

# THE IMPACTS OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON TEACHERS' MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION.

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## **Abstract**

This article investigates the impact of various school leadership styles (Transformational, Transactional, Laissez-Faire Leadership Style and Autocratic) on the motivation and job satisfaction of teachers. Effective school leadership is critical to creating a positive work environment, which directly influences teacher retention and instructional quality. Drawing on established motivational and organizational theories, this review posits that participatory and inspirational leadership styles (like Transformational and Democratic) significantly enhance teachers' intrinsic motivation and overall job satisfaction by fostering a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Conversely, rigid or passive styles often lead to demotivation and dissatisfaction. The paper conceptualize models, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings to provide a strong basis for recommending leadership strategies that promote a highly motivated and satisfied teaching faculty.

**Keyword:** *Leadership Styles, Motivation, Job Satisfaction.*

## **Introduction**

The principal role that evolved from a purely administrative function to a critical instructional and organizational leader, which in modern schools, teacher performance and retention are paramount, making the work environment a crucial focus. This paper asserts that the single most influential factor shaping this environment is the leadership style adopted by the school head. High teacher motivation and job satisfaction are not just desirable traits, they are fundamental prerequisites for effective teaching, low staff turnover, and ultimately, improved student outcomes. This article seeks to systematically analyze the mechanisms through which a leader behavior either inspires or detracts from a teacher's professional fulfillment and drive.

Despite the clear link between teacher well-being and school effectiveness, many educational institutions face persistent challenges, including high teacher burnout, absenteeism, and attrition. The significant contribution to these issues is often ineffective or inappropriate school leadership. Specifically, there is a lack of consistent understanding and application of leadership styles that are empirically proven to boost intrinsic motivation and comprehensive job satisfaction. This review addresses the need to clarify which leadership styles have the most potent and positive influence on the core professional attitudes of teachers.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The main objectives of this study include the following:

- i To define and differentiate key leadership styles (Transformational, Transactional, Autocratic, Laissez-Faire Leadership Style Democratic) prevalent in educational settings.
- ii To conceptually review the core constructs of teacher motivation and job satisfaction.
- iii To establish a theoretical framework explaining the link between specific leadership styles and teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors.
- iv To empirically review and synthesize findings from studies that have investigated the correlation between leadership styles and teacher motivation/job satisfaction.
- v To propose practical recommendations for school leaders and educational policymakers to cultivate a highly motivated and satisfied teaching workforce.

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Concept of Leadership Styles**

The concept of leadership, or leadership concept, refers to various ideas about being a leader and leadership's principles and fundamentals. It includes factors that affect leadership style and a potential leader's traits and perceptions. Leadership concepts benefit any individual who oversees or manages a group of people to achieve a common objective. The leader may know what skills and characters they may develop and how to use these to connect with their team members or followers.

Leaders usually exhibit a style of leadership as they motivate and inspire their followers. Leadership style therefore, refers to the manner in which a leader chooses to lead and interact with their followers (Northouse, 2018). It reflects the leader's behaviors, attitudes, and actions in influencing and directing others. Leadership style has a huge influence on how a leader makes decisions, communicates expectations, motivates followers, and creates a work environment. Leadership style is an expression of the leader's leadership approach. It reflects the leader's preferences, values, and beliefs about how to effectively lead and influence others. There are several leaderships styles and these different leadership styles can impact the dynamics, productivity, and culture within an organization or group in several different ways. For the purpose of this article, the concept of three leadership styles would be looked into which includes:

**Transformational Leadership:** Leaders inspire and motivate followers by appealing to higher ideals and moral values. They act as role models, encourage innovation (intellectual stimulation), and pay attention to individual needs (individualized consideration).

**Transactional Leadership:** Leadership is an exchange process; a leader provides rewards for good performance and implements corrective action for poor performance (contingent reward and management-by-exception).

**Laissez-Faire Leadership Style:** This is a "hands-off" approach where the leader provides very little guidance, supervision, or direction, giving subordinates maximum freedom. Its impact is mixed. While it might show some effects on intrinsic job satisfaction (due to the high autonomy), excessive laissez-faire leadership can lead to confusion, lack of accountability, and ultimately, lower overall effectiveness and job satisfaction in the long run.

**Democratic/Participative Leadership:** Leaders involve teachers in decision-making, encouraging collaboration and shared responsibility.

### **Motivation**

The term motivation is derived from the Latin word *movere*, meaning to move. Motivation can be referred as a combination of motive and action. Motivation is an action word that influences every aspect of our daily lives. Motivation is fundamental in the level of success an individual attains. Motivation is a personal and internal feeling. This feeling arises from needs and wants. Motivation is continuous process because as our one need fulfills it gives rise to other needs. There is general agreement that people are motivated in situations where they can participate, they can feel accomplishment and receive recognition for their work, where the communication is frequent and there are opportunities for career and knowledge growth.

Ormrod J E (2008), defines motivation as an internal state that arouses us to action, pushes us in particular direction and keeps us engaged in certain activities. William G Scott defines motivation is a process of stimulating people to action to accomplish desired goals.

### **Theoretical Framework**

**Leadership Theories:** These theories define and categorize the leadership styles used by school principals or administrators and posit how those styles affect followers (teachers). This is arguably the most common and relevant framework in educational studies. Leaders inspire and motivate followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and develop their own leadership capacity.

**Transactional Leadership Theory:** This theory focuses on supervision, organization, and performance through a system of rewards and punishments. Leadership is a process of exchange, where followers receive rewards for meeting agreed-upon goals.

**Impact on Teachers:** Transactional leaders influence extrinsic motivation through clear expectations, performance-based rewards, and disciplinary actions (e.g., contracts, bonuses, or corrective feedback).

**Path-Goal Theory of Leadership:** This theory suggests that a leader's job is to clear the path for followers to achieve goals and make the journey more satisfying. The leader's style (Directive, Supportive, Participative, Achievement-Oriented) should be contingent on the situation and the characteristics of the subordinates (teachers) and the task.

**Motivation and Job Satisfaction Theories:** These theories explain why and how teachers become motivated and satisfied, providing the mechanism through which the leadership style operates.

**Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Motivation-Hygiene Theory):** Two separate sets of factors influence satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

**Motivators (Intrinsic Factors):** Lead to satisfaction (e.g., achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, growth). Leadership styles like Transformational and Participative are often seen to impact these factors directly.

**Hygiene Factors (Extrinsic Factors):** Prevent dissatisfaction (salary, working conditions, supervision/leadership style, school policy). Leadership styles heavily influence the "supervision" hygiene factor.

**Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan):** People are driven by an innate desire for personal growth and fulfillment (intrinsic motivation) when three basic psychological needs are met:

**Autonomy:** Feeling in control of one's own behavior and goals (choice in curriculum, decision-making).

**Competence:** Feeling capable and effective (support for professional development, effective feedback).

**Relatedness:** Feeling a sense of belonging and connection to others (supportive school culture, team building).

Leadership styles that empower, coach, and are democratic/collaborative are expected to fulfill these needs, thus boosting intrinsic motivation and deep job satisfaction.

**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:** Individuals are motivated to fulfill a hierarchy of needs, from basic physiological and safety needs (which relate to hygiene factors like salary and job security) to higher-level needs like Esteem and Self-Actualization (which align with intrinsic motivators like recognition, responsibility, and growth).

Finally, the overall framework posits that a Principal's Leadership Style (Transformational, Transactional, Democratic) acts as an independent variable that influences the fulfillment of teachers' fundamental Motivational Needs (Autonomy, Achievement, Recognition). This fulfillment, in turn, serves as the mediating mechanism that determines the dependent variables, which are the teachers' Motivation (Intrinsic/Extrinsic) and ultimate Job Satisfaction.

## **Empirical Review**

According to Dubinsky *et al.* (1995) the leadership style is thought to be crucial for accomplishing organizational goals. Three types of leadership styles are categorized in this study: democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire. Democratic leadership focuses on encouraging people to share their ideas, facilitating communication, and synthesizing all available data to make the best decision. Democratic leadership is an approachable method of managing a group where all members have equal authority. Democratic leadership functions best in groups where participants are eager to share their knowledge and talents (Ray & Ray, 2012).

The autocratic leadership style, the administrator puts his own interests before those of his subordinates. Human needs are not sufficiently taken into account. The leader is stingy, cruel, power-mad and self-centered. He makes decisions without first consulting a group (Adeyemi, 2013). The laissez faire style is characterized by a high degree of avoidance, indecision, and apathy. The management-by-exception leadership style is characterized by a focus on mistakes, standard setting, error searching, rule enforcement, and deviation monitoring (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2005).

Several studies have shown a significant positive relationship between leadership style and employee job satisfaction (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006; Bartolo & Furlonger, 2000; Hui *et al.*, 2013). This paper concentrated on the topic of teachers' motivation and job satisfaction in the education sector, taking into account the importance of principal leadership and education. Teacher job satisfaction is of great importance, in as much as research has proven that satisfied teachers usually show higher performance and productivity at work (Brezicha *et al.*, 2020). Conversely, the principal bears ultimate accountability for overseeing every facet of the school, rendering judgments, and directing the institution's operations and working environment has become more intense, and stressful, moreover there is a high pressure to perform, to overcome cultural differences, survive in the globalizing and competitive world (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016). A positive atmosphere is established when the principal employs the most appropriate leadership styles for the staff (Mehrotra, 2005).

The essential element for job satisfaction for teacher is the leadership of a principal (AH Ch *et al.*, 2017). Findings of previous research show that leadership in general has positive impact on intrinsic, extrinsic and overall job satisfaction of the followers (Chang & Lee,

2007; Griffith, 2004). But some studies like AH Ch *et al.*, (2017) study's shows that there is the positive and significant relationship between democratic leadership style and job satisfaction of teachers and that there is negative relationship of principals' autocratic leadership style with job satisfaction of teachers.

Furthermore, according to Yousef (2000) improving employees' job satisfaction hinges on adopting suitable leadership behaviors and different leadership styles exert varying influences on job satisfaction. So, the importance of this paper is to examine the effects of the school principal's democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership style in the in external and internal job satisfaction of teachers, and overall job satisfaction of teachers which for now is an unresearched area and make a gap in the literature of leadership and job satisfaction in education.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study suggest that democratic leadership had a significant effect on overall job satisfaction and both intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction. This implies that when teachers have a principal who use this type of leadership, they perceive their leaders as participative, inclusive, and collaborative, they are more likely to feel satisfied with their jobs.

Furthermore, intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction effect of democratic leadership implies that aspects such as autonomy, recognition, and meaningful work are important contributors to job satisfaction, because these aspects are empowered by democratic leadership style. On the other hand, the results on the autocratic leadership let to conclude that a top-down, directive leadership approach may not be conducive to fostering satisfaction among educators and school should look for principals that use different approaches in leading the school toward are fields and directions that the school work cause the satisfaction of teachers no only affect their performance but also the way that school function. While laissez-faire leadership had a significant effect on both overall job satisfaction and intrinsic job satisfaction, it didn't significantly influence extrinsic satisfaction.

This implies that laissez-faire leadership, characterized by a hands-off approach and trust in employees' abilities, may primarily impact factors relate to personal fulfilment and the overall work environment rather than tangible rewards or external factors. In summary, the study highlights the importance of democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles in promoting overall job satisfaction and intrinsic factors among teachers, while suggesting that autocratic leadership may not be effective in this context.

## **Recommendation**

The overall strategy should focus on shifting practices toward Transformational and Democratic principles, thereby enhancing a teacher's sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The following recommendation is hereby given as follows;

1. Adopt a Collaborative and Participative Decision-Making Model Since Democratic leadership is strongly correlated with job satisfaction, principals must move away from autocratic, top-down approaches.
2. Involve teachers in key non-instructional and instructional decisions, such as curriculum development, setting school policies, budgeting, and selecting new staff.
3. Establish formal committees or task forces where teachers lead initiatives and provide input directly to the administration. This fosters a sense of ownership and respect.
4. Maintain transparent and open communication channels. Share the rationale behind all major decisions and actively solicit feedback from all staff members.
5. Focus on inspiring and supporting the professional growth of teachers, which is key to boosting intrinsic motivation. Act as a mentor, not just a manager. Recognize that teachers have different needs, skills, and professional goals. Provide personalized support, coaching, and resources for professional development
6. Clearly articulate a compelling, shared vision for the school's future. Inspire teachers to commit to the vision and believe in their ability to achieve it, thereby strengthening their sense of purpose.
7. Encourage teachers to be innovative, question the status quo, and experiment with new instructional methods. Create a culture where it's safe to take risks and learn from failures
8. Job satisfaction is heavily influenced by how teachers feel valued and supported in their challenging roles. Move beyond general praise. Specifically acknowledge and celebrate teacher efforts and achievements publicly (e.g., staff meetings, newsletters) and privately.
9. Leaders should be approachable, consistent, and genuinely value staff input. A positive leader-member exchange is a strong predictor of teacher commitment and satisfaction.
10. Principals should actively work to reduce unnecessary bureaucratic tasks and ensure teachers have adequate resources and a conducive work environment to perform their primary role (teaching) effectively.

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