

Relationship between Principals' Transformational Leadership and Teacher Motivation in Central Schools of Zhemgang District, Bhutan

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Abstract

Today, one dramatic change in the function of Bhutanese schools is the leadership. Recently, the establishment of central schools have placed principals under the limelight like never before and doubled their managerial roles and responsibilities. The principals are entrusted with the task of keeping a huge number of teachers motivated. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the level of transformational leadership behaviors and the motivation level of teachers based on the perceptions of teachers and to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership behavior and teacher motivation in central schools of Zhemgang district, Bhutan.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. The sample consisted of entire 178 teachers in the central schools. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was adapted and used to measure the transformational leadership behaviors of principals and the researcher developed a questionnaire to measure the teacher motivation based on Nelson (2003)'s seven levels of motivation. Both the survey questionnaires were administered to the entire population of 178 teachers in the central schools. Descriptive statistical analysis and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient were employed in analyzing the data. Content analysis was applied to analyze the interviewed data.

The finding of the study revealed that the teachers perceived the principals' transformational leadership behaviors at a high level, however, the teachers perceived their motivational level at a low level. Furthermore, the study indicated no significant relation between principals' transformational leadership behaviors and teacher motivation in the central schools. Therefore, it is recommended that the various educational agencies take measures in uplifting the teacher motivation.

Keywords: *transformational leadership, teacher motivation, central schools*

1. Introduction

Education has come a long way and the way school function in the 21st century has gone through dramatic change. One such change in function in school is the leadership. Fullan (2001) contemplates that principals are the main components in successful educational innovation and in a culture of change. Today the roles of leaders have changed and the success of any organization relies significantly on the leadership styles practiced. True leaders doesn't look for individual gains thus, but engaging others with their consideration and modesty because they are involving themselves in what they are doing (Mintzberg, 2010).

Although there are various theoretical approaches to study the leadership styles but transformational and transactional leadership framework has received considerable research support (Bass & Avolio 1993). The transformational leadership is a new educational model for bringing about improved educational outcome, and this model focuses on the approach used by school principals and teachers to exercise educational leadership (Hallinger, 2003). Avolio and Bass (2002) exerts that the transformational leadership behaviors, like inspiring followers and creating appropriate environment and communicating vision and mission of the organization are related significantly to change in attitude of the employees.

The fact is that the leader alone cannot achieve the goals and vision of the organization. It is to be understood that teachers are very important for the success of the school. Teachers, therefore, are crucial parts of a school. Motivated teachers are impregnated with creativity, change and innovations, impacting immensely the learning outcome of the students. According to Smith (1994), the need of motivated employees is significant in a rapidly changing workplaces. Mendenhall et al. (1995) stated that motivation is the desire to derive with a person to achieve some goals, for motivation is an internal condition based on a person's perceptions and need. Besides, to achieve the goals of education organization, motivation of education inspectors, school administration, and especially teachers is a point to be considered (Turabik &

Baskan, 2015). According to Ejimmoref (2007), the task of motivating teachers should be first realized by the school administrators. The very nature of a human being is the need of being appreciated, approved and respected and thus, providing right motivation at the right time is a mandate of a leader. Prishangika (2011) found that leadership behaviors have direct impact on the motivation of teachers. Similarly, Wanglabeh (2011) from the study on the relationship between principals' transformational leadership practices and teacher's motivation in selected Islamic private schools in Songkhala, Southern Thailand found that teachers' motivation is significantly related to a principals' transformational leadership practices.

It is perceived that in many developing countries the quality of education deteriorating is linked to the motivation of the teachers, which in turn, is relied on the impact of principals' leadership behaviors. In Bhutan, the quality of education is still a matter of concern and is deliberated repeatedly in the National Education Conferences. Principals and teachers have an important role in uplifting the quality of education. Lately, teacher attrition has emerged as a new challenge for the Ministry of Education (MoE). According to the latest annual Education Statistics, a total of 290 teachers have left the profession in 2016 alone (Choden, 2017). Lack of teacher motivation was mentioned to be one of the reasons. Recently, the MoE has initiated the establishment of central schools under the School Reform Program (SRP) stating to provide equitable and quality education. With the soaring number of teachers and students, autonomy on finance, new infrastructure constructions, strategic plans and evaluations, principals are doubled with management chores overnight. Therefore, it is a matter of concern how principals can keep the teachers motivated.

Therefore, this study was carried out to study the level of principals' transformational leadership behaviors and the level of teacher motivation as perceived by the teachers, and the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher motivation in central schools of Zhemgang district, Bhutan. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods, and 178 teachers of central schools were recruited to respond to the survey questionnaires, and 4 principals were interviewed.

2. Objectives

1. To study the level of principals' transformational leadership behaviors in Central Schools under Zhemgang district as perceived by the teachers
2. To examine the level of teacher motivation as perceived by the teacher
3. To explore whether there is any relationship between teacher motivation and principals' transformational leadership behaviors as perceived by the teachers.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Participants

The study was carried out as a survey to study the relationship between principals' transformational leadership and teacher motivation in central schools of Zhemgang district, Bhutan. The participants for the research included 178 teachers and 4 principals.

3.2 Research Instrument

3.2.1 Quantitative Method

To study the level of principals' transformational leadership behaviors, a survey questionnaire on Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) designed by Bass & Avolio (1994) was adopted and used.

The questionnaire included 29 items. A five-point Likert Scale was used to measure the degree of agreement with the statement. The score for each item was 5 to 1 representing from always to never respectively.

To examine the level of teacher motivation, a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree was used. The researcher designed the questionnaire based on the operational definition of the terms of 7 levels of motivation (Nelson, 2003). The questionnaire included 33 items.

The statistical analysis of data was done using Statistical Package, the results were evaluated by employing means, standard deviation and Pearson Correlation Coefficient

3.2.2 Qualitative Method

For the qualitative research, 4 principals, one principal from each school, were selected as key informants for the interview. Through the interview, it was expected to acquire additional information on transformational leadership behaviors. The selection criteria for the key informants was, that the principal should be currently serving the school. The interview guidelines included 6 questions on transformational leadership for the 4 principals. Content analysis was used to analyze the interviewed data.

3.3 Quality of Research Instrument

The validity and reliability test was conducted in a school with 30 respondents in another district. The validity test confirmed that all the items under the variables had an IOC of 1.00 and was validated by three experts. The reliability test confirmed that the variables are reliable with Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient value of 0.91 for transformational leadership and 0.86 for teacher motivation, which was greater than the acceptable level of 0.65.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Personal Information of the Respondents

The demographic information of the teachers in the central schools under Zhemgang district was summarized based on gender, age, educational level, and teaching experience. The data was interpreted in frequencies (N) and percentages (%) using descriptive statistics as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Frequency and percentage of teacher's personal information

Personal information	Frequency	Percentage
1. Gender		
Male	92	51.7
Female	86	48.3
2. Age		
21-30 years old	94	58.8
31-40 years old	77	43.3
Above 40 years	7	3.9
3. Educational Level		
Bachelor degree	152	85.4
Master degree	15	8.4
Others (PTC, PGCE)	11	6.2
4. Teaching Experience		
1-5 years	13	7.3
6-10 years	73	41.0
11-15 years	44	24.7
16-20 years	24	13.5
Above 20 years	24	13.5

Of the total population, a bit over half of the subjects (N=92) were male and the rest (N=86) were female. More than half (52.80%) of the respondents were between 21 to 30 years old and 43.30% between 31 to 40 years old. The majority of the respondents, 85.40%, holds a Bachelor degree, 43.3% have Master's degree and 6.2% had other qualifications. A few of them (7.30%) had teaching experience between 1 to 5 years, 41% had between 6 to 10 years, 24.7% had between 11 to 15 years, 13.50% had between 16 to 20 years and 13.50% had more than 20 years.

4.2 The Level of Principals' Transformational Leadership Behaviors in Central Schools of Zhemgang district as perceived by the teachers.

In Table 2 the descriptive statistics of all observed variables under transformational leadership behaviors are presented.

Table 2 Overall levels of principals' transformational leadership behaviors

Dimensions of principals' transformational leadership behaviors	μ	σ	Level of behaviors
1. Idealized Influence	3.85	0.85	High
2. Inspirational Motivation	3.92	0.85	High
3. Intellectual stimulation	3.70	0.89	High
4. Individual Consideration	3.61	0.96	High
5. Idealized Attributes	3.85	0.87	High
Overall	3.78	0.88	High

Notes: The rating scale was divided into 5 perception levels to the mean score between 4.21-5.00 as Highest, 3.41-4.20 as High, 2.61-3.40 as Moderate, 1.81-2.60 as low and 1.00-1.80 as lowest.

The overall level of principals' transformational leadership behaviors was perceived high by the teachers of central schools of Zhemgang district with an overall average score of 3.78. From the five dimensions of transformational leadership behaviors, *Inspirational Motivation* was rated the highest with a mean score of 3.92, and *Individual Consideration* was rated the lowest with a mean score of 3.61. All the five dimension of transformational leadership behaviors were perceived high with mean scores ranging between 3.61 and 3.92.

4.3 The Level of Teachers' Motivation in Central Schools of Zhemgang District.

The descriptive statistics of all the observed variables of teacher motivation is presented in this part. The descriptive statistics include mean and standard deviation.

Table 3 Overall level of teacher motivation

Sl.no	Dimensions of Teacher Motivation	μ	σ	Level of teacher motivation
1	Level I: Purpose and Meaning	1.99	1.08	Low
2	Level II: Trust and Respect	2.43	0.99	Low
3	Level III: communication and information	2.26	0.97	Low
4	Level IV: Praise and Recognition	2.47	0.94	Low
5	Level V: Autonomy and Flexibility	1.95	1.08	Low
6	Level VI: Involvement and Encouragement	2.08	1.00	Low
7	Level VII: Learning, opportunity and growth	2.29	1.05	Low
	Overall Average score	2.21	1.01	Low

Notes: The rating scale was divided into 5 perception levels to the mean score form 4.21-5.00 as Highest, 3.41-4.20 as High, 2.61-3.40 as Moderate, 1.81-2.60 as low and 1.00-1.80 as lowest.

The overall level of motivation was perceived low by the teachers in central schools of Zhemgang district with an overall average score of 2.21. From the seven dimensions of teacher motivation, praise and recognition was rated the highest with a mean score of 2.47 and autonomy and flexibility was rated the lowest with a mean score of 1.99. All the seven dimensions of the teacher motivation were perceived low with mean score ranging between 1.99 and 2.47.

4.4 The Relationship between Principals' Transformational Leadership Behaviors and Teacher Motivation in Central Schools of Zhemgang district.

To determine the relationship between principals' transformational leadership behaviors and teacher motivation, Pearson Correlations coefficient was used. Therefore, the correlation between the two variables are as in Table 4.

Table 4 Correlations of principals' transformational leadership behaviors and teacher motivation

	II	IM	IS	IC	IA	TL	TM
Idealized Influence (II)	1						
Inspirational Motivation (IM)	.726**	1					
Intellectual Stimulation (IS)	.606**	.753**	1				
Individual Consideration (IC)	.603**	.697**	.713**	1			
Idealized Attributes (IA)	.561**	.709**	.724**	.833**	1		
Transformational Leadership (TL)	.786**	.891**	.878**	.894**	.891**	1	
Teacher Motivation (TM)	-.260**	-.320**	-.277**	-.239**	-.329**	-.328**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The two major variables; transformational leadership and teacher motivation in this study were significantly correlated at the .01 level. A Pearson's data analysis revealed a low negative correlation between transformation relationship and teacher motivation, ($r=-.328$). Idealized attributes and teacher motivation though negative have the highest correlation compared to the other dimension of transformational leadership behaviors. The significant correlation among the variables of transformational leadership and teacher motivation ranged from $r = -.329$ ($P<.01$) to $r = -.239$.

4.5 Content Analysis of the Interview

The interviewed information of the principals was transcribed without any alteration of the informants' opinion. The informants were identified as principal A, principal B, principal C, and principal D.

The informants on, work relationship, stated that they strive to promote healthy work relationship. They were of the opinion that punctuality, approachability, being responsible, accountable, and role modeling are important so that the staff can emulate positive traits and behaviors. Principal C said, *"I am punctual for all the school activities, I also teach apart from the administrative works and I try to role model work ethics and behaviors"*. Similarly, principal A stated, *"I make sure I am always on time and be aware of my actions in the schools, so that I can display good attitudes for the staff to emulate"*.

The principals are also found to encourage and motivate the staff. They are said to have mechanisms like rewards, certification, training opportunities, and financial support in times of adversities.

Regarding strategies in addressing problems, the principals said the school have set teachers' code of conduct and ethical documents as terms of reference. They also said they solve matters internally. Some cases are forwarded to the counsellors for counselling and necessary interventions sought from consulting the school management team. For example, principal A said, *'sometimes there are tensions pertaining ideas, between the young and old teachers, so I call both the teachers and talk to them, help them understand the tensions and try to reach a common understanding.*

The principals have the opinion that they work towards influencing the subordinates to accomplish goals of the school. They said they set clear expectations from the teachers, help the teachers align their plans to the goal of the school, and constantly upgrade their knowledge to remain informed so as to influence the teachers. Principal B stated, *'Young staff have lot to pick up professional attitudes, it is therefore, of due importance to remain updated on various changes happening in the professional field, exhibit the potential through leading and always be available where there is a need for the teachers, so as to achieve the goals of the school.*

4.6 Level of Principals' Transformational Leadership Behaviors in Central Schools of Zhemgang district, Bhutan.

The study came to the conclusion that the level of principals' transformational leadership behaviors in central schools of Zhemgang district was perceived to be at a high level with an average score of 3.79. Inspirational motivation was rated the highest and Individual consideration was rated the lowest. A similar study conducted by Wangmo (2014) in Chukha district on the level of principals' transformational leadership in the seed schools found to have a same result that the principals' transformational leadership was perceived at the high level. This signifies that the principals in the central schools exhibited transformational leadership behaviors and articulated a compelling vision of future, expressed confidence that the goals are achieved, behaved optimistically about future, behaved enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished, and took a firm stand on controversial issues. Inspirational motivation is one dimension of transformational leadership that has a profound impact on the motivation. Leaders who use the inspirational motivation tactic are able to convey their ideas clearly and motivate their subordinates to do well (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Further the result of the content analysis also exerted that the principals in the central school use Inspirational motivation as one key leadership practices of the principals. This confirms that teachers believe in the inspirational motivation of transformational leadership behavior of the principal. The study also confirmed that the principals shared their values and beliefs, placed strong sense of purpose in the followers, and considered the moral and ethical consequence of decisions. It also indicates that principals communicated the importance of trusting each other which is inevitable for the success of any organization.

The principals are also observed to display self-respect, generosity, open-mindedness, and good faith with empathy for the subordinates. The principals are found to re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate, sought different perspectives when solving problems, invited others to look at the problem from different angles, suggested non-traditional approach to deal with traditional problems, and provided attention to rethink new ideas which has never been questioned before. This signifies that the principals have sound knowledge of intellectually stimulating the situation and in addressing a wide range of problems. The findings also confirmed that principals tried many different strategies in handling different situations often inviting the suggestions and ideas of the staff in the school. One prominent difficulty the study revealed was that with the establishment of central schools, the number of the teacher increased drastically, this impacted the imparting of personal time of all the teachers in the schools. The teachers felt that the principals spend less time in teaching them, the item 'principals spend time teaching me' was perceived moderate with a mean score of 2.93.

It is understood from the study that the principals in the central schools are found to be confident, risk-taking and focused on higher order of ideals, moral and ethics. They believed in collaboratively working in achieving goals of the school and have a clear sense of direction. The study calls for more intervention in individual consideration, the teacher felt dissatisfied pertaining to principals' time in teaching them. As it is clear from the demographic data that the majority of the teachers are young and attention seekers, so the principals should find time in coaching them and nurturing them.

In nutshell, it is a good sign that the central schools are progressing with the support of well-informed principals in transformational leadership. The display of such contemporary leadership is a potential that can have a lasting influences and impact for the young teachers in the school.

4.7 Level of Teacher Motivation in Central Schools of Zhemgang district, Bhutan.

The study revealed that in general the teachers have low motivation despite principals' effective implementation of transformational leadership practices. The finding showed that while teachers are moderately motivated from receiving praise and recognition, they seem not to be receiving enough trust and respect, learning, opportunity and growth. They also revealed the feeling of restriction and rigidity rating lowest on benefiting from autonomy and flexibility. This finding is in line with the study carried out by Prishangkika (2011) in Chilaw educational zone, Srilanka on teacher motivation which found out the level of teacher motivation was at a moderate.

The study revealed that the teachers received praise and recognition both verbal and written in helping them improve the quality of work, the teachers also felt their achievements are recognized and made public and was working towards earning the prestigious national teacher excellence award, however, the motivation is not so high. It can be because the teachers are young and many motivational factors are not met in their perceptions. They may be expecting better facilities and guidance from the school and the ministry. Trust and respect is a corner stone in building up motivation in a subordinate (Nelson, 2003); the teachers in the central schools can feel the trust and respect environment created. But, they expect to have more of it in keeping them motivated further.

The study revealed that the teachers do not receive enough professional development programs to update their knowledge in order to carry out their professional practices. Though the Ministry of Education has mandated 80 hours of professional development for each teacher per year, the teachers must have felt they do not receive the mandated hours of professional development programs. Or it could be the teachers are not met with the motivation because they hardly get the opportunity for ex-country trainings or National Based In-service Programs (NBIP) where they are both financially and intellectually benefited. It is also understood from the study that the facilities for professional advancement is not adequate for keeping the teachers motivated. Besides, the trainings and professional development programs are also perceived to be inadequate in enhancing their teaching competency.

The study also concluded that while teachers felt they can provide feedback to the school authority when issues arose, they are not motivated enough. It can be speculated that teachers do not feel motivated when they do not have the encouragement in asking question about their work. Autonomy and flexibility was similarly perceived at a low level by the teachers in the central schools. One reason can be assumed that the teachers are not well aware of their responsibilities may be because of the many overlapping co-curricular responsibilities that they have to shoulder and the focus is lost trying to keep up to all the responsibilities. The teacher also felt they are not fully empowered to influence the quality of their work, which has resulted in low motivation. However, the teachers felt motivated when they are allowed to work independently to use their initiative. This indicated the motivation is not met because while the teachers are happy to work independently to use their initiative they are not fully empowered.

Finally, it is to be concluded the overall level of teacher motivation is low in the central schools of Zhemgang district. There is a huge responsibility of the school and agency concerned to improve the motivation level of the teachers

4.8 The Relationship between Principals' Transformational Leadership Behaviors and Teacher Motivation in Central Schools of Zhemgang district.

The study revealed that there is a negative relationship between principals' transformational behaviors and teacher motivation ($r=-.328$, $P<.01$) as perceived by the teacher of central schools of Zhemgang district. It is similar to the finding of the study carried out by Eris (2011) in primary schools in Turkey which indicated that there was no meaningful relationship between the transformational leadership characteristics of school principals and the level of teacher motivation. Alasad (2017) studied the leadership styles of principals in Bedouin secondary school and teacher motivation and found that there is no relationship between transactional and transformational leadership with teacher motivation. This means, there are situations where, though the principals' exhibited high level of transformational leadership behaviors there is less influence in the level of teacher motivation. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are isolated cases where, transformational leadership not always bore a high teacher motivation. The motivation of the teachers in the central schools still remains low despite the transformational leadership practices of the principals at a high level as perceived by the teachers. This gives a new finding that there can be many other potential factors beyond the leadership practices of the principals that can affect the motivation level of the teachers in remotely located schools. One such factor, for example is the financial incentives; studies on teacher job satisfaction had similar survey items and found that the job satisfaction of the teachers is because of the financial incentives, thus, it can be understood that extrinsic motivation also has immense influence on the motivation and performance of the teachers, and this can be applied to the teachers in Zhemgang district as well. While it can be argued that financial incentives may not always lead to high motivation, it can also be asserted that teachers in Bhutanese schools do not have any other

additional source of earning besides the salary, thus financial incentives can be a motivation on a face of escalating living cost. The low teacher motivation in central schools also could be because of the workload; besides the heavy teaching hours teachers have to endure, there are co-curricular activities which demands huge amount of time and attention and teachers are rated on their performance based both on academic and non-academic activities. This could have led to teacher burn out adversely diminishing their motivation. Zhemgang is a remote district and some factors that could have demotivated the teachers can be such as the erratic electricity supply during the summer, unavailability of proper cooling facilities especially the schools in the south, proper housing facilities and medical facilities. These factors have little association with the transformational leadership behaviors of the principals. Therefore, it can be assumed that despite the high level of principals' transformational leadership behaviors the teacher motivation was perceived at a low level.

From the above findings of this study and the assertions put forward by different researchers, it is concluded that there are isolated cases as in this study, where transformational leadership has no positive correlations to teacher motivation. The research hypothesis of 'There is relationship between principals' transformational leadership behaviors and teacher motivation in the central schools of Zhemgang district' is, thus, rejected.

5. Conclusion

The finding of the study revealed that the teachers perceived the principals' transformational leadership behaviors at a high level, however, the teachers perceived their motivational level at a low level. Further the study indicated, no relation between principals' transformational leadership behaviors and teacher motivation in the central schools. While transformational leadership is considered to lead to motivation, it is an isolated case as in my study which found no relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and teacher motivation. This could possibly be because the survey questionnaire did not encompass other potential motivational factors that could have led to low motivation of the teachers and not necessarily the principals' transformational behaviors. For example, factors like teacher burnout, organizational environment, teacher deployment, rural location and financial incentives.

5.1 Recommendations

The study revealed a low teacher motivation and one reason was attributed to the learning opportunities, so it is recommended that the Ministry of Education create enough training opportunities both in-country and abroad. The relationship between the principals' transformational leadership behaviors and teacher motivation was found to be negative. Therefore, principals should be provided with comprehensive training on leadership practices that would best impact teacher motivation. The finding of the study revealed that the principals spend less time in coaching the teachers. It is of due importance that the principals schedule their time in coaching the teachers as the majority of the teachers are young and need close attention. Principals are also perceived to disregard the feedback of the teachers, to this the principals are suggested to invite active participation for a collaborative decision making, being approachable for the teachers can help them open up to many issues, which can both benefit the teacher and the school at large. Teachers perceived that there is less autonomy and flexibility in the school to motivate them. The principals can help them work independently, empower them and improve their abilities in being responsible and accountable to their responsibilities. One finding of the study was that the teacher perceived their motivation not met in the professional development opportunities. Therefore, it is recommended that the central school have financial authority with which School Based In-Service can be enhanced and during the breaks explore training for the teachers both in-country and abroad. This study has a number of limitations because it is based only to the central school in one district. The future researchers can explore to carry out a similar study with more central schools from different districts which will ultimately help generalize, validate and reassure the reliability of the conclusions reached in this study. The aspiring researchers could also replicate the study and compare the transformational leadership practices in different levels of school. A research to study the relationship between other leadership practices and teacher motivation is also recommendable as this study revealed a low correlation of transformational leadership and teacher motivation. A comparative study could be carried out to compare the motivational level of the teachers in urban and remote central schools in the country. A study on relationship between teacher

motivation and other variables such as working environment, organizational culture and organizational commitment is also recommended.

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