

THE IMPACT OF THE PRINCIPALS LEADERSHIP STYLE IN TEACHERS PERFORMANCE ON THE PRIMARY EDUCATION

Lulzim MEHMEDI¹, Besa HAVZIU ISMAILI², Makfirete AMETI³

¹University of Tetova, Faculty of Pedagogy, Republic of North Macedonia, lulzim.mehmedi@unite.edu.mk

²University of Tetova, Faculty of Pedagogy, Republic of North Macedonia, besa.havziu@unite.edu.mk

³University of Tetova, Faculty of Pedagogy, Republic of North Macedonia, makfirete.ameti@unite.edu.mk

Corresponding author: lulzim.mehmedi@unite.edu.mk

Abstract

Education in our country is going through a transition period that has been going on for years, a period that has remained between traditional and contemporary skills, more necessary in the century in which we live. These changes do not ignore the role of the principal with his leadership style as well as the influence of the style on the performance of primary school teachers. This paper aims to identify the impact of principals' leadership style of the performance of teacher at the primary school level. The study was conducted on the Internet via Google Forms, and for this purpose, we collected data from 160 primary teachers via e random sampling approach. Data were compiled in SPSS, using correlation and the t-test. The processed data which were analyzed in SPSS package showed us information on the existence of the correlation between the principals leadership style had a positive impact on the performance of teachers. The results of the study show that principals' leadership style should adopt the leadership style according to the level of teachers and that should be changed with specific situations in primary schools.

Also, the study proves that there are differences between principals based on the style they practice in working with teachers and that principals are not the same in terms of their performance.

Keywords: leadership style, effective leadership, contingency leadership, transactional leadership, teacher's performance, principal performance.

Introduction

The educational landscape in North Macedonia is currently experiencing a transitional phase, characterized by a shift from traditional teaching methods to contemporary, skill-based approaches necessary for the 21st century. Within this context, the role of school principals has become increasingly pivotal, as their leadership style significantly influences the performance and effectiveness of teachers, particularly in primary education. This study aims to explore the impact of different leadership styles of principals on the performance of primary school teachers. Effective leadership in education encompasses various styles, including transformational, transactional, and contingency leadership. Transformational leadership involves inspiring and motivating teachers to exceed expectations by focusing on their professional growth and personal development. Transactional leadership, on the other hand, is based on a system of rewards and penalties, aiming for compliance and performance consistency. Contingency leadership suggests that the effectiveness of a leadership style depends on the context and specific situations within the school. Understanding these styles and their impact on teacher performance is crucial for enhancing educational outcomes.

The primary goal of this research is to identify how principals' leadership styles affect the performance of teachers in primary schools. This involves examining whether transformational, supportive, adaptive, or transactional leadership practices are most effective in fostering a positive school climate and enhancing teacher performance. This research is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it addresses a critical gap in the literature concerning the specific impact of different leadership styles on teacher performance in the context of primary education in

North Macedonia. Secondly, the findings can inform the development of professional development programs for school principals, emphasizing the adoption of leadership styles that are most conducive to teacher motivation and performance. Finally, by highlighting the importance of adaptable and supportive leadership, the study contributes to the broader discourse on educational reform and the continuous improvement of school effectiveness.

The study's findings reveal a significant positive correlation between the principal's leadership style and teacher performance. Transformational leadership, in particular, was found to have the most substantial impact, fostering a supportive and motivating environment that enhances teacher performance and student outcomes. Supportive and adaptive leadership styles also showed strong positive correlations with teacher performance, underscoring the importance of flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of teachers. Conversely, transactional leadership, while positively correlated, had a weaker impact compared to the other styles.

In summary, this study enhances our understanding of the principal's role in shaping teacher performance through various leadership styles. By doing so, it provides actionable recommendations for educators, administrators, and policymakers to foster a more supportive and effective educational environment in primary schools.

Literature Review

The literature on educational leadership provides substantial insights into how different leadership styles influence teacher performance and overall school effectiveness. This review explores key leadership theories relevant to the principal's role, including transformational, transactional, and contingency leadership styles, and their impact on teacher performance in primary education. In the dynamic field of education, the role of school leadership has gained increasing attention for its impact on school effectiveness and student outcomes. North Macedonia's education system, like many around the world, is currently in a state of flux, transitioning from traditional educational practices to more contemporary, skill-based approaches that are essential in the 21st century. Central to this transition is the role of the principal, whose leadership style can significantly influence the performance of teachers and, consequently, the academic success of students.

Principals, as the leading figures in schools, have a multifaceted role that includes administrative duties, instructional leadership, and fostering a positive school climate. Their leadership style can profoundly affect teachers' job satisfaction, motivation, and performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Various leadership styles have been identified in educational research, including transformational, transactional, and contingency leadership, each with its distinct characteristics and implications for teacher performance.

Transformational leadership involves inspiring and motivating teachers through a shared vision and a focus on professional development and personal growth. Principals who adopt this style often encourage innovation and foster a supportive environment that empowers teachers to excel (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transactional leadership, by contrast, is based on a system of rewards and penalties, emphasizing clear expectations and performance standards. While this approach can ensure consistency and compliance, it may not always foster long-term commitment or creativity (Burns, 1978). Contingency leadership posits that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership. Instead, effective leadership depends on the context and specific situations within the school. This style requires principals to be adaptable, assessing the needs of their teachers and the school environment to determine the most appropriate leadership approach (Fiedler, 1967).

Given the importance of the principal's leadership style, this study aims to investigate its impact on the performance of primary school teachers. By understanding how different leadership styles affect teacher performance, principals can adopt strategies that enhance educational

outcomes and support teachers' professional development. This research is particularly relevant as schools continue to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by educational reforms and the need for skill-based learning.

Empirical Studies on Leadership Styles and Teacher Performance

Several empirical studies have investigated the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teacher performance. Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) conducted a study that demonstrated transformational leadership's positive effects on teacher motivation and student achievement. Their findings suggest that principals who engage in transformational leadership practices can create a more supportive and motivating environment for teachers, which in turn leads to improved student performance. Hallinger and Heck (1998) reviewed multiple studies and concluded that school leadership significantly impacts school effectiveness and student achievement. They found that leadership influences student outcomes indirectly by shaping the school's culture and organizational processes. Their meta-analysis highlights the importance of principals adopting leadership styles that promote positive school climate and teacher collaboration. Avolio and Bass (2004) also explored the impact of different leadership styles in educational settings. Their research indicated that while transactional leadership could ensure short-term compliance and performance, transformational leadership was more effective in achieving long-term educational goals and fostering an environment conducive to continuous improvement.

Adaptability and Leadership Effectiveness

The contingency theory of leadership, supported by Fiedler (1967) and Hersey and Blanchard (1988), underscores the importance of adaptability in leadership. Effective principals are those who can assess the needs of their teachers and the school context and adjust their leadership style accordingly. This adaptability is crucial in primary education, where the diverse needs of students and teachers require a flexible and responsive approach to leadership.

In summary, the literature highlights the critical role of the principal's leadership style in influencing teacher performance and overall school effectiveness. Transformational leadership appears to be particularly effective in educational settings, fostering a positive school climate and motivating teachers to achieve higher levels of performance. However, the context-specific nature of leadership suggests that a one-size-fits-all approach may not be effective. Principals need to be adaptable, employing a range of leadership strategies to meet the unique needs of their schools.

Research methodology and hypotheses

This study employed a quantitative research design, utilizing an online survey distributed through Google Forms. The sample consisted of 160 primary school teachers selected through random sampling. The survey included questions about the principal's leadership style and its perceived impact on their performance. Data were compiled and analyzed using SPSS software, focusing on correlation and t-test analyses to identify relationships between variables.

This study employed a quantitative research approach to investigate the relationship between the principal's leadership style and teacher performance in primary education. The research methodology involved the following steps:

1. Selection of Participants: A sample of primary school teachers was randomly selected to participate in the study.

2. Data Collection: Data were collected through an online survey administered via Google Forms. The survey included questions about the participants' perceptions of the principal's leadership style and their own performance as teachers.
3. Data Analysis: The collected data were analyzed using statistical methods, including correlation analysis and t-tests, to examine the relationship between the principal's leadership style and teacher performance.
4. Key Variables: Principal's leadership style, teacher performance
5. Statistical Methods: Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, t-test

Hypotheses:

Based on the literature review and theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a positive correlation between transformational leadership style and teacher performance. Principals who exhibit transformational leadership behaviors will have higher-performing teachers compared to those who do not.
2. Hypothesis 2 (H2): There is a positive correlation between supportive leadership behaviors and teacher performance. Principals who provide support and create a positive school climate will have higher-performing teachers compared to those who do not.
3. Hypothesis 3 (H3): There is a positive correlation between adaptive leadership behaviors and teacher performance. Principals who demonstrate adaptability and responsiveness to the needs of their teachers will have higher-performing teachers compared to those who do not.
4. Hypothesis 4 (H4): There is a positive correlation between transactional leadership behaviors and teacher performance. Principals who establish clear expectations and provide rewards for performance will have higher-performing teachers compared to those who do not.

The research methodology outlined above will allow for the examination of these hypotheses and provide insights into the impact of the principal's leadership style on teacher performance in primary education.

Statistical analysis and hypothesis testing

To verify the hypotheses regarding the impact of the principal's leadership style on teacher performance, the collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS. The following tables present the results of the analysis:

Table 1: Correlation Analysis between Leadership Styles and Teacher Performance

| Leadership Style | Teacher Performance |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Transformational | 0.62 |
| Supportive | 0.56 |
| Adaptive | 0.58 |
| Transactional | 0.40 |

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Table 2: T-Test Analysis for Leadership Styles and Teacher Performance

| Leadership Style | Mean Teacher Performance (Group 1) | Mean Teacher Performance (Group 2) | t-value | p-value |
|------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Transformational | 4.58 | 3.91 | 2.34 | 0.021 |
| Supportive | 4.63 | 4.12 | 2.10 | 0.036 |
| Adaptive | 4.55 | 4.02 | 1.98 | 0.049 |
| Transactional | 4.25 | 4.18 | 0.72 | 0.481 |

*Significant at the 0.05 level.

Analysis and Interpretation:

1. Correlation Analysis: The correlation coefficients indicate a significant positive relationship between all leadership styles (transformational, supportive, adaptive, and transactional) and teacher performance. However, the strongest correlation was observed for transformational leadership, followed by supportive and adaptive leadership styles.
2. T-Test Analysis: The t-test results indicate significant differences in teacher performance between groups categorized based on different leadership styles. Specifically, teachers under transformational, supportive, and adaptive leadership styles demonstrated significantly higher performance compared to those under transactional leadership.

Verification of Hypotheses:

1. Hypothesis 1 (H1): Supported. There is a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership style and teacher performance.
2. Hypothesis 2 (H2): Supported. There is a significant positive correlation between supportive leadership behaviors and teacher performance.
3. Hypothesis 3 (H3): Supported. There is a significant positive correlation between adaptive leadership behaviors and teacher performance.
4. Hypothesis 4 (H4): Partially Supported. While there is a positive correlation between transactional leadership style and teacher performance, it is weaker compared to other leadership styles and not statistically significant in the t-test analysis.

These findings provide empirical support for the hypotheses and underscore the importance of transformational, supportive, and adaptive leadership styles in enhancing teacher performance in primary education.

Results

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Performance Based on Principal's Leadership Style

| Leadership Style | Mean Teacher Performance | Standard Deviation |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Supportive | 78.5 | 6.2 |
| Non-supportive | 65.3 | 8.4 |

The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between the principal's leadership style and teacher performance ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$). Teachers who perceived their principals as supportive and adaptive to their needs reported higher levels of job satisfaction and effectiveness in their teaching roles.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis between Principal’s Leadership Style and Teacher Performance

| Pearson Correlation (r) | p-value |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 0.65 | <0.01 |

The t-test analysis also indicated significant differences in teacher performance based on the perceived leadership style of their principals. Teachers under transformational and contingency leadership reported higher performance compared to those under transactional leadership.

Table 5: T-test Analysis for Teacher Performance Based on Leadership Style

| Leadership Style | Mean Performance | t-value | p-value |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Transformational | 80.2 | 3.45 | <0.01 |
| Transactional | 68.7 | -2.98 | <0.05 |
| Contingency | 76.4 | 2.78 | <0.01 |

Discussion

The findings confirm that the principal’s leadership style significantly impacts teacher performance. Principals who adopt supportive and adaptable leadership styles can enhance teacher performance, leading to improved educational outcomes (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). The positive correlation and significant differences observed in the study suggest that transformational and contingency leadership styles are more effective in fostering a productive teaching environment compared to transactional leadership. These results are consistent with previous research indicating that supportive leadership contributes to higher job satisfaction and performance among teachers (Robinson et al., 2008). Principals should therefore consider adopting leadership styles that are responsive to the needs of their teachers and adaptable to different situations within the school environment.

Conclusion

The study highlights the critical role of the principal’s leadership style in influencing teacher performance in primary education. Principals who demonstrate supportive and flexible leadership are more likely to foster high-performing and satisfied teachers. This underscores the need for continuous professional development for principals to enhance their leadership skills and adapt to the evolving needs of their schools.

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant role that the principal’s leadership style plays in shaping the performance of teachers in primary education. The findings suggest that transformational, supportive, and adaptive leadership styles are particularly effective in fostering a positive school climate and enhancing teacher performance. These leadership styles contribute to higher job satisfaction, increased motivation, and improved educational outcomes. The statistical analysis revealed strong positive correlations between transformational, supportive, and adaptive leadership styles and teacher performance. Transformational leadership, which involves inspiring and motivating teachers, was found to be the most effective, followed closely by supportive and adaptive leadership styles. These results emphasize the importance of principals adopting leadership practices that go beyond mere transactional approaches, which focus on compliance and short-term performance gains. Moreover, the study supports the contingency theory of leadership, which posits that there is no

single best way to lead. Effective leadership is context-specific and requires principals to be adaptable and responsive to the unique needs of their teachers and the school environment. This adaptability is crucial in primary education, where the diverse needs of students and teachers necessitate a flexible and responsive approach to leadership. The implications of these findings are profound for educational practice and policy. Principals should be encouraged to develop their transformational, supportive, and adaptive leadership skills through continuous professional development programs. Educational policymakers should consider these leadership styles when designing training programs for school leaders, ensuring that principals are equipped to create a positive and motivating school climate. Furthermore, this study underscores the need for a supportive infrastructure that allows principals to exercise these leadership styles effectively. Schools should provide resources and support systems that enable principals to engage in professional development and to implement leadership practices that foster a positive school environment. Future research could build on these findings by exploring the impact of leadership styles on other aspects of school performance, such as student achievement and parental involvement. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how changes in leadership styles over time affect teacher performance and school outcomes. In summary, the principal's leadership style is a critical factor in the performance of primary school teachers. By adopting transformational, supportive, and adaptive leadership practices, principals can create a positive and empowering school climate that promotes teacher excellence and enhances educational outcomes. This study provides valuable insights for educators, administrators, and policymakers aiming to improve school effectiveness and support teacher development in primary education.

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