

## **TEACHER MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: THE ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES**

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**ABSTRACT:** The paper investigated the effects of transformational leadership practices and teachers' job motivation and engagement. In the educational context, the school organizational commitment of teachers is very important for achieving school effectiveness which in turn influences students' learning outcomes. Additionally, teachers' organizational commitment plays an essential role in establishing a unified effort within a school organization. Thus, it is necessary for every individual in the school organization to build up efforts in supporting the augmentation of teachers' commitment towards the school organization. Herewith, this will allow the school organization to come across impending organizational challenges and concurrently maintain the organizational commitment of teachers. The paper concluded that a classroom teacher who derives the satisfaction of his job is expected to be punctual in school and perform his duties diligently in an adequate learning environment and instructional facilities. A satisfied teacher is invariably an effective and efficient teacher. It was recommended that Education Ministries and Boards should establish and implement programmes such as seminars, workshops and so on to develop transformational leadership skills among school principals, among others.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Motivation, Engagement, Transformational leadership, Teacher motivation, Teacher Motivation.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Leadership is a crucial element in organizational success, exerting significant influence over employee motivation and engagement. Nowhere is this influence more critical than in elementary and secondary schools, where effective leadership cultivates a positive learning environment. In recent years, scholarly interest has surged in transformational leadership, which is a style known for inspiring and empowering followers toward excellence. This growing interest is substantiated by empirical evidence demonstrating the positive correlation between transformational leadership and employee motivation and engagement across various organizational contexts, including educational institutions. Transformational leaders as described by Litz and Blaik-Hourani (2020), and echoed by Roache (2023) possess the ability to transcend traditional hierarchical structures, fostering collaboration and a shared vision. Through

inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence, they cultivate trust and empowerment, encouraging followers to reach their full potential.

Numerous studies, such as those by Ahmad et al. (2023), and Aljumah (2023), support the notion that transformational leadership correlates with heightened levels of employee commitment, satisfaction, and performance. In educational settings, this leadership style not only enhances school performance but also elevates student outcomes (Roache, 2023). Anchored in established theories of transformational leadership by Tayal et al. (2022) and the managerial style of Kariuki et al. (2022), this research seeks to unravel the nuanced mechanisms through which leadership practices influence the motivational landscape of educators. By exploring these dynamics, this study aspires to offer actionable insights for educational leaders and policymakers to cultivate environments that prioritize the well-being and professional development of educators.

It is obvious that the duties of teachers' center around their classroom, a room, and a chalkboard. In the traditional school system, one person leads, the other follows and one person also makes the major decisions that affect the entire group. Input maybe asked for or given but the decision itself is left up to one individual and in most cases, this one person in the case of secondary school is always the principal. According to Saleh and Kalu (2017), the principal gives direction and lead to achieve objectives, ensure the implementation of school plants with its facilities. The principal is a leader, a thinker and a decision maker. He oversees all the teachers and is the person to whom they all answer to.

Ololube (2024) affirmed that the principal is the administrative head of secondary who perform management the actualization of educational objectives at this level of education. In the school system, the head of school has to share information, transfer ideas, and feelings through communication to enhance the collective cooperation of others within the school. Ogonnaya (2003) acknowledged that the principal is also expected to provide educational leadership as teachers look up to him/her for educational leadership and administrative guidance. Zembylas and Papanastasiou (2004) noted that teachers' dissatisfaction with work place has been seen to be one of the problems drawing these dreams away from reality.

Teachers' job satisfaction is the fulfillment, the attractiveness and happiness teachers find in their job that makes them to be highly committed to it. Commitment is when an individual experiences responsibility for the outcome of his/her work. Committed teachers complete their tasks diligently and are also willing to sacrifice their time and personal agenda whenever their attention is needed for the academic achievement of the school. However, most teachers are not committed to their primary responsibilities. Teachers show laissez- faire attitude to school activities, some are involved in other businesses while some trade during official hours. Hence, school performance depends more on the principals' leadership than any other factor. Principals therefore are required to exhibit appropriate leadership skills to entice teachers to maximize input, which might be expressed in teachers' commitment to duty and students' academic achievements.

Leadership is a multifaceted moral relationship that exists between people as it is centred on trust, emotion, shared visions, commitments and obligation. Leadership is an act of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal. It occurs in any group or organization, in all groups a leader must emerge. Leadership could be seen as a purposeful relationship which occurs periodically among participants who use their individual skills and influence to promote transforming change (Kearns, 2005). Leadership is the ability to get things

done with the help and cooperation of other people within the institution (Grace & Kalu, 2016). Blackburn (2009) stated that leadership skill of school principals is often the key factor of difference between effective and ineffective schools. Leadership is a process in which there is an element of influence. One factor that influences teachers' commitment to their duties is the principal's leadership practices which is the most important determinant of school excellence.

Traditionally speaking, some secondary school principals place emphasis on hierarchical leadership models, where top-down decision-making reigns (Onyekwere, 2024). The system directly or indirectly tells them that they do not know anything about the school administration. Maybe that is the major reason why in developing countries such as Nigeria, there is a high rate of teacher attrition.

According to Ololube (2024), transformational leadership practices stimulate followers into productivity and therefore there is need to accommodate transformational leadership practices in the secondary school system. Transformational leadership practices involve a change. Change cannot just happen in schools but it happens with people. So, in order to initiate change, one needs to know how to lead people.

This leadership style is what the present generation needs if the desired progress could be achieved in secondary schools. It is the type of leadership that will change, revolutionize and transform progressively the lives and developmental process of people, institution, organization or nation. Hence, it involves a committed relationship between the leader and followers. Educational leaders, administrators and researchers considered leadership as a necessary factor to attain institutional goals. Transformational leadership is defined as a leader who pays attention to his followers' issues while motivating them to achieve their objectives. To Ololube and Wome (2025), leaders who can persuade people to imagine and materialize the vision, as well as well-coordinated and lead coordination and collaboration between the leaders and their followers, are key to success. The leadership role of the educational institution is determined in all features of the over-all duties of the school management. Thus, leadership has to do with initiating, organizing, motivating and directing the followers' actions in particular situation towards the accomplishment of the common goal.

Transformational leadership, according to Akitunde (2013), focused on changing the connection between leaders and subordinates. The transformational leader in this situation encourages and stimulates his or her followers to promote a happy attitude and complete responsibilities to the best of their capabilities. Through the approach of attitude, desire, and encouragement, the leader attempts to bring change to the organization and raise the individuals he or she leads. This style of leadership encourages subordinates to feel appreciated and cared for. It also encourages followers to feel inspired to give more, making them feel accomplished.

A transformational leadership style allows a leader to have a significant part in establishing an environment that is full of drive, enthusiasm, and passion to help his followers achieve their goals. Followers, however, are expected to maximize their performance in the institution without feeling pressured of the stated transformational leadership dimension: (1) Idealized Influence (Attributes) - transformational leaders inspires admiration, respect, and belief in his followers. (2) Idealized Influence (Behavior) - transformational leaders uses their vision for the organization to inspire and implant dynamics in their group. (3) Inspirational Motivation - transformational leaders understand how to communicate with their people. They can also inspire others to achieve their goals by sharing their passion and motivation. (4) Intellectual Stimulation - Not only transformational leaders do challenge the current situation, but they also embed their followers to think beyond the box. The leader encourages his followers to try

innovative things and learn new things. (5) Individualized Consideration - transformational leaders also help and encourage individual followers. Leaders invests into delivering clear lines of communication which results to followers to share their thoughts, identify each distinctive contributions, and create supportive bonds. Followers will build rapidly their trust, shows their strengths and confidence in the production of aimed output.

According to Sadeghi and Pihie (2012), leaders who employ inspiring motivation behavior motivate their followers by setting challenges and significance of their job. It signifies that school leaders encourage their subordinates to do their tasks. The study also discovered that school leaders' idealized influenced behavior is driven by their sense of worth and mission. This suggests that school leaders are leaders who openly discuss essential organizational ideals and place a premium on appealing and worthwhile visions as well as ethical considerations. Nevertheless, work motivation among teachers is an important determinant in classroom success and school progress. Teachers are motivated to engage in the educational process. The amount of participation is critical for achieving educational objectives. The willingness to work determines a teacher's motivation. If a teacher is passionate about the school, he/she will actively participate in both academic and non-academic activities. The conditions necessary for high motivation and involvement of school teachers must be improved.

The characteristics of transformational leadership can be expected as an affirmative evaluation on work motivation according to the theory (Money, 2017). It is an expectation from a transformational leader to develop a foundation of appreciation (idealized influence), deliver inspirational motivation and offer significance and purpose for what needs to be accomplished, stimulate their followers' minds (intellectual stimulation) to think of innovative ways and show individualized consideration by identifying and uplifting each follower's needs. The researcher aims to evaluate the process of transformational leadership style to inspire leaders and teachers to give their all in order to achieve the institution's goals and objectives. It is critical to find an explanation because low teacher motivation, as an outcome of ineffective transformational leadership in the institution, can lead to lower performance, and when teachers perform poorly, human resource investments fail, and the institution is unable to achieve its goals due to a lack of support from the administration.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Transformational Leadership Theory**

This study is deeply rooted in Transformational leadership theory, as advocated by Katsande (2021), which remains a central pillar in understanding leadership dynamics. This theory underscores the significance of leaders' ability to inspire and motivate followers through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Within educational settings, transformational leadership has emerged as a critical factor in shaping teacher motivation and engagement, aligning with the evolving demands of modern schooling (Jay, 2023).

Transformational leadership theory promotes a style of guidance that emphasizes motivating employees, and creating a vision and encouraging them to fulfill it. The fundamental skills of a transformational leader include being able to mobilize employees, inspire them and boost their morale. Nowadays, organizations need to increase their knowledge and awareness about the environment and to create wide organizational changes for survival and development.

In this context, the role of leaders who move the organization toward the future, recognize the environmental need and facilitate appropriate changes, becomes more evident. Such leaders are called transformational leaders. These school leaders can strengthen the staff understanding and justice, and improve the quality of work life in the organization. Quality of work life includes any improvement in organizational culture which improves employees' satisfaction and human dignity and causes their development and growth in the organization. On the other hand, perception of discrimination and injustice demoralizes and demotivates employees and decreases productivity of their performances. In the very fast changing world, organizational management becomes important more than ever and is considered as critical success factor in organizations (Raman, et al., 2015).

Not only top-level managers need to show their capabilities, but all managers at all levels of the organization also feel the need to cooperate with others to achieve the desired results. Regardless of their job, they should know how to influence others, provoke them into working and also they must take responsibility for outcomes. Transformational leadership is a complex and dynamic process in which leaders influence their followers' values, beliefs and goals. These leaders move organizations toward the future, recognize environmental needs and facilitate appropriate changes. Leadership is emerged from the advent of social life. Some people are put together and begin their social life and influence each other. Transformational leadership is achieved when leaders and followers motivate each other for higher motivation and morality. These leaders have better relationships with their supervisors. They help the organization more than leaders who act transactional and they create more value for the organization. Transformational leaders motivate their employees to do more than what is sited in their employment contract and they focus on the employees' higher level needs. These leaders act as mentors and advisors and pay attention to personal development, learning, and supplying the needs of the employees. They provide challenge, a sense of mission, broader perspectives, respect, and trust for the employees, and they act as role models for their employees. They create an atmosphere of trust and motivate employees to work for the organization beyond their self-interests (Ololube, 2024).

Transformational leadership refers to leaders who seek to create ideas and new perspectives to create a new path of growth and prosperity in front of the organization. By developing commitment, passion and loyalty among managers and staff, they mobilize organization's members to make fundamental changes in fundamentals and basis of the organization in order to be prepared and to gain necessary capabilities for moving in new directions and reaching higher ideal performance peaks (Mirkamali et al., 2014). The transformational leader constantly looks for potential motives in followers and aims to draw followers' attention to superior needs and conversion of individual interests into collective interests. According to Bass and Avolio, transformational leadership is a conscious, moral and spiritual process that provides development patterns for organization through a reliable equal power leadership.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **Transformation Leadership**

The leaders who look for and generate new ideas in a new way of development and success of the organization is transformational leadership. They activate the organization's followers to

make essential modification and basis of changes to reach the top higher performance in innovative instructions by increasing the level of commitment, desire and faithfulness of the leaders (Mirkamali et al., 2014). A transformational leader, according to Storey (2010), is a modern leadership theory that emphasizes on the transformation of the follower and teamwork toward the fulfillment of the organizational goal. Various leadership theories have recognized transformational leadership as a more effective leadership approach. The type of leadership technique used determines the success of any firm. According to the case studies undertaken, in order to achieve the intended organizational goal, a leader must be innovative, motivating, and transparent, as well as possess the capacity to operate as part of a team.

Leadership is a vital part of most educational systems, thus, any learning completed depends on the influence of leaders, as catalysts of change, with the help of the teachers, who are the central of the acquisition and instruction of the education process. Hence, all processes, inputs and outcomes in an educational setting are influenced by various theories of leadership styles and practices in terms of motivating staff and increasing their sense of belonging towards the institution. Through effectiveness and efficiency to attain the essential level of output, leadership involves the appropriate performance and conduct of leaders to influence the group to work as team (Ololube, 2024). Thus, transformational leadership constructs a new viewpoint both the leaders and followers to encourage change in the whole institution (Arabian et al., 2014).

Transformational leadership according to Yang (2014) is an important tool to enhance the improvement of the quality of education in the institutions. This confirmed with the evaluation of Raman, et al. (2015) which disclose that behavior of transformational leaders in the institution bring changes with proper management and administration. As such, practicing this style of leadership, reform and efficiency within the organization is reinvigorated. A transformational leadership style allows a leader to have a significant part in establishing an environment that is full of drive, enthusiasm, and passion to help his followers achieve their goals. Followers, on the other hand, are expected to maximize their performance in the institution without feeling pressured by the five dimensions of transformational leadership style. Transformational leaders combine imaginative and honest leadership to change the educational environment, which includes not only the school but also the teachers that work there (Waters, 2013).

The act of preparing and training followers, as well as offering direction on issues and resource allocation toward an organization's goals and objectives, is defined as leadership as stated by Ololube (2024). Leadership is responsible for an organization's performance and long-term success. The transformational leader identifies needed change with subordinates or followers, sets a vision to motivate change, then implements the change in close relationship with committed team participants (Bell & Menguc, 2012). Beyond transformational leadership, encouragement and caring are essential. It's a new kind of leadership that reflects today's cultural trends and emphasizes the moral responsibilities of both the leader and the followers. To escalate follower's commitment to institutional goals, the leader should change their values and beliefs.

The leader suggests that subordinates be motivated by a shared organizational vision. To stimulate intellectual progress, the leader must present the most recent developments and trends and enlighten members. Individual members' requirements should also be considered by the leader. Furthermore, transformational leadership allows a leader to delegate authority to members. Members can exceed expectations and fulfill their goals with this style of leadership. According to Ololube (2024), transformational leadership in educational institution is a model of

leadership focused on the influence and management of school. The leader works to increase the human resource performance while also accepting and implementing the school's vision.

## **ELEMENTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

### **Idealized influence of leaders**

This refers to role modelling, articulation of high expectations and confidence in followers. The transformational leader displays a charismatic personality that influences others to be like him. The principal should act as a role model and express willingness to take visits and follow a core set of values, convictions and ethical principles in the actions she takes. It is through this concept of idealized influence that the principal builds trust with his teachers and the teachers in turn develop confidence in her. The principal should also demonstrate the highest level of ethical behaviour possible, admitting when she is wrong and acting in a socially respectable and appropriate way.

### **Inspirational motivation & ability to inspire confidence**

The leader is expected to articulate a clear vision for the future, communicate expectations of the group, and demonstrate a commitment to the goal through one-on-one coaching and mentoring. Inspirational motivation refers to the principal's ability to inspire confidence, motivation, and a sense of purpose in her teachers. The principal should also provide opportunities for in-service training for her teachers for them to grow and become fulfilled in their job. She should also motivate and direct her teachers to use their energy towards maximizing the attainment of instructional goals and objectives.

### **Intellectual stimulation and creativity**

This refers to encouraging followers to challenge existing approaches, reframe problems, and think in new ways. The vision of transformational leader is to help followers see the big picture and succeed in their efforts. Anjali and Anand (2015) asserted that intellectual stimulation leads to the development of employee commitment to the organization. They further stated that this has implications for the ability of the organization to achieve goals based on dedication and hard-work. Transformational leader should support her teachers by involving them in decision making process and stimulate their efforts to be as creative and innovative as possible to identify solutions. She solicits ideas from her teachers without critics. She also helps to change the way the teachers think about and frame problems and obstacles.

### **Individualized consideration of group members**

The transformational leader recognizes that each follower or group member has specific needs and desires. She should also take into account the differences and perspectives of the followers and be a coach and mentor to them. For instance, some are motivated by money while others by position and excitements. As a transformational leader, the principal should be able to recognize or determine through eaves dropping or observation what motivates each individual teacher so that they will perform well. A satisfied teacher is invariably an effective and efficient teacher. When a teacher is not satisfied, his/her classroom could be drastically and negatively affected.

Satisfaction connotes happiness and a state of well-being as an outcome of a need fulfilled. When teachers are satisfied with their job, they carry out their duties in high spirit. Ololube and Wome (2025) noted that when workers are satisfied in their jobs, they perform better and this is an indication of school effectiveness.

Egbezor (2005) observed that it can be argued that dedication to duty is a function of job satisfaction and job satisfaction here refers to the extent to which personal wants both materially and psychologically realized by the individual while performing a task. Job satisfaction offers explanation of what makes people want to come to work, what makes them happy about their jobs or what makes them decide to quit their job. Udoeke (2005) opined that if the school system is to succeed and if the huge investments and national hopes on education are to be fully achieved, the teacher must have enough job satisfaction. Teachers that have job satisfaction are committed to duties. It is the school principal who will effectively maximize the available human and material resources by the commitment process to achieve the educational goals. Hence, when teachers are committed to their job, they are bond emotionally and intellectually to their duties.

## **TEACHER MOTIVATION**

The term *motivation* originates from the Latin word *movere*, meaning ‘to move,’ signifying the internal drive that propels individuals toward certain behaviors (Nguyen, 2017). Motivation encompasses biological, cognitive, emotional, and social elements that energize and guide human actions. It serves as a fundamental determinant of performance, inspiring individuals to pursue goals and engage meaningfully in tasks.

Motivation in the educational context is deeply influenced by leadership practices. Naile and Selesho (2014) emphasized that a leader's capacity to inspire subordinates towards goal attainment is intricately linked to their leadership style. Moreover, factors such as organizational culture, social justice, emotional intelligence, and spiritual awareness shape motivational dynamics (Nevid, 2013). Environmental conditions, personal traits, and previous experiences further affect motivation levels.

McClelland's theory of motivation highlights three essential needs that drive behavior: the need for achievement, affiliation, and power. These needs significantly influence professional behavior and success (Wahyuningdyah, 2015b). In schools, teachers' motivation both intrinsic and extrinsic is crucial and is further enhanced when coupled with disciplined work ethics.

Research suggests that teacher motivation impacts nearly all aspects of the school structure (Tecer, 2011). It is closely tied to professional satisfaction and productivity (Unsar, 2011). However, inequitable reward systems may undermine morale, especially when high-performing staff receive the same recognition as underperformers (Gokay & Ozdemir, 2010). Conversely, consistent positive feedback and constructive criticism significantly bolster teacher morale and effectiveness (Firestone, 2014).

Motivational strategies such as fair remuneration, job security, recognition, opportunities for advancement, and supportive leadership are pivotal to maintaining high performance (Addison & Brundrett, 2008; Shukr et al., 2016). Without adequate motivation, even highly skilled and qualified educators may underperform. Hence, school administrators must actively implement strategies that inspire and engage teachers to enhance teaching quality and student outcomes (Yilmaz & Ceylan, 2011; Duren, 2002).

## **TEACHER ENGAGEMENT**

In response to the rapidly changing educational landscape, teacher engagement has emerged as a critical area of focus. Professional engagement refers to teachers' involvement not only in their classrooms but also in supporting activities across the school environment (Becker & Riel, 2000). Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, 2010) distinguish between work engagement, which relates to the teacher's connection with their professional tasks, and teacher engagement, which encompasses their relationship with the school as a whole.

Teacher engagement is essential in shaping instructional strategies and overall teacher responsibilities (Borup et al., 2014). It also serves as an indicator of teaching quality and positively influences student academic and social success (Rossmiller, 1988). Engaged teachers are more likely to invest in their students' learning and personal development. For this reason, school leaders must create professional environments that foster teacher involvement and creativity (Song et al., 2013; Meister, 2010).

Furthermore, Rossmiller (1988) observed a perceptual gap between highly engaged and disengaged teachers, which can be narrowed through reflection and professional support. Van der Heijden et al. (2015) emphasized that enhancing teacher engagement improves not only individual performance but also student outcomes and the attractiveness of the teaching profession. According to Bird et al. (2009), engaged educators possess a clear understanding of their roles and demonstrate effective collaboration with colleagues and supervisors.

Teacher-to-teacher interaction plays a significant role in promoting engagement. Such professional interactions provide opportunities for shared learning and the enhancement of instructional practices (Borup et al., 2014; Thoonen et al., 2011). Consequently, teacher engagement is not merely a personal attribute but a systemic element tied to professional development and school effectiveness.

## **APPLICATION OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Transformational leadership in secondary education fosters a supportive and innovative environment conducive to academic excellence. Leaders adopting this style articulate a shared vision, stimulate intellectual growth, and encourage collaboration, thereby creating a culture that nurtures both teacher and student success (Anderson, 2017). These principals challenge conventional practices, inspire high expectations, and offer meaningful opportunities for both academic and personal growth (Allen et al., 2015).

Transformational leaders also prioritize effective communication by actively listening to stakeholders and fostering inclusive dialogue (Allie, 2014; Stronge & Xu, 2021). By establishing trust and encouraging participation, they build strong relationships and collective accountability, leading to school-wide improvement. A key outcome of this leadership approach is the development of a school climate characterized by shared values, fairness, and respect (Demir, 2008; Allen, 2015).

Such leaders instill a sense of purpose and motivation among staff and students alike. Through emotional connection and motivational support, they inspire others to exceed expectations (Shelton, 2012). This leadership model is marked by clear vision-setting and the ability to convey that vision compellingly (Anderson, 2017). As Gillet and Vandenberghe (2014), Pawar (2016), and Bojovic and Jovanovic (2020) noted, transformational leaders guide

their teams by promoting shared sense of purpose and cultivating an environment of continuous growth and innovation. This leadership style do not only elevates academic achievement but also strengthens school culture. An emphasis on inclusivity and shared responsibility, make transformational leadership to promote a cohesive learning community and prepares students and teachers alike for long-term success.

The characteristics of transformational leadership in education are:

- Inspiring a Shared Vision: Transformational leaders articulate a clear vision for the school, motivating teachers and students to work towards common goals.
- Empowering and Supporting Staff: They create a supportive environment where teachers feel valued and empowered to take initiative and innovate.
- Promoting Intellectual Stimulation: They encourage critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving among both teachers and students.
- Individualized Consideration: They recognize the unique needs and talents of each student and teacher, providing personalized support and opportunities for growth.
- Fostering Collaboration and Teamwork: They promote a culture of collaboration and teamwork, where teachers and students work together to achieve common goals.
- Encouraging Continuous Improvement: They foster a culture of continuous improvement, where teachers and students are encouraged to reflect on their practices and make changes to improve outcomes.

Transformational leadership has various benefits to secondary school in the under listed ways:

- Improved Student Engagement and Motivation: By creating a positive and engaging learning environment, transformational leaders can help students become more engaged and motivated in their learning.
- Higher Student Achievement: When students are engaged and motivated, they are more likely to achieve academic success.
- Stronger School Culture: Transformational leaders can help create a strong and positive school culture, where everyone feels valued and respected.
- Increased Teacher Morale and Retention: By creating a supportive and empowering environment, transformational leaders can help improve teacher morale and retention.
- Innovation and Improvement: Transformational leaders can foster a culture of innovation and improvement, where teachers and students are encouraged to try new things and find better ways to learn and teach.
- Reduced Inequity: Transformational leaders can help design support systems that reduce inequity on multiple levels and create a more resilient educational infrastructure for the future.

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHERS' JOB MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

Teacher motivation in this study is conceptualized through three core indicators: the need for achievement, the need for cooperation, and the need for power. Motivation is broadly understood as an individual's willingness to exert considerable effort toward achieving organizational goals.

Rooted in Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, motivation encompasses physiological, safety, esteem, and self-actualization needs that collectively shape human behavior and work engagement. Hoy and Miskel (1992) defined teacher motivation as the internal drive that compels educators to fulfill their responsibilities, while Wiles (1955) noted that the level of motivation significantly impacts job performance and task completion.

Motivational theories generally posit that motivation arises from unmet needs, which create a state of tension that drives an individual to act (Wahyuningdyah, 2015a). Thus, teachers are motivated by various internal and external factors as they strive to fulfill personal and professional goals. Wiles (1992) identified key teacher needs, including job security, conducive working conditions, belongingness, fair treatment, recognition, participation in decision-making, and opportunities for self-development. In this regard, school principals are instrumental in motivating teachers by recognizing their contributions, providing praise or rewards for achievements, and creating supportive environments (Mulyasa, 2012).

Motivation manifests intrinsically through achievement, responsibility, and personal growth and extrinsically through supportive leadership, workplace relationships, income, and status (Engkoswara & Komariah, 2010). The principal's leadership plays a vital role in shaping these motivational dynamics. Robbins (2003) emphasized that effective school leaders are capable of energizing staff and fostering adaptive behaviors that align with organizational goals. Motivational constructs such as effort, goal orientation, and perseverance serve as indicators of teachers' job commitment and effectiveness.

Transformational leadership, defined by its visionary, inspiring, and innovative nature, has been found to positively influence teacher creativity and professional motivation. Al Harbi et al. (2019), Sui et al. (2012), and Apiani et al. (2023) highlighted that transformational leaders enhance teachers' creative capacities by fostering psychological empowerment and supporting innovation. In addition, transformational leadership encourages knowledge sharing and collaborative thinking among teachers (Zhang et al., 2019), as well as self-confidence in engaging in novel teaching practices (Azim et al., 2019; Alarifi & Alharbi, 2019).

Empirical evidence further confirms that transformational leadership through individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation enhances teacher innovation and engagement (Tse et al., 2018; Ripki et al., 2020). Mahmood et al. (2019) also noted that the presence of challenging tasks and innovation support strengthens the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher creativity.

## **IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ON TEACHERS' JOB ENGAGEMENT**

Transformational leadership significantly contributes to increased teacher engagement by fostering job satisfaction, motivation, and a strong sense of commitment. Engkoswara and Komariah (2010) emphasized that transformational leaders enhance teacher engagement by creating environments where educators feel valued, empowered, and aligned with the school's vision. Robbins and Judge (2013) similarly asserted that such leadership practices lead to more engaged and effective teachers.

Principals who practice people-centered transformational leadership positively influence teachers' teamwork, collaboration, and emotional bonds with colleagues (Josanov-Vrgovic & Pavlovic, 2014). Research by Hui et al. (2013), Tesfaw (2014), and Nyenyembe et al. (2016) further supported the idea that transformational leadership strengthens teacher commitment and

professional identity. Bogler (2001) observed that supportive leadership behaviors, such as recognizing teachers' efforts and providing professional development opportunities, significantly enhance job satisfaction and engagement.

Engaged teachers demonstrate high levels of dedication, punctuality, and instructional quality characteristics essential for achieving educational outcomes. Kopperud et al. (2014) and Ghadi et al. (2013) found a strong positive correlation between transformational leadership and employee engagement. Tims et al. (2011) further noted that leaders who promote a positive work climate can improve teacher optimism and organizational involvement. Ultimately, transformational leadership fosters a sense of responsibility, intrinsic motivation, and a drive for excellence (Mansor et al., 2017; Chaudhari et al., 2012).

## **MEDIATING ROLE OF TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY AND INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT**

Teacher self-efficacy refers to an educator's belief in their capability to perform job tasks effectively and influence student learning outcomes. Grounded in Bandura's (1997) social-cognitive theory, self-efficacy includes mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological responses. Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) defined teacher self-efficacy through three domains: instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement. Polatcan et al. (2021) elaborated that these beliefs influence teachers' ability to implement effective teaching methods, manage classrooms, and foster student motivation.

Transformational leadership supports teacher self-efficacy by instilling confidence, offering guidance, and modeling effective practices. Several studies confirm a strong link between transformational leadership and enhanced teacher self-efficacy (Gumah et al., 2016), although some research reported weaker or non-significant relationships (Groote et al., 2015; Valckx et al., 2020).

Organizational commitment is equally essential in determining teachers' motivation and engagement. It reflects a teacher's loyalty and dedication to their institution. However, research has indicated a trend among millennial teachers to prioritize commitment to the profession over the school, thereby challenging institutional retention efforts (Guhao, 2019; Mahdi et al., 2017; Suryani, 2018). Caballero and Guhao (2020) and Hanaysha (2016) highlighted that institutional commitment not only boosts teacher motivation but also enhances the overall performance and sustainability of the educational system.

Transformational leadership has been consistently linked to increased organizational commitment. Leaders who show individualized consideration and foster personal connections with staff contribute significantly to long-term employee retention and institutional loyalty (Sahu et al., 2018; Nazir & Islam, 2017; Islam et al., 2018). Coladarci (1992) and Liu and Huang (2019) found that high levels of self-efficacy correlate with increased organizational commitment and teacher engagement. Barni et al. (2019) and Klassen and Tze (2014) further affirmed that teachers with strong self-efficacy experience greater job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved classroom effectiveness.

Research has also found that traits such as openness and conscientiousness are positively associated with self-efficacy, highlighting the importance of personal attributes in shaping teacher motivation and performance (Perera et al., 2018). Thus, teacher self-efficacy and organizational commitment function as mediators between transformational leadership and

teacher engagement, facilitating improved performance, instructional quality, and student achievement.

## **CONCLUSION**

The quality of the leadership style of the principal makes the difference between the success and failure of the school. However, one of the major challenges to principals' leadership style adopted for the success of the school is teachers' job motivation and commitments to their duties. When teachers are not satisfied with their jobs as a result of non-payment of salaries and wages, not involving them in decision making, lack of professional development to enhance their knowledge and so on, they will not be committed to their duties. A classroom teacher who derives the satisfaction of his job is expected to be punctual in school and perform his duties diligently in an adequate learning environment and instructional facilities.

A satisfied teacher is invariably an effective and efficient teacher. It is imperative that the principals of public secondary schools in Rivers State adopt a transformational leadership style for the success of their schools. There is a very high level of transformational leadership of school heads, a very high level of organizational commitment in teachers and a high level of teacher's self-efficacy. Further, there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and the organizational commitment of teachers. There is also a significant relationship between transformational leadership and the general self-efficacy of teachers, and a significant relationship between the general self-efficacy of teachers and organizational commitment of teachers. In addition, there is also a full mediation on the effect of the general self-efficacy of teachers on the relationship between transformational leadership and the organizational commitment of teachers.

## **Suggestions**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- The state government should ensure that teachers' salaries and wages are paid when due.
- School principals should ensure there is quality instructional environment for effective teaching and learning in their schools.
- The state government should encourage development programmes such as seminars, workshops, conferences and so on for secondary
- School principals should allow clear communication with their teachers.
- Transformational leadership practices should be adopted in all secondary education systems.
- The state government should ensure that secondary school teachers' welfare should be considered adequately to enable them put in their best.

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