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Leading with Vision in Vietnamese Education: How Transformational Leadership Shapes Professional Learning Communities Through the Lens of Female Educators

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between transformational leadership and the effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in public schools in Hanoi, focusing on the perspectives of female educators, including teachers and school managers. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was applied, using stratified random sampling to collect data from 360 female participants (207 teachers, 141 vice-principals, and 12 principals) across primary, secondary, and high schools. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire that assessed three dimensions of transformational leadership—Setting Direction (SD), Developing People (DP), and Restructuring the Organization (RO)—along with PLC effectiveness using the PLCA-R instrument. Reliability was confirmed through high Cronbach's Alpha coefficients (ranging from 0.717 to 0.949), and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) demonstrated the model's validity. The results from Pearson correlation analysis indicated

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strong positive relationships between all dimensions of transformational leadership and PLC effectiveness, with particularly significant correlations between leadership and Supportive Relationships (SCR), and Collective Learning and Application (CLA). The study found that transformational leadership had a strong influence on the "soft" elements of Professional Learning Communities (such as collaboration, collective learning, and shared vision), but had a negligible impact on the "hard" elements related to organizational structure, thereby emphasizing the central but limited role of leadership in developing a learning culture in public schools in Hanoi. These findings offer valuable insights into how transformational leadership can enhance PLC effectiveness in Vietnam's educational context, providing implications for leadership development and policymaking. However, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference, and the study's focus on Hanoi's public schools calls for future research in diverse educational settings across Vietnam. Longitudinal and qualitative studies would further deepen the understanding of the long-term impacts of transformational leadership on PLCs.

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Introduction

Effective leadership is critical to educational success and is fundamental to fostering institutional effectiveness, collaborative environments, and continuous learning. During times of transformation, leadership's role becomes even more pivotal as it steers educational institutions through change and nurtures a culture of ongoing improvement. Among various leadership models, transformational leadership stands out for its proven impact on developing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), essential for enhancing teacher collaboration and professional growth. This model emphasizes inspiring and motivating individuals toward a shared vision, promoting individual growth while fostering collective responsibility, teamwork, and innovation—key elements for educational reform (Day et al., 2016; Thien et al., 2022).

In this study, Leithwood & Jantzi (2006) chose the transformational leadership model over the Bass and Avolio model due to its broader focus on leadership practices specific to educational settings. Leithwood & Jantzi's (2006) framework emphasizes vision development, collaboration, and continuous learning—core components that align well with the characteristics of PLCs. While the Bass and Avolio model is widely used in organizational leadership, it tends to focus more on transactional aspects and individual motivation, which makes it less applicable to the dynamic and communal aspects of educational leadership in the context of PLCs.

In Vietnam, the need for school administrators to adopt transformational leadership practices is central to ongoing educational reforms aimed at improving teaching quality and student outcomes. These reforms emphasize the importance of leadership that inspires and motivates educators while cultivating a culture of shared responsibility among staff. However, while transformational leadership has shown positive results in global studies (Zhang et al., 2022), its specific impact in the Vietnamese educational context remains underexplored. Traditional practices and contemporary demands in Vietnam present unique challenges and opportunities for the implementation of transformational leadership strategies. PLC practices in Vietnamese schools, characterized by hierarchical structures and limited resources, also add to the complexity of adopting such leadership styles effectively.

Previous research has established a positive link between transformational leadership and PLC success (Hord, 1997; Stoll et al., 2006), but the influence of cultural, institutional, and socio-political factors in Vietnam's educational landscape has not been fully addressed. This gap highlights the need for research focusing on how transformational leadership can be tailored to the specific context of Vietnamese schools. By examining the role of transformational leadership in the establishment and functioning of PLCs in Hanoi, this study seeks to contribute to the understanding of how these leadership practices can be effectively implemented within the unique Vietnamese educational environment.

Although much of the existing literature on transformational leadership and PLCs is foundational, it is becoming outdated, and more recent studies are needed to reflect the evolving dynamics of educational leadership. The urgency of this research is reinforced by Vietnam's current educational reforms, which call for collaborative, teacher-centered professional development. Understanding the role of leadership in fostering such environments is crucial for advancing these reforms. This study aims to provide insights into how transformational leadership influences PLCs and to offer practical recommendations for leadership development and policy initiatives that can drive sustainable improvements in Vietnamese education. Through this exploration, the research will contribute to enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in Vietnam and support the ongoing educational transformation.

Review of the Literature

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are collaborative networks of educators that focus on improving teaching practices and student learning outcomes through shared commitment and participation. Defined as groups wherein educators regularly engage in collective learning and professional development, PLCs emphasize collaborative inquiry and reflection on teaching methodologies (Hudson, 2023) Hudson (2023). This framework promotes an environment where teachers support one another in refining pedagogical practices while cultivating a strong sense of community and shared responsibility (Admiraal et al., 2021)

Recent research highlights that effective PLCs can lead to sustainable educational improvements by fostering continuous professional growth among educators (Krabonja et al., 2024). They encompass various aspects of professional learning, such as promoting teacher leadership, enhancing collaboration, and addressing diverse educational needs (Alzayed & Alabdulkareem, 2020). Essentially, PLCs are designed to create a culture of shared learning, where educators collaboratively explore instructional strategies, share best practices, and ultimately drive student achievement (Lee & Ip, 2021). As such, PLCs serve as vital mechanisms for professional development that align educators' individual goals with broader educational objectives.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership has been a focal point in educational research, particularly represented by the Leithwood & Jantzi (2006) model and the Full-Range Leadership Model (Avolio & Bass, 1991)The Leithwood & Jantzi model delineates transformational leadership into three main categories: Setting Directions, Developing People, and Redesigning the Organization. Each category comprises specific practices that foster a collaborative school culture and promote professional growth, ultimately enhancing student achievement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). In contrast, the Full-Range Leadership Model encompasses transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, emphasizing a continuum of leadership behaviors that cater to varying motivational needs (Bass, 1985; Stewart, 2006).

While both models advocate for improving organizational outcomes, the Leithwood & Jantzi model concentrates specifically on the educational context, providing a clearer framework for addressing the complexities of school leadership and its direct impact on teaching and learning environments (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). In particular, its focus on setting shared goals and fostering a professional community aligns more closely with the collective aspirations of educational institutions. Moreover, current research highlights the effectiveness of transformational leadership in increasing teacher motivation and student performance, suggesting that the Leithwood & Jantzi model offers a more robust approach for educational settings compared to the broader Full-Range model (Abdullah et al., 2018; Litz & Scott, 2016; Marks & Printy, 2003). Therefore, adopting the Leithwood & Jantzi model can lead to more focused and effective leadership practices that enhance educational outcomes.

PLCs in the Context of Vietnamese Education

PLCs are relatively new in Vietnam, with implementation varying widely across schools. Recent studies indicate that while PLCs have the potential to enhance teachers' professional skills and shape school teachers' job happiness levels (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025), their application and sustainability face numerous challenges (Doan & Pham, 2022; Hong-Van Thi Dinh et al., 2023). Key obstacles include insufficient resources and support, which hinder the effectiveness of PLCs (Phan, 2017; Saito & Tsukui, 2008). Research has highlighted the need for facilities, financial support, and management improvements to enable more effective PLC operations (Linh & Kasule, 2022; Hong-Van Thi Dinh & To-Trinh Thi Tran, 2024).

In light of educational innovation, it is essential to continue exploring PLC models suitable for Vietnam's unique conditions to enhance education quality (Hong-Van Thi Dinh et al., 2023). The community of practice model has demonstrated significant advantages in improving teachers' professional capacity (Hong et al., 2024). Additionally, cultural and systemic factors are crucial in implementing PLCs in Vietnam. Traditional hierarchical structures and a lack of collaborative culture can impede the effectiveness of PLCs (Nguyen, 2019). Systemic issues, such as limited resources and disparities in professional development opportunities, further complicate the implementation of PLC activities (Doan & Pham, 2022). Addressing these factors is vital for successfully integrating PLCs into the Vietnamese education system.

Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and PLCs

The role of transformational leadership in PLCs has been well-documented in both previous (Hord, 1997; Minckler, 2013; Olivier & Hipp, 2010) and recent study (Zhang et al., 2022), confirming that transformational leadership directly or indirectly influences PLCs (Valckx et al., 2019). Transformational leadership in secondary schools fosters increased teacher collaboration and a sense of community (Minckler, 2013), inspiring educators to enhance educational quality (Hallinger, 2003). Transformational leaders cultivate collaborative environments, motivate teachers, and provide clear direction and support for cooperative activities (Leithwood et al., 2008; Wang, 2016).

These leaders also enhance organizational relationships and commitment (Leithwood, 1994) and improve PLC effectiveness by establishing meeting times and promoting a collaborative culture (Benoliel & Schechter, 2017). Furthermore, transformational leadership encourages teacher participation in professional activities and

decision-making (Marks & Printy, 2003). Transformational leadership is crucial for developing and sustaining effective learning communities (Boyd & Hord, 1994; Burns, 1978).

Despite the extensive literature on the relationship between transformational leadership and PLCs, significant gaps still need to be discovered, particularly concerning the Vietnamese context. More research is necessary to explore how transformational leadership impacts PLCs in Vietnamese schools. Recent studies have primarily introduced PLC concepts without assessing the impact of transformational leadership amidst ongoing educational reforms (Hong-Van Thi Dinh et al., 2023). This underscores the need for further investigation into how transformational leadership can be leveraged to enhance the implementation and effectiveness of PLCs in Vietnam. We suppose the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a positive relationship between Setting Direction and PLC.

H2: There is a positive relationship between Developing People and PLC.

H3: There is a positive relationship between Restructuring Organization and PLC.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

Study Design. This research utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional design to explore the perspectives of public school administrators and teachers in Hanoi, Vietnam. Data were collected at a single time using a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms.

Population. The study population comprised administrators and teachers working in public schools under the supervision of the Hanoi Department of Education and Training. The participants were selected from schools across three levels: primary, secondary, and high school.

Sampling Method. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representation across different school levels (primary, secondary, and high school) and locations (urban, suburban, rural). This method was used to capture the diversity of experiences and perspectives from administrators and teachers across various types of schools.

Sample Size. The total sample size consisted of 360 participants, divided as follows: 207 teachers, 141 vice-principals, and 12 principals. The sampling was done to reflect the distribution of educators and administrators across the three school levels and different locations within Hanoi.

Measurement of Variables

Demographic Information. We collected basic participant data, including age, gender, position, and education level.

Transformational Leadership. We measured transformational leadership using nine items from Leithwood & Jantzi's (2006) model across three dimensions: Setting Direction (SD), Developing People (DP), and Restructuring Organization (RO). We assessed each item on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Professional Learning Community Assessment (PLCA-R). This study employs the PLCs assessment scale developed by Olivier et al. (2010), which is shortened to 12 items across six domains: shared and supportive leadership (SSL); shared values and vision (SVV); collective learning and application (CLA); shared personal practice (SPP);

supportive conditions—relationships (SCR); and supportive conditions—structures (SCS). We assessed each item on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

All instruments were translated from English to Vietnamese using Brislin's (1970) back-translation method, involving forward translation by two bilingual experts and back-translation by two additional experts. A pilot group assessed the translated instruments' semantic, functional, and conceptual equivalence.

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26.0, including descriptive statistics for demographic data and inferential statistics to examine relationships between transformational leadership and PLC effectiveness.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1.

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants (N=360)

	Characteristics	Number	Proportion
Age	Under 30 years old	65	18.1%
	30 to 40 years old	112	31.1%
	40 to 50 years old	118	32.8%
	50 to 60 years old	65	18.1%
Position	Teacher	207	57.5%
	Vice Principal	141	39.2%

	Principal	12	3.3%
Teaching Level	Primary	84	23.3%
	Secondary	84	23.3%
	High school	192	53.3%

The age analysis of 360 female participants divided them into four groups: under 30 (18.1%), 30–40 (31.1%), 40–50 (32.8%), and 50–60 (18.1%), with no one over 60. Younger teachers under 30 were less experienced, while those 50–60 had extensive experience. Most participants were teachers (57.5%), followed by vice-principals (39.2%) and principals (3.3%), reflecting the organizational structure where teachers dominate. High school teachers comprised 53.3% of the sample, while primary and secondary teachers each accounted for 23.3%, highlighting differences in participation by teaching level.

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test

Table 2.

Assessment of factor reliability using Cronbach's Alpha Index

Type	Factors	Observed variables	Variable-total correlation	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient
Transformational Leadership	Developing people (DP)	DP1	0.827	0.917
		DP2	0.820	
		DP3	0.852	
	Redesigning the organization (RO)	RO1	0.839	0.916
		RO2	0.875	

		RO3	0.784	
	Setting directions (SD)	SD1	0.859	0.949
		SD2	0.905	
		SD3	0.922	
PLC	Share and Supportive Leadership (SSL)	SSL1	0.625	0.768
		SSL2	0.625	
	Share Values and Vision (SVV)	SVV1	0.612	0.754
		SVV2	0.612	
	Collective Learning and Application (CLA)	CLA1	0.690	0.816
		CLA2	0.690	
	Share Personal Practice (SPP)	SPP1	0.565	0.717
		SPP2	0.565	
	Supportive Conditions – Relationships (SCR)	SCR1	0.852	0.920
		SCR2	0.852	
	Supportive Conditions – Structures (SCS)	SCS1	0.883	0.937
		SCS2	0.883	

The analysis results show that all factors in the model have good reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.754 to 0.949, all exceeding the threshold of 0.7; indicating that the scales have a high level of internal consistency. In particular, the factors Developing People (DP), Redesigning the Organization (RO) and Setting Directions (SD) all have Alpha > 0.9, reflecting excellent reliability. In addition, all observed variables have adjusted item-total correlation coefficients > 0.7, confirming the homogeneity and appropriateness of each variable in the scale structure. Thus, the scales are all eligible for exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and subsequent analysis steps.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Table 3.

Model Fit

		Independent Variable	**Dependent Variable**
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.502	0.920
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1903.057	4378.595
	Df	66	36
	Sig.	0.000	0.000
Component		6	1
Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	Cumulative %	86.236%	81.636%

The results in Table 3 show that the data fully meets the conditions for conducting exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Specifically, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index reached 0.920, which is considered

"excellent" according to Kaiser's (1974) classification, indicating that the sample is large enough and the correlations between variables are strong enough to explore the latent factor structure. At the same time, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity has a value of p = 0.000, rejecting the hypothesis that the correlation matrix is a unit, confirming a significant relationship between the observed variables. Thus, the data fully meets the necessary premises to conduct EFA reliably.

Table 4.

Factor rotation matrix

		1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
PLC	SCS1	0.969						
	SCS2	0.966						
	SCR1		0.953					
	SCR2		0.945					
	CLA2			0.918				
	CLA1			0.914				
	SSL2				0.905			
	SSL1				0.889			
	SVV1					0.923		
	SVV2					0.835		
	SPP1						0.884	
	SPP2						0.879	

Transformational Leadership	SD3	0.945
	RO2	0.937
	SD2	0.926
	DP3	0.918
	RO1	0.906
	DP2	0.883
	DP1	0.882
	RO3	0.872
	SD1	0.859

The rotated matrix reflects the factor structure consistent with the proposed theoretical model, with the observed variables loading strongly on the corresponding factors, and the loading coefficients are all greater than 0.55, meeting the required level to confirm the concept's representativeness (Hair et al., 2010). There is no cross-loading phenomenon - that is, no variable significantly loads on more than one factor, ensuring unidimensionality and discriminant validity between the Transformational Leadership and Professional Learning Community (PLC) components. Specifically, variables such as SCS1 and SCS2 (belonging to the factor "Supportive Conditions - Structures") have high loading coefficients (0.966 and 0.969, respectively), indicating a strong internal relationship between the measured variables and the factors. Similarly, the group of variables representing Transformational Leadership, such as SD3, RO2, and DP3, loaded on one factor with coefficients ranging from 0.859 to 0.945, clearly reflecting the three-component structure of transformational leadership.

The study showed that the three components of transformational leadership—Development Orientation (SD), People Development (DP), and Organizational Restructuring (RO)—although distinct in theory, are perceived by teachers as a unified whole in practice with high factor loadings (0.859–0.945) and excellent Cronbach's Alpha reliability (0.916–0.949). This phenomenon reflects the central leadership culture in Vietnamese public schools, where leadership behaviors are closely linked to a key leader, with no clear distinction between roles. This is consistent with Hallinger and Bryant's (2013) view that, in the East Asian context, leadership behaviors are often integrated, making it difficult to separate strategic, transformational, and technical leadership. The results of the study suggest that leadership theory needs to be adapted to local cultural and organizational contexts to reflect practice accurately.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 5.

Correlations between factors

		SDPRO*	SSL	SVV	CLA	SPP	SCR	SCS
SDPRO	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.021	0.390*	0.586*	0.064	0.712**	-0.072
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.692	0.000	0.000	0.227	0.000	0.175
	N	360	360	360	360	360	360	360
SSL	Pearson Correlation	-0.021	1	0.113*	-0.124*	0.471**	0.030	-0.038
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.692		0.033	0.018	0.000	0.572	0.477
	N	360	360	360	360	360	360	360
SVV	Pearson Correlation	0.390**	0.113*	1	0.241**	0.038	0.312**	-0.095
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.033		0.000	0.472	0.000	0.072
	N	360	360	360	360	360	360	360

CLA	Pearson Correlation	0.586**	-0.124*	0.241**	1	-0.045	0.622**	0.070
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.018	0.000		0.399	0.000	0.187
	N	360	360	360	360	360	360	360
SPP	Pearson Correlation	0.064	0.471**	0.038	-0.045	1	0.039	0.026
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.227	0.000	0.472	0.399		0.463	0.624
	N	360	360	360	360	360	360	360
SCR	Pearson Correlation	0.712**	0.030	0.312**	0.622**	0.039	1	0.047
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.572	0.000	0.000	0.463		0.371
	N	360	360	360	360	360	360	360
SCS	Pearson Correlation	-0.072	-0.038	-0.095	0.070	0.026	0.047	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.175	0.477	0.072	0.187	0.624	0.371	
	N	360	360	360	360	360	360	360

**SDPRO. Transformational Leadership*

Pearson correlation results showed significant relationships between the components of Transformational Leadership and the elements of Professional Learning Communities (PLC), providing a solid basis for subsequent confirmatory analyses.

Specifically, the strong correlations between transformational leadership and SCR ($r = 0.712$, $p < 0.01$) and between transformational leadership and CLA ($r = 0.586$, $p < 0.01$) reflect the central role of transformational leadership in promoting supportive relationships and collective learning – two core components of PLC. This is consistent with the theory that transformational leadership helps form a collaborative culture, encourage initiative, and improve organizational effectiveness (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006)

In contrast, weak or nonsignificant correlations between SCS and other factors suggest that structural conditions such as time, technology, or

organizational processes are not clearly linked to learning components. This finding suggests the limits of leadership influence in the context of limited material conditions.

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)

Table 6.

Multivariate effects of transformational leadership

	Effect	Value	F	Hypo-thesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squa-red
Inter-cept	Pillai's Trace	0.976	2360.053	6.000	350.000	0.000	0.976
	Wilks' Lambda	0.024	2360.053	6.000	350.000	0.000	0.976
	Hotelling's Trace	40.458	2360.053	6.000	350.000	0.000	0.976
	Roy's Largest Root	40.458	2360.053	6.000	350.000	0.000	0.976
Transformational Leadership	Pillai's Trace	0.755	13.696	24.000	1412.000	0.000	0.189
	Wilks' Lambda	0.306	20.600	24.000	1222.214	0.000	0.256
	Hotelling's Trace	2.076	30.141	24.000	1394.000	0.000	0.342
	Roy's Largest Root	1.981	116.530	6.000	353.000	0.000	0.665

Multivariate analysis shows that transformational leadership has a significant and statistically significant multivariate effect on all six professional learning community components (PLC) components. All multivariate test indices – including Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda,

Hotelling's Trace, and Roy's Largest Root – have p-values of 0.000, indicating that the differences between levels of transformational leadership are real and statistically significant. In particular, the Partial Eta Squared (η^2) indices range from 0.189 to 0.665, exceeding the threshold of 0.14 according to Cohen's (1988) classification, indicating the large effect size. This suggests that transformational leadership behaviors – such as supporting innovation, communicating vision, and providing a growth orientation – strongly impact the level of PLC development, with some components showing very high levels of influence (η^2 close to 0.7).

Table 7.

Summary of MANOVA results by transformational leadership

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	SSL	0.718[a]	4	0.179	0.386	0.819	0.004
	SVV	73.473[b]	4	18.368	18.971	0.000	0.176
	CLA	145.229[c]	4	36.307	74.149	0.000	0.455
	SPP	1.996[d]	4	0.499	1.090	0.361	0.012
	SCR	163.539[e]	4	40.885	116.876	0.000	0.568
	SCS	3.592[f]	4	0.898	1.029	0.392	0.011
Intercept	SSL	2128.229	1	2128.229	4571.181	0.000	0.928
	SVV	818.666	1	818.666	845.523	0.000	0.704
	CLA	1488.240	1	1488.240	3039.382	0.000	0.895
	SPP	2085.273	1	2085.273	4555.732	0.000	0.928
	SCR	1320.465	1	1320.465	3774.777	0.000	0.914
	SCS	1759.949	1	1759.949	2017.558	0.000	0.850

Transformational Leadership	SSL	0.718	4	0.179	0.386	0.819	0.004
	SVV	73.473	4	18.368	18.971	0.000	0.176
	CLA	145.229	4	36.307	74.149	0.000	0.455
	SPP	1.996	4	.499	1.090	0.361	0.012
	SCR	163.539	4	40.885	116.876	0.000	0.568
	SCS	3.592	4	0.898	1.029	0.392	0.011
Error	SSL	165.279	355	0.466			
	SVV	343.724	355	0.968			
	CLA	173.826	355	0.490			
	SPP	162.492	355	0.458			
	SCR	124.184	355	0.350			
	SCS	309.672	355	0.872			
Total	SSL	6677.000	360				
	SVV	3883.000	360				
	CLA	6486.000	360				
	SPP	6650.000	360				
	SCR	5968.000	360				
	SCS	5565.000	360				

The MANOVA analysis results in Table 7 show that transformational leadership significantly univariately affects several core components of the professional learning community (PLC). Specifically, transformational leadership has a substantial impact on Shared Vision and Common Values (SVV) with $F = 18.971$, $p < 0.001$ and Partial $\eta^2 = 0.176$, a powerful effect on Collective Learning and Application (CLA) with $F = 74.149$, $p < 0.001$, Partial $\eta^2 = 0.455$, and a powerful impact on Supportive Conditions – Relationships (SCR) with $F = 116.876$, $p < 0.001$, Partial $\eta^2 = 0.568$. According to Cohen's (1988) scale, these η^2 values all reached or exceeded the threshold for significant influence,

suggesting that inspirational and innovation-supportive leadership behaviors strongly promote PLC's "soft" aspects, such as collaboration, shared values, and team cohesion. However, the results also showed that the remaining three components, namely Shared Strategic Leadership (SSL), Reflective Practice (SPP), and Supportive-Structural Conditions (SCS), were not significantly influenced by transformational leadership ($p > 0.05$; $\eta^2 < 0.012$). This suggests that these factors may depend more on the specific organizational context, power hierarchy, and material conditions than individual leadership styles. This finding is consistent with the theoretical framework of Leithwood and Jantzi (2006), which emphasizes the role of transformational leadership in creating a learning culture – but not as the sole factor that governs all the components of a PLC.

Discussion

This study investigated the multidimensional effects of transformational leadership on professional learning communities (PLCs), with significant findings from the MANOVA analysis. The results highlighted that transformational leadership strongly impacts three components of PLCs: Shared Vision and Values (SVV) ($\eta^2 = 0.176$), Collective Learning and Application (CLA) ($\eta^2 = 0.455$), and Supportive Conditions - Relationships (SCR) ($\eta^2 = 0.568$). These findings align with Leithwood and Jantzi's (2006) work, which affirms that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in guiding vision, fostering a continuous learning environment, and building reciprocal relationships. Specifically, the SCR component was most influenced, emphasizing transformational leadership's ability to create a psychologically safe space for sharing and learning (Abendaño, 2024). This is consistent with global research, including studies by Hallinger and Heck (2010), Leithwood and Jantzi (2008), and Zhang et al. (2022),

which underscore the pivotal role of transformational leadership in enhancing educational quality and fostering environments conducive to professional collaboration and student achievement.

In addition to the positive impacts, this study also observed limitations in the effect of transformational leadership on some PLC components. Notably, transformational leadership did not significantly influence the remaining three components: Shared Strategic Leadership (SSL), Reflective Practice (SPP), and Supporting-Structural Conditions (SCS). This suggests that these components might be more influenced by existing organizational structures, professional cultures, and available resources rather than leadership style alone (Jabeen et al., 2019). Specifically, the SCS component could be constrained by higher-level policies and budgets, which are often beyond the direct control of school leaders (Hord, 1997). These results echo the findings of Stoll et al. (2006), who suggested that physical barriers, such as organizational structures and resources, often require system-level interventions. The correlation analysis further revealed strong associations between transformational leadership and SCR ($r = 0.712$) and CLA ($r = 0.586$), underscoring the essential role of leadership in promoting collaborative learning and supportive relationships. However, the weak or non-significant correlations, particularly between SCS and other components, reflect the independent existence of physical structural factors distinct from the socio-cultural aspects of PLCs. This observation is in line with Fullan's (2007) multi-layered model of educational change, which proposes that structural and cultural factors evolve at different rates (Ogden, 2017).

These findings are consistent with previous studies, confirming the substantial influence of transformational leadership on the cultural dimensions of PLCs. Leithwood and Sun (2012) similarly emphasized

the transformative effects of leadership on developing a learning culture within schools, reinforcing the effectiveness of transformational leadership in fostering shared values and collective learning. However, the lack of significant influence on structural components corroborates Stoll et al.'s (2006) assertion that physical and organizational barriers require more systemic approaches, rather than relying solely on leadership traits.

The implications of these findings are crucial for stakeholders in the education sector. School leaders should prioritize the development of transformational leadership qualities, particularly in the areas of creating a shared vision and promoting collective learning. Policy makers should allocate additional resources and support mechanisms to address the structural barriers that are less affected by leadership style. These insights align with the conclusions of Linh and Kasule (2022) and Doan and Pham (2022), who highlighted the need for leadership strategies that overcome challenges posed by hierarchical structures and limited resources in the Vietnamese context. Furthermore, training programs should integrate transformational leadership skills with strategies to address structural barriers and enhance PLC effectiveness.

Finally, this study's relevance to the Vietnamese educational context is notable, as PLCs are still developing in many areas (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2025). Phan (2017) and Saito and Tsukui (2008) noted that transformational leadership offers a framework to overcome challenges by promoting collaboration, decentralizing decision-making, and aligning professional development initiatives with teachers' needs. Policy recommendations from this study emphasize the importance of investing in leadership training and resources and fostering autonomy within schools to address systemic barriers and

promote innovation. These findings resonate with global and local perspectives on context-sensitive leadership development (Hong-Van Thi Dinh & To-Trinh Thi Tran, 2024; Eaker et al., 2002), providing valuable insights for educational reform and PLC advancement.

Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role of transformational leadership in enhancing key components of professional learning communities (PLCs), particularly Shared Vision and Values (SVV), Collective Learning and Application (CLA), and Supportive Conditions - Relationships (SCR). These findings confirm that transformational leadership is vital for fostering a collaborative and supportive learning environment. However, the study also reveals that transformational leadership has limited impact on certain components, such as Shared Strategic Leadership (SSL), Reflective Practice (SPP), and Supporting-Structural Conditions (SCS), which are more influenced by organizational structures and available resources. The implications suggest that school leaders should focus on developing transformational leadership traits, while policymakers should invest in resources and support mechanisms to address structural barriers. Overall, this research underscores the need for both leadership development and systemic reforms to effectively build and sustain PLCs in schools, offering practical recommendations for improving educational outcomes.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. The sample was limited to a specific region, which may not represent all educational contexts, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the cross-sectional

design restricts causal conclusions, and future longitudinal studies could explore the long-term effects of transformational leadership on PLCs. Future research should also examine the role of external factors, such as national policies and socio-economic conditions, in influencing the impact of leadership on PLCs. Moreover, investigating the interaction between leadership styles and organizational culture would provide deeper insights into how leadership approaches affect PLC outcomes across various educational settings.

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