



Liderazgo Transformacional y Clima Organizacional: ¿qué opinan los docentes?

Transformational Leadership and Organizational Climate: what do teachers think?

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Abstract

The relationship between transformational leadership (TL) of managers and perceptions of organizational climate (CLIMOR) in an Ecuadorian fiscal educational institution was analyzed. Through a descriptive correlational design, the MLQ-5X Questionnaire adapted to the Ecuadorian context and the CLIOUNing were applied to a sample of 50 teachers. Significant moderate correlations were found between the TL and CLIMOR dimensions ($r = 0.39 - 0.58$, $p < .01$). It follows from this that managers who adopt transformational behaviors contribute to the generation of organizational environments that are more favorable for educational development, with inspirational motivation and individual consideration being particularly relevant as predictors of the positive organizational climate.

Keywords

Transformational leadership, organizational climate, educational management, educational institutions, Ecuador.

Resumen

Se analizó la relación entre el liderazgo transformacional (TL) de los directivos y las percepciones del clima organizacional (CLIMOR) en una institución educativa fiscal ecuatoriana. Mediante un diseño correlacional descriptivo, se aplicó el Cuestionario MLQ-5X adaptado al contexto ecuatoriano y el CLIOUNing a una muestra de 50 docentes. Se encontraron correlaciones significativas moderadas entre las dimensiones del TL y el CLIMOR ($r = 0.39 - 0.58$, $p < .01$). Se desprende de esto que los directivos que adoptan comportamientos transformacionales contribuyen a la generación de ambientes organizacionales más favorables para el desarrollo educativo, siendo particularmente relevantes la motivación inspiracional y la consideración individual como predictores del clima organizacional positivo.

Keywords

Liderazgo transformacional, clima organizacional, gestión educativa, instituciones educativas, Ecuador.

Introduction

Transformational leadership (TL) in the educational context is a determining factor for organizational development and the improvement of institutional results. Bass & Avolio (2000) conceptualized such a leadership style as one that inspires followers to transcend their own interests for the benefit of the organization, promoting intellectual development and based on the individual needs of each employee. In the field of education, this perspective acquires particular importance due to the complex and multidimensional nature of school institutions, where the interaction between multiple and diverse educational actors requires leadership capable of articulating shared visions and promoting organizational environments conducive to learning (Morales, 2023).

International research has consistently documented the positive influence of TL with diverse results. Achi et al. (2025) demonstrated that TL has a significant impact on teacher performance, especially in educational contexts affected by crises, evidencing the ability of this leadership style to maintain organizational effectiveness even in adverse circumstances. Similarly, Yu & Jang (2024) set up a theoretical framework that links TL with the improvement of teachers' work performance, emphasizing the importance of inspirational vision and individualized consideration as fundamental mechanisms for professional development. All these findings are consistent with those reported by Wilson Heenan et al. (2023), who in their international systematic review identified that TL exerts a significant impact on school personnel and organizational culture in primary schools, reporting patterns of influence that go beyond specific cultural contexts.

In the regional context, these relationships have begun to be explored in greater depth, recognizing cultural and organizational particularities. Morales (2023) specifically investigated the relationship between TL and the institutional climate in educational centers in the northern sector of Quito, highlighting significant correlations that mark the importance of TL for institutional development. An Ecuadorian adaptation of the MLQ-5X with high reliability ($\alpha = 0.97$) was used for this, which provided a solid foundation for the measurement of the construct in the local context and established methodological precedents for national research.

The organizational climate (CLIMOR), on the other hand, is a fundamental aspect for the effective functioning of educational institutions, grouping together the shared perceptions that the members of an organization develop about their work environment. Thomas (1976) defined it as the shared perceptions that the members of an organization have about their work environment, including aspects such as teamwork, communication, available resources and recognition, dimensions that in the school context go hand in hand with the teaching and learning processes. Maraza et al. (2022) identified that perceptions of CLIMOR have a direct

impact on educational quality, establishing a clear relationship between the organizational environment and institutional results, which underscores the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to the generation of positive organizational climates.

The relationship between TL and CLIMOR has been reported in multiple international contexts. Damanik & Aldridge (2017) mention that TL has a positive impact on both school climate and teacher self-efficacy, specifying patterns of influence extended beyond perceptions to aspects of professional development. Wang et al. (2019) identified latent classes of TL differentially associated with CLIMOR in kindergartens, referring that different TL profiles can be translated into different organizational environments, implying the need to consider specific configurations of leadership behaviors to optimize organizational results.

For their part, Zhang et al. (2025) demonstrated that TL influences work engagement through the mediation of CLIMOR, highlighting that the latter acts as a key mechanism through which TL favorably impacts organizational results. Similarly, Shao et al. (2025) pointed out that authentic leadership influences the work commitment of primary and secondary school teachers due to the serial mediation of school climate and teacher effectiveness, thus evidencing the importance of the organizational environment as a mediating variable in the relationships between leadership and educational outcomes.

The Ecuadorian context, due to its cultural and geographical diversity, presents characteristics that require specific examinations and attention in the study of these organizational aspects. In addition, educational institutions face unique challenges related to changing socioeconomic conditions and ever-changing national education policies. Londoño-Proano (2022) analyzed leadership styles in Ecuadorian organizations, identifying the need to adapt leadership models to local cultural characteristics, including the framework of values such as respect for hierarchy, the relevance of interpersonal relationships, and orientation towards group consensus. Cultural adaptation is fundamental to understanding how the constructs of TL and

CLIMOR manifest themselves in the national educational context, where factors such as ethnic diversity and pedagogical traditions influence organizational dynamics.

Lefteri & Menon (2025) analyzed both TL and transactional as predictors of teacher self-efficacy, finding that both styles contribute significantly, although differentially, to organizational outcomes. Bao (2024) showed that the principal's TL influences the innovative behavior of teachers, such influence being moderated by uncertainty and the sense of meaning at work, illustrating the complexity of the mechanisms through which leadership influences the behaviors and attitudes of employees.

Despite the advances, the valid and reliable measurement of these constructs still represents an important methodological challenge, however, there are two instruments that have been positioned as references. Gkolia et al. (2022) validated the Principal Leadership Questionnaire in the Greek educational context, while Wang et al. (2023) re-examined the psychometric properties of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire in Singapore, finding evidence of factorial validity and measurement invariance supporting its use in diverse cultural contexts. These works underline the importance of cultural adaptation of measurement instruments and the need to verify their psychometric properties in each specific context of application.

CLIMOR, as a multidimensional construct, has been operationalized in various ways, reflecting the complexity of the phenomenon and the variety of existing theoretical perspectives. Mejías et al. (2006) developed the CLIOUNing instrument, including dimensions such as quality management, adaptability, institutional planning, resources, teamwork, skills development, performance standards, communication, institutional pride, and recognition. The questionnaire has demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = 0.965$) in subsequent studies (Maraza et al., 2022), establishing itself as a valid tool for measuring CLIMOR in educational contexts and providing a solid basis for comparative research.

The importance of examining these relationships is based on the need to generate empirical evidence that allows the evaluation of national educational management policies and practices. The Ecuadorian education system has undergone significant transformations in recent decades, including curricular reforms, changes in evaluation systems, and new regulatory frameworks that require educational leaders capable of navigating these changes while maintaining organizational environments favorable to the learning and development of both students and teachers. Understanding how TL influences CLIMOR can provide valuable guidance for the design of management education programs and institutional improvement strategies.

In this sense, the study sought to contribute to the knowledge about the relationship between TL and CLIMOR in an educational institution in the Ecuadorian highlands, using validated instruments adapted to the local context, with the aim of providing empirical evidence that can feed strategies for improvement in educational management and contribute to the development of contextualized theoretical frameworks for the understanding of educational leadership in the region.

Methodology

A cross-sectional, descriptive-correlational, and comparative quantitative design was adopted. The study group was made up of the 50 teachers who make up an institution in the province of Pichincha. All of them complied with: (a) being an active teacher, (b) having at least one year of experience working under the supervision of the evaluated director, and (c) giving informed consent to participate in the study. The subjects had the following demographic characteristics: 78% female ($n = 39$) and 22% male ($n = 11$), aged between 18 and 63 years ($M = 35.16$, $SD = 11.46$).

The MLQ-5X Questionnaire by Bass & Avolio (2000) was used to measure TL, adapted to the Ecuadorian context by Morales (2023). The instrument consists of 24 items that evaluate the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and

individualized consideration. It corresponds to a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). The adaptation Morales (2023) demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = 0.97$).

For the CLIMOR, the CLIOUNing questionnaire (Mejías et al., 2006) was used, which includes 11 items (5-point Likert scale) that measure dimensions such as quality management, institutional planning, teamwork, resources, communication, institutional pride, and recognition. It has a high reliability ($\alpha = 0.965$) according to Maraza et al. (2022).

Statistical analysis was performed using descriptive techniques (means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values) and hypothesis testing. Significant differences by sex were calculated between the main variables (T-Student). To examine the bivariate relationships between scores, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used, previously verifying the assumptions of normality ($p > 0.05$). A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was established for all statistical tests. For the correlational analysis between variables and dimensions, the following statistical hypotheses were proposed: H_0 : There is no significant relationship ($p > 0.05$) / H_1 : There is a positive and significant relationship ($p \leq 0.05$).

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the demographic variables and the global scores of TL and CLIMOR.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	n	M	SD	Min	Max
1. Age	50	35.16	11.46	18	63
2. TL	50	3.37	0.60	1.00	5.00
3. CLIMOR	50	3.83	0.76	1.00	5.00

Note. M = Mean; SD = standard deviation; Min = minimum value; Max = Maximum Value.

The results of Table 2 show that both the TL and the CLIMOR present scores above the theoretical midpoint of the scale (3.0), suggesting positive perceptions on the part of the

teachers. The variability in the responses, evidenced by the SDs, indicates some differences in perceptions among the participants.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics by Dimensions

Dimension	M	SD	MIN	Max	α Cronbach
Transformational Leadership					
Idealized Influence	3.65	0.87	1.67	5.00	.89
Inspirational Motivation	3.71	0.92	1.33	5.00	.91
Intellectual Stimulation	3.58	0.85	1.67	4.67	.87
Individual Consideration	3.84	0.79	2.00	5.00	.85
Organizational Climate					
Quality Management	3.92	0.81	2.00	5.00	.78
Teamwork	3.88	0.73	2.50	5.00	.76
Personal development	3.76	0.79	2.00	5.00	.82
Resources and Communication	3.69	0.84	1.50	5.00	.79
Recognition	3.81	0.88	1.67	5.00	.84

Note. M = Mean; SD = standard deviation; α = Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Further analyses revealed differences according to demographic characteristics. Older teachers (> 40 years) reported slightly more positive perceptions of both TL (M = 3.45) and CLIMOR (M = 3.89) compared to younger teachers. However, no significant differences were found by sex in any of the main variables (T-Student = $p > 0.05$).

The detailed analysis of the dimensions (Table 2) revealed that in the TL, individual consideration obtained the highest score (M= 3.84, SD= 0.79), followed by inspirational motivation (M= 3.71, SD= 0.92), deducing from this that teachers perceive their managers as

especially attentive to individual needs and capable of communicating motivating visions. Intellectual stimulation presented the lowest mean ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.85$), generating an area of opportunity for the development of behaviors that intellectually challenge teachers. For CLIMOR, the highest score was observed in quality management ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.81$), indicating positive perceptions about institutional recognition and organizational planning. Resources and communication showed the lowest average ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.84$), thus manifesting the need to improve the availability of resources and communication flows. Cronbach's α reliability coefficients presented values between 0.76 and 0.91, confirming the adequate internal consistency of all the dimensions evaluated, already demonstrated in previous studies. The correlational analysis between variables revealed a positive and significant relationship between TL and CLIMOR ($r = 0.557$, $p < 0.001$) (Table 3), which allows us to reject the null hypothesis. No relationships were observed with respect to age.

Table 3

Matrix of Correlations between Principal Variables

Variables	1. Age	2. TL	3. CLIMOR
1. Age	--		
2. TL	0.18	--	
3. CLIMOR	0.23	0.557**	--

Note. ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$. $n = 50$.

The analysis of the bivariate relationships between the dimensions of TL and CLIMOR is presented in table 4. The results show that all TL dimensions show significant correlations with CLIMOR dimensions, with values ranging from $r = 0.39$ to $r = 0.58$. Inspirational motivation showed the strongest correlations with quality management ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$) and recognition

($r = 0.53$, $p < 0.01$). On the other hand, individual consideration had the highest correlation with personal development ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$), which is conceptually coherent.

Table 4

Correlations between Dimensions of Transformational Leadership and Organizational Climate

TL Dimensions	Quality Management	Team Work	Personal development	Resources	Recognition
Idealized Influence	0.52**	0.48**	0.45**	0.41*	0.49**
Inspirational Motivation	0.58**	0.51**	0.47**	0.44*	0.53**
Intellectual Stimulation	0.49**	0.46**	0.51**	0.39*	0.47**
Individual Consideration	0.45**	0.54**	0.56**	0.42*	0.51**

Note. ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$. $n = 50$.

Discussion

The findings confirm the existence of a significant and positive relationship between TL and CLIMOR. The correlation found ($r = 0.557$, $p < 0.001$) is consistent with the international literature that has documented similar behaviors in various educational contexts. The magnitude of the correlation found is comparable to the results reported by Zhang et al. (2025), who identified that TL influences work commitment through CLIMOR mediation. Similarly, Wang et al. (2019) documented significant relationships between latent factors of TL and CLIMOR in educational contexts, albeit in a different cultural setting. The consistency of these findings across different cultural and organizational spaces suggests that the relationship between TL and CLIMOR may be a robust and cross-cultural phenomenon, with important implications for educational leadership theory.

The analysis of the specific dimensions of the TL revealed patterns of significant, although differentiated, relationships with the components of the CLIMOR. Inspirational motivation showed the strongest correlations with quality management ($r= 0.58$) and recognition ($r= 0.53$), which is conceptually consistent considering that leaders who communicate an inspiring vision generally tend to generate environments where excellence is valued and achievements are recognized. This finding is also concurrent with the results of Bao (2024), who demonstrated that the inspirational motivation of TL significantly influences the innovative behavior of teachers, suggesting that this dimension of leadership is particularly effective in promoting high-performance environments.

Individual consideration had the highest correlation with personal development ($r= 0.56$), which supports Bass & Avolio's (2000) theory of the importance of attending to the individual needs of followers to promote their professional growth. This is especially relevant in the educational context, where the continuous professional development of teachers is essential for the improvement of educational quality. Yu & Jang (2024) obtained similar results by pointing out that TL improves teacher work performance through consideration of individual needs, empirically supporting the importance of personalizing leadership strategies.

The results also show that all dimensions of TL are significantly related to all components of CLIMOR, with correlations ranging from 0.39 to 0.58. Relational consistency indicates that the TL could function as an integrated system where the different dimensions work synergistically to influence the organizational environment. The systemic perspective considered is supported by Wilson Heenan et al. (2023), who in their systematic review identified that TL exerts a comprehensive impact on school personnel and organizational culture, supporting the idea that the effectiveness of LT lies in the systemic and coherent integration of its components.

The fact that older teachers report more positive perceptions of both TL and CLIMOR deserves special attention and can be explained by several interrelated factors. Teachers with more experience may be better able to recognize and value effective leadership behaviors due to their exposure to different management styles throughout their careers. In addition, they may have developed stronger relationships with managers over time. Lambersky (2016) found similar patterns in his study on the impact of leadership on teacher morale and self-efficacy, suggesting that professional experience moderates perceptions of leadership in a systematic way.

The absence of significant differences by sex in perceptions of TL and CLIMOR is consistent with previous studies that have found that perceptions of leadership tend to be more influenced by situational and relational factors than by basic demographic characteristics (Thomas et al., 2020).

The reliability values found for the dimensions of both instruments (α between 0.76 and 0.91) confirm the adequacy of the instruments used in the Ecuadorian context. These values are comparable to those reported in the original adaptation by Morales (2023) for the MLQ-5X and by Maraza et al. (2022) for the CLIOUNing, providing additional evidence of the validity of the instruments in Latin American educational contexts and setting precedents for future research in the region.

Management training programs should focus on the development of specific transformational competencies, specifically inspirational motivation and individual consideration, which showed the strongest relationships with key components of CLIMOR. Achi et al. (2025) provides additional arguments about the importance of these programs, especially in challenging educational contexts, and where the ability to maintain positive organizational environments becomes crucial for the continuity and quality of educational processes.

In terms of limitations, the exclusive use of self-report measures can introduce biases, which could inflate the observed correlations. Shao et al. (2025) suggest mixed methodological

approaches that combine quantitative and qualitative data to enrich the understanding of these complex relationships and provide a more comprehensive perspective of the phenomena studied.

Conclusions

The results of this study provide solid empirical evidence on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational climate in Ecuadorian educational institutions. It can be deduced from the significant and moderate-high correlations found that managers who adopt transformational behaviors contribute significantly to the generation of organizational environments that are more favorable for educational development. This supports the importance of TL as a key factor in effective educational management and provides an empirical basis for the development of institutional improvement strategies based on the strengthening of managerial competencies. The dimensional analysis revealed that all facets of TL are significantly related to all components of CLIMOR, with the relationships between inspirational motivation and quality management, and between individual consideration and personal development being particularly relevant. In this way, it is identified that the TL operates as an integrated system that integrally influences the organizational context of educational institutions.

The consistency of these identified relationships reinforces the validity of Bass & Avolio's (2000) theoretical model and states that leadership interventions must address multiple dimensions in a coherent manner to maximize their effectiveness. The practical implications of this report are significant for educational management. Management education programs should prioritize the development of transformational competencies, particularly in the dimensions that showed stronger associations with key components of the organizational climate. Educational policies should also consider TL as a critical factor for the improvement of the organizational environment and, by extension, of institutional educational quality.

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