

The Impact Of The Leadership Style Of The Principal In China's Rural Schools On The Motivation And Job Performance Of Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Administrators' leadership beliefs were examined in connection to teachers' levels of work satisfaction in rural Chinese schools. It also looked at how teachers' organisational commitment affected the link between leadership style and performance. Each country's cultural characteristics were considered while examining the different principals' leadership philosophies. A mixed-methods descriptive sequential strategy was used to analyse the data that was gathered from 51 rural schools in China. This study aimed to achieve these four objectives by collecting quantitative and qualitative information from 438 rural teachers and 51 rural school administrators. Data cleaning, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and structural equation modelling were all carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22, while theme analysis was used for the synthesis of qualitative data. When administrators embraced transformational leadership tactics, teachers reported higher levels of work satisfaction than when administrators opted for more passive-avoidant approaches. In contrast to the hands-off approach of passive avoidant leadership, which decreased employee productivity, transactional leadership increased output via motivational tactics, intellectual stimulation, and contingent remuneration. The degree to which employees cared about the company affected many associations between leadership styles and job satisfaction. Furthermore, every cultural trait of a country was associated with a certain leadership style and attribute, except masculinity. Educators and legislators develop proposals for future studies based on these results.

KEYWORDS: *Principal leadership style, China's rural schools, Teacher's motivation, Teacher's job performance.*

1. INTRODUCTION

This study looks at how different types of principal leadership affect the morale and effectiveness of rural Chinese school teachers. In rural regions, where resources are few and logistical challenges are common, the success of schools depends on the motivation of teachers and the accomplishment of their students. The impacts of authoritarian, transformational, and democratic leadership styles on teacher morale are investigated in the research. In doing so, it hopes to create an environment where educators are valued and supported in their work (Parveen et al., 2022). Leadership tactics that assist educators in honing their craft and being abreast of studies in the field are the primary focus of this study. Finding out how principal leadership style affects teacher motivation is the primary goal of the research. Teachers in rural China may benefit from increased feelings of support, job satisfaction, and student learning if certain strategies are put into place. Policies and leadership development programmes may be improved by gaining better knowledge of how various styles of leadership influence the motivation of teachers. If school administrators in rural China are trained in effective leadership techniques, they may create a school environment that is more encouraging and motivating for students (Baig et al., 2021).

2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Limited resources and logistical concerns provide distinct obstacles to China's rural education system. An optimal learning environment cannot be achieved without a strong and competent principle. Different leadership styles and their effects on rural schoolteachers' intrinsic motivation and job production are the subject of this study. In rural locations, where resources are less and logistical challenges are greater, a robust educational system depends on enthusiastic and competent educators. Researchers looked at how several leadership styles—autocratic, democratic, and transformational—impacted teachers' intrinsic motivation, job happiness, and academic achievement (Younas et al., 2022). Research also delves into how leadership strategies, such as creating a collaborative school culture and placing a premium on professional development opportunities, might assist schools in remote areas to overcome distinct challenges. Examining the relationship between principal leadership style and teacher motivation in China's rural schools will help administrators and legislators make informed decisions. This research has the potential to inform the development of new policies to support teachers in rural China and to guide the creation of targeted leadership development programmes. The end objective is to make these important schools better places for students to study (Parveen et al., 2021).

3. PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research is the causal relationship between rural school principals' leadership styles and their impact on teacher motivation and performance in China. Finding the most effective ways to empower and motivate teachers is

the goal of this research, which examines the effects of several leadership styles “(transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant)” on educators. As a result of this research, more effective leadership training programmes may be designed, and even changes in policy can be made to make the school climate more favourable to teachers. Finally, this study aims to help enhance student learning results in these important rural schools by examining how leadership styles impact instructors.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership is the capacity to guide, motivate, and inspire subordinates to complete common goals and strategies through the effective use of organizational resources. Leadership styles, such as authoritarian, autonomous, or laissez-faire, vary depending on the leader's background, cultural affiliations, and school environment (Demircioglu, 2021). By striking a balance between their leadership style and their followers' obligations, school administrators may improve teacher job performance and school effectiveness. Instructional, transformational, and moral leadership styles are essential for enhancing school effectiveness and teacher work performance. In rural schools like China, strong leadership is crucial to overcome geographically scattered student populations, limited resources, and other practical difficulties. Research shows that leadership styles significantly affect educators, with transformational leadership increasing motivation and work satisfaction. This research aims to investigate the effects of transformational, transactional, or passive-avoidant leadership styles on the motivation and performance of rural schoolteachers in China, guiding policy, and leadership development programs to create a more conducive setting for educators and improve learning outcomes for students (Hosseingholizadeh et al., 2021).

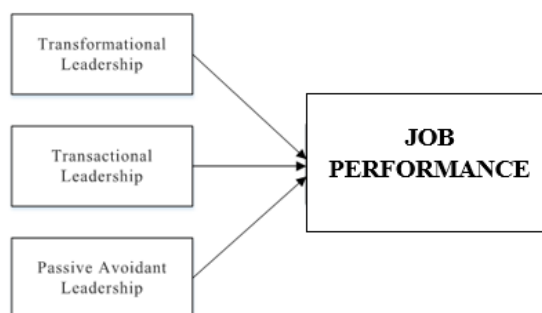
5. RESEARCH QUESTION

- How much of an impact do teachers' job performance and principals' perceived leadership styles have on each other?

6. METHODOLOGY

Researchers in China analysed information from 51 rural schools using a mixed-methods explanatory sequential approach. To accomplish the four goals of the research, 438 educators and 51 administrators from rural schools provided quantitative and qualitative data. The data was cleaned, descriptive statistics were run, and reliability statistics were created using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 22. Structured comparisons were developed using Mplus Version 7.0, and theme testing was used to condense the qualitative data. The findings showed that when leaders displayed avoidant, passive leadership, teachers were less content with their work, in contrast to when administrators used transformational management strategies, instructors reported higher levels of fulfillment. To understand the dynamic link between leadership style and work happiness, the research also looked at teachers' organisational commitment. Researchers looked at how administrators' cultural and national backgrounds impacted their leadership styles in the classroom. The goals and problems that this study set out to address made it all the more important to use a multi-method approach. The research questions have been adequately answered as the research method and design were chosen with the study's purpose in mind.

6.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



7. RESULTS

7.1 The Perspectives of Principals and Teachers on Leadership Styles

Educators' perspectives on school administration were investigated using three leadership models: the passive-avoidant, transformational, and transactional models. The previously stated management methods included several quantified components, such as individual attention, stimulation of the mind, inspirational motivation, administration by exception (passive and active), idealised impact on conduct, contingent reward, or laissez-faire.

7.1.1 Comparing and Evaluating Numerical Data

This research aimed to investigate how teachers at different schools interpreted the principles of leadership of their school administrators using descriptive statistics such as means or standard deviations. Transformational leadership had the

greatest average score ($M = 4.05$, $SD = .68$), while transactional leadership came in second ($M = 3.84$, $SD = .66$). The least effective leadership style was passive avoidant ($M = 2.39$, $SD = .70$). The highest mean scores were for credited idealised impact ($M = 4.09$, $SD = .75$), motivational inspiration ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .75$), or idealised impact (Behaviour) ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .70$). The lowest mean scores were for intellectual stimulation and individual care ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .85$). In these two groups, researchers also discovered the lowest standard deviations. The transactional management component related to contingent compensation received an average score of 4.08 with a standard deviation of 0.79, whilst the active (management by exception) component recorded an average score of 3.6 with a standard deviation of 0.82. These results are shown in contrast. Table 1 shows that exception-based leading had an improved mean score ($SD = .82$) than laissez-faire ($M = 2.15$) when comparing passive-avoidant leadership styles. The difference between the two was found to be 0.79 standard deviations.

Table 1: Information on Leadership Styles as Perceived by Educators

Leadership Styles and Dimensions	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Transformational Leadership	4.05	.68	-1.03	1.33
Intellectual Stimulation	3.91	.85	-.78	.45
Inspirational Motivation	4.35	.75	-1.48	2.72
Individual Consideration	3.78	.78	-.40	-.11
Idealised Influence (Attributed)	4.09	.75	-.75	.50
Idealised Influence (Behaviour)	4.10	.70	-.87	1.03
Transactional Leadership	3.84	.66	-.33	-.04
Contingent Reward	4.08	.79	-.10	-.29
Management by Exception (Active)	3.60	.82	-1.01	1.01
Passive Avoidant Leadership	2.39	.70	.44	.18
Management by Exception (Passive)	2.63	.79	.18	-.22
Laissez Faire	2.15	.82	.59	.16

The study's main emphasis was on school administrators' opinions on their ideas of leadership. To facilitate teacher comparisons of their principals' leadership styles, researchers computed descriptive statistics such as averages and standard deviations. In an attempt to ascertain which of the two principals was more adept at running their respective schools, researchers compared them. The greatest mean scores were observed for the following leadership styles: transformational management “($M = 4.20$, $SD = .35$), transactional leadership ($M = 3.58$, $SD = .50$), and passive-avoidant leadership ($M = 1.93$, $SD = .51$)”. Individual consideration, the group of idealised influence, and idealised influence (attributed) were ranked as the three most significant qualities on a scale from 0 to 4. Intellectual stimulation and idealised impact (behaviour) had the lowest mean evaluations, at 4.07 out of 5. The transactional leadership component about contingent pay received a mean score of 4.22 (standard deviation = .51) compared to 2.94 for the active dimension of management. The statistic measuring active leadership style has a standard deviation of 0.84. The laissez-faire passive avoidant leadership style had a lower mean score ($M = 1.78$, $SD = .52$) than the management by instance passive avoidant approach (Table 2). The data indicates that laissez-faire had an average rating of 2.07 and management by exceptions had a mean score of 1.78.

Table 2: Statistical Characteristics of Leadership Styles as Perceived by Principals

Leadership Styles and Dimensions	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
Transformational Leadership	4.20	.35	.20	-.57
Intellectual Stimulation	4.06	.45	.50	-.33
Inspirational Motivation	4.54	.44	-.68	-.21
Individual Consideration	4.10	.49	-.09	-.48
Idealised Influence (Attributed)	4.23	.63	-2.17	9.58
Idealised Influence (Behaviour)	4.07	.51	-.12	-.42
Transactional Leadership	3.58	.50	-.22	-.01
Contingent Reward	4.22	.51	-.43	-.44
Management by Exception (Active)	2.94	.84	.08	-.47
Passive Avoidant Leadership	1.93	.51	.17	-.62
Management by Exception (Passive)	2.07	.69	.50	.05
Laissez Faire	1.78	.52	.07	-1.13

Following the presentation of the descriptive data, an ANOVA was conducted to see if the assessments of the principal and teachers' leadership traits differed statistically significantly. This was finished when the descriptive data was shown. There are statistically significant disparities in the administrators' and teachers' views of their leadership effectiveness, according to the variance analysis results. These two organisations have reported these disparities. Regarding the transactional leadership style ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.66$; $M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.50$; $F(1,487) = 7.29$, $p < 0.05$) or the passive avoidant leadership style ($F(1,487) = 20.80$, $p < 0.05$) ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.70$; $M = 1.93$, $SD = 0.51$), there were statistically significant differences in the perceptions of the leadership styles held by teachers and principals. Teachers' and principals' leadership philosophies were rated on three key characteristics. These dimensions were: the individual consideration dimension ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.78$; $M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.49$, respectively); the leadership by exception (Active) dimension ($F(1,487) = 23.20$, $p < 0.05$; $M = 2.63$, $SD = 0.79$; $M = 2.07$, $SD = 0.69$, respectively). There were no additional statistically significant differences in the perceptions of administrators' and teachers' leadership abilities.

Table 3: Findings from a One-Way Analysis of Variance on Principals' and Teachers' Evaluations on Leadership Styles

Leadership Styles and Dimensions	Teachers' Perceptions of Leadership Styles		Principals' Perceptions of Leadership Styles	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Transformational Leadership	4.05	.68	4.20	.35
Intellectual Stimulation	3.91	.85	4.06	.45
Inspirational Motivation	4.35	.75	4.54	.44
Individual Consideration	3.78	.78	4.10*	.49
Idealised Influence (Attributed)	4.09	.75	4.23	.63
Idealised Influence (Behaviour)	4.10	.70	4.07	.51
Transactional Leadership	3.84*	.66	3.58	.50
Contingent Reward	4.08	.79	4.22	.51
Management by Exception (Active)	3.60*	.82	2.94	.84
Passive Avoidant Leadership	2.39*	.70	1.93	.51
Management by Exception (Passive)	2.63*	.79	2.07	.69
Laissez Faire	2.15*	.82	1.78	.52

7.1.2 Analysis Qualitative Information

To illustrate each leadership style and its corresponding feature, the interview questions were designed to elicit reactions from the principals. The findings demonstrated that the data obtained from administrator interviews and teacher focus groups were consistent with one another due to their comparable outcomes. The teachers were also given the chance to double-check their responses by answering the same questions.

7.1.2.1 Transformational Leadership

Among both school administrators and classroom teachers, transformational leadership was identified as the most common type of management. Organise social activities, bring in guest lecturers, and use rewards and incentives to get students pumped up. Positive encouragement from administrators is crucial for maintaining teacher engagement, regardless of challenges. Teachers often give administrators the lowest grades when they show revolutionary leadership by giving students personalised attention. Through staff meetings, peer reviews, and observing more seasoned teachers, principals can determine what their teachers need, provide opportunities for professional development, and foster collaboration. Teachers' assessments of administrators' leadership styles were lower than their own, but not substantially different. Promoting creative expression is a crucial part of transformational leadership. Despite the lackluster evaluations of their leadership by both teachers and administrators, two key ideas emerged: the need to maintain a professional demeanour and the significance of gaining the respect of educators.

7.1.2.2 Transactional Leadership

In educational institutions, transactional leadership is second only to transformational leadership in terms of prevalence. Administrators and teachers have divergent views on the prevalence of transactional leadership. The dependent incentive dimension is more common than the management by exception (Active) component, which leads to three primary themes. The present organisational system helps instructors comprehend who is accountable for what, according to rural school administrators in China. More intangible incentives could take the form of verbal appreciation, official acknowledgment, gratitude rituals, or chances for professional growth. Teachers feel their salaries are commensurate with their work when they get praise from both their peers and the government. After talking with school administrators and educators, three themes emerged. The number of administrators required for follow-up depended on the task's complexity and the educator's subject-matter competence.

7.1.2.3 Passive Avoidant Leadership

Principals at these schools often used a passive-avoidant style of leadership, while administrators and teachers at these schools reported low levels of this style overall. Because of the preponderance of management-by-exception (Passive) over laissez-faire leadership, three main themes emerged. School administrators may use the help of social workers, department heads, instructors, coordinators, and vice principals to put this component into action. They behaved in this manner because they were pursuing their aims. The other feature of passive-avoidant leadership was its infrequency of application. Two main themes emerged from the qualitative data when it was analysed thematically. First of all, every one of the leaders consistently showed the trait of overcoming bureaucracy to answer questions or make decisions. This emphasises how important it is for schools to have strong leadership.

8. DISCUSSION

Finding out whether teachers' leadership styles affect teachers' levels of job satisfaction was the goal of this quantitative study that employed data obtained from the MLQ (5X-Short) in its rater form and Spector's Work Performance Survey. Quantifiable data acquired from educators was used to address this subject. Teachers who participated in the focus groups were interviewed to collect qualitative data.

8.1 Effects of Teacher Inspiration on Professional Effectiveness

This study investigates job performance in educational professionals using descriptive statistics. The highest overall score for job performance was given to supervision, with ratings increasing as the amount of supervision increased. For teachers to be happy in their jobs, they must get along well with their principal, academic vice principal, or head of faculty. There was a strong correlation between the characteristics of the work and the additional-highest average score; after variety, perceived job satisfaction was greatest. Positive attitudes towards coworkers and students are also important factors. Open lines of communication are crucial for job satisfaction, with teachers expressing high satisfaction with the school's overall communications system. Having a good relationship with one's principal, academic vice principal, and head of faculty is crucial for instructors to enjoy their work. Working conditions were significantly correlated with the ranked second mean score; variety was the strongest predictor of job satisfaction. Researchers found that work happiness is more important than contingent compensation in a company's information transmission framework. Despite its mild positive impact, monetary compensation had the highest association with total job performance. Studies in China have found a positive correlation between teachers' contentment with remuneration and overall job performance. However, there is no correlation between a person's happiness in their work and the amount of money they make in that field. Teachers may be unhappy with their income compared to other professions, such as oil and gas industries, which pay more money and provide a comfortable lifestyle. The availability of various perks and rewards also contributes to an employee's overall level of contentment with their employment. There is a relatively favourable correlation between work performance and promotion, even though it has the lowest score of all work performance criteria. Teachers who lack a well-defined career progression route often report less satisfaction and produce worse-quality work.

8.2 Leadership Styles of Principals and How They Influence Teachers' Work Productivity and Satisfaction

Teachers report more job satisfaction under transformational leadership, but they report lower satisfaction under passive-avoidant leadership, according to research on how teachers perceive the leadership styles of their administrators. The study supports previous research in primary, secondary, and tertiary education settings, and suggests that employee satisfaction is negatively affected by a passive leadership style. Intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation were the only variables positively correlated with work performance. Individual attention, the lowest mean score, did not correlate with teachers' work satisfaction. On the scale of transformative leadership attributes, idealised influence, and idealised influence (behaviour) ranked highest. However, the correlation between these traits and teachers' job satisfaction was lacking. Activities that challenge educators' minds, such as giving them more autonomy and responsibility, greatly boost productivity. Transactional leadership, such as contingent incentives, positively correlated with teachers' perceptions of their success on the job. Unfortunately, there was no evidence that a more hands-on approach to management increased employee happiness. Less active avoidant leadership styles, such as laissez-faire, were associated with worse overall job performance among educators, according to the research.

9. CONCLUSION

The research reveals that leaders in China's rural schools use transactional, passive-avoidant, and transformational leadership styles. The results suggest that leaders who combine elements of transformational or transactional leadership are more likely to succeed. Transformational leadership is more favored by participants, followed by transactional and passive avoidant methods. Teachers expressed high satisfaction with their jobs and colleagues, but low satisfaction with fringe benefits and contingent incentives. Transformational leadership techniques increased teachers' job satisfaction, while restrained and avoidant styles were less likely to have happy faculty members. Transformational leadership is closely linked to individual satisfaction in their roles, with intellectual stimulation and a sense of purpose being key aspects. Encouraging administrators can lead to increased work satisfaction among instructors, influencing staff relationships, team performance, and communication. Having one's needs met at work did not, however, correlate with happiness in one's position. Contrary to contingent incentives, transactional leadership styles did not increase employee satisfaction. Teachers had stronger emotional and normative ties to their organizations over the long term, with higher levels of normative commitment associated with larger levels of success. Emotional commitment was found to be a powerful mediator between work performance and intellectual stimulation, while affective commitment served as a potentially detrimental mediator between employee judgments of job performance and passive avoidant leadership traits.

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