

THE POWER OF LEADERSHIP: UNVEILING THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP ON TEACHERS' MOTIVATION AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

***Hafiz Muhammad Afzal Haroon**

afzalharoonch@gmail.com

Ph.D Scholar, Superior University, Lahore

Prof. Dr. Muhammad sarwar

muhammad.sarwar@superior.edu.pk

Dr. Muhammad Arif

mu.arif@superior.edu.pk

Assistant professor Department of Education, Superior University Lahore

ABSTRACT

The success of any educational system significantly depends on the motivation and performance of its teachers, which are, in turn, greatly influenced by the leadership practices of school administrators. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' motivation in public sector male secondary schools of District Lahore. Grounded in Bass and Avolio's Full Range Leadership Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation, the study explored how transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles impact intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among secondary school teachers. A quantitative research design was employed to ensure objective measurement and analysis. The target population included approximately 3,300 male teachers from 73 public sector male secondary schools in Lahore. Using a two-stage random sampling technique, data were collected from 200 teachers across 20 randomly selected schools. A structured questionnaire was adopted, validated through expert reviews, and pilot-tested to confirm its reliability. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis. The findings revealed a positive relationship between transformational leadership and both intrinsic and extrinsic teachers' motivation. Transactional leadership also showed a moderate positive impact, while laissez-faire leadership had a weak and often negative correlation with teacher motivation. The results emphasized that leadership style is a crucial determinant of teacher engagement, satisfaction, and professional commitment. This study provided valuable insights for policymakers, educational leaders, and training institutions in Pakistan.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Teacher Motivation, Transformational Leadership, Public Sector Schools, Secondary Education, Lahore, Pakistan, Quantitative Research

Introduction

In the current educational context, school leadership excellence has emerged as a decisive factor in the determination of institutional achievement and pedagogical influence. In the case of secondary schools more specifically, the role of school leaders' principals by default is no longer that of an administrative manager but of the transformational leader who should motivate, activate, and guide his or her teaching staff to academic excellence and professional fulfillment. Leadership is no longer an afterthought for schools; leadership is now central to school reform and teacher motivation.

Motivation of teachers is seen as the lifeblood of every school. An effective teacher will be more inclined to show commitment, innovation, and persistence in the face of academic and administrative pressures. Demotivation, on the other hand, can lead to absenteeism, burnout, and

diminished instructional quality, which ultimately impacts student achievement in a negative way. In developing countries such as Pakistan, particularly public secondary schools, demotivation of teachers is a significant impediment to educational reform and quality improvement. While matters of workload, access to resources, and policy implementation add their contributions, school-level leadership is a powerful yet untapped force of teacher motivation. District Lahore is a large city and an educational hub in Punjab and reflects the broader dynamics of public education in Pakistan. Male secondary teachers in public schools work hard in hard-pressed conditions with few rewards and are under increasing pressure to perform. In such circumstances, principal leadership can be a spur to teacher motivation or, conversely, a source of disengagement. Whether the ability of the principal to motivate, engage, reward, and support teachers will motivate teachers to derive meaning and professional fulfillment from their work or not depends on their capacity to do so. Empirical evidence in the case of cross-cultural environments has long since proven the effect of transformational and transactional styles of leadership on organizational culture, job satisfaction, and staff motivation. Empirical research on the subject in the context of the inter-play between these two leadership styles and employee motivation is, however, sparse in the Pakistani context, more precisely in male secondary public sector schools. Most of the literature available is at the student level or treats leadership at an aggregate level without looking into its differential impact on teacher motivation. This is a compelling argument to address through targeted research.

The present study intends to investigate the impact of different leadership styles-transformational and transactional used by the school principals on the level of motivation among the male secondary public sector school teachers in District Lahore. By shedding light on this nexus, the study expects to contribute to educational leadership knowledge and making practical implications to policymakers and school managers who try to enhance teachers' performance through leadership.

Leadership and Teacher Motivation

Some external research studies have found an extremely positive correlation between transformational leadership, teacher intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. A Canadian secondary school study by Leithwood & Jantzi (2005) found that principals who practiced transformational leadership demonstrated a positive influence on the commitment of teachers towards school goals, professional growth, and affective commitment. Kouni, Koutsoukos, & Panta. (2018). had conducted a study in Tanzania among 700 secondary school instructors. The study confirmed that transformational leadership was a robust predictor of teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment to the profession in the face of limited resources. Barnett, McCormick, & Conners (2001) in Australia discovered that transformational leadership brought about greater autonomy, confidence, and innovativeness beyond contractual requirements dimensions strongly associated with intrinsic motivation. These experiments determine that transformational leadership is not only effective in Western high-resource settings but that it can even be applied effectively in the Third World, provided course is taken to recognize cultural and institutional settings. Transactional leadership, although often viewed as second best to transformational leadership, was found to have moderate effect on teacher motivation, i.e., structure, predictability, and immediate reward for performance. Bass (1999) found that contingent rewards under transactional leadership would encourage instructors when clearly connected to performance outcomes. Overdependence on the style, though, would hinder creativity and innovativeness. Khasawneh et al. (2012) researched Jordanian public school

principals and established that transactional leadership was effective in discipline and procedural obedience but had comparatively lower effects on more internal motivation drivers such as commitment and satisfaction. Benhan & Ming (2024), in their study teachers concluded that transactional leadership was more associated with extrinsic motivation and obedience to accountability, rather than long-term professional commitment. Thus, transactional leadership has a utilitarian but limiting function, beneficial in the preservation of order but insufficient to generate long-term professional motivation. Empirical studies across most countries have come up with the same findings that laissez-faire leadership is inversely related to motivation, job satisfaction, and teacher/school effectiveness. In Israel, Eyal & Roth (2011) found that laissez-faire leadership was correlated with emotional exhaustion, decreased organizational commitment, and low motivation. Professional isolation was caused by a lack of guidance and support. Hariri, Monypenny, & Prideaux (2012) in Indonesia studied school leaders working under circumstances of resource insufficiency and asserted that laissez-faire leadership resulted in the lack of direction and low morale, precisely where teachers were expecting more direction in instruction. Aydin, Sarier, & Uysal (2013) meta-analyzed studies from Europe and found the smallest of all the leadership styles to have the effect of laissez-faire leadership in shaping the teaching staff to be motivated and increase educational results. This type of evidence just testifies to the risks of passive leadership, specifically in schools that are already lacking resources or policies. Cross-cultural studies highlight that organizational contexts, cultural values, and socio-economic settings are likely to have a significant influence on attitudes towards leadership styles and also on how these are likely to affect teacher motivation. Avolio, Zhu, Koh, & Bhatia (2004) in Singapore discovered that transformational leadership was positively influential in teacher motivation when accompanied by respect-based relationships and clear hierarchies. These findings are in the background of leadership as a global and flexible cultural phenomenon and of its influence on teacher motivation needing to be understood in the particular society of the country in question. In the biggest education system of the world, India, scholars have increasingly attempted to theorize the meeting point between leadership and teacher behavior. Arora, s(2016) monitored Indian state school principals and found that transformational leadership increased teachers' self-efficacy, organizational commitment, and teaching practices. Inspirational and helpful principals had more active teachers compared to teachers with autocratic or laissez-faire principals. Kumar & Kumar (2017) compared the impact of leaders' styles on secondary school teachers' job satisfaction. Their study concluded that principals who practiced intellectual stimulation and individual support contributed a high percentage to teacher motivation, particularly in urban schools. Dlamini, et.al. (2023) concluded that in rural schools where there were no facilities and teacher absenteeism was an issue, principal behavior played a crucial role in the maintenance of teachers' motivation and engagement. Principals who practiced trusting, respect, and getting involved in learning issues assisted teachers in having higher morale. Hasan & Hossain (2023) added that the transformational leadership dimensions like inspirational motivation and idealized influence were of utmost importance in influencing teacher commitment in government schools. Nonetheless, circumstance-constrained leadership development training habitually reduced principals to a transactional or autocratic style of leadership. Gunawardena & Karunanayake (2016) also pointed out that instructional leadership was not being maximized in Sri Lankan government schools due to bureaucratic constraints. But where principals engaged teachers in participative decision-making and staff development, morale among teachers and teaching

quality were significantly improved. Berhanu, (2025). found that teachers valued principals who were providing them with specific directions, demonstrating respect for their professional independence, and valued their work, all of which are critical to transformational leadership. Perera, et.al (2018) Explanatory sequential mixed methods design was employed in the research to determine levels and conditions of motivation and engagement and school-related conditions that Such factors enhanced teachers' commitment and reduced burnout. Subedi (2014) compared Nepalese public secondary school principals' leadership practice and found most utilized transactional or authoritarian leadership styles due to bureaucratic stresses. However, among the few who practiced transformational activities (innovation, support from teachers, sharing vision), they possessed significantly higher teacher motivation and performance. The connection between leadership and teacher motivation has been extensively treated under global education research in recent decades. Empirical studies from around the world continue to confirm that leadership styles in schools namely transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire remain strong predictors of teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. These findings provide valuable insights into how leadership can be used to improve the quality of education in different educational systems. The key objective of this study was to find out the correlation between school leadership and motivation of male government secondary-level school teachers in District Lahore. Specifically, the study looked for to achieve the following purposes:

Based on research objectives and questions, the subsequent hypotheses were formulated to be used as null hypothesis to ascertain the statistical relationship between principals' leadership style and teachers' motivation in District Lahore secondary schools:

Null Hypotheses (H_0):

H_{01} : There is no relationship between principals' transformational leadership style and teachers' motivation in secondary schools.

H_{02} : Principals' transactional leadership style and teachers' motivation in secondary schools are statistically unrelated.

H_{03} : Principals' laissez-faire style of leadership and teachers' motivation are statistically independent.

Research Methodology

The research methodology adopted to explore the effect of school leadership styles on motivation of teachers at the secondary level in the public sector of District Lahore was as follows. Keeping in view the nature of the research problem and the need to study associations between variables, the most appropriate quantitative research design was identified. This research design also permits the utilization of standardized measures to collect quantitative data, which is then statistically examined for patterns, correlation, and potential causal relationship. Specifically, the study utilizes a correlational design to examine whether the leadership style of principals is related to intrinsic and extrinsic levels of motivation in teachers. The population of the study includes male teachers serving in public sector secondary schools within District Lahore. Male teachers in male schools were selected in a bid to ensure similarity of environmental and administrative factors influencing teacher motivation. Second, emphasis is put on secondary grade level (Grades 9–10), where leadership influences is most prevalent due to study pressure and advancement of the curriculum.

A standardized, self-report questionnaire was constructed to gather information on teachers' motivation and leadership styles. The questionnaire was pre-tested through pilot testing and expert panel review to establish its validity before data collection for the main study. Two-stage

random sampling technique was used to obtain a representative sample of 200 teachers from 20 randomly chosen male government secondary schools, which was institutionally as well as geographically representative.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the data, whereas inferential procedures such as Pearson correlation and regression analysis were utilized in hypothesis testing as well as statistically significant relationships between teacher leadership styles and teacher motivation.

The study employed a correlational study in a quantitative research design to test the relationship between school leaders' leadership style and teacher motivation in public secondary male schools. Quantitative design was employed because of the nature of the research problem that required data collection numerically and analysis through statistics to test the extent and direction of association between variables.

This strategy was subjected to test with the use of a meticulous and systematic self-report questionnaire with an appropriately selected sample of teachers. The measure was translated from proven scales, professionally content-validated and pilot-tested for reliability.

For the sake of representation, a two-stage sampling procedure was used. At stage one, 20 male secondary public sector schools were randomly selected from a list of 73 such schools of District Lahore. At stage two, 10 teachers were randomly selected from each sampled school, and the overall sample of 200 teachers was achieved.

Quantitative design enabled the use of descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations, frequencies) to describe the data, and inferential statistical techniques (e.g., regression analysis, Pearson correlation) for determining the nature and extent of relationships between teacher motivation and leadership styles.

In order to collect information relevant to the research study titled "The Power of Leadership: Unveiling the Role of Leadership on Teachers' Motivation at the Secondary Level", a systematic close-ended questionnaire was administered and utilized as the main research instrument. The following three styles of leadership have been discussed in this section in the context of Bass and Avolio's Full Range Leadership Theory:

1. Transformational Leadership
2. Transactional Leadership
3. Laissez-Faire Leadership

Both styles were assessed with more than one item on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Participants indicated how often their principals demonstrated some of the behaviors associated with these styles, on a 5-point Likert scale: Very Low (VL) to Very High

Analysis of Data

Quantitative research paradigm was used. The data were quantitative in nature. Cronbach's alpha statistics (0.91) showed that value of instrument's data set was reliable and good. Questionnaire was utilized as data collection tool. Data were collected from those respondents who were members of study sample. Outcomes of data analysis are presented in form of descriptive and inferential statistics. Data were analyzed through Statistics Package for Social Sciences 16.0.

Results

Table 1

Perceived agreement of teacher Intrinsic Motivation in schools

S No	Intrinsic Motivation Statements	M	SD
1	Teaching load in the school engagement with meaningful teaching responsibilities (<i>I</i>)	4.09	1.011
2.	Clocking in and out of school autonomy in managing one's time effectively (<i>I</i>)	4.06	1.023
3.	Maintenance of professional records Valuing personal accountability through professional activities (<i>I</i>)	3.94	1.144
4.	Interpersonal relationship among the staff (<i>I</i>)	3.96	1.051
6.	Availability of teaching and learning resources Encouraging innovative use of resources to enhance creativity (<i>I</i>)	3.84	1.057
8.	Participation in co-curriculum activities (<i>I</i>)	3.79	1.180
9.	Teaching Staff with Administration relationship (<i>I</i>)	3.87	1.116
11.	Involvement of teachers in decision making (<i>I</i>)	3.97	1.053
12.	Conflict resolution processes in the school (<i>I</i>)	3.86	1.130
16.	Planning of the school schedule Collaborative involvement in personal fulfillment (<i>I</i>)	4.02	1.143

Table 2

Perceived agreement of teacher Extrinsic Motivation in schools

S No	Extrinsic Motivation Statements	M	SD
5.	Class sizes	3.66	1.205
7.	Student discipline	4.00	1.042
10.	Allocation of duties by the Principal	3.82	1.058
13.	Approving teachers financial budgets	3.96	.999
14.	School staff welfare organization e.g. meals	3.89	1.104
15.	Award system adopted by school for achievers	3.91	1.139
17.	Planning of the roster of duties	3.98	1.116
18.	Dress code for teachers and students	3.49	1.341
19.	Planning of staff and departmental meetings	3.74	1.187
20.	Sponsorship seminars and workshops	3.25	1.380

The table indicated the mean values and standard deviations of 20 school variables that are influencing teachers' motivation. The mean values indicate the average level of agreement or frequency of each factor on a 5-point Likert scale (assumed to be where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree).

Highest Mean Scores

The largest mean size is School teaching load ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.011$). That is, teachers tend to agree that teaching load has a large effect on motivation.

Punctuality systems and an effective routine with large means, i.e., Punching in and out at school ($M = 4.06$) and School routine organization ($M = 4.02$), indicate that these are high motivators.

Student discipline ($M = 4.00$) and Staff Interpersonal relationship ($M = 3.96$) are also ranked high, where discipline of staff and excellent staff relationship are very crucial in maintaining teacher motivation.

Moderate Mean Scores:

These are followed by Teachers' participation in decision making ($M = 3.97$), Conflict handling procedures ($M = 3.86$), and Staff care of schools ($M = 3.89$) which are indicative of moderate agreement that collective practices and staff care are essential in motivation. Teaching facilities and learning resources ($M = 3.84$) and Principal's delegation of duties ($M = 3.82$) also help but to a lesser extent.

Lowest Mean Scores

Least mean areas are Sponsorship for workshops and seminars ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.380$) and Dress code for teachers and students ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.341$), which shows that these areas are least salient or least emphasized in the study schools. Class size ($M = 3.66$) and Departmental and staff meeting organization ($M = 3.74$) were at the lower mid-range, so class size management and meeting areas for improvement can be improved to increase motivation. The SDs range from approximately 1.0 to 1.4, indicating moderate deviation in response. Larger SDs, i.e., for Sponsorship for workshops and seminars ($SD = 1.380$) and Dress code ($SD = 1.341$), indicate diverse opinions by the respondents for these. Smaller SDs (e.g., on Teaching load, Clocking in/out) indicate proportionately more uniform opinions in the sample.

Table 3

Pearson correlation among leadership styles and Motivation

		Intrinsic	Extrinsic	Motivation
Transformational Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	.612	.089	.364
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.060	.808	.301
	N	200	200	200
Transactional Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	.359	.358	.543
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.309	.310	.105
	N	200	200	200
LaissezFaire Leadership Style	Pearson Correlation	.063	.079	.057
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.862	.828	.875
	N	200	200	200

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

Findings of the Study

From the data analysis, the findings of the study are as follows.

The findings indicate that transformational and transactional leadership both have positive correlation with the motivation of teachers, with transformational and transactional leadership (.36 and .54 respectively) as the positive predictor. However, the laissez-faire style is low correlated (.057) with motivation, indicating that non-involved or passive leadership has nothing to do with increasing teachers' motivation.

Conclusion

Leadership power must be defined in order to understand its impact on secondary school teachers' motivation. Leadership is not about being in control but a dynamic force that shapes the school culture, generates teacher commitment, and forms professional allegiance. The study indicates that participative and transformational styles of leadership have a positive influence on teacher motivation with impacts to establish trust culture, recognition, and sharedness. The study concludes that teacher motivation is a critical determinant of leadership style. Both transformational and transactional leadership styles have a positive correlation with teachers' motivation, indicating that leaders who possess the capability to properly set expectations, people recognition, inspiring them, and engaging them substantially can enhance their level of motivation. Of the two, transactional leadership is positively correlated with, in which it is argued that formal systems of reward and accountability are most accountable for teacher motivation. Laissez-faire leadership does not work, in which it is argued that passive or uninvolved leadership neither generates nor sustains teacher motivation. These have repercussions concerning the necessity of applying energetic and participatory forms of leadership in an attempt to create committed and motivated secondary school teachers.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations drawn from data collected in this study research and the requirement for future study in the area: Administer standardized tests (e.g., MLQ – Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire) to schools to identify dominant leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire). Compare levels of teacher motivation with these styles to establish optimal styles for the secondary school environment. School managers need to be trained to intellectually challenge, stimulate, and care personally for teachers. Visioning thinking, positive feedback, and group decision-making have been demonstrated to prompt work motivation and job satisfaction. Set ongoing feedback loops between leadership and classroom staff. Two-way open communication aids in building trust and gives a sense of belonging and purpose among teachers. Involve teachers in curriculum development, policy-making, and activities related to school improvement. Shared leadership establishes ownership and self-activation among teachers by acknowledging professional agency. Establish school leader and middle management leadership development initiatives (e.g., department heads) to build distributed leadership culture. Increased system leaders of stronger caliber increase long-term teacher motivation. School leaders must institute formal and informal reward systems to recognize and reward teachers' achievement, creativity, and commitment. Intrinsic gains are greatly multiplied when valued and respected teachers are recognized. Promote respect, teamwork, and empathy through emotionally intelligent leadership. Constructive working environments with empathetic leadership are linked with enhanced teacher morale and engagement. Collect and compare data on teacher motivation (performance data, surveys, and interviews) in addition to leadership behaviors. Apply evidence to shape enhanced leadership approaches and link them with changing teacher needs. Leadership should provide opportunities for ongoing professional development (CPD) and career development. Incentivized teachers will be most likely to associate their incentive with development opportunities brought about by incentivizing leadership. Promote adaptive leadership that focuses on in-school issues, teacher mix, and school culture. One-size-fits-all leadership approaches may be too weak to motivate personnel in multicultural secondary schools.

REFERENCES

- Adhikari, D. R., Parajuli, D., & Shrestha, P. (2024). Sustainable human resource management: The Nepalese perspective. In *Knowledge Transformation and Innovation in Global Society: Perspective in a Changing Asia* (pp. 109-140). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- Arora, G. (2016). *An exploration of mentoring among Indian school teachers: A mixed-methods study*. Bangor University (United Kingdom).
- Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. (1991). *The full range of leadership development: Basic and advanced manuals*. Binghamton, NY: Bass, Avolio & Associates.
- Aydin, A., Sarier, Y., & Uysal, S. (2013). The Effect of School Principals' Leadership Styles on Teachers' Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction. *Educational sciences: Theory and practice*, 13(2), 806-811.
- Barnett, K., McCormick, J., & Connors, R. (2001). Transformational leadership in schools—panacea, placebo or problem?. *Journal of educational administration*, 39(1), 24-46.
- Bass, B. M. (1999). Two decades of research and development in transformational leadership. *European journal of work and organizational psychology*, 8(1), 9-32.
- Benhan, H., & Ming, C. (2024). TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION: IMPACT ON TEACHER MOTIVATION AND STUDENT OUTCOMES. *Globus: Journal of Progressive Education*, 14(2).
- Berhanu, K. Z. (2025). Strategies principals used to develop teachers' psychological empowerment in primary schools, Ethiopia: qualitative study. *Current Psychology*, 44(2), 864-881.
- Dlamini, J., Plessis, A. R. D., & Markham, L. (2023). Staffing and retention challenges of teachers in rural schools of Eswatini: The case of the Lubombo Region. *International Journal of Rural Management*, 19(3), 361-378.
- Eyal, O., & Roth, G. (2011). Principals' leadership and teachers' motivation: Self-determination theory analysis. *Journal of educational administration*, 49(3), 256-275.
- Hariri, H., Monypenny, R., & Prideaux, M. (2016). Teacher-perceived principal leadership styles, decision-making styles and job satisfaction: how congruent are data from Indonesia with the Anglophile and Western literature?. *School Leadership & Management*, 36(1), 41-62.
- Hussain, F. (2023). *Factors influencing organisational transformation and the mediation of transformational leadership for the real estate companies in Bangladesh*. University of Wales Trinity Saint David (United Kingdom).
- Karunanayaka, S. P., Naidu, S., & Menon, M. (2016, November). Transformational change at the intersections of technology, education and design at the Open University of Sri Lanka. In *Eighth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF8)*, 27–30 November 2016.
- Khasawneh, S., Omari, A., & Abu-Tineh, A. M. (2012). The relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment: The case for vocational teachers in Jordan. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 40(4), 494-508.
- Kouni, Z., Koutsoukos, M., & Panta, D. (2018). Transformational leadership and job satisfaction: The case of secondary education teachers in Greece. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 6(10), 158-168.
- Kumar, V., & Sharma, R. R. K. (2017). Relating management problem-solving styles of leaders to TQM focus: an empirical study. *The TQM Journal*, 29(2), 218-239.
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2005). Transformational leadership¹. *The Essentials of School Leadership*, 31.
- Perera, K. D. R. L. J., Whannell, R., Hathaway, T., Taylor, N., Phan, H., & Boyle, C. (2018). *Early adolescents' motivation and engagement in learning and impact of the school-related conditions in low Socio-economic districts in Sri Lanka: A mixed methods study* (Doctoral dissertation, University of New England).
- Subedi, S. (2020). *Public Health Leadership in Nepal: Development, Enactment and Competencies*