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Influence of Transactional Leadership Style on Teachers Motivation at Secondary Level

1. **Muhammad Bilal** MPhil Scholar, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Email: bkhan9271@gmail.com
2. **Dr. Muhammad Idris** Associate Professor, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Email: midrees@awkum.edu.pk
3. **Dr. Maksal Minaz** Lecturer, Department of Education, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Email: maksalminaz@awkum.edu.pk
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Abstract

The quantitative paper examined the influence of transactional leadership style on teacher motivation at high-secondary schools in the Charsadda district of Pakistan. The study was based on a post positivist, quantitative, correlational design research survey using a random sample of 102 out of 705 male teachers. Validated questionnaires were used to gather data on transactional leadership variables (contingent reward and management by exception) and teacher motivation. (intrinsic and extrinsic). The research tool was validated and the reliability was 0.70 cronbach,s Alpha which was acceptable in the field of social science. Findings showed that transactional leadership behaviors were significantly positively related to extrinsic motivation, and a more subtle impact on intrinsic motivation. The results of the study indicated the importance of reward systems, in general, on teacher motivation, but warn that transactional leadership practices should not be overly dependent on in order to get more profound professional involvement. It was recommended that educational leadership programs should be designed to offer training on both transactional and transformational leadership in order to meet the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation needs.

Keywords: Transactional Leadership, Teacher Motivation, Contingency Reward

Introduction

The quality of leadership affects not only the level of operational efficiency in schools, but also motivates, satisfies and involves teachers in their professional work (Northouse, 2018). Schools in the modern education system, particularly those in the developing world like Pakistan, are generally confronted with several issues that include scarce resources, bureaucratic process of administration and high expectations on the performance of the students. These pressures reinstate the need to have proper leadership so as to instill discipline, accountability and to enhance professional development among the educators. The given structured approach is especially useful in educational institutions where the work of a lot of teachers should be coordinated, and the results of academic and administrative works are carefully tracked. Transactional leadership makes the work environment predictable and disciplined by making sure that teachers know what is expected of them and tying performance to outcomes, and this can motivate, increase efficiency and commitment. The importance of the transactional leadership is also supported by the increasing need of quality education and accountability in high secondary schools. The teachers are key towards determining the learning outcomes of the students and their readiness to take on a higher level of education and professional life. When teachers are motivated they tend to practice more innovative ways of teaching, keep their classrooms in check and to offer individual attention to the students (Dinham and Scott, 2000). On the other hand, teacher demotivation may result in absentees, low morale and low student performance. In that regard, transactional leadership also provides a system through which to match teacher productivity with institutional aims, mostly in bureaucratic or resource limited environments.

Theatrical Concept of the study

The theoretical basis of transactional leadership uses the works of Burns (1978) that differentiated transformational and transactional leadership. Whereas transformational leadership is more oriented in the need to motivate the followers to attain new and elevated performances beyond the expectations, transactional leadership is more oriented in ensuring that order is maintained and that the set goals are achieved through the establishment of structured incentives and monitoring. This theory was further

discussed by Bass (1985) that there are two crucial dimensions of transactional leadership: contingent reward and management-by-exception. Contingent reward is the mechanism through which leaders show expectations and reward the employees with money, symbols, and professional benefits, in case of the fulfillment of these expectations. This may be in form of teachers being rewarded, given a career progression, or other incentives that are given to them based on meeting academic or administrative goals in an educational institution. Conversely, management-by-exception is a corrective action and intervention in case of deviation in performance, which is not in accordance to the set standards. It may take an active or a passive form whereby issues are solved after they occur or by constant monitoring (Bass and Riggio, 2006; Ibrahim et al., 2014). The two aspects are core in ensuring accountability and motivation in institutions, especially where there is a need of clear guidance and performance appraisal. Teacher motivation in secondary education is also crucial in higher secondary education. Motivation is intrinsic whereby it is motivated by personal satisfaction, professional growth and purpose, and extrinsic whereby it is motivated by rewards, recognition, and leadership behaviors (Deci and Ryan, 2000; Saima et al., 2025). Where intrinsic motivation leads to a deep involvement and long-term professional development, extrinsic motivation may guarantee short-term adherence and output (which is necessary in a bureaucratic education system such as the one in Pakistan). In Pakistan, the educational system, especially the public schools, has the tendency of having a hierarchical decision making process, inadequate leadership preparation, and poor resource distribution (Iqbal, 2012). This has led to leadership practices that are prone to underestimate teacher requirements, demoralize teachers and affecting the general quality of teaching. The studies suggest that formal leadership styles, including transactional leadership, may bring stability and clarity, thus increasing teachers motivation and performance (Bush and Glover, 2014; Abdul Wahab, et al., 2014; Harris & Chapman, 2002; Selmat et al., 2013). But when there is over dependence on transactional mechanisms without the intrinsic needs of the teachers, they may get involved in compliance and not engagement (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Therefore the current study was based on the theory of transactional leadership (Bass, 1985) according to which leaders can inspire their followers with the help of organized interactions. Transactional leaders use rewards or corrective measures in a manner that depends on the way in which plain objectives are met. This theory is very institutional like and focuses on performance, order and hierarchy and is thus very applicable to the institutional settings such as schools.

Important aspects of transactional leadership are:

- i. **Contingent Reward:** Leaders explain the expectation and give rewards (monetary, professional or symbolic) as they are achieved. This dimension has a direct relationship between actions by the leader and extrinsic motivation of the followers.
- ii. **Management-by-Exception** Leaders apply when standards are not achieved, by either an active approach of continuous monitoring or a passive approach of remedying deviations once they occur. This is to guarantee compliance and accountability but might not bring about intrinsic motivation.

Transactional Leadership Theory provides a framework on which principal behaviors can be evaluated based on systematic rewards and monitoring to determine its effects on teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and classroom performance. Although the main advantage of a transactional leader is to boost extrinsic motivation, there is a recognized limitation regarding the need to handle intrinsic professional development and innovation (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2006; Nguni, Sleegers and Denessen, 2006).

Conceptual Framework of the study

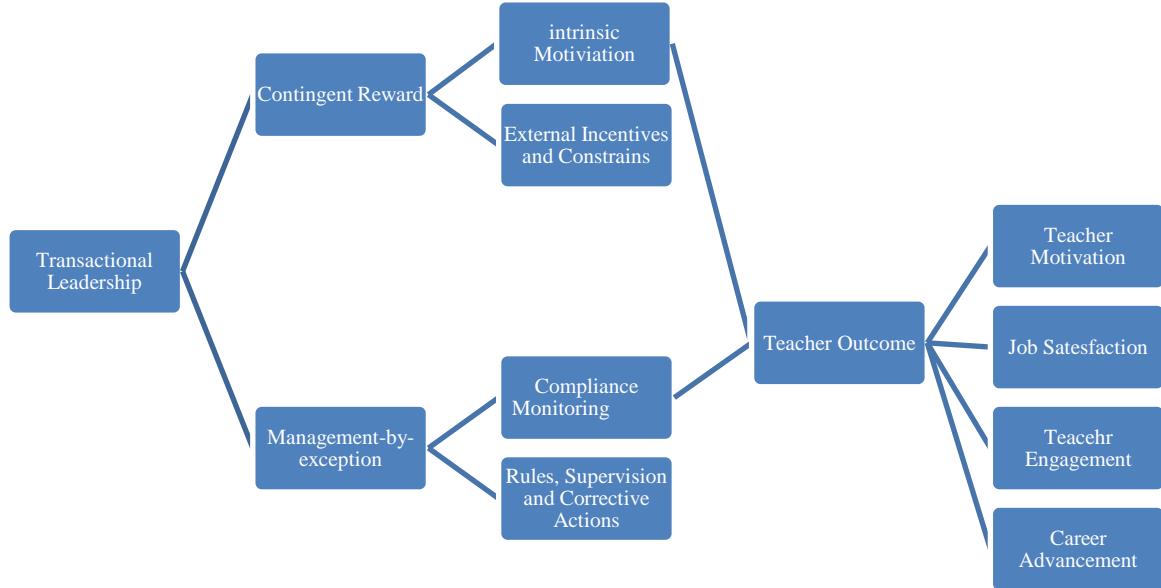


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of the Influence of transactional leadership style on teacher motivation (Bass 1985)

The above figure shows the principal transactional leadership style which is operationalised by contingent reward and management-by-exception. Teacher motivation: intrinsic (personal satisfaction, professional growth), and extrinsic (salary, recognition, promotions) motivation.

It is assumed that transactional leadership behaviors are able to boost extrinsic motivation and to a given degree impact intrinsic motivation, which consequently influences teacher engagement, performance, and overall performance in high secondary schools.

Problem Statement

Although leadership is an important in determining the outcome of education, there are few empirical studies that are specifically done on transactional leadership style and its effects on teacher motivation in Pakistan. The special impact of transactional practices on intrinsic and extrinsic teacher motivation is usually neglected in general leadership studies (Yukl, 2013). In the absence of localized data, the educational leadership policies may be made based on assumptions as opposed to evidence. This research therefore aims at exploring the connection between the behaviors of transactional leadership by principals and teacher motivation in government higher secondary schools in District Charsadda.

Objective of the Study

The following research objective was focused;

1. To investigate the influence of transactional leadership behaviors of school principals on teacher motivation in Government Higher Secondary Schools in District Charsadda, Pakistan.

Research Question

The research question of the study was;

1. How do transactional leadership behaviors of school principals influence teacher motivation in Government Higher Secondary Schools in District Charsadda, Pakistan?

Significance of the Study

The study was relevant to the body of literature on educational leadership by contributing localized empirical data to transactional leadership and teacher motivation in Pakistan. The research study will be significant for school principals, educators, policy-makers, training educators in accordance with the effects of structured leadership practices on teacher motivation and provides ideas on how leadership training programs can be improved. The research also forms a strong basis of future studies on the styles of leadership and the outcomes of the teacher in the same environment.

Literature Review

According to (Bass, 1985) the transactional leadership is integrated into two primary dimensions; contingent reward and management-by-exception. Contingent reward is the application of incentives or recognition to stimulate the desired behaviours and achieve the goals on the contrary, management-by-exception is the intervention when an exception is found compared to the set standards either in an active manner (active monitoring) or in a passive manner (corrective action) (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

These behaviors in education have taken the form of principals overseeing the performance of the teachers, rewarding good performance in performing the duties, and responding to poor performance in a systematic way.

The research studies showed that transactional leadership style works well especially in bureaucratic and resource-limited learning cycles, where they need clear direction, organization of expectation and accountability measures (Bush and Glover, 2014). Although it might not promote the sense of innovation or intrinsic motivation as transformational leadership would, transactional leadership will make sure that the organizational goals are always met and the performance of the teachers would be in line with the organizational norm (Nguni, Sleegers, and Denessen, 2006).

Teacher Motivation Intrinsic and extrinsic

Teacher motivation is a multicomponent concept that influences the job performance, job satisfaction, engagement and student achievement (Dinham and Scott, 2000). It is generally broken down into intrinsic motivation, which is motivated by personal satisfaction, profession development and self-actualization, and extrinsic motivation, which is motivated by rewards, recognition and external approval (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Furthermore, intrinsic motivation helps teachers to be creative in their pedagogies, to engage the students, and enhance their careers (Guajardo, 2011). Extrinsic motivation on the other hand offers tangible rewards like promotions, salary advances, awards and recognition to support behaviors that one desires. Research indicates that the two types of motivation are essential in education and both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation contributes to immediate compliance and performance and long-term engagement and professional commitment respectively (Podsakoff, Todor, and Skov, 1982).

Organizational effectiveness, classroom management, and student learning outcomes have been associated with the motivation of teachers. Teachers who are highly motivated have more control in their classroom, use new strategies in teaching and have individualized attention on their students (Dinham & Scott, 2000). On the other hand, demotivation is a factor in absenteeism, burnout, low job satisfaction, and poor performance of the students. Thus, it is essential to learn the leadership determinants of the motivation in the educational research.

Teacher Motivation and Transactional Leadership

Higher levels of extrinsic motivation among teachers have always been linked to transactional leadership behaviors especially the contingent rewards (Wahab et al, 2014). When they get recognition, promotions or performance based rewards, teachers have higher chances of remaining dedicated and performing efficiently. The more subtle impact of management-by-exception behaviors on motivation is that management by exception ensures compliance and accountability. Active observation and corrective feedback would have a positive impact on performance and engagement when done in a fair and transparent manner. Nonetheless, too much or punitive management-by-exception may have the negative impact of damaging intrinsic motivation and cause stress or demoralization in the teachers (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Okoth (2018) is the author who stated that transactional leadership of school principals positively affected teacher organizational commitment and job satisfaction in Nigeria, mainly through organized reward systems and frequent monitoring of performance. Likewise, Malaysian research noted that transactional leadership also positively affected motivation and engagement in teachers by contingent reward behaviors, which proved that transactional leadership can also be applied in cross-cultural education (Wahab et al., 2014).

The education system within Pakistan is typified by hierarchies in the education process, lack of leadership training and bureaucratic administration systems. Research shows that a considerable number of school principals use top-down leadership style, and little to no focus on participatory or motivational leadership style (Iqbal, 2012). This usually results in underestimating the intrinsic motivation of the teachers, demoralizing the staff and interfering with classroom performance. As highlighted by Hameed and Waheed (2011), transactional leadership is in a position to offer structure and accountability that is required in state schools within Pakistan especially in the districts where resources are constrained. Transactional leadership is effective in sustaining institutional goals because it clarifies the expectations and ties performance to rewards. But, in the situation when it is used without considering the needs of the teachers, it is likely to promote submission instead of the real motivation. As Bush and Glover (2014) further discussed that a balance between transactional

and transformational styles of leadership would be essential in fostering extrinsic and intrinsic motivation among school teachers.

Research on Leadership and Motivation of Teachers

The scientific research conducted on transactional leadership and teacher motivation has shown that there is a strong correlation between both in the world. Nguni, Sleegers, and Denessen (2006) established that transactional leadership had a positive forecast of teacher satisfaction and performance in both primary and secondary school. The analysis indicated that contingent rewards and structured expectations were well received by teachers in schools where there is a high accountability requirement. In Pakistani context, Ahmed (2015) examined the leadership approaches of school principals and observed that transactional leadership was more effective in task accomplishment and obedience, but not creativity and professional development. In a similar manner, Dinhamb and Scott (2000) also established that extrinsic motivation which was reinforced through leadership behaviors also led to increased levels of teacher engagement and instructional effectiveness. Furthermore the research studies in secondary schools are sparse but very important since at this level, the teachers are exposed to both special subjects and examination pressures that demand continuous encouragement. The impact that transactional leadership has on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can be used to guide policymakers to develop leadership training interventions to create conditions where teachers are satisfied, engaged, and develop professionally.

Gap in the Literature

In spite of the fact that a lot of studies have been conducted regarding the field of leadership and teacher motivation, there are still a number of gaps:

In Pakistan, the majority of studies have put emphasis on general leadership without separating the impacts of transactional leadership (Ahmed, 2015). Not many studies have reviewed both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation among teachers in higher secondary. Furthermore, Empirical studies on the role of socio-political and bureaucratic influences in development of leadership effectiveness are also not done locally in districts like Charsadda where the problem could be unique to the district. Limited research was found on the long-term effects of transactional leadership on the teacher professional growth and innovation. Therefore this paper attempts to fill these gaps by empirically researching the relationship between transactional leadership behaviors of school principals and teacher motivation- intrinsic and extrinsic in government higher secondary schools of District Charsadda in Pakistan.

Methodology

Research Paradigm and Design

The paradigm embraced by the study was post positivism, where the quantitative approach was taken to establish the relationships between variables objectively (Creswell, 2014). A descriptive correlational design found the relationship between transactional leadership and teacher motivation (Mugenda, and Mugenda, 2010).

Population and Sampling

The sample size was 705 males who were the teachers in government higher secondary schools in the District Charsadda. A total of 102 teachers were randomly chosen to use Krejcie and Morgan table (1970) to identify a representative sample (Riley, 2017).

Research Instrument

The researcher used structured questionnaire and used two adopted scales to gather the data in which the transactional Leadership Scale was developed by Morris and Fitch (2003) Juneja, (2025) and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) by Bass and Avolio (1994) that evaluated contingent reward and management by exception behaviors. Teacher Motivation Scale which was based on Self Determination Theory and the framework of Dinhamb and Scott (2000) was used to measure intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The items were rated using 5 point Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree until 5 = strongly agree).

Validity and Reliability

Three specialists in educational leadership revised content validity. Construct validity was tested with the help of exploratory factor analysis with a pilot test which included 20 teachers and internal consistency reliability was measured with the help of Cronbach alpha and all dimensions were greater than the accepted level of the construct of .70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013).

Data Collection Procedure

Facade to face and online surveys were used in a period of three weeks to collect data. The participants signed an informed consent and were guaranteed confidentiality. The responses were coded and kept in a safe place to be analysed.

Data Analysis Technique

The analysis of data was done with SPSS (Version 16). The correlation between the transactional leadership dimensions and teacher motivation were tested by descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and correlational analysis.

Data Analysis and Results

The data was collected from 102 teachers in the government higher secondary schools of District Charsadda to determine how transactional leadership affects teacher motivation. Analysis of data was done with the help of SPSS version 16 with the help of descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic information helps to contextualize the study findings and understand the sample profile.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	25-30	28	27.5
	31-35	33	32.4
	36-40	25	24.5
	Above 40	16	15.7
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	20	19.6
	6-10 years	34	33.3
	11-15 years	28	27.5
	Above 15 years	20	19.6
Qualification	Bachelor	35	34.3
	Master	62	60.8
	MPhil/PhD	5	4.9

The above table shows that most teachers (60.8) were Master degree and they were aged 31-35 (32.4%). The balance of teaching experience was quite equal with 33.3% of the respondents possessing 6-10 years of teaching experience. This means that the sample was heterogeneous and able to contribute effectively and offer a valid foundation to determine leadership influence.

Teacher Motivation and Transactional Leadership

Two dimensions of transactional leadership (contingent reward and management-by-exception) and two kinds of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) were used to measure the relationship between transactional leadership and teacher motivation.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics, Correlation, and Regression Analysis

Variable	Mean	SD	Correlation with Motivation	Regression (β)	p-value
Contingent Reward	4.02	0.68	0.68**	0.42	0.000
Management-by-Exception	3.75	0.74	0.54**	0.25	0.002
Intrinsic Motivation	3.62	0.70	-	-	-
Extrinsic Motivation	3.95	0.65	-	-	-
Overall Teacher Motivation	3.78	0.68	-	0.67	0.000

The results of the analysis indicates that contingent reward practices are highly perceived among teachers and that the overall teacher motivation is significantly associated with the contingent reward practices ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$). Correlation also represents positive but to a lesser extent between management-by-exception ($r = 0.54$, $p < 0.01$). According to regression analysis, transactional leadership is a significant predictor of teacher motivation (0.67, $p < 0.001$), and it is likely that organized leadership practices, specifically reward-oriented programs have a heavy effect on teacher participation, performance and happiness.

Discussion and Analysis

The results indicate that transactional leadership is critical in boosting teacher motivation in higher secondary schools in District Charsadda. Educators think that their principals are mostly applying contingent reward systems, which is similar to the transactional theory of leadership suggested by Bass (1985) and elaborated by Bass and Avolio (1994). Contingent reward is the reward given to

teachers upon meeting the set goals and aims which in its turn promotes both accountability and enhances motivation. Contrastingly, management-by-exception though existing was rated at a moderately high degree implying that principals only interfere when there is deviation or problem and does not mean that the principals are expected to keep a close eye on the performance of teachers. It is also seen in the analysis that extrinsic motivation, such as promotions, rewards, and recognition is more than intrinsic motivation, such as self-satisfaction and personal achievement. It is indicative of the fact that teachers are more effectively motivated by external rewards, which are also in line with the Self-Determination Theory proposed by Ryan and Deci (2000), which emphasizes that extrinsic incentives can be used to boost performance in structured settings but are not necessarily in favor of long-term commitment and innovation. It is specifically true regarding the bureaucratic school system of Pakistan, where principals tend to implement the formal power and stricter control (Bush and Glover, 2014). The correlation between transactional leadership and teacher motivation ($r = 0.672$, $p < 0.01$) was positive, which proves that reward-based and structured leadership has a positive impact on teacher engagement and job satisfaction. This is further supported by the regression analysis, which shows that transactional leadership is significant in explaining a large percentage of the variance in teacher motivation (0.67 , $p < 0.001$). The teachers observe a vivid reward system and remedial action, which minimizes uncertainty, brings order, and promotes adherence to the expectations of the organization.

But there are some weaknesses of transactional leadership which the study also points to. Although it is good to foster extrinsic motivation, it might ignore intrinsic motivation like creativity, innovation and self-development. Applying punitive policies or strict policies may decrease intrinsic interest and cause burnout of the teacher as Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) suggest. Thus, transactional leadership will guarantee discipline and short-term performance, but the elements of transformational leadership should also be considered in order to promote intrinsic motivation and professional satisfaction. In comparison, other research investigating the same issue in Malaysia and Nigeria indicated that transactional leadership has a positive effect on teacher performance, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization (Abdul Wahab, et al., 2014; Okoth, 2018). Such results are likely to indicate that the performance of the transactional leadership style is cross-cultural and regional, assuming that the rewards and corrective actions are viewed as fair and transparent. Conclusively, in higher secondary schools in Charsadda, transactional leadership is an appropriate tool of enhancing teacher motivation especially in extrinsic motivation. However, to achieve sustainable professional growth and long-term investment, it might be necessary to make the practice of leaders more balanced, which means combining both transactional and transformational leadership.

Conclusions

It was concluded by the results of the research that transactional leadership has great impact on the motivation of teachers in higher secondary schools of District Charsadda. The study results showed that the application of contingent rewards and management-by-exception implemented by principals improves teacher engagement, job satisfaction and overall performance. The structured reward systems, high expectations, and corrective actions make teachers react positively and provide order and discipline in the school environment. There was higher extrinsic motivation compared to intrinsic motivation, which includes recognition, promotions, and tangible rewards and this is a testament that transactional leadership is effective in promoting compliance and task-oriented performance. Nevertheless, the limitations of transactional leadership are also identified in the study, especially as far as developing intrinsic motivation, creativity, as well as, long-term professional development is concerned. Although transactional practices can work with short-term results and even ensuring order, rewards and corrective actions can hardly cover personal development of teachers and emotional needs. In order to achieve sustainable enhancement in teacher motivation and the quality of education, it is advised that the use of transactional leadership styles should be supplemented by transformational leadership styles that are able to inspire, empower, and engage teachers not only to get the job done. Generally, this research highlights the need to employ balanced leadership approaches in an attempt to maximize extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in the learning environment.

Recommendations

It was recommended that educational leadership programs should be designed to offer training on both transactional and transformational leadership in order to meet the extrinsic and intrinsic

motivation needs. Furthermore school Principals must be careful and consistent, equitable and transparent in reward and corrective systems to ensure maximization of engagement in teachers.

It was also recommended that future studies should be able to investigate mixed style of leadership, with an emphasis on how the transformational aspect can be used to supplement transactional practices to boost extrinsic and intrinsic motivation of teachers.

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