



## Challenges of Transformational Leaders: A Narrative Approach

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**Purpose:** The present research was conducted with the aim of expressing the challenges of transformational leaders in schools.

**Method:** The approach of the current research is qualitative and the strategy used is narrative research. The researched population was all school principals of Kermanshah city. Sampling was purposeful and 13 people were studied until reaching theoretical saturation. Data collection was semi-structured interview and document review. Validation in the present research was examined and confirmed based on the process of verifiability, transferability, believability and reliability.

**Findings:** The analysis showed that the challenges of transformational leaders in schools include different aspects. The participants reflected the challenges in the form of challenges of different definitions and perceptions, the need for capabilities and competences, and finally structural challenges, and these results were drawn in three graphs. Challenges related to the definition and characteristics include the following: common goals, planning, creating a professional work team, creating change and transformation and inspiring employees. In the challenges related to the necessary competencies of transformational leaders, we also found five main categories including: scientific support, emotional support, clear and two-way communication, organizational foresight, creating a creative and dynamic environment. In the structural challenges faced by transformational leaders, we also found four categories including: organizational issues, individual issues, socio-cultural issues and lack of resources and facilities.

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### **Introduction and statement of the problem**

If the society has the necessary knowledge and skills to manage schools, the educational system will definitely be highly efficient and reliable. Those who act as educational leaders are considered facilitators of educational affairs and have a special role in establishing communication (Wales, 2013). The success of educational systems, especially schools, basically depends on their leaders. The basis of school leadership is mainly taken from Western societies (Hallinger & Kulophas, 2019).

One of the important directions of school leadership research is to investigate the "pathways" through which school leadership affects teaching and learning (2010, Hallinger & Heck; 2020, Lithwood et al). Leaders are the ones who should interpret the policies in the context of the school, accompany the teachers and bring real benefits to the school based on the direction of the policy. Contemporary issues such as 21st century skills and lifelong learning, school leadership is expected to inspire principals and transform curriculum, teaching and teachers, and all schools in general (Lowe et al, 2020). Evidence suggests that traditional leadership and management approaches have been quite successful in solving technical problems in schools (Cruz & Laruca, 2020).

But future leaders will face problems that do not have specific solutions, and it is necessary to create new capacities to solve them. This requires a different type of leadership (Khalkhali, 2014). Educational managers are very important in improving schools and especially in the academic progress of students (Hoy & Miskel, 2016). But

future leaders will face problems that do not have specific solutions, and it is necessary to create new capacities to solve them. This requires a different type of leadership (Khalkhali, 2014). Educational managers are very important in improving schools and especially in the academic progress of students (Hoy & Miskel, 2016). Therefore, the use of new leadership styles provides the conditions for optimal education (Ramazanejad, Hemtinejad, Andam, Zare, and Sadeghpour, 2019).

Among the different leadership styles, the transformational leadership style is the basis and foundation for long-term changes in the organization, which makes it possible to reach the goals of the organization. The positive effects of transformational leadership have been observed in the effectiveness and performance of the leader at the individual, group and organizational levels (Hur et al, 2011). Transformational leadership has been one of the most prominent leadership models in education during the last three decades (2018, Gomus et al).

In fact, among the newest leadership styles in organizations, the transformational leadership style has been noticed by organizations (Shah Mansouri and Sokot Arani, 2014). Transformational leadership focuses more on change and inspires followers. The transformational leader is committed to a common vision and goals for his organization, challenging employees to solve innovative problems and developing the leadership capacity of followers through coaching, mentoring and providing new challenges and re-supporting employees are the main goals of a transformational

### 3 Challenges of Transformational Leaders: A Narrative Approach

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leader (Bass, 2006). & (Rigo, Arokiasamy et al, 2016).

The use of transformational leadership in schools has always faced many challenges and problems. Transformational leadership is an ideal global leadership style. Research has shown that transformational leadership comes with a wide range of situations compared to transactional leadership, which is why managers often resort to transactional leadership in practice. (Hamedani, 2016). Along with the transformational leadership style, most of the human talents of the organizations can be increased and their potentials and abilities can be used to realize the organizational goals and vision (RosIntan & Etal, 2012). With a complete understanding of leadership styles, managers purposefully use the language of their leadership style when discussing specific issues, leadership style brings certain interactions with it. Transformational leadership style is a two-way and interactive style favorable for expressing ideas (2020, Legutko). Stress in the work environment is an obstacle to many organizational developments, the transformational leader is directly affected by an obstacle such as stress in the work environment (Lee & Huang, 2020). Transformational leadership, in particular, has been an important area of research in organizational psychology and has attracted extensive research due to its strong and consistent association with high-performance and effective teams (Gardner, Lowe, Moss, Mahoney and Collier, 2010; 2001, Lowe and Gardner). The value and importance of transformational leadership is determined when these leaders build strong teams in the organization. (2020, Du Plessis, Wagley and Becker). The

goal of this type of leadership is to help followers reach their maximum potential. The leader serves to inspire, motivate and morally uplift both himself and the followers, thereby improving the performance of the followers (Northouse, 2013). (Burns, 1978) defined transformational leadership as a type of ethical leadership that considers the motivations of followers. The purpose of this type of leadership is to help followers reach their maximum potential (Mitchell, 2019).

In addition to the things mentioned in relation to the importance of the role of leadership and its effectiveness, it should be noted that leadership is a complex responsibility and leaders face obstacles and challenges in practice. (2008) Leonard Carrillo In an article he studied the obstacles and problems faced by leaders, he mentioned the obstacles including: sexual orientation, cultural difference of leaders, administrative paper game and lack of self-confidence of the manager. He stressed that half of the personnel have distanced themselves from the leadership for reasons such as paperwork. In addition, for reasons such as incomplete knowledge and information, leaders do not have the ability to accept the position of leadership, which causes them to lack the necessary confidence and trust in themselves to accept the great responsibility of leadership.

Considering the undeniable role of managers in implementing the solutions of the document of fundamental transformation, their development will lead to the desired transformation in the process of teaching and learning of students and the continuous improvement of the quality of school performance (document of fundamental

transformation of education and upbringing, 2019). Various researches in this field show that despite the efforts made, the functions have not been properly considered in Iran's educational system, and school principals still run schools in a traditional way, which is partly due to their low level of maturity in managing schools in the ways emphasized in New theories are scientific (Falah, 2017; Shokohi, 2017). Relying on the review we had on the transformational leadership style, it is concrete and common that transformational leaders in the organization have a great influence on the effectiveness of organizations. But like other leadership styles, transformational leaders also face problems and challenges in practice in using this leadership style. Due to the necessity of this issue, the researcher in this study is looking for an answer to the question, what problems and challenges do transformational leaders face in their career path?

### **Theoretical**

One of the goals of the organization and researchers in the past four decades has been leadership and they have tried to implement this phenomenon with a series of academic criteria. One of the most recent personal approaches that has emerged for the study of leadership is based on the relational transformational leadership model created and operationalized by Bess and Avolio (Dulwich and Higgs, 2005). Selesznik considers the influence of leaders as: "transforming situations, extracting ideas and expectations and creating specific goals and desires". Nichols also believes that management can do things with the traditional activities of planning, organizing, monitoring and controlling by others,

without paying much attention to people's opinions (Akbari, 2009). Leadership, on the contrary, is very concerned about what people think and feel and how they relate to the environment, organization and job. The leader's behavior is a well-known topic that has been extensively researched in various fields. Among them, during the last two decades, the common theoretical framework has increasingly been in terms of transformational leadership, which was proposed by Burns and Bess.

James McGregor Burns was the first to coin the terms transactional and transformational leadership in his book "Leadership". His primary interest was political leadership. But his terms were quickly used in the fields of organizational management. Burns, for the first time (1987), distinguished between transformational and transactional leaders. Transformational leaders increase the surrounding needs and motivations and cause great change in individuals, groups and organizations. Relational leaders target the current needs of subordinates and pay a lot of attention to them. (reward for performance), based on the theories of transformational leadership, a leader needs to use internal actors to perform the necessary actions for the organization to achieve its desired goals. In this regard, the goal of the transformational leader is to ensure that the path to the goal is clearly understood by the internal actors. remove potential barriers within the system and encourage actors to achieve predetermined goals (Bunke et al., 2003).

Based on (Leithwood & Sun's, 2012) review of 79 studies, the different dimensions of transformational school

leadership can be grouped into the following four categories of leadership performance.

- **People Orientation:** Refers to leadership practices that include creating a shared vision and building cross-school communities.

- **Continuous development of people:** includes providing individual support and intellectual stimulation. Here the leader seeks to build trusting relationships and serves as a role model for the beliefs and values that are highly respected in the school.

- **Organizational redesign:** Here the leader focuses on creating a positive school culture, strengthening relationships with parents and the community, and creating structures that allow teachers to effectively carry out their teaching duties.

- **Improving the educational program:** Here the leader is involved in educational leadership and supervision aimed at improving the educational program of the school (Mitchell, 2019).

### **Internal background of the research:**

(Hosseini et al, 2009) in a research entitled investigating the relationship between organizational culture and transformational leadership and leader-follower exchange with a different approach reported that group culture has a positive effect on leader-follower exchange and developmental culture on two styles of transformational leadership and leader-follower exchange. and makes it meaningful. But the hierarchical culture has a negative effect on both leadership styles. (Mahdavi Shakib, 2013) in a research entitled the relationship between the thinking style of elementary school principals and transformational

leadership style showed that transformational leadership style is going on in successful institutions and has been very successful. (Khodaparast Sareshke & Amir Nejad, 2012) have reported a direct and significant relationship between organizational learning and readiness for change. Also, there is a direct and significant relationship between mental models of change and readiness for change, but there is no significant relationship between individual mastery and learning group and readiness for change.

(Rahimian & Hedayati, 2012) in a research entitled Review of transformational leadership researches in schools: by presenting a conceptual framework of combining the results; They concluded that transformational leadership with the mediation of some variables is able to provide the basis for the growth and development of all human members in the open school system and also the basis for creating a healthy school. (Mansouri & Sokot Arani, 2014) conducted a research titled the effect of transformational leadership style on the self-efficacy of subordinates, and the findings of the research showed that the transformational leadership style has a positive and significant effect on the self-efficacy of subordinates. (Ardalan, Ghanbari & Zandi, 2014) showed in their research that the tendency to change in the individual and the organization is a characteristic of the increase in transformational leadership at different organizational levels. In their report, it is stated that there is a positive and significant relationship between the revolutionary leader and readiness for change. (Molai, Karimi, Ahmadzadeh, 2015) in a research entitled the role of cultural intelligence

in transformational leadership of universities, the results showed that cultural intelligence and its four components have a positive and meaningful relationship with transformational leadership.

Several researches have been conducted to identify and prioritize the main factors of success in the organization (Broom, 2013). Among the effective factors in the success and excellence of the organization, we can mention the management, leadership, and then the subordinates. On the other hand, some experts have considered transformational leadership in creating emotional motivation and fundamental change in the organization as a necessity of leadership (Auckland, 1981). In another study (2010), Hawk et al determined that there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee creativity. In addition, the research results showed that subordinates' learning participation in the creative work process has a mediating role in the relationship between transformational leadership and subordinates' creativity.

In the research that (Baller, 2012) titled transformational leadership behaviors of school principals conducted a qualitative research based on teachers' understanding, he found that transformational leadership helps school principals to move their schools forward by using their ideas and beliefs. The results of Baller's study indicated that school principals have a high level of computer transformation leadership characteristics, including ideal influence, inspirational motivation, individual considerations, and mentally stimulating behaviors.

(Agarwal & Krishna, 2014) they determined that transformational

leadership has an effect on followers' self-efficacy. Emotion management can also play a mediating role in this regard.

(Chusing et al., 2014) by examining the effect of transformational leadership style on job satisfaction, they showed that out of the four components of transformational leadership style, only the dimension of personal consideration has a positive and significant relationship with job satisfaction. (Ojha et al., 2018) in their research titled transformational leadership and supply chain ambivalence: the mediating role of supply chain organizational learning and the moderating role of uncertainty, they showed that transformational leaders help their followers to raise the level of individual creativity and self-improvement. Research (Al-Rahil et al., 2018) investigating the effect of transformational leadership style on product innovation in Jordanian higher education institutions. The results of the research show that transformational leadership has a positive effect on the innovation of higher education institutions in Jordan. (Hoggs et al., 2018) with a systematic review of 195 studies, they concluded that leadership is an effective factor in predicting creativity and innovation.

(Li & Huang., 2020) in a research titled transformational leadership and employee development at the workplace: mediating roles of stressors, barriers to the challenge of boundaries in psychology came to the conclusion that stressors are a very important factor in the organization's lack of prosperity and do not allow transformational leaders to implement their plans well. (Luo et al.'s, 2020) study showed that teacher-perceived transformational leadership was associated with outcomes, positively with work

engagement, participation in professional learning, and job satisfaction, and negatively with intention to leave. This confirms the importance of school leadership as a key factor. To increase teacher engagement and participation to achieve school reform, school leaders practice transformational leadership.

### **Methodology**

The approach of the current research is qualitative and the strategy used is narrative research. Narrative-research chooses a collection of stories, which is a narrative of people's life experiences, as its data source. The research population is all managers of Kermanshah city. The sampling method of the current research is purposeful and the sample volume continued until data saturation was reached. The selection criterion was to go to the education department of Kermanshah city and get a list of the names of managers who had some characteristics of a transformational leader. These characteristics were determined based on the dimensions of transformational leadership. These people were usually people who excelled in festivals and research activities. and they mainly had transformative experience, and then there was a purposeful selection of those who were willing to participate in the

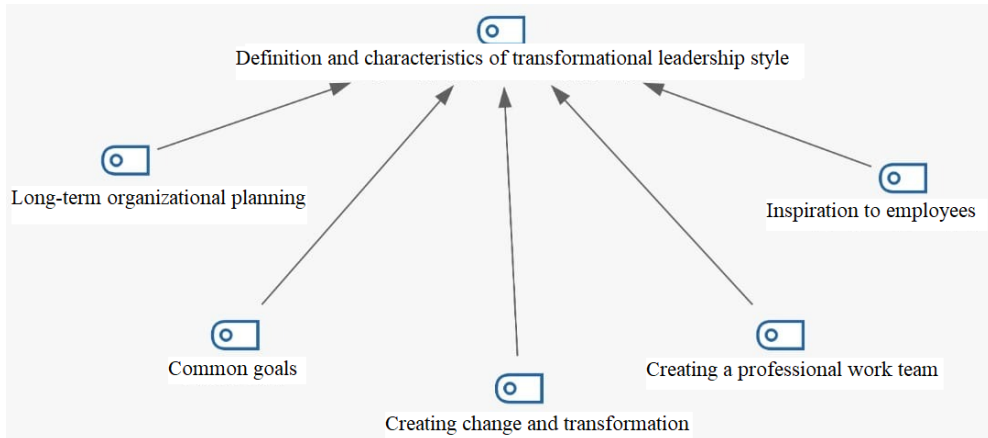
research. In the following, interviews were conducted with 18 managers (men and women) of Kermanshah city level through the purposeful criterion-based sampling method, and finally, 13 of them were used in the research after reaching data saturation.

### **Findings**

From the analysis of managers' narratives about the challenges of transformational leadership style, numerous concepts and finally 14 themes were obtained. In the following, data analysis is presented in the form of answers to the research questions.

**First question: What is the participants' point of view about the challenges related to the definitions and characteristics of the transformational leadership style and what meanings are conveyed to their minds?**

In order to answer the first question of the research, an interview was conducted with the participants, and by analyzing the narratives, documents and biographies of the participants, we found five main categories, which include the following: common goals, planning, creating a professional work team, creating change and transformation. and an inspiration to the employees, which we will continue to analyze.



**Figure 1: Definition and characteristics of transformational leadership from the perspective of managers**

As can be seen in the analysis, it can be stated that managers consider the transformational leadership style as a style in which the manager considers specific goals at the beginning of work and tries to achieve those goals. A purposeful organization is having a purposeful leadership, creating common goals among members, aligning personal and organizational goals, and according to them, if the manager does not consider these things, he will face problems, as one of the participants narrated as follows:- "In my opinion, transformational leadership means that the leader considers goals for the organization and tries to integrate the goals of the members of the organization with the goals of the organization and thus act for the benefit of the organization" (Participant 4). Among the other definitions they presented about this style was that after setting goals, the manager must have a **comprehensive and long-term plan**. Outdated people can be successful in their work, and sometimes not considering these things can create big problems for the manager. In this

regard, the narrative of one of the participants was as follows: "The leader removes outdated programs and by having a plan for work and in Considering the capital before doing any plan and planning based on the facilities and finally the drastic changes comes to my mind" (Participant 6).

What the participants mentioned after the planning is the **formation of a professional work team** in which the manager emphasizes on teamwork and by getting to know the members of the group, focusing on the needs of the members, strengthening the skills of the members, emphasizing on continuous training, and emphasizing on the personal growth of the members. Creating the spirit of collective effort, emphasizing on increasing the productivity of people, emphasizing on collective benefits, double effort in individual and organizational work, and increasing organizational skills, tries to have a strong and professional work team and if these things are not considered, the manager will have problems in his work. These features are evident in the narration of some of the



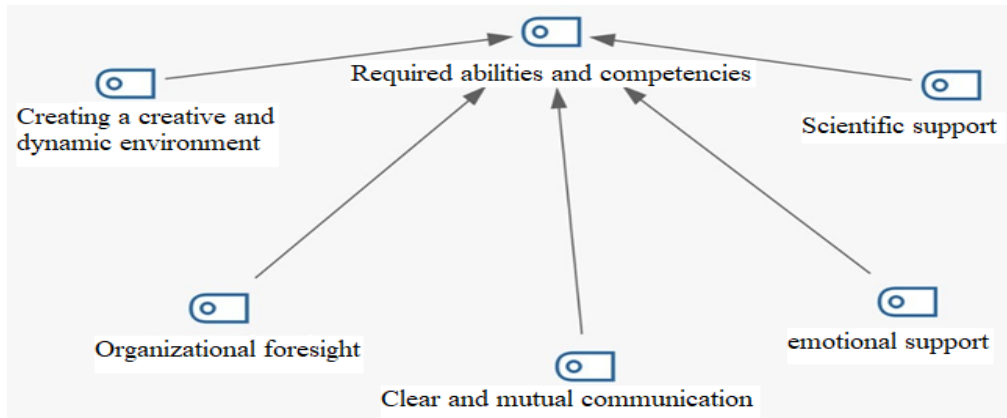
participants. One of the participants narrated as follows: "I have not been familiar with this style for a long time, but after becoming familiar with it, it is the second year that I try to use this style in my work. In this style, the leader forms a work team and tries to bring about positive changes in the organization by motivating the team members. Also, he emphasizes the needs of the members and works alongside the team members and does not just supervise them. (Participant 1).

The participants emphasized that this style causes **tremendous and fundamental changes**. According to them, these changes include: changes in outdated habits, welcoming new ideas, encouraging the creativity of members, emphasizing innovation in the organization, emphasizing creating positive changes, It was creating fundamental change and transformation, emphasizing new ideas, creating dramatic changes, changing the mentality of members, doing new things and solving problems in a new way, and they claimed that sometimes considering these things can be an obstacle in the successful implementation of this style. In connection with the mentioned cases, it is possible to refer to the narrative of one of the participants, he explains as follows: "What comes to my mind is that an organization makes very significant changes by using this leadership style, and in the habits Obsolete creates transformation, fundamental changes that change the members and employees of the organization. If this leadership is implemented correctly, it has many positive effects and brings freshness to my mind" (Participant 3).

Finally, the participants emphasized that in transformational leadership, the leader inspires the employees, and in their opinion, if the leader does not **inspire** his employees and does not influence them, he cannot be successful in the management process. They expressed their meaning with items including: influence on the thoughts of subordinates, ability to influence subordinates, convince members for the benefits of the organization, being a role model for leaders, intellectual stimulation of followers, and inducing positive feelings among members. In the following, we will discuss the narratives of two participants: Participant number eight's narrative was as follows: "I always try to be an example for them with my behavior, for example, I am never afraid to take reasonable risks in front of them, so that they also set me as their example. I also try to convince them about the collective benefits and instill a good feeling in them by encouraging them and giving them self-confidence" (Participant 8).

**Second question: From the perspective of the participants, what are the challenges related to the necessary competencies of transformational leaders?**

In order to answer the second question of the research, by analyzing the narratives, documents and biographies of the participants, we found five main categories, which include the following: scientific support, emotional support, transparent and two-way communication, organizational foresight, creating a creative and dynamic environment that In the following, we will analyze and explain each of them.



**Figure 2: Capabilities and capabilities, required competencies of transformational leaders**

As can be seen in the analysis, the participants had wide opinions regarding the necessary competencies of transformational leaders. Some of them consider **scientific support** as one of the competencies of a transformational leader and claim that not considering these items or a part of these items can be an important obstacle for leaders. For such support, things such as: welcoming creativity and innovation, welcoming the suggestions of young members, supporting new projects, agreeing with new ideas, holding educational workshops, emphasizing knowledge enhancement, sharing scientific information, equalizing the scientific level of members, encouraging subordinates. Exchange of information, encouragement of members to research activities are mentioned below, and we will discuss three examples of related narratives: Participant number seven: "Yes, I always announce to all my teachers at the beginning of the year that if they have characteristics such as cooperation and participation with the school staff, presenting new plans and

ideas, sharing new scientific information that they acquire, and... I do, and through this encouragement, I try to bring them closer together so that instead of stubbornness, they cooperate and help each other to improve each other's scientific level. Among the other competencies of the transformational leader that the participants mentioned and considered its absence as an important obstacle in the successful implementation of the transformational leadership style was **emotional support**. Some of the participants in the definition of this type of support include: motivating members, supporting group members, giving morale to members, collective decision-making, accepting opposing opinions in the organization, as described by one of the participants. he does: "I have tried to motivate the members and by giving them spirit to move towards the goals of the organization and I have never stood up against their opposing opinions and I have tried to make decisions collectively and I have always used their opinion (Participant 9).

Among the other competencies of a transformational leader, the absence of which was considered another important obstacle, is **transparent and mutual communication**, which includes things such as: fully introducing oneself to members, identifying members' expectations, informing members of the benefits of work, giving feedback to members' performance, and receiving feedback. It is from the members that one of the participants describes it as follows: "The effective director must know the abilities of each teacher and must also know what the teachers expect from him as their leader; In this case, it can respond to their needs. Also, they can get feedback from teachers and use it to improve their work. Teachers also try to achieve their goals due to the importance and attention of the manager and follow their manager and do not get upset with the manager's feedback and use it to improve themselves" (Participant 6).

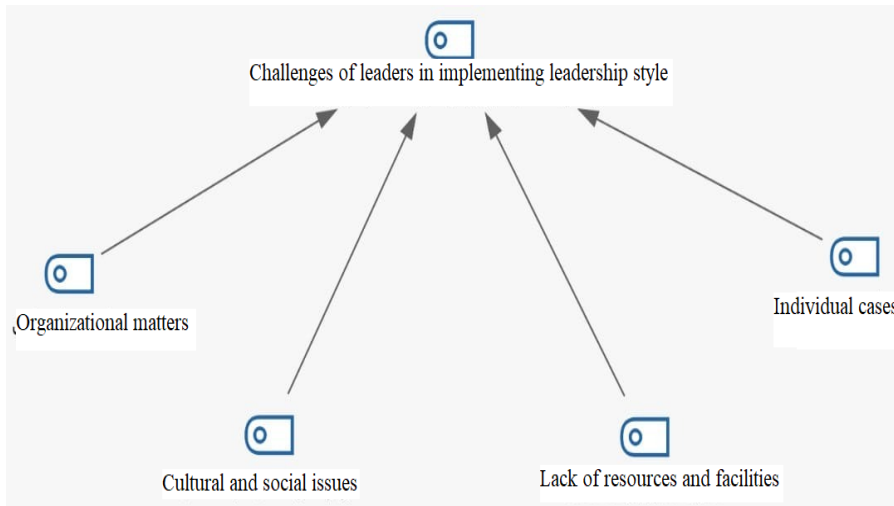
**Organizational foresight** is another competence that managers have mentioned and considered its absence as a reason for the lack of success of leaders. In this way, one of the participants narrates that: the manager must identify the organizational problems and for them to launch his own solutions forever and do it with his foresight" (Participant 5).

**Creating a creative and dynamic environment** is the last competence mentioned by the managers and it is

related to: creating a cordial atmosphere, creating a collaborative atmosphere, observing ethical principles, observing mutual respect, observing fairness and honesty, the existence of trust between members, having an organization with Open system, consideration of internal and external relations, competing with neighboring organizations are described, which we can examine in the narrative of two contributors below. One of the participants narrates as follows: "Things like competing with neighboring organizations and trying to progress in work, having a broad and positive vision for the future, having pure ideas for excellence, creating a sincere environment with responsible members, making decisions in a consultative manner and ultimately positive results. It comes to my mind" (Participant 1).

**Third question: From the perspective of the participants, what structural challenges have educational managers faced in implementing transformational leadership style?**

In order to answer the third research question, by analyzing the narratives, documents and biographies of the participants, we found four main categories which includes the following: organizational issues, individual issues, socio-cultural issues and lack of resources and facilities, which we will analyze and explain each of them below.



**Figure 3: structural challenges of leaders in implementing transformational leadership style**

As it can be seen in the analysis, the managers mentioned the structural challenges for the implementation of this style, the first thing they all agreed on was the **organizational issues**, which each of the participants complained about in their own way and considered it a big obstacle on their way. They mentioned that it includes the following: Uncertainty of changes in sub-systems, lack of correct understanding of changes, positivity towards the results, failure of high-level managers, opposition to long-term plans, in the short-term plan, facing operational and structural problems to continue activities, slow response. research and development by the officials, the traditionality of the educational system, the management of the educational system, the tendency of the members of the organization to retire, the issuance of all permits from top to bottom, the incompatibility of some plans with the laws governing the country, considering innovations as a threat, changing positions more quickly

Management, officials' misunderstanding of educational activities, old and outdated educational system, officials' directive view of managers, lack of financial support of the administration, lack of knowledge-enhancing classes by the administration, lack of organizational culture change, selection of managers in the last two years of service, seniority of managers and more attention of the administration to Shahid schools and the board of trustees, which we will discuss in the following examples of narratives.

One of the participants narrates as follows: "In my opinion, the main challenge of transformational leadership is the lack of support and opposition to it from the higher authorities because they do not want to go out of their safe circle in their work area and challenge their work area and on the other hand Subordinates can also create challenges by opposing change and not cooperating and making excuses" (Participant 4). Here, the objections and lack of support

of the upstream managers are mentioned.

The narrative of another participant was as follows: "In general, what challenge can be bigger than that the administration rejects any idea or plan that you want to implement due to financial problems and fear of damaging it, or says that we are not responsible for the implementation of this plan." We don't accept it, and you have to pay for it yourself and don't support us in any way. It has happened many times that I have given plans and suggestions that if supported, I could have made a big contribution to education, but they are always against change and don't take risks" (Participant 3). In her words, she protested against the organization's lack of support for the plans and the organization's fear of causing damage and their opposition to the changes, and she considered these cases to be among the challenges facing transformational leaders.

Among the other problems that the leaders faced were **individual cases**, each of which related to issues such as: managers' lack of knowledge about transformational leadership style, lack of tolerance for criticism, lack of cooperative spirit, managers' fear of failure, teachers' fear of losing their safe margin. , considering individual interests, lack of altruism, ignoring collective interests, existence of stubborn members, different academic level of members, incompatibility of members, lack of respect and honesty among members, lack of efforts of managers to update their information and lack of cooperation of teachers. One of the participants complains about the fear of members and teachers and narrates as follows: "The lack of ability and competence of some colleagues and

their opposition to change for reasons such as fear of endangering their peace, fear of endangering their security, fear of knowing Not being there and being ridiculed" (Participant 8). Another participant complains about not tolerating criticism and lack of employee motivation, etc.: some challenges are also individual, such as: not developing the scope of one's knowledge and awareness, not having the spirit of criticism, not having the spirit of creativity and curiosity, fear of failure, fear of being judged, Opposition to change" (Participant 2). One of the contributors complains about the differences, such as the age difference of the staff or the difference in their tastes, he says: "The main challenge is related to the old teachers with long years of service, as they are usually due to their age or have diseases that can be done. They don't have many activities, or because they are at the end of their service years, they don't have the motivation to work and get promoted, and on the other hand, they have a big age difference with the young people in the group, which causes differences in taste in the group. Among other things, they are stubborn colleagues who They always oppose, as well as parents who usually do not understand education and educational plans" (Participant 11).

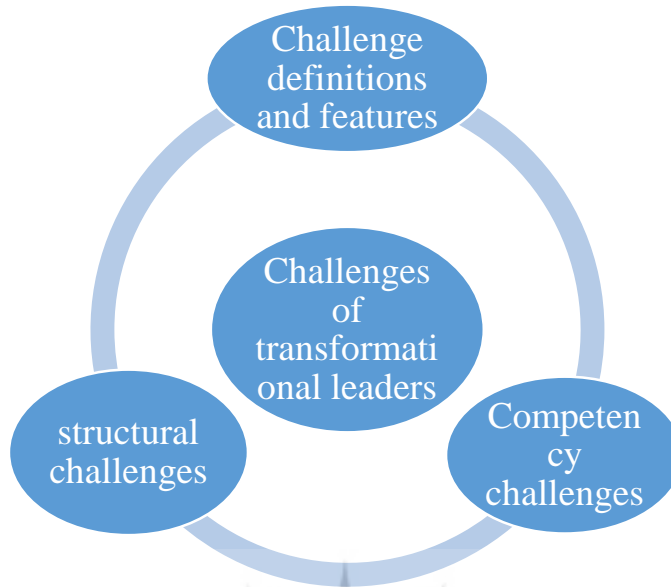
Among the other problems mentioned by the administrators were **socio-cultural issues**, some of which include such things as: the deprivation of the educational area, the low level of literacy of the parents of the students, the low level of the culture of the educational area, the lack of support from the parents, the non-participation of the parents in the meetings. They mentioned family education. As one of the participants narrates that: "The lack

of knowledge, awareness and low literacy of most parents is one of the obstacles that closes the way for transformation, as well as things such as the per capita cost and the cooperation of parents in holding extra-curricular classes and the lack of participation of parents in counseling and training sessions. Family is one of the challenges that I am justified with" (Participant 1). Some also express things like: the level of resilience of the students' parents, the level of the society's understanding of the changes, the knowledge of the educational activities. The level of resilience of parents of students, society can be mentioned from changes" (Participant 9).

The last thing that everyone agreed on was the **lack of resources and possibilities**, for which things such as: the large volume of textbooks, the large number of students, the lack of educational equipment and tools, the lack of educational space, the lack of educational budget, the lack of public assistance, the lack of They mentioned the expert force in the work environment and finally the lack of access to technology, which we will discuss below with two examples of quotations. One of the participants related to the lack of a library and prayer

room and the most basic spaces necessary to continue education as follows: "The lack of resources and facilities is such that the most basic things that every school is entitled to cannot be found in our school. Our school does not have a library. The prayer hall and not even a simple drawing in the school yard and we don't have the budget to implement it" (Participant 11). Another participant narrates his protest as follows: "The large amount of useless educational content and practical application in the future life of students and the hasty implementation of some lessons without thinking about the result and considering the necessary infrastructure for it, such as adding workbooks And technology, thinking and research, for its implementation, there must definitely be a smart class, which our school does not have, and even in the schools that have them, there is usually no skilled workforce capable of working with it and teaching it" (Participant 13). As it was said, the large volume of textbooks, the lack of expert staff in the work environment, and the lack of access to technology were among the cases of lack of resources and facilities, which were evident in the words of the above participant.

## Discussion



**Figure 4: Challenges of transformational leadership**

In the present study, an example of school principals' experiences of the transformational leadership style and its challenges was studied in the form of narrative writing of the challenges of transformational leaders in schools. The researcher found many of these cases after examining and deeply analyzing the narratives and documents under investigation. The participants reflected the challenges in the form of challenges of definitions and characteristics, capabilities and competences and finally structural challenges. **Challenges related to definitions and characteristics of transformational leadership style:** What we found out from the school principals was that they should first of all make changes in their attitudes towards the definitions and characteristics of the transformational leadership style because many of the problems that prevent the use of this leadership style were related to a

different perception of the meanings and characteristics of this leadership style. Having common goals, long-term organizational planning, creating a professional work team, inspiring employees and ultimately creating change and transformation are among them. In relation to the challenges related to this style presented by managers, transformational leadership is leadership in which common goals are emphasized and the leader tries to achieve the interests of the organization based on **common goals**. They believed that sometimes as a manager, he has goals in mind. but the rest of the members do not cooperate and do not consider the goals of the organization as part of their goals, and the lack of this common goal becomes an obstacle to success in this style, so it is necessary to be careful that the manager must change the goals of the members in the direction of the organizational goals and all the

members of the group to a common goal reach.

Their narrative is similar to Tourish's (2013) definition as he also found that transformational leadership motivates followers to change goals and improve. (Darling et al, 2007) also believe in their research under the title of strengthening entrepreneurship with a focus on management and leadership style: Charismatic and transformational leadership have the ability to connect with the goals of entrepreneurial and creative organizations because they support both the goals and the entrepreneurial cultures that foster They include what is needed for success.

It was also stated that in this style of leadership, **long-term organizational planning** should be emphasized, and a transformational leader can achieve great success after setting goals by creating flexible and long-term planning, and many of the problems of not succeeding in this style are related to not eliminating outdated plans. And not planning based on the budget and things like that, they claimed that the members may also oppose the plans and create obstacles in this way, so they suggested that the planning should be flexible so that the members do not oppose.

Many of them emphasized the formation of a **professional work team** and claimed that the leader can never be successful alone and must do his best to know the members of the team he forms and consider their needs, because in their opinion, many One of the obstacles related to the failure to form a professional team can be the opposition of the members, but when the needs of the members are considered and the leader tries to increase the skills of the team and make the members professional, that is when the

organization's goals can be achieved. In connection with professional development, (Roy, 2008) considers professional development as a process of empowering people, in this process, people are helped to overcome their feelings of helplessness and helplessness, professional development in a sense leads to the mobilization of people's internal motivations. (Jang et al, 2003), in a research titled transformational leaders, seek the participation of followers by highlighting the importance of cooperation in performing collective tasks, and the evidence presented can somehow evoke the relationship between these two variables. The results of the present study are in harmony with their evidence.

Many managers considered transformational leadership as a kind of **inspiration to employees** by the leader and claimed that the leader can be successful by influencing the thoughts of subordinates. It can never achieve the goals of the organization and cause change and transformation.

Finally, according to them, transformational leadership means **creating change and transformation**, and the result of this is creating tremendous changes in the organization. will not give, and according to managers, these things can be an obstacle to change. This perception of managers is similar to the results of (Ardalan, Ghanbari and Zandi's research , 2015) because they have shown in their research that the tendency to change in the individual and the organization as a form of learning is a function of the expansion of transformational leadership at different organizational levels. In their report, it is stated that there is a positive and significant



relationship between transformational leadership and readiness for change.

**Challenges related to capabilities and competencies:** In relation to the challenges related to the capabilities and competences required by this leadership style, the research results achieved the following items: scientific support, emotional support, clear and mutual communication, organizational foresight and creation of a creative and dynamic environment. The analysis showed that the participants all emphasized the managers' acceptance of scientific activities and information exchange and such things, and they believed that a transformational leader should provide all-round **scientific support** to his members, and sometimes the manager himself is ineffective in this field. Not leveling scientific information of members or not agreeing with their scientific plans and hindering the creativity and innovations of employees prevents creativity and innovation. In this regard (Hoggs et al, 2018) concluded with a systematic review of 195 studies that leadership is an effective factor in predicting creativity and innovation.

Among the other capabilities that were mentioned in the analysis was the **emotional support** of the leader to the members. They claimed that the leader can motivate the members and encourage them and give self-confidence and morale to the members and eliminate the stress of the members and things like that. The members of the work team provided all-round emotional support. According to them, sometimes a manager who does not work in this field and lacks the necessary skills takes away the self-confidence from the members and causes stress in them and ultimately hinders the success of the

transformational leadership style. In this regard Li and Huang et al(2020), in a research titled transformational leadership and employee development at work: mediating roles of stressors, hindering the challenge of boundaries in psychology, concluded that stressors are a very important factor in the organization's lack of prosperity and It does not allow the transformational leaders to implement their plans well, which we also stated here that one of the necessary competencies of a leader is the emotional support of members so that they can implement their plans well. (Mortazavi et al, 2004) in their research titled "Investigation of the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership" examined the age of employees in three classified groups in order to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and the transformational leadership style of their managers, and the results showed that between emotional intelligence And the transformational leadership style has a positive and direct relationship.

Since the attitudes and behaviors of leaders are considered powerful drivers of work success, therefore, the main duty of senior managers and even their main work is emotional leadership, which according to previous studies, this feature is manifested in transformational leadership. Another mentioned competency that was examined in the research was the **clear and mutual communication** between the leader and the members, which according to them, for the correct implementation of the transformational leadership style, there should be an emphasis on establishing two-way communication because if there are communication jams, the leader will

never succeed in implementing this leadership style, and sometimes many plans will be dissolved due to misunderstanding among the members, and the main reason is the lack of a clear and mutual communication, so one of the things that can be done in the implementation The success of this leadership style is the lack of skills of the manager in this field. In this regard, the results of Ghanbari's research (1993) which considered awareness of social relations and human relations as the reason for advancing the role of leadership are consistent. Organizational foresight was also one of the other competencies needed by leaders that was examined in the research and it was emphasized that leaders without having a common vision and being surrounded by issues inside and outside the organization can never be successful in their work, sometimes many managers do not consider the future and That is why they will face problems in their work. This claim of theirs is similar to the research results of Weiss, (Linn Luke and Griffiths, 2009). Because they also realized that if leaders want to communicate and implement a clear vision for the future of the organization, they must be aware of the types of organizational cultures in the internal environment and surround it.

The final required competency that was examined in the analyzes was the manager in **creating a creative and dynamic environment** where there was a cooperative and collaborative environment, whose leader was governed by the ethical principles such as the principle of honesty in relation to internal and external relations and competition with neighboring organizations. and shows trust building in the group. Transformational leaders

deal with their followers with a spirit of honesty and integrity, and this leads to an atmosphere of trust and integrity in the organization, and according to the participants, many managers face problems because they do not have such skills in creating a creative and dynamic environment. The results of the present study were similar to the results of (Moghimi's, 2011) study because he also found that transformational leaders deal with their followers with a spirit of honesty and integrity, and this leads to an atmosphere of trust and integrity in the organization. (Sankar, 2003) also found that a correct and reliable transformational leadership should be honest with oneself and others and based on moral values and spirituality, and the characteristics of the leader should be based on truth and trust instead of attraction.

**Structural challenges faced by transformational leaders:** The findings of the research examine the structural challenges of leaders in the implementation of transformational leadership style and divide them into four categories including: organizational challenges, individual challenges, social-cultural challenges and lack of resources and facilities. even some of them consider **organizational matters** not only as a challenge but also as a big obstacle in the direction of implementing transformational leadership and ultimately creating changes and transformations because they protested against the lack of support from upper managers and opposition to change, and the lack of holding knowledge-enhancing and in-service courses The related had a complaint. (Vaziri's, 2004) findings stated that the effectiveness of in-service training in motivating managers

and teachers, increasing their knowledge is effective in student progress. (Parsa, 2007) also points out that quick and timely awareness and awareness of communication channels to connect managers' thoughts with new thoughts through various methods such as in-service training, compiling books and texts and organizing thematic meetings help in improving the state of change. Transformational leaders support their employees and train them and establish a good relationship with them.

Among the other cases that managers mentioned under the title of challenges of transformational leadership were **individual cases** that complained about teachers' non-cooperation due to fear of failure and differences in teachers' tastes and similar cases. (Cummings & Worley, 2001) in a research entitled "Organizational Development and Change" stated that the main action in any kind of change and transformation effort is to identify how to get people's commitment, because if people do not commit to changes, they will leave freezing (the previous situation). (It becomes very difficult. In confirmation of this point of interest, (Nejad, 2013) also found in his research entitled the effect of age on the leadership styles and behavior of managers that age is one of the prominent characteristics in the field of organizational demography and stated that organizational demographic factors such as length of service and age of organizational people It is significantly effective in shaping the philosophy, way of thinking and behavior of the leaders in the organization. Their research and results indicate the existence of a significant relationship between the age of the employees and the level of behavioral

adaptation of their managers to the transformational leadership style.

Another challenge is the change of **socio-cultural developments**, which refers to the cultural level of the educational area and community support, which sometimes affects the quality of this leadership style at the level of the culture of the area where the school is built and the social relations of the area. In this regard, (Bryant, 2003) also found in his research that the effectiveness of transformational leadership is largely dependent on culture. People with traditional culture values find a weak relationship between transformational leadership and effectiveness.

The last challenge was related to the **lack of resources and facilities**, which emphasized the lack of suitable educational space and necessary educational equipment and such things. Because according to what the managers narrated, there are many problems and obstacles on the way to successful implementation of the transformational leadership style, such as lack of technology and smart classes and lack of suitable spaces such as laboratories, etc. This finding is in line with the results of the research (Al-Shoeibi, 2009), who admits that the budget and lack of facilities are obstacles to playing the role of leadership, is consistent.

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During the implementation of this research and the preparation of the article, all national laws and principles of professional ethics related to the subject of research, including the rights

of statistical community, organizations and institutions, as well as authors and writers have been observed. Adherence to the principles of research ethics in the present study was observed and consent forms were consciously completed by all statistical community.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

According to the authors of the present article, there was no conflict of interest.

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