

Transformational Leadership and Growth Mindset: Pathways to Educational Innovation and Transformation

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Abstract

Education systems are rapidly changing due to advancements in technology, globalization and increasing diversity among learners. This has therefore created a strong need for innovation and transformation. In this context, teachers and educational leaders act as change agents and their beliefs about learning and their leadership practices give a direction to implementation of reforms in institutions. There are two important factors supporting this process- transformational leadership (TL) and a growth mindset (GM). Both have been individually studied extensively, but there is limited evidence on how they work together. This study focuses on transformational leadership and growth mindset as related pathways to educational innovation among teachers and educational leaders. It is a descriptive survey research, and data was collected from 135 educators. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation was used for data analysis highlighting moderate levels of transformational leadership and moderately high growth mindset. There was a low positive but non-significant relationship between the two, which suggested that they are related, but largely independent. The research indicates the need to develop both transformational leadership (TL) and a growth mindset (GM) through pre-service teacher education, in-service professional development and mentoring of teachers to support educational innovation and transformation.

Key Words: *Transformational Leadership, Growth Mindset, Educational Innovation, Transformation, Teacher Education.*

Advancements in technology, expansion of knowledge, globalization and increasing learner diversity are the latest and most important determinants of educational transformation in the 21st century. Content transmission in the classrooms has been underrated and contemporary classrooms are moving towards developing qualities like critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and adaptability. There are discourses on education reform at the international level that emphasize on education that is learner-centred, competency-based and innovation-driven. This not only requires pedagogical shifts but also transformation in educational culture and leadership practices (OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2021). Sustainable innovation in education therefore demands and depends on teachers and educational leaders who have the relevant professional capacities and leadership orientations.

Transformational Leadership in education is a modern leadership framework that stimulates shared vision among teachers and provides the required individualized support for the modern classroom (Bass and Riggio, 2006). These leaders inspire others to go beyond regular classroom activities and expectations to achieve continuous improvement through reflective practice. This leads to strong institutional cultures and educational innovation.

The mindset theory shapes professional behaviour by highlighting the role of underlying beliefs about ability and learning. Growth Mindset is a concept advanced by Dweck (2006), who claims that educators with a growth mindset are able to manage difficulties and challenges easily. Research has also indicated that growth-oriented beliefs are associated with other qualities necessary for

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leaders like, resilience, adaptive expertise and openness to new instructional approaches (Dweck, 2017).

Together, transformational leadership and a growth mindset emphasise on development, learning and continuous improvement. It has been experienced that leaders who demonstrate transformational behaviours also display growth-oriented thinking by promoting reflective dialogue and building cultures of continuous learning through experimentation and risk-taking. Conceptual links have been seen, but there are limited studies related to these variables to explore their combined contribution to educational innovation and transformation.

Therefore, in this research study, transformational leadership and a growth mindset have been studied together as complementary pathways to educational innovation and transformation. This is an attempt to generate insights for teacher education and leadership development programs.

Theoretical Background / Literature Review

Transformational leadership and a growth mindset jointly enable education systems to adapt to change while ensuring meaningful transformation. Transformational leadership moves beyond traditional models by empowering people to act in the collective interest (Adeoye, Hasan and Izzatul, 2025). Bass (1985) framework identifies four core components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Building on this, Sumampong and Arnado (2024) proposed the TELM framework, which emphasizes visionary leadership, collaborative culture, empowering practices, continuous professional growth and dynamic management. Such leadership leads to psychological safety among teachers and allows them to experiment, take

risks and adopt innovative pedagogies (Litz and Blaik-Hourani, 2018).

Growth Mindset, as opposed to a fixed mindset, signifies the belief that abilities can be developed through effort. Reyes (2025) highlighted that educators with a growth mindset view failure as a learning opportunity and are ready to embrace challenges.

Emerging literature highlights the interdependence of Transformational leadership and a growth mindset. In his research, Reyes (2025) has focused on how transformational practices predict and strengthen teachers' growth mindset. When teachers fail, transformational leaders help them understand it as a stepping stone to success leading to innovation (Adeoye, Hasan and Izzatul, 2025; Kreiness, 2020). The effectiveness of Transformational leadership depends on the mindsets of teachers. Those with a growth mindset respond with innovative behaviours, while those having a fixed mindset may perceive work as stressful or threatening (Caniels, Semeijn and Renders, 2018).

Overall, Transformational leadership provides vision and support, while growth mindset enhances resilience and openness. Strengthening both through professional development and training will help educators to act as effective agents of change (Sliwka, Britta, Janina and Lin, 2023; Adeoye, Hasan and Izzatul, 2025).

Need and Rationale

In the changing landscape of teaching and learning, technology and diversity have led to serious transformation in practices. Transformational leadership and a growth mindset have been researched to provide depth and innovation in such a scenario. Although both have been studied separately, few research studies have focused on their relationship. The current study addresses this gap to study their relationship and inform teacher education for transformation.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the level of transformational leadership among teachers and educational leaders.
2. To determine the level of growth mindset among teachers and educational leaders.
3. To ascertain the relationship between transformational leadership and growth mindset among teachers and educational leaders.
4. To suggest implications for teacher education and leadership development programs based on the findings.

Hypothesis

There is no significant statistical relationship between transformational leadership and growth mindset among teachers and educational leaders.

Research Methodology, Sample and Tools

The present study adopted the descriptive survey methodology. Standardized and validated tools of Transformational leadership and a growth mindset were used to gather data. Transformational Leadership Survey: This 18-item questionnaire had key dimensions of transformational leadership- idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass and Avolio, 1995). This was a 4-point Likert scale. Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.90$ in prior studies, which indicated strong reliability.

Growth Mindset Scale: This 8-item subscale from Dweck (1999) framework showed good internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha \approx 0.80-0.85$) and measured beliefs about intelligence and character on a 5-point Likert scale.

These tools were sent through a Google Form for administration to 135 educators, ensuring response uniformity and accessibility.

Results and Discussion

1. Analysis of the survey data for transformational leadership shows the overall mean item score as $M = 3.25$,

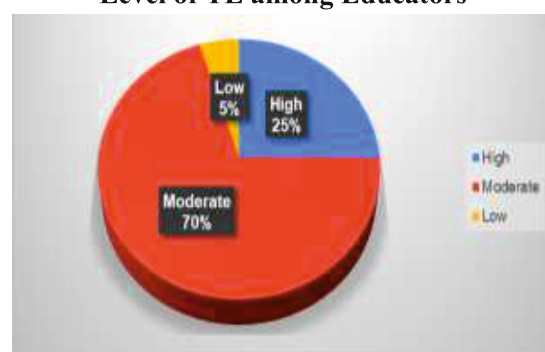
$SD = 0.43$, indicating that TL was of moderate level among the participating teachers and educational leaders.

Table 1.1
Level of TL among Educators

N	Mean Item Score	SD	Level of TL
135	3.25	0.43	High- 25%
			Moderate- 70%
			Low- 5%

Figure 1.1

Level of TL among Educators



Level-wise distribution showed that 94 respondents (70%) fall in the moderate category, 34 respondents (25%) in the high category, and only 7 respondents (5%) in the low category. This shows that most educators demonstrate reasonably consistent transformational leadership behaviours such as supporting others' development, encouraging new perspectives, providing guidance and feedback, and fostering trust-based influence. Since the majority is in the moderate range rather than high, the results also point to the need for developing the leadership component and organizing professional training programs to further strengthen visionary and intellectually stimulating leadership practices in educational settings.

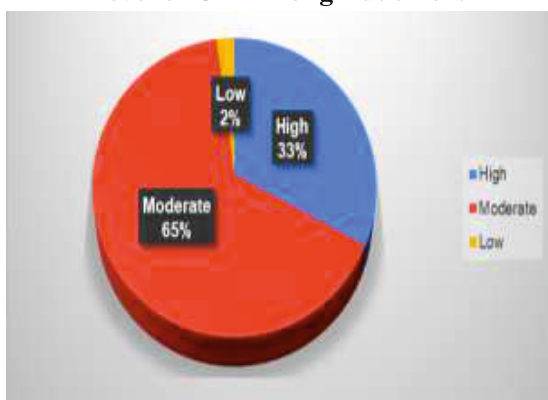
2. Growth mindset scores analysis shows an overall mean growth mindset item score of $M = 3.36$ with $SD = 0.46$, indicating a moderately high level of growth mindset among the participants.

Table 1.2
Level of GM among Educators

N	Mean Item Score	SD	Level of GM
135	3.36	0.46	High- 32.6%
			Moderate- 65.2%
			Low- 2.2%

Figure 1.2

Level of GM among Educators



Level-wise categorization revealed that 88 respondents (65.2%) fall in the moderate category, 44 respondents (32.6%) in the high category, and only 3 respondents (2.2%) in the low category. These results indicate that most teachers and educational leaders believe in effort-based learning and learning from mistakes.

The results highlight that most educators in the sample are psychologically ready for professional growth, which is a quality that supports innovation and educational transformation. However, since the largest group is still in the moderate rather than high category, professional development and reflective practice interventions which are structured and mindset-oriented, could further strengthen growth-oriented beliefs and risk-taking capacity among educators.

3. A Pearson product-moment correlation was calculated between the two composite scores.

Table 1.3
Correlation between Transformational Leadership and Growth Mindset

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p
Transformational Leadership	135	3.25	0.43	0.134	0.122
Growth Mindset	135	3.36	0.46		

Figure 1.3

Correlation between Transformational Leadership and Growth Mindset



As shown in the table and figure, the analysis indicates a weak positive relationship between the two variables, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Both variables move in the same direction, with limited connection but they appear to be separate contributors to educational innovation and transformation.

Teachers and Principals with higher levels of transformational leadership also display slightly stronger growth mindset beliefs. However, their relationship is not statistically significant or strong. Both emphasize learning and development, but do not naturally occur together. Leadership behaviour is governed by additional factors such as institutional culture, training, role expectations and professional experience.

Implications and Suggestions

The overall findings indicate that leadership behaviour and mindset must be intentionally developed through structured teacher education

and professional learning systems as separate qualities.

1. Teacher Education Curriculum Reform

Teacher education should incorporate leadership development along with pedagogy. Pre-service teacher training programs may include transformational leadership skills such as vision building, motivation, collaboration, and how to provide individualized support through reflective practices. Growth mindset can be inculcated through challenge-based tasks and feedback-rich assessments. Internships may include supervised innovative projects, with evaluation criteria based on leadership initiative and adaptability.

2. Pre-Service Practice and Assessment

Internships, practice teaching and student-led events may help develop leadership qualities. Peer mentoring and school-based innovation projects can also translate theory into action. Student teachers should design, implement, and reflect on innovative strategies of teaching. Assessment systems should be continuous and comprehensive. Evaluation should not only be of teaching competence but also of openness to feedback and improvement.

3. Professional Development of In-Service teachers

This should be a dual-focus approach, for developing both leadership skills and growth mindset. Workshops, innovation labs and professional learning communities should be encouraged. For strengthening teachers' resilience and capacity for change, reflective dialogue and structured feedback cycles can be employed.

4. Institutional Leadership Practices

Teacher training colleges should establish mentoring systems for growth-oriented thinking. Action research can be extremely beneficial in this case. Small grants for innovation can support experimentation. Leadership evaluation should become a regular feature.

5. Policy and Professional Standards

Regulatory bodies for teacher education should ensure that teacher and leadership standards should include transformational leadership and growth mindset competencies. They should also promote integrated training and professional development within teacher education courses.

Conclusion

Overall, this research study predicts that there is a basic readiness for growth and change among educators. However, leadership behaviours and mindset automatically do not develop together. They need to be built intentionally and individually. Institutions that focus on developing both leadership skills and growth mindset will produce educators who are not only effective in their roles but also active contributors to change. In the current times, when there is uncertainty and rapid shifts in education systems, strengthening both leadership and mindset is essential for moving from policy-level reform to meaningful and sustained transformation in education.

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