at Work in Secondary Schools of Mauritius

Codaboccus Muhammad Khalil Ibrahim

Faculty Pengajian Maritim, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Kuala Nerus 21030, Terengganu, Malaysia

*Correspondence Author: Codaboccus Muhammad Khalil Ibrahim; kcodab@gmail.com

Abstract: In Mauritian secondary schools (colleges), very limited studies exist regarding the influence of transformational leadership applied by rectors on educators' trust in their leaders and their degree of commitment to their work. **Objectives:** to determine (a) (i) the levels of transformational leadership applied by rectors of secondary schools in Mauritius, (ii) the degree of trust of these educators in their rectors, (iii) the degree of educators' commitment to their duties; (b) the relationship and influence of transformational leadership applied by schools leaders over (i) educators' trust in their rectors, (ii) educators' degree of commitment toward their work; (c) the existence of any relationship between educators' trust and their commitment toward their duties. **Method:** Data was collected from 394 respondents across Mauritius during December 2022 using simple random sampling through an online survey. Analysis on SPSS 25 was carried out for correlations. **Results:** All three variables' levels were rated as "high" and were significantly and positively correlated: (i) there was a significant positively moderate correlation between the level of transformational leadership applied in colleges and the degree of educators' trust in their heads of schools; (ii) there was a significant positively low correlation between the level of transformational leadership applied in colleges and the degree of educators' commitment to their work. Additionally, it was found that there was a significant positively weak correlation between the degree of educators' trust in their heads of schools and the degree of educators' commitment to their work.

Keywords: Transformational leadership; Teacher trust; Teacher confidence; Teacher work commitment; Teacher dedication; Secondary schools

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

The system of education in the Republic of Mauritius started with educational services provided by missionaries. In 1956, the Education Act was established, providing primary education for all students regardless of their race or religious beliefs. Since then, the Mauritian authorities have made massive investments in education as they believe it is crucial for the country's development and citizens' welfare. Despite being a Republic, the educational system in Mauritius remains structured as a British system. The Ministry of Education aims to provide high-quality education and create innovative leaders capable of transforming the country into a prosperous nation^[1]. Education is compulsory for students up to age 16, and all students up to Grade 9 receive free commuting facilities and textbooks^[1].

Leading an organization's assets toward continuous improvements and goal attainment is a crucial management responsibility. School rectors must adopt an appropriate leadership style to inspire and motivate their staff, coordinate their efforts, and direct personal goals toward the overall objective of the organization^[2]. Multiple roles played by leadership are essential to the overall success of the organization. In addition to leadership, teacher trust is also critical in ensuring the success of an educational institution^[3]. Educators must trust their rectors, who must provide clear objectives, create a vision for the school, and describe the steps necessary for achieving it. Also, the educator's commitment to his work is vital to be productive in the rapidly changing educational landscape^[4]. Educators and school rectors need to go beyond conventional systems to meet the changing demands of young learners and work-related activities^[5]. This requires a high level of work commitment from educators to foster continuity and advancement in the educational sector.

Many researchers have pointed out the importance and benefits to an educational institution when its leader adopts a transformational leadership style, namely the empowerment of the school rector to strategically envision resource alignment throughout the school to achieve its long-term goals^[6]. Additionally, the application of transformational leadership by heads of schools significantly and positively impacts school progress^[7]. No school can progress without its teachers. Transformational leadership has a significant impact on the work of teachers as this leadership style helps teachers to better trust their rectors and feel more committed to their work^[8-10]. Transformational leadership indirectly helps to improve student attainment by enhancing teacher commitment and getting them to work toward a common goal thereby implying trust in the heads of schools^[11].

Stakeholders within the school premises in Mauritius should not content themselves in merely adopting measures that have worked in other countries only. Each country has its own educational system and specificities. Therefore, outcomes of the application of transformational leadership at school might not be similar. As an educator witnessing this continuous change, the researcher decided to embark on this investigation to determine whether, in the Mauritian context, secondary school teachers viewed their rectors as transformational leaders who could promote trust in the leader and whether the application of transformational leadership in their schools have an impact upon their commitment and dedication at work.

1.2. Problem statement

Similar to other educational systems in other countries, the alignment of the school resources and the ability of the leader to drive his school toward sustainable change in view of achieving its goals is a major challenge. Among the factors that contribute to improving a school's performance in tandem with its success are school leadership and teachers' dedication^[2]. No leader will be able to bring change in an effective manner if he is unable

to connect to his teachers, gain their trust and harness their work potential. Lacking these elements in an educational institution could make the school's efforts to fulfill its goals and objectives less effective. During the discharge of his duties, the school leader might often question his own leadership capabilities and this feeling might cascade down to the teachers who in turn question their trust in their leader's abilities. Additionally, this doubt could further impact their work at school.

In Mauritius, very limited studies (if not any) exist regarding the influence of transformational leadership applied by rectors on firstly educators' trust in their leaders and secondly the educators' degree of commitment to their work in Mauritian secondary schools (colleges). The researcher believes that there exists the need to find out whether, according to teachers, their rectors are in fact adopting a transformational leadership style and whether this fact positively impacts their trust in their school leader and also affects their commitment toward their professional duties.

1.3. Rationale of the study

This investigation into the problem stated earlier is pertinent to the current situation in Mauritian secondary schools as it will enable both teachers and school leaders to determine the level and better comprehend the application of transformational leadership of school leaders and also their motivations behind their decision-making process. Furthermore, rectors will be able to assess whether their transformational leadership practices could actually improve and sustain their educators' levels of confidence which in turn could lead to better student achievement due to increased teacher engagement at work. Additionally, from the perspective of teachers, this investigation will enable them to view their level of trust toward their head of school and assess whether this trust is affected by the application of transformational leadership. Next, this study will help teachers to determine their degree of commitment to their duties and whether this commitment is affected by the application of transformational leadership by the school leader. Lastly, this investigation will help determine whether educators' commitment to their work is influenced by their trust in their heads of schools. Therefore, this study will help both teachers and rectors comprehend the relationship between transformational leadership on the one hand and trust in the school leader and its impact on work commitment on the other hand.

1.4. Objectives of the research

This investigation will help to:

- i Determine the level of transformational leadership applied by rectors in secondary schools of Mauritius as seen by educators working in these colleges.
- ii Evaluate the level of trust that educators place in their rectors.
- iii Investigate the stage of educators' commitment to their work as seen by themselves.
- iv Assess whether transformational leadership at school has an effect on both educators' confidence in their rectors and educators' professional dedication.
- v Determine whether there exists a relationship between educators' trust in their rectors and educators' work commitment.

1.5. Research questions

The following questions are based on the above-mentioned objectives of this study.

1. What is the level of transformational leadership applied by heads of secondary schools in Mauritius as seen by educators of those schools?

2. How much do educators trust their heads of schools?
3. To what extent are educators committed to their professional duties?
4. Does the application of transformational leadership by heads of secondary schools affect their educators' level of trust in their leaders and their degree of commitment toward their duties?
5. Does educators' level of trust in their leaders influence their degree of commitment toward their duties?

1.6. Contribution of this research

This research could provide valuable insights into how the above-mentioned factors contribute to improving the overall school environment in the Mauritian context. By exploring the impact of transformational leadership on teacher trust and commitment, both researchers and policymakers can identify effective strategies for school leaders to inspire and motivate their teachers. This, in turn, can lead to improved teacher job satisfaction, increased student achievement, and a more positive school culture. Ultimately, the results of such a study could provide guidance to school leaders on how to create a supportive and successful learning environment for students and teachers alike.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

2.1. Introduction

In today's fast-changing world dominated by the technological revolution, schools need to adapt or perish. School leaders expect no more than excellence as competence only no longer suffice. Although the learning and development of various competences among learners are good indicators of a school's level of effectiveness^[12], it is necessary to reach for excellence as it is in these educational establishments where stakeholders can experience an overarching set of common goals that unites the staff and the learners who work hand in hand toward the achievement of these goals. In this context, adopting an improved school leadership is essential for raising learners' academic achievement. For a school leader to be able to achieve its goals, it is necessary for him to get his teachers to work toward these goals. This can only be achieved if he is trusted by his teaching staff. Additionally, teachers have to be fully committed to their work and highly motivated through good leadership practices by the leader^[13].

2.2. School leadership

One relevant definition of leadership is that it is a technique for persuading subordinates to comprehend and accept the duties given to them so that they can be completed efficiently and effectively^[14]. Leadership, therefore, involves rectors doing their best to persuade and inspire instructors to deliver their professional duties to the best of their abilities in order to accomplish the school's objective and vision.

All management and administrative responsibilities that center on learner achievement can be referred to as school leadership^[15]. In order to enhance the educational institution, workers, information technologies, and teaching potential, school leadership must primarily focus on empowering educators, maximizing individual talents and abilities, developing organizational educational experiences, responding to changing social and economic conditions, and integrating a variety of leadership philosophies.

The vision and purpose of any educational institution are created by its figureheads, who then communicate these to their staff and endeavour to motivate them in an effective manner so that they collaborate and put forth substantial effort to accomplish these ambitions. Thus, leadership entails the task of creating and planning the

organization's path in light of the most recent developments by employing newer technologies, networking, forging partnerships, invigorating and encouraging employees, and boosting their confidence^[16].

It is almost impossible to improve the level of a school without good leadership^[17] as good leadership empowers and motivates teachers to be more dedicated to their work which in turn has a positive effect on students' attainments^[13]. Hence, if a school wants to tread the path of excellence, effective changes brought about by the school leader have to go through excellent leadership and a higher degree of teacher commitment that bring about improvements in learner achievement^[18].

2.3. Transformational leadership in schools

The concept of transformational leadership refers to a leadership style that brings about positive influences in both social systems and personal behavior^[19]. The application of transformational leadership brings about a positive change in followers who experience a higher degree of motivation and empowerment and hence better output at work^[19]. Additionally, transformational leadership helps followers gain more trust in their leaders who are seen as role models. Followers of transformational leaders feel trust in their leaders and they are highly motivated and transformed to give their best at work due to the effect of the leader's idealized influence, mental stimulation, individualized consideration and inspirational motivation given to every follower and these form the four dimensions of this leadership style^[20].

Transformational leadership, when applied in a school context, describes the leadership qualities of school administrators who can push their institution forward at a critical juncture in its evolution^[21]. Many researchers have depicted the merits of applying transformational leadership in schools. Educational establishments have a close resemblance to business organizations in the sense that they can benefit from better overall performance through the application of transformational leadership^[22,23]. If heads of schools apply transformational leadership, this will help to create a common vision, improve the level of trust from teachers in the leader, and enhance teacher motivation and empowerment thereby improving their commitment to work and ultimately positively impact upon student achievement^[23,24]. When school leaders apply transformational leadership, teachers feel more satisfied at work and students benefit and obtain better grades^[25].

H1: There is a significant level of transformational leadership being applied in secondary schools by their rectors.

2.4. Transformational leadership and teacher trust

Trust from educators in their rectors is essential since it affects how teachers feel and behave when given duties. This is consistent with other researches showing how crucial it is for educators to have faith in their heads of schools who run the institution and organize its day-to-day activities since it affects how they perceive and react to whatever choices are made by the rector. If transformational leadership is applied by rectors, this will have a significant positive effect on teachers' trust^[26]. Not only trust is improved through the use of transformational leadership, but it also enhances educators' level of commitment and their psychological well-being^[27]. This increase in educators' level of trust will form the basis for change to happen within the school^[28].

Many researchers have emphasized the importance of trust or confidence of teachers in their rectors^[29]. For any relationship to be effective, it should comprise an element of trust. Teacher trust in their rectors brings about better learner attainment^[30]. Several factors could be influenced by an educator's degree of trust in his head of school^[31]. Since their levels of confidence in their rectors play a significant role, it affects how educators feel and perform when given instructions by them. This relationship is confirmed by the social exchange theory which asserts that the aspect of confidence in the heads of schools is frequently what keeps healthy and sustainable

relationships between teachers and rectors^[32].

The benefits of trust also imply that the confidence of teachers in their heads of schools can result in improved feedback regarding counseling activities^[33]. For an educational institution to be successful, trust in its figureheads is crucial^[34]. Educational leaders might suffer from impaired leadership function if they are unable to gain the trust of educators and they may not be able to lead effectively^[35]. Educators' confidence in their rectors can promote open and effective communication between both parties, providing educators with the perception that their rectors are dependable, genuine, effective, and compassionate^[36].

The empowerment of educators is also dependent upon their own ability to trust their heads of schools^[37]. Significant, meaningful and long-lasting transformations in colleges can only occur when educators and administrators have a positive working relationship because if heads of schools are not trusted by their educators, they will find it almost impossible to perform and exercise their leadership role^[38]. If heads of schools are successful in gaining their teachers' hearts and minds, their directives will be viewed as a kind of motivation and enthusiasm to be more committed to their duties^[39]. Therefore, if rectors are to gain and maintain the trust of educators and become leaders who are appreciated and respected by their staff, they must be conscious of their behaviors as school leaders.

In Mauritius, many parents think that a few confessional secondary schools that were initially set up by missionaries from England are the best educational institutions that suit their children's needs in the sense that learners benefit from strong academic competencies complemented by religious knowledge and holistic character development of the student^[40,41]. There exists a similar situation in Malaysia for some religious schools and also in other parts of the world^[42,43]. These secondary schools are always in very high demand as many parents have a high level of trust in the abilities of these schools to produce successful students at the end of the cycle.

H2: Educators trust their heads of schools.

H4: Transformational Leadership applied in schools affects educators' trust in their heads of schools.

2.5. Transformational leadership and teacher commitment to their work

In the context of a school, the definition of teacher commitment would mean that these teachers concur with the vision and purpose of their educational establishment and that they are eager to keep serving it while showing a great deal of dedication to it^[31]. Lack of dedication from a teacher will lead to a variety of problems, including subpar tasks, absenteeism and behavioral problems, a diminished ability to assist in the advancement of the school, and an unwillingness to engage with other teachers^[44].

Among the factors that support the high level of achievement of any educational institution is a conjunction between good leadership practices and a high level of dedication from its teaching staff. The ability of such an institution to accomplish its goals may be hampered if any one of the above elements is missing. The educational institution's engagement toward excellence could be considerably increased by educators' increased faith in their rectors if the latter possesses and employs strong leadership skills^[45]. The dedication of educators includes freedom in how teaching is carried out, diversity in their duties and responsibilities, the type of management philosophy employed by their rectors, effective interpersonal interaction, and continuous professional development.

Transformational leadership, when applied in schools, has significant positive effects on teacher commitment to their work and also their ability to become more innovative^[46]. However, the degree of teacher commitment is dependent upon their level of trust in their rectors^[27,46]. The degree of dedication among instructors toward their school is the same in both high-performing and low-performing secondary schools^[47]. Educators frequently struggle with scheduling issues and devising the best methods for instructing learners while simultaneously molding their attitudes, behaviors and principles. School heads must establish an appropriate leadership style to maintain

educators' dedication to their institution given the demanding volume of work that these instructors need to perform^[48]. The philosophy behind the previous statement lies in the fact that an educator's willingness to carry out duties entrusted to him is determined by his rector's leadership style, which in turn, also defines how committed the educator will remain to his institution^[49].

The consequences for a rector for not adopting a good leadership style might be seriously detrimental to his overall school management function and consequently lead to the downfall of his institution. Educators' sentiments, like discontent, skepticism, hostility, and mental anguish, may be a major challenge for heads of schools who fail to successfully manage their educational establishments^[45]. Most excellent colleges are unable to sustain their outstanding success in the ensuing years if there is a drop in educators' professional dedication^[16]. Additionally, the workplace atmosphere together with the attitudes and actions of rectors have a significant influence on educators' level of dedication during the carrying out of their duties^[48].

Good leadership skills employed by the head of the school is sine qua non to gain and sustain trust and adherence from educators in order to work toward and achieve common objectives. Most educators tend to follow and adhere to the rectors who adopt good leadership styles^[50]. Furthermore, these heads of schools were demonstrated to possess the capability to influence the degree of professional dedication of their educators. On the other hand, ineffective rectors would make their teachers unhappy^[50].

The different leadership techniques, behaviors, and approaches used by heads of schools are another issue that frequently arises in educational institutions as it presents a challenge to both educators and the institution itself. In one boy's college in the center of the island of Mauritius, the demand for seats far exceeds the school's accommodation capacity. According to the leader of that college, this is due to the strategies and leadership style employed to manage and sustain a high level of discipline. Thus, there is the perception by parents that their children, apart from benefitting from academic knowledge, will also come out of the system as disciplined individuals with high levels of integrity. In that context, educators in such schools have not only the responsibility to meet the exigencies of parents but also to handle the problems associated with a high school population since such schools usually tend to grow steadily over time. The responsibilities placed on educators have increased as student enrolment in such schools continues to grow^[49]. In such circumstances, the rector must manage educators' workload, demands, and enthusiasm well because such a situation could negatively impact their level of dedication to both their jobs and their standards of instruction. It is therefore primordial for such rectors to embrace transformational leadership in order to effectively manage their educators' load of tasks whilst sustaining their high degree of commitment toward their work^[18].

Due to the dispersed outcomes from international researchers regarding the relationships between transformational leadership applied by heads of schools on one hand and teacher trust and work commitment on the other^[51,52], the researcher deemed it crucial to gain a deeper understanding of such a complicated connection in order to shed light on such a relationship in the context of Mauritian secondary schools as this can only be beneficial to the whole educational system.

H3: Educators are committed to their professional duties.

H5: Transformational leadership applied in schools affects educators' commitment toward their duties.

H6: Educators' trust in their heads of schools influences their commitment toward their duties.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Introduction and data collection instrument

Because of the significance of causation and the high capacity of quantitative approaches to acquire knowledge in an unbiased setting, the deductive research strategy was utilized for the purposes of this investigation. The researcher adheres to the claims that deductive research methods are favored because they need less time and financial resources, are straightforward, accurate, and successful, and can be verified through the use of statistical and mathematical methods^[53].

The researcher decided to initially use a semi-structured interview to gather initial data regarding leadership styles, and their possible impact on teacher trust and work commitment. This type of collection instrument is a tried and tested one and it is very popular among researchers^[54]. Based upon the responses from a semi-structured interview gathered from a few school leaders and experienced educators, a questionnaire was designed to gather responses from participants that would then be analyzed and subjected to hypothesis testing as this is appropriate for quantitatively elucidating a particular characteristic of a study population^[55]. This survey instrument is effective for collecting data directly from participants and extrapolating the outcomes to the intended population^[56]. The researcher decided to opt for an online survey method for that purpose due to its many benefits^[57,58]. The procedure mentioned above suggests deductive reasoning, which will be employed for data gathering and hypothesis testing^[59].

The short version of the popular Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) form was modified to generate the survey questionnaire^[60]. Respondents' demographic profiles were gathered in Part A. The four leadership components of creating an ideal influence, provoking intellectual thought, generating individual-based evaluations, and inspiring motivation were used in Part B of the instrument to evaluate the level of transformational leadership^[61]. In Part C, the Trust in Teams and Trust in Leaders Scale was modified to provide the elements used to assess the level of educators' trust in their rectors^[62]. The questions in Part D were used to assess the degree of educators' commitment toward their professional duties^[63,64].

The data collection instrument was designed through Google Forms and comprised essentially of 5-point Likert scale items due to its user-friendliness, clarity and reliability^[56]. Links to the online questionnaire were sent to a maximum number of teachers requesting them to give their responses.

3.2. Validity, reliability and pilot testing

A couple of rectors, their deputies and the teaching staff of a secondary school were initially required to fill in the questionnaire online and data was tested for reliability^[65] in a successful manner. However, the questionnaire had to be shortened and a few items rewritten for improved clarity.

3.3. Sampling and data collection

There are currently 69 state secondary schools and 109 private secondary schools in the Republic of Mauritius^[66]. The targeted population for this study comprised all the educators of both genders employed in both school categories and made up a total of 9,379^[66]. Due to the relatively small size of the country and the number of secondary school teachers employed, it was decided to select participants through simple random sampling. Additionally, this sampling method is particularly advantageous since minimal knowledge of participants is required, validities are high and data can be analyzed with ease^[67]. A confidence level of 95% was deemed appropriate for this investigation. The sample size (n) of 370 respondents was calculated online through the sample size calculator from^[68]. This was crosschecked by calculating the sample size for an infinite population and adjusted for a finite population^[69]. The formula provided by Srivastav was also used for crosschecking^[70].

In November 2022, all school leaders were contacted through electronic medium and requested to share the researcher’s request to fill in the questionnaire online together with the link attached to all their teaching staff. Data was collected in December 2022 and all responses were selected as all elements in the questionnaire had to be fully completed for the document to be validated and submitted on Google Forms. In total, 394 responses were received and selected and this number was considered sufficient for data analysis^[68]. To control Common Method Bias, procedural remedies were adopted. Questions were shuffled each time they were presented to respondents and different response descriptions were used in the data collection tool.

3.4. Data analysis

All data collected ought to be crosschecked for errors or unanswered items^[71,72]. Although the researcher made sure that this would not happen by setting conditions on Google Forms, still all data were examined to remove errors, if any, at this stage. Data from Google Forms were then exported to Microsoft Excel, reformatted/relabelled and then transferred to IBM SPSS 25 software to be used for analysis and testing. SPSS was selected as it provides a powerful and user-friendly platform for statistical analysis. Additionally, SPSS can be integrated with other software such as Microsoft Excel and PowerPoint, which makes it easier to import and export data and results. Furthermore, SPSS provides the flexibility to customize the output and analysis by allowing users to modify the syntax, commands, and other settings.

The levels of transformational leadership, trust of educators in their rectors and their degree of commitment toward their work were initially analyzed through descriptive statistics and central tendency, dispersion, skewness, and kurtosis indices were used to describe variables^[56,73]. The mean scores displayed in **Table 6** were interpreted^[74]. Also employed was the Shapiro-Wilk normality test. Results were displayed using appropriate visual means. Hypothesis testing was used to determine relationships between transformational leadership applied in schools on the one hand and educators’ trust in their rectors and educators’ commitment to their work on the other hand.

4. Results

4.1. Demographic profile of respondents

Table 1 displays the demographic details of respondents in this study. The number of female respondents was slightly higher than their male counterparts with a total number of respondents reaching 394. The data also shows that there were more male respondents from private schools compared to public schools but on the contrary, there were more female respondents from public schools compared to private schools.

Table 1. Demographic details

Gender * Type of school crosstabulation				
Gender		Type of school		Total
		Public	Private	
Male	Count	76	113	189
	%	42.9%	52.1%	48.0%
Female	Count	101	104	205
	%	57.1%	47.9%	52.0%
Total	Count	177	217	394
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The information displayed in **Table 2** shows that a majority of respondents (57%) counted at least 16 years

of work experience and they were aged 40 or higher. However, responses were obtained through all age brackets and more than 85% of educators having up to 5 years' experience were relatively young (20–29 years). The distribution of responses in **Table 2** shows that educators from all age groups feel concerned about leadership in their schools.

Table 2. Working experience and age group

Working experience (No. of years) * Age group crosstabulation						
Working experience	Age group (years)					Total
		20–29	30–39	40–49	50–65	
1–5 years	Count	30	15	0	0	45
	%	85.7%	10.3%	0.0%	0.0%	11.4%
6–10 years	Count	5	45	0	0	50
	%	14.3%	31.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.7%
11–15 years	Count	0	60	15	0	75
	%	0.0%	41.4%	11.1%	0.0%	19.0%
16–20 years	Count	0	25	70	5	100
	%	0.0%	17.2%	51.9%	6.3%	25.4%
>20 years	Count	0	0	50	74	124
	%	0.0%	0.0%	37.0%	93.7%	31.5%
Total	Count	35	145	135	79	394
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Cronbach Alpha test for reliability (Appendix A) was carried out on the data collection instruments. The questionnaire was found to be highly reliable for all three variables with $\alpha = .78$ for transformational leadership applied in colleges, $\alpha = .89$ for Educators' trust in their rectors and $\alpha = .81$ for Educators' commitment to their work^[75].

Table 3. Questionnaire summary

Summary of online survey instrument	
Section A: Demographic information	
Elements measured	No. of questions
Gender, age, work experience, type of school	4
Section B: Transformational leadership applied in colleges	
Establish a positive impact on educators	3
Create enthusiasm among educators	3
Provoke educators' intellectual thought	3
Generate individual-based evaluations	3
Section C: Educators' trust in their rectors	
Benevolence	4
Competence	4
Integrity	4
Predictability	4
Section D: Educators' commitment to their work	
Dedication toward teaching	3
Dedication toward learners	3
Dedication toward institution	3
Dedication toward profession	3
Total No. of questions	44

Table 3 summarizes the four sections of the questionnaire and shows the elements measured under each variable. This amounted to a total of 40 questions for the three variables and 4 questions related to respondents' profiles. All 40 questions were grouped under their respective variables namely "The level of transformational

leadership applied in colleges”^[61] in section B; “The degree of educator’s trust in their heads of schools”^[62] in section C and “The degree of educators’ commitment to their work”^[64] in section D.

Measures of skewness showed almost symmetrical distributions for all three variables and also displayed negative values for kurtosis but they can be considered as very lightly platykurtic due to their relatively low negative values. It was decided to perform normality tests on the three grouped variables and the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests displayed in **Table 4** show that they all were not normally distributed.

Table 4. Normality tests

Tests of normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Level of transformational leadership applied in colleges	.083	394	.000	.979	394	.000
Degree of educators’ trust in their heads of schools	.123	394	.000	.955	394	.000
Degree of educators’ commitment to their work	.105	394	.000	.976	394	.000

a. Lilliefors significance correction

In order to determine the level of each variable, the mean, median and standard deviation of each variable was calculated. The results obtained were then interpreted^[74,76].

Table 5. Measurements of level of transformational leadership, degree of educator trust and educator commitment

Level of transformational leadership				
Dimensions	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Establish a positive impact on educators	3.4501	3.3333	.86094	High
Create enthusiasm among educators	3.6193	3.6667	.75759	High
Provoke educators’ intellectual thought	3.5372	3.6667	.76899	High
Generate individual-based evaluations	3.5482	3.6667	.75501	High
Level of transformational leadership applied in colleges	3.5387	3.5000	.60884	High
Degree of educator trust in their rector				
Dimensions	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Benevolence	3.7690	3.7500	.70437	High
Competence	3.6834	3.7500	.77091	High
Integrity	3.6897	3.5000	.73664	High
Predictability	3.5558	3.5000	.70376	High
Degree of educators’ trust in their heads of schools	3.6745	3.5625	.61755	High
Degree of educator commitment to work				
Dimensions	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Dedication toward teaching	3.8655	4.0000	.69954	High
Dedication toward learners	4.2352	4.3333	.61777	Very High
Dedication toward institution	3.5508	3.3333	.70967	High
Dedication toward profession	3.8773	3.6667	.65633	High
Degree of educators’ commitment to their work	3.8822	3.8333	.40279	High

Table 6. Mean score interpretation

Mean score interpretation	
Mean score	Interpretation
1.00–1.79	Very low
1.80–2.59	Low
2.60–3.39	Average
3.40–4.19	High
4.20–5.00	Very high

4.2. Level of transformational leadership applied by school rectors as seen by educators

All scores for the elements in **Table 5** were interpreted based on **Table 6**^[74]. The information displayed in **Table 5** shows that all the elements used to measure the level of transformational leadership in schools were considered as “high” with an overall level ($M = 3.54, SD = .61$). All the elements displayed high mean values >3.40 . The highest level among the different elements was the rector’s ability to “create enthusiasm among educators” ($M = 3.62, SD = .76$). Hence, it can be said that there is a highly significant level of transformational leadership being applied in secondary schools by their rectors.

H1: There is a significant level of transformational leadership being applied in secondary schools by their rectors.

4.3. Educators’ trust in their heads of schools

The results from **Table 5** reveal that all the dimensions used to measure the degree of trust of educators in their heads of schools were “high” with an overall degree of trust and dedication of ($M = 3.67, SD = .62$). All the elements displayed high mean values >3.40 . The highest level among the different dimensions was the rector’s ability to show “benevolence” ($M = 3.77, SD = .70$). Hence, it can be stated that there is a significantly high degree of trust placed by educators in their heads of schools.

H2: Educators trust in their heads of schools.

4.4. Educators’ commitment to their professional duties

It can be stated from **Table 5** that the overall degree of educators’ level of commitment toward their work was “high” ($M = 3.88, SD = .40$). The findings also reveal that all elements of trust and dedication were “high” except for educators’ “dedication toward learners” which was “very high” ($M = 4.24, SD = .62$) and rated as the highest dimension in this group. Hence, it can be stated that there is a significantly high degree of commitment by educators toward their work and that they are very highly dedicated to their students.

H3: Educators are committed to their professional duties.

4.5. Correlations between transformational leadership, educators’ trust in their leaders and their degree of commitment toward their duties

In order to find out whether there existed any relationship between the three variables, a bivariate linear Spearman correlation test was performed on them and the outcomes are displayed in **Table 7**. Based on the correlation test, it can be inferred that (i) there is a significant positively moderate correlation between the “Level of transformational leadership applied in colleges” and the “Degree of educators’ trust in their heads of schools”; $r(394) = .60, p = .000$. (ii) There is a significant positively low correlation between the “Level of transformational leadership applied in colleges” and the “Degree of educators’ commitment to their work”; $r(394) = 0.28, p = .000$. Hence, it can be stated that the application of transformational leadership by heads of secondary schools significantly and positively affects both their educators’ level of trust in their leaders and their educators’ degree of commitment toward their duties.

Additionally, the individual dimensions of transformational leadership were correlated with the two other variables namely, educators’ trust and educators’ commitment. The results regarding correlations between the four dimensions of transformational leadership and the level of educators’ trust in their rectors displayed in

Table 7. Correlations for all three variables

Spearman Rho' correlations for the three variables including 4 dimensions of transformational leadership		Level of transformational leadership	Educators' trust	Educators' work commitment	Positive impact	Create enthusiasm	Intellectual thought	Individual evaluations
Level of transformational leadership applied in colleges	Correlation coefficient	1.000	.604**	.281**	.819**	.753**	.713**	.813**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	394	394	394	394	394	394	394
Degree of educators' trust in their heads of schools	Correlation coefficient	.604**	1.000	.170**	.544**	.413**	.391**	.618**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	394	394	394	394	394	394	394
Degree of educators' commitment to their work	Correlation coefficient	.281**	.170**	1.000	.188**	.245**	.181**	.316**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	394	394	394	394	394	394	394

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7 show that (i) there is a significant positively moderate correlation between “Establishing a positive impact on educators” and the “Degree of educators’ trust in their heads of schools”; $r(394) = .54, p = .000$. (ii) There is a significant positively moderate correlation between “Creating enthusiasm among educators” and the “Degree of educators’ trust in their heads of schools”; $r(394) = .41, p = .000$. (iii) There is a significant positively weak correlation between “Provoking educators’ intellectual thought” and the “Degree of educators’ trust in their heads of schools”; $r(394) = .39, p = .000$. (iv) There is a significant positively strong correlation between “Generating individual-based evaluations” and the “Degree of educators’ trust in their heads of schools”; $r(394) = .62, p = .000$.

The results regarding correlations between the four dimensions of transformational leadership and the degree of educators’ commitment to their work displayed in **Table 7** show that (i) there is a significant positively very weak correlation between “Establishing a positive impact on educators” and the “Degree of educators’ commitment to their work”; $r(394) = .19, p = .000$. (ii) There is a significant positively weak correlation between “Creating enthusiasm among educators” and the “Degree of educators’ commitment to their work”; $r(394) = .25, p = .000$. (iii) There is a significant positively very weak correlation between “Provoking educators’ intellectual thought” and the “Degree of educators’ commitment to their work”; $r(394) = .18, p = .000$. (iv) There is a significant positively weak correlation between “Generating individual-based evaluations” and the “Degree of educators’ commitment to their work”; $r(394) = .32, p = .000$.

H4: Transformational leadership applied in schools affects educators’ trust in their heads of schools.

H5: Transformational leadership applied in schools affects educators’ commitment toward their duties.

Further analysis was carried out to confirm whether there was any relationship between the level of educators’ trust in their rectors and the educators’ commitment toward their work. The result of the Spearman correlation from **Table 7** reveals that there is a significant positively weak correlation between the “Degree of educators’ trust in their heads of schools” and the “Degree of educators’ commitment to their work”; $r(394) = 0.17, p = .001$.

H6: Educators’ trust in their heads of schools influences their commitment to their duties.

4.6. Findings and discussion

The findings from the analyzed data are displayed in **Table 8**.

Results show that rectors demonstrated high transformational leadership behaviors in general. The educators felt that their rectors had demonstrated the capacity to positively impact them, upscale their enthusiasm, provoke their intellectual thought and generate individual-based evaluations to a high degree. Leadership is based on building relationships, which requires collaboration and unity between the rector and his teachers where a school leader must be supported and trusted by his teaching staff^[61,77]. Moreover, the results support earlier research on transformational leadership applied by heads of schools^[51,78,79]. The outcomes demonstrate that rectors were highly focused, resolute and careful about designing a workplace that promotes intellectual growth, work-related enthusiasm and productive work practices.

Table 8. Findings from data analysis and results

Findings from data analysis and results		
Elements		Result
1	Transformational leadership applied by rectors	Highly significant
2	Transformational leadership dimensions measured	All high
3	Trust placed by educators in their heads of schools	Highly significant
4	Trust dimensions measured	All high
5	Commitment by educators toward their work	Highly significant
6	Constituting elements of commitment measured	Highly significant with “Dedication toward learners”–Very high
7	Application of transformational leadership by heads of secondary schools	Positively and significantly correlated with educators’ level of trust
8	Correlation between the 4 dimensions of transformational leadership and educators’ trust in their rectors	Significantly positive, but moderate
9	Correlation between the 4 dimensions of transformational leadership and educators’ degree of commitment to their work	Significantly positive, but weak
10	Application of transformational leadership by heads of secondary schools	Positively and significantly correlated with educators’ degree of commitment
11	Correlation between degree of educators’ trust and degree of educators’ commitment	Significantly positive, but weak

Educators had a high level of confidence and trust in their rectors. This implies that the heads of schools displayed a high degree of benevolence, competence, integrity and predictability while exercising their duties. Despite believing that their principal sources of information necessary to carry out school activities came from their rectors, educators were also of the opinion that their level of dedication to their duties was as important in ameliorating the achievements of their schools^[44]. In this survey, the instructors felt that their rectors had a high degree of benevolence, competence, integrity and predictability in addition to being skilled. Such elements are crucial in establishing a more welcoming and productive workplace^[80]. A significant degree of primary confidence in their rectors will result in better teacher-rector engagement, which is necessary for attaining the objectives of the school together^[81].

The conditions for a conducive workplace are that it should (a) be secure and clean, (b) promote freedom to educators to exercise their own judgment in carrying out their instruction, (c) assign acceptable responsibilities and duties, (d) possess an efficient management system, and (e) offer continuous professional development to the educators^[82]. A high degree of educators’ dedication^[82] toward their duties can be observed in secondary schools of Mauritius. This could be a consequence of school leaders continually fostering a positive work environment that

encourages educators to be committed to their professions^[27]. Additionally, educators might have established an emotional, prescriptive, and persistent dedication that contribute to promote a sense of devotion and a readiness to support the school^[83].

Previous researches confirm the assumption that the application of transformational leadership by their rectors influences educators' trust in them favourably^[31,84]. In parallel to that, this investigation found that transformational leadership has a significantly moderate and positive influence on educators' trust in their school leaders. This demonstrates that transformational leadership applied by rectors in a school setting has contributed to enhancing educators' trust in their leaders. Some factors like the rector's personality, his ability to provoke mental effort, concern for every staff member and his ability to inspire and arouse enthusiasm in his educators are key to building up a conducive work atmosphere^[51,77].

If a head of school is effective and exhibits all four dimensions of transformational leadership, then he will have the power to positively impact his educators' mindsets, enthusiasm and behaviors^[20,85]. Additionally, as per the Teacher Trust in Principal model^[84] founded upon the dimensions of transformational leadership^[20], there is clear evidence that transformational leadership has a significant and immediate influence on educators' trust in their school leaders. School administrators were successful in applying transformational leadership, in the context of this investigation and thereby increasing the degree of educator confidence in them^[51]. It can also be claimed that the four dimensions of transformational leadership^[20] are essential in creating a productive workplace^[51].

Based on the findings in this study, it is undeniable that rectors of secondary schools in Mauritius have displayed a high ability to positively impact their educators, create enthusiasm among them, provoke their intellectual thought and establish individual-based evaluations. The outcome is that educators display a higher degree of credence in their heads of schools. Such educators not only acknowledge that their rectors were capable of comprehending, showing empathy and supporting their contributions to the college but also of efficiently handling and performing their tasks in the institution. It is therefore evident that the endeavors of these rectors have aided in improving both the degree of educators' trust and favorable opinions on them^[31,77].

The outcomes of this study also demonstrate that transformational leadership had a significantly positive but weak influence on the degree of educators' commitment to their work. Other studies also confirm this relationship^[29,45,86]. It is, therefore, manifest that the rectors in these colleges were successful in inspiring educators to be dedicated to their institution, pupils, and vocation. Emotional, normative, and sustained engagement are significant determinants in creating favorable views with respect to an educational institution according to the operational commitment paradigm^[83]. If the head of the school could create a favorable workplace culture, staff members would establish a strong affective connection with their professions, worry about losing their jobs because of the benefits obtained from the school and not available elsewhere and have a sense of devotion toward their occupation and the institution^[29,45]. Although earlier investigations^[87-89] have shown the importance of educators' trust in their rectors as a scaffolding used to promote a high degree of devotion toward their jobs, the findings of this investigation demonstrated a slightly different picture with a significant positively weak relationship between the degree of educators' trust in their heads of schools and the degree of educators' commitment toward their work.

The degree of confidence and faith found in educators is dependent upon the degree of trustworthiness, empathy, efficiency and receptiveness that rectors employ as transformational leaders^[90]. Despite the participants in this research having a high degree of trust in their heads of schools, this only weakly correlates with their dedication toward their profession. The process through which dedication is formed may provide an understanding of this observation^[18]. Working commitment is a complicated procedure that is shaped by group dynamics and is dependent upon the context^[91]. Only dedication toward the institution, learners, teaching and the profession were

examined as elements of commitment toward work. The interactions between educators themselves, educators and non-teaching staff, as well as between parents and educators could all have an impact on how committed teachers are toward their jobs. The mechanism of establishing commitment toward work is ever-changing and educators have ties with their co-workers, pupils, community, and the profession in addition to their interactions within their classroom settings^[92].

The workplace environment is an additional element that influences an educator's commitment to his work^[92,93]. If an educator has a relatively substantial load of work, this may negatively impact how he views his dedication to his work. On the other hand, a manageable teaching load will aid the teacher in becoming more completely engaged and motivated in his work^[92]. Educators' devotion to their work may be negatively impacted if they have a heavy workload, especially if their teaching activities conflict with administrative duties^[94]. Despite the fact that they are dedicated to their learners and their institutions, their commitment to their work may suffer^[94].

5. Limitations, conclusion and recommendations

Responding to an online questionnaire may appear very convenient to many^[58] but this method of data collection has its drawbacks also. Many respondents might not necessarily have an internet connection. Additionally, others might view such types of messages as intrusive on their mobile phones and they just delete them^[95]. The results of this study were based on responses from educators only. It would be worth examining the point of view of heads of schools in this matter. Moreover, the scope of this study was limited to the inner boundaries of the school. Therefore, external factors affecting educators' trust in their rectors and commitment to their work were not considered.

Based upon the purpose of this investigation and the results obtained, it was discovered that all three variables' levels were rated as "high" according to educators' point of views. It was further discovered that transformational leadership had a significant and positive effect on both educators' trust in their heads of schools and educators' work commitment. Additionally, it was found that there existed a weak positive correlation between educators' trust in their heads of schools and the degree of educators' commitment to their work. This finding confirms that educators' trust could act as a mediating factor toward the degree of educators' work commitment. It is therefore recommended that a regression analysis such as the Hayes process be carried out to determine the degree of mediation of educators' trust in their work commitment. Efforts to improve trust between educators and their leaders may lead to greater commitment and dedication toward their work.

The outcomes imply that transformational leadership plays a significant role in enhancing educators' trust in their leaders and work commitment. Therefore, the quality of leadership in secondary schools can not only have a significant impact on educators' perceptions and attitudes toward their work but, together with trust, they may be critical factors for retaining quality educators and reducing turnover in schools. It is therefore the duty of the rector to foster a positive work environment and enhance educators' work-related attitudes and behaviors. This study provides valuable insights for educators and school administrators in developing effective strategies for enhancing educators' commitment to their work. Additionally, the importance of considering the cultural context of the school and the unique characteristics of the educators and leaders when developing strategies to improve trust and work commitment should be considered.

Despite the findings concurring with previous researches, it must be pointed out that there are other dimensions such as workplace conditions and interactions between staff members that need to be considered in the measurement of educators' commitment to their duties^[91-93]. The researcher is of the opinion that these elements

could play a significant role in determining the levels of the dependent variables. Since only educators' perspectives were considered, it is suggested that further studies be carried out based on one major stakeholder in this study namely the heads of schools. The study also has implications for teacher training programs and professional development, suggesting that training in transformational leadership and building trust between educators and rectors and acquiring digital competencies should be incorporated into these programs to promote innovative leadership and teaching strategies^[96]. Moreover, there is the need to utilize a multidimensional approach to measure educators' work commitment, taking into account various factors such as dedication to learners, job satisfaction, and intention to stay in the profession^[97].

This investigation has demonstrated the importance of transformational leadership in secondary schools and its impact on educators working in these schools. It raises important questions for future research, such as exploring the impact of trust and work commitment on student outcomes and examining the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving these variables. It is suggested that additional studies be carried out between all internal and external stakeholders involved in the provision of education as this could help policymakers develop the right framework for the benefit of everyone especially our students who are our future.

Conflict of interest

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Appendix A

Reliability statistics for the 3 variables

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items	No. of items
Level of transformational Leadership applied in colleges	.777	.777	4
Degree of educators' trust in their heads of schools	.868	.869	4
Degree of educators' commitment to their work	.808	.809	4