



Original Article

Unveiling the Influence of High School Principals' Leadership Behaviors on Organizational Motivation: Teachers' Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The role of principal in a school context is multidimensional and complex. On one hand the principal manages the school matters as leader and on the other does an academic responsibility. There is a lack of studies to tell about the effect of leadership behaviour on teachers' motivation to work in a high school context. This study examines the relationship between principals' leadership behaviour and its relationship with teachers' organizational motivation in a high school context. Data were collected from 220 teachers based on convenient sampling approach in district Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Two scales such as leadership behaviour scale and organizational motivation scale were used as a tool of data collection. The collected data were analyzed using the spearman r correlation coefficient technique. Total five hypotheses were formulated to test the perceptions of teachers out of which only one was accepted and four were rejected. The results of the study revealed that there was strong negative correlation between dictatorial leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation. However, a strong positive correlation was found between supportive, participative and achievement oriented behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation. The study concluded that teachers' motivation reduces under a dictatorial leadership, whereas, teachers' motivation increase under supportive, participative and achievement oriented leadership environment. It is suggested that the results of this study may be replicated or further studied in other context for better understanding.

Introduction

Leaders mobilize people to work towards the achievement of the set target. School principals perform different roles in the context of school as leaders. This ranges from looking

after school matters to teaching and community interaction. However, the teacher motivation is one of the essential characteristics of effective school leadership (Leithwood, 2021). UNESCO has already recognized the important role played by school principals as leaders. This essentially explain the multiple and crucial role school principals play in schools (Fullan, Azorín, Harris & Jones, 2024). The leadership role of school principals transcends mere dispensation of daily school activities to supervise the roles and responsibilities of teachers and student learning (Tan, Gao & Shi, 2022).

The behaviour of school principal has a key role in the determination of producing competent teachers who take care of the academic development of students and their own learning as professionals. Research has discovered that those principals who show flexible and caring attitude and behaviour have positive effect upon the motivation of teachers in schools (Al Shebli & Alhosani, 2022). Caring and positive behaviour is strongly correlated with high job satisfaction of teachers. The temperament and attitude of school heads determines the level of job commitment and work motivation of school teachers. A competent school leader gives clear direction to its team members to achieve the set academic goals of the school (Bush, 2023).

The leadership of the school has the potential to influence the thoughts and actions of all the teaching staff who are involved in teaching process. Research has established that active school heads create a supportive and favorable work environment where teachers are highly motivated to work together to achieve the set targets in collaboration with school teachers and community (Kilag, Tokong, Enriquez, Deiparine, Purisima & Zamora, 2023).

Leadership behaviour

Leadership behaviour is a multidimensional construct. Effective leadership is based on the premise that a school principal may coordinate the school activities by taking the teachers into confidence and creating a culture of togetherness and team feeling (Asbari, Purba, Hariandja & Sudibjo, 2023). This type of behaviour gives wider opportunities to teachers to demonstrate their full abilities which also enhances their professional commitment towards their job. Researchers have highlighted different types of leadership behaviour such as directive, supportive, participative and achievement oriented behaviour. These behaviours influence the actions of leaders while working in an organizational context (Mete, Goldman, Shanafelt & Marchalik, 2022).

Path goal theory explains that leaders facilitate the team members the task performance of the members of the organization and their subordinates. This behaviour leads to job satisfaction or motivation of the subordinates (Ahmed, N., et al., 2022 & Sibte-Ali, 2023). Behavioral theories of leadership basically explain how leaders act in a certain situation. This theory elaborates that the best way to evaluate a leader is to watch how he or she acts or behaves. So this theory concludes that the actions of leaders are more important because leaders action determines the success or failure of the organizational system (Lyubykh, Gulseren, Turner, Barling & Seifert, 2022).

School principals show various ways and approaches to look after the schools or dealing with the routine matters ranging from teaching to managing staff. One such important element is dealing with teachers' supervision and direction (Kemethofer, Helm & Warwas, 2022).

According to researchers many principals fail to provide encouraging behaviour to their staff which culminates in a low motivation among them. The teachers lose their interest in the daily matters of school and become alienated from their professional responsibilities towards the organization (Pratiwi & Warlizasusi, 2023). Teachers also start quitting the school or look for windows to leave the organization. Such teachers even do not show high commitment towards their job due to their low organizational motivation (Bush, 2022).

Organizational motivation is the degree of interest or attachment of teachers towards the organizational goals. Motivated teachers take keen interest in school activities irrespective of any incentive. They are highly encouraged by the leadership behaviour and support (Lie, Sherly, Dharma, Wakhyuni & Sudirman, 2021). Researchers have explained that organizational motivation is strongly correlated with work environment, leadership role and job security. However, among all these leadership behaviour or attitude is a highly influencing factor that connects teachers to schools and community. According to path goal theory, leaders demonstrate various behaviour such as supportive, directive, participative and achievement oriented to their team members. The level of organizational motivation of the subordinates is directly proportionate to the type of behaviour that a leader demonstrates (Bektaş, Kılınç & Gümüş, 2022).

Organizational motivation

The level of job motivation of teachers in a school context is associated with the leaderships behaviour of the principal. A supportive principal can positively motivate its staff members with caring and respectful behaviour. Organizational motivation of teachers is attached with different determinants such as job security, unconditional incentives, promotion and encouragement from the management (Fahera & Firmansyah, 2024). Studies have established that many factors play a key role in improving the motivation level of teachers in a school context (Li, H., et al., 2024 & Ma, X., 2022). These factors include training opportunity, social status, sense of belongingness and feeling of ownership. Job motivation of teachers can be enhanced through lessening their stress levels in teaching, giving more incentives and providing high respect and recognition (Sirait, Junaedi, Purwati & Deli, 2022). Studies have found that many teachers do not show low interest in teaching with punctuality because, they feel alienated and disrespected or pushed aside by the management of the community. Unless these issues are resolved by the leadership and management of the schools, the desire for quality performance with remain unfulfilled (Adriana, Santoso, Hadijaya & Srinio, 2023).

Researchers have found that the leadership behaviour is directly associated with the level of morale and motivation of teachers in a school context. The quality of leadership behaviour is highly correlated with teachers' motivation and their performance (Koekemoer, De Beer, Govender & Brouwers, 2021). Several studies have indicated that quality school environment characterized with teacher's motivation is an important aspect of the school development. Those teachers who work in an environment where the leadership does not provide enough incentives in terms of social support and tangible rewards, the work motivation level goes down. In many schools lack of motivation of teachers have led to low academic performance of the schools and dissatisfaction of the community (Aitken & Von Treuer, 2021). When the teachers are dissatisfied with the leadership behaviour, it affects the overall working environment of the schools and teachers lose their interests in school matters.

Problem statement

Studies have indicated that leadership behaviour has a profound effect on teachers' professional development and work motivation. An observation of leadership behaviour and teacher motivation studies reveal that there are numerous factors which play a key role in either enhancing or decreasing the organizational motivational level of teachers such as job security, social support, team work, and leadership behaviour. It has been found that teachers' performance is associated with leadership role in an educational context (Jiazhi & Batool, 2024). Principals as school leaders play a key role in motivating their staff members to become a part of the academic team and show their full participation. However, all this depends upon the type and style of leadership of the school management (Hoque & Raya, 2023). Above literature shows that several studies have highlighted the many aspects of the leadership behaviour and its intimate relationship with teacher development. However, there is dearth of studies that specifically explain how different leadership roles and styles of school principals affect the level of organization motivation of high school teachers in district Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Research objectives

Following were the main objectives of this study.

1. To examine the relationship of directive leadership behaviour with teachers' organizational motivation
2. To find out the relationship of supportive leadership behaviour with teachers' organizational motivation
3. To evaluate the relationship of participative leadership behaviour with teachers' organizational motivation
4. To assess the relationship of achievement oriented leadership behaviour with teachers' organizational motivation
5. To assess the relationship of principals' leadership behaviour with teachers' organizational motivation

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to address the above given research objectives.

H₀₁ There is no statistically significant relationship of directive leadership behaviour with teachers' organizational motivation

H₀₂ There is no statistically significant relationship of supportive leadership behaviour with teachers' organizational motivation

H₀₃ There is no statistically significant relationship of participative leadership behaviour with teachers' organizational motivation.

H₀₄ There is no statistically significant relationship of achievement oriented leadership behaviour with teachers' organizational motivation.

H₀₅ There is no statistically significant relationship of principals' leadership behaviour with teachers' organizational motivation.

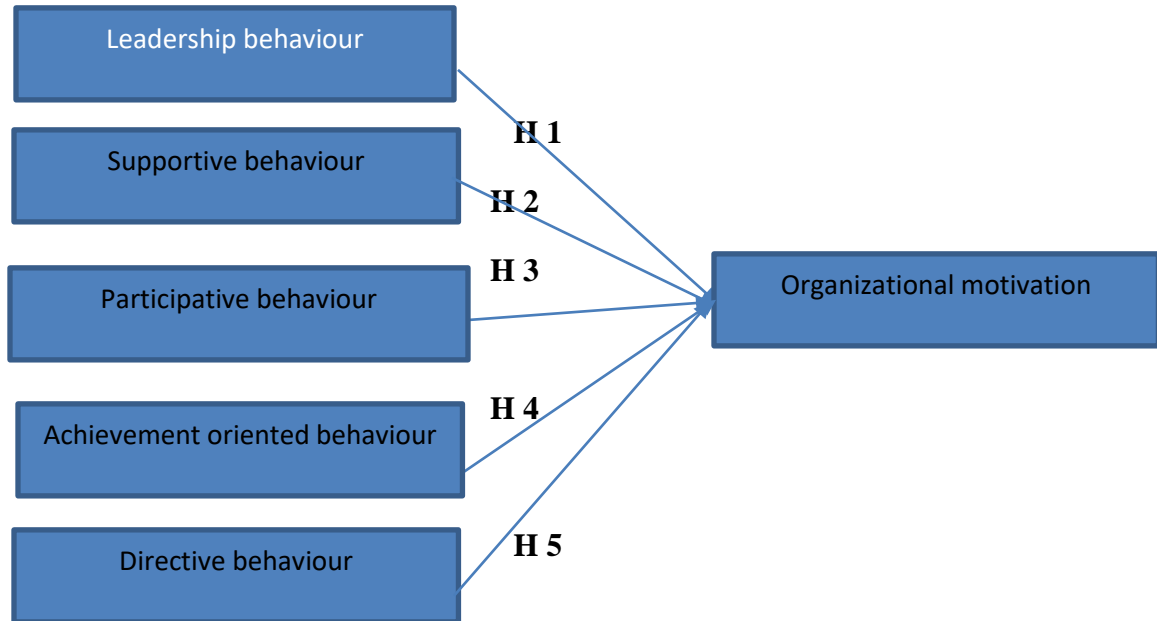


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Methodology

Design of the study

This study was designed based on quantitative correlational approach. The main aim was to explore and assess the perceptions of secondary school teachers about the leadership behaviour and its effect on their organizational motivation.

Population and sample

The population of the study consists of all the secondary or high school teachers in Malakand division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, for data collection a total of a mixed group of male and female teachers (n=220) from high school teachers were conveniently sampled from different schools of district Swat. The teachers were selected based on the principle of availability and only those teachers were sample who were ready to participate in the study without any hesitation.

Data collection tool

Two scales were used for data collection. Leadership behaviour of the principals was measured

using the leadership behaviour scale. Organizational motivation of teachers was measured using the organizational motivation scale of teachers. The scales were adopted and validated based on expert judgment and reliability tests to be used in the new context.

Data collection

Data collection was conducted by personally visiting the designated high schools. The researchers visited the schools after getting permission from the management regarding data collection. The consent of the individual teachers was also obtained before distributing the data collection measures. The purpose of the research was shared with the teachers before allowing them to fill out the questionnaires.

Data analysis

The collected data was analyzed using inferential statistical tools such as Spearman r correlation coefficient. Before data analysis, the data was entered into SPSS version 21. All the missing values in the collected data were treated and cleaned.

Results

The collected data was analyzed based on teachers' perceptions of the leadership behaviour of principals on their organizational motivation was calculated using the Spearman rank correlations coefficient for each of the responses.

H₀1: There is no statistically significant relationship between directive leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation.

Table 2. Directive leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers

			Directive leadership behaviour
Spearman's rho	Correlation coefficient	Organizational motivation	-.421**
		n	428

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 shows that there was a statistically negative correlation ($\rho = -.421, p < 0.05$) between directive leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers. This reveals that a statistically significant negative correlation exists between the directive leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers. Based on this analysis, the hypothesis of this study "There is no statistically significant relationship between directive leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation" was accepted. It means that there is strong negative correlation between dictatorial leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation.

H₀2: There is no statistically significant relationship between supportive leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation.

Table 3. Supportive leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers

			Supportive leadership behaviour
Spearman's rho	Correlation coefficient	Organizational motivation	.622**
		n	428

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Table 3 shows that there was a statistically significant positive correlation ($\rho=.622$, $p<0.05$) between supportive leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers. This reveals that a statistically significant positive correlation exists between the supportive leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers. Based on this analysis, the hypothesis of this study “*There is no statistically significant relationship between supportive leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation*” was rejected. It means that there is a strong positive correlation between supportive leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation.

H₀3: There is no statistically significant relationship between participative leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation.

Table 4. Participative leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers

			Participative leadership behaviour
Spearman's rho	Correlation coefficient	Organizational motivation	.512**
		n	428

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Table 4 shows that there was a statistically significant positive correlation ($\rho=.512$, $p<0.05$) between participative leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers. This reveals that a statistically significant positive correlation exists between the participative leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers. Based on this analysis, the hypothesis of this study “*There is no statistically significant relationship between participative leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation*” was rejected. It means that there is a strong positive correlation between participative leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation.

H₀₄ There is no statistically significant relationship of achievement oriented leadership behaviour with teachers’ organizational motivation.

Table 5. Achievement oriented leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers

			Achievement oriented leadership behaviour
Spearman’s rho	Correlation coefficient	Organizational motivation	.432**
		n	428

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Table 5 shows that there was a statistically significant positive correlation ($\rho=.432$, $p<0.05$) between achievement oriented leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers. This reveals that a statistically significant positive correlation exists between the achievement oriented leadership behaviour and organizational motivation of teachers. Based on this analysis, the hypothesis of this study “*There is no statistically significant relationship between achievement oriented leadership behaviour and teachers’ organizational motivation*” was rejected. It means that there is a strong positive correlation between achievement oriented leadership behaviour and teachers’ organizational motivation.

Table 6. Principals’ leadership behaviour and teachers’ organizational motivation

Principals’ leadership Behaviour	Organizational motivation	
	Teachers	Principals
	rho values	rho values
Directive behaviour	-.421	.553
Supportive behavior	.622	.442
Participative behavior	.512	.501
Achievement behaviour	.432	.470

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Table 6 indicates that directive leadership behaviour was highly positive correlated ($\rho=.553$, $p<0.05$) with organizational motivation of teachers in view of principals as compared with negative correlation ($\rho=-.421$, $p<0.05$) of teachers. Supportive leadership behaviour was highly positively correlated ($\rho=.622$, $p<0.05$) with organizational motivation in view of teachers as compared with ($\rho=-.442$, $p<0.05$) of principals. Participative leadership behaviour

was similar as being strongly positively correlated ($\rho=.512$, $p<0.05$) with organizational motivation in view of teachers as ($\rho=-.501$, $p<0.05$) in view of the principals. Achievement orientation leadership behaviour was also similar as being strongly positively correlated ($\rho=.432$, $p<0.05$) with organizational motivation in view of teachers as ($\rho=-.470$, $p<0.05$) in view of the principals. This means that apart from the directive leadership behaviour of principals, all the other three behaviour such as supportive, participative and achievement oriented were strongly positively correlated. This means that directive leadership behaviour is not suitable for the organizational motivation of teachers in a school context. Based on this analysis, the hypothesis of this study “*There is no statistically significant relationship between leadership behaviour and teachers’ organizational motivation*” was rejected. It means that there is a strong positive correlation between leadership behaviour and teachers’ organizational motivation.

Discussion

The results of this study are in line with the findings of previous studies which discovered that teachers demonstrate a highly poor motivation under a directive work environment where leaders behave in a dictatorial way. Other studies have found a negative correlation between directive leadership and teachers’ motivation in the workplace. Contemporary researchers have indicated a significantly negative relationship between leadership behaviour which is directive and teachers’ organization commitment and work motivation (Chen, 2023).

This finding of the current study strongly supports the results of previous research studies. Studies on supportive leadership have indicated that supportive management styles helps employees grow socially and ethically. The success of any organization including schools is dependent on many internal and external factors, however, supportive leadership behaviour is among the most important one (Ignatescu, Uredi, & Kosece, 2021). Supportive leaders promote confident and trustworthy workers who show commitment to organizational goals and develop a sense of ownership. Thus, principals with supportive attitude have been found to have contributed significantly towards the development of positive school culture. Supportive behaviour rests on the premise of help and care which are two important pillars of democratic leadership. Teachers working in a supportive school environment demonstrate strong commitment and job satisfaction which are the offshoot of organizational motivation (Bush, 2022).

This finding of the current study highly concurs with the research findings of previous studies where the participative leadership role has been highlighted to have positive effect on teachers’ motivation for work and satisfaction. Studies have discovered that participative work environment promotes culture of trust in a school context. Teachers show high commitment and work motivation under a participative leadership. Participative work approach is a determining factor in a progressive work environment where workers work as team and help each other in achieving the goals of the organization through shared ownership (Kilag et al, 2023). Democratic minded school principals provide full opportunities to the teachers to participate equally in the discharge of their duties without any fear or favour. It has been observed that those principals who create a participative work environment create a community of learners where every member of the school staff participates with dedication and commitment. This ultimately

translates into the realization of the school goals with strong commitment and progressive vision (Fullan, et al, 2024).

This particular result of the current study also coincides with the findings of many research studies in the past. Achievement orientation is always considered an important leadership behaviour which creates a sense of hope and motivation among the team members. Research has found that principals who emphasize on staff development and shared culture in the school give importance to the contributions of their school staff members. They acknowledge the contributions of the teachers and recognize them openly which places a highly positive impact upon the level of job satisfaction of teachers and also increases their level of motivation (Hogue & Raya, 2023). Studies have referred to achievement orientation as an important leadership behaviour through which school leaders attempt to persuade their staff members to own the common goals of the schools and work together to achieve the set goals. Many studies have confirmed the strong correlation between achievement orientation leadership behaviour and teachers' work motivation, job satisfaction and sense of ownership of the school (Lie et al, 2021; Bush, 2022).

The findings of this study widely support the results of previous studies that effective school leaders create an environment of trust and adapt themselves to the situation to deal with the issues of schools. Studies have revealed that under a directive leadership style, team members lose their self-esteem and freedom to share their point of view (Mete et al, 2022). This breeds mistrust and leads to low organizational productivity as the staff of the organization began to lose their motivation and commitment to work under the dictatorial leadership (Sirait et al, 2022). Studies have reported that competent and effective school leaders demonstrate active leadership qualities such as proactive approach, motivation and support for their team members. They create a participative and team environment where each member of the school feel encouraged and empowered. They provide help to their team members at every step and do shrink in becoming a role model by initiating tasks on personal basis. They create a sense of approval in the minds of their team members and provide them first hand support all time (Tan et al, 2022).

Conclusion

This study presents some important evidence that there is a significantly positive correlation between leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation. The revealed that directive leadership behaviour was negatively correlated with organizational motivation of teachers. A highly positive relationship was found between supportive leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation. There was also very strong and positive correlation between participative leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation. A strong and positive correlation was found between achievement oriented leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational behaviour. The positive correlation between all the dimensions of leadership behaviour further strengthens the fact that teachers want democratic leadership and its allied concepts like participative and supportive work environment. However, the negative relationship between directive leadership behaviour and teachers' organizational motivation confirms that teachers do not favour an autocratic leadership environment in schools.

Recommendations

Based on the study results, it is recommended that the results of this study may be replicated or tested in other contexts to collect more robust results for better and deeper understanding of the phenomenon. There is a need to promote supportive and participative work environment in schools to enhance the organizational motivation of teachers. It is recommended that principals may demonstrate supportive leadership behaviour which will enhance the motivation level of teachers. There is a need to stop directive leadership approach in dealing with school matters as it discourages and decreases the organizational motivation of teachers. It is also recommended that the school management and administration may include this as a policy matter and discourage dictatorial work environment in schools.

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