



**LEADING FROM WITHIN AS A SHAPING FORCE: THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP STYLES ON TEACHERS' MOTIVATION AND JOB SATISFACTION**

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**Abstract**

This study investigates the connection between teachers' job satisfaction and motivation levels in Arab schools in Israel and the leadership philosophies of their administrators. A sample of 240 males and female elementary, middle, and secondary school teachers participated in the study using a quantitative research methodology. According to the research, teachers who believe that their school's leadership especially transformational and transactional leadership is effective report feeling more empowered and engaged at work, as well as having greater levels of job satisfaction and motivation. On the other hand, a decrease in these levels is linked to a laissez-faire leadership style, highlighting the detrimental effects of ineffective leadership. The nature of the relationship between teacher performance and school leadership styles is better understood thanks to these findings. In order to comprehend the nature of the interaction between school leadership on the one hand, and job satisfaction and work motivation on the other, they emphasize the critical role that teachers' opinions of their profession and professional experience play. As a result, the study emphasizes the need for more research on the professional perspectives of teachers and how they affect their performance in Israeli Arab schools, an area that is still lacking in the literature on educational leadership today.

**Keywords:** Leadership Styles, Job Satisfaction, Work Motivation, Arab Teachers, Israel

**Introduction**

Leadership in organisational and educational literature is characterised as a hierarchical framework focused on the manager, defined as the capacity of an individual or group to influence and inspire others to pursue a shared objective (Bsoul & Vasiluță, 2021: 51; Abd Algani, Abu Alhaija & Mahamid, 2021: 10617). In the educational setting, leadership is crucial,

as it significantly influences the quality of teaching, learning processes, and the overall organisational climate, rendering it an essential component of educational policies and the administration of educational institutions (Surur et al., 2020: 1198). The leadership style employed by the school head is a crucial determinant of the educational institution's overall effectiveness, especially in overseeing the teaching staff and influencing the organisational culture. The literature identifies three primary leadership styles: transformational leadership, founded on inspiration, vision, and professional development support; transactional leadership, which utilises rewards and punishments to uphold the status quo; and laissez-faire leadership, marked by minimal participation, procrastinated decision-making, and a lack of accountability (Bsoul & Vasiluță, 2021: 53).

Research demonstrates that effective and supportive leadership fosters collaboration among educators, elevates their intrinsic motivation, and enhances the quality of educational practices (Sakerania, 2019; Abu Alhaija, 2025: 61). Transformational leadership correlates with elevated job satisfaction levels in contrast to transactional or laissez-faire leadership (Meney, 2024: 891; Kheir-Faddul & Dănăiață, 2019), whereas negative leadership styles are linked to diminished motivation and ongoing job satisfaction challenges (Haxhihyseni, 2023: 194). Research indicates that a principal's implementation of a transformational leadership style fosters teachers' willingness to exceed formal obligations and enhances organisational commitment and professional engagement (Ogunode et al., 2023). This is evidenced by elevated motivation levels in schools characterised by this leadership approach in comparison to others (Meney, 2024: 892). In light of the extensive changes in educational systems and the increasing power of school principals, school leadership has become a pivotal conceptual and organisational element in influencing educational practices. This research is significant due to the critique of conventional leadership styles reliant on reward systems and procedural management, and its objective to explore alternative leadership methods that better correspond with the complexities of modern educational environments.

Although numerous studies have investigated the influence of school leadership styles on teachers' job satisfaction and motivation, research focused on Arab schools in Israel is scarce. This research aims to address this gap by conducting an empirical investigation of the correlation between school leadership styles and teachers' job satisfaction and professional motivation levels. This seeks to enhance the theoretical discourse and establish a conceptual framework for formulating leadership styles that consciously and profoundly address the challenges of the modern educational landscape.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Leadership is characterised as the process of inspiring individuals to do tasks directed towards the attainment of organisational objectives, integrating developed competencies and inherent characteristics (Ogunode et al., 2023). Effective leadership encompasses not only the organisation of work and task completion but also the cultivation of employee needs and the augmentation of their commitment without resorting to pressure. Kheir-Faddul & Dănăiață (2019: 23) provide a metaphorical depiction of leadership using the "flame" analogy, wherein the leader symbolises the spark, the followers represent the combustible material, and the organisational context supplies the requisite conditions for the process to persist. This underscores the significance of the interplay of the leader, followers, and the environment in

attaining institutional goals.

### **Educational Administration**

School leadership refers to the principal's use of leadership strategies designed to navigate the institution's obstacles, elevate the performance of both teaching and administrative personnel, and improve student outcomes (Ogunode et al., 2023: 3). In this regard, researcher Surur and colleagues (Surur et al., 2020: 1198) assert that leadership has emerged as a crucial element in modern educational policies owing to the growing interconnection of leadership, teaching, and school climate. A group of researchers (Bsoul, 2021: 52; Abu Alhaija & Abd Algani, 2024: 6537) assert that the role of the school principal extends beyond conventional management to encompass the development of an educational vision and the establishment of an effective learning community, thereby rendering the integration of management and leadership essential for attaining educational and institutional excellence.

### **Leadership Styles in Educational Institutions**

Educational literature identifies three primary school leadership styles, each with distinct foundations and impacts on educators. Transformational leadership is regarded as an inspiring approach that emphasises the empowerment of educators and the augmentation of their intrinsic motivation through a unified vision and collective objectives, thereby increasing commitment levels and addressing challenges (Goktas, 2021: 1024; Abu Alhaija et al., 2021: 489). This approach is defined by adaptability and the equilibrium of authority with democratic principles, transcending material incentives to address internal requirements and foster institutional loyalty (Meney, 2024: 891).

Conversely, transactional leadership relies on a conditional, reciprocal connection between the principal and instructors, characterised by explicit criteria that connect performance to rewards or sanctions. This is accomplished by contingent reinforcement and management by exception, predominantly depending on external incentives to attain organisational objectives (Chepkirui et al., 2023: 65; Hutama et al., 2024: 154; Meney, 2024: 893).

Laissez-faire or avoidant leadership is marked by inactivity, minimal intervention, and a lack of accountability, thereby constraining the leader's organisational influence. This leadership style correlates with diminished job satisfaction, motivation, and subpar professional performance, rendering it one of the least effective in the educational sphere (Bsoul & Vasiliuță, 2021: 53; Mshelia & Emmanuel, 2022: 59; Goktas, 2021: 1025; Mahamid & Abu Alhaija, 2023: 4321).

### **The Significance of Job Satisfaction in Teachers' Professional Performance**

Job satisfaction is characterised as a favourable emotional reaction exhibited by an employee regarding their professional experiences, particularly when the work imparts a sense of purpose, accomplishment, and fulfilment (Ertas & Pekmezci, 2023: 195). It is a multifaceted notion that includes the employee's emotions, attitudes, and assessments of their working situations. It is shaped by internal elements including appreciation, performance, and responsibility, as well as external influences such as compensation, institutional regulations, and the work environment (Baxi & Atre, 2024: 35). Job satisfaction is correlated with self-efficacy and confidence in attaining professional achievement (Bsoul & Vasiliuță, 2021: 53). In the educational sphere, teachers' job happiness is a crucial factor influencing the quality of their performance and the extent of their professional dedication. Research demonstrates that elevated satisfaction levels augment motivation and work engagement, hence enhancing

educational practices (Elmazi, 2018: 43; Rexha & Buleshkaj, 2024). A differentiation is established between an internal aspect of satisfaction pertaining to meaning and self-fulfilment, and an external aspect associated with job conditions and institutional support. Collectively, they establish the foundation for augmenting educators' ability to confront professional issues and elevate the standard of education (Rexha & Buleshkaj, 2024: 5693; Baluyos et al., 2019: 207).

### **Teachers' Professional Motivation: Theoretical Aspects and Influencing Variables**

Motivation, as discussed in organisational and educational literature, is a multifaceted notion that embodies both internal and external influences propelling an individual to engage in behaviours aimed at attaining professional or personal objectives (Kheir-Faddul & Dănăiață, 2019: 20; Tandeas et al., 2021: 168). Research differentiates between extrinsic motivation, which relies on incentives, and intrinsic motivation, which arises from personal interest and self-actualization, highlighting that intrinsic motivation correlates more significantly with sustainability and performance quality (Kheir-Faddul & Dănăiață, 2019: 21–22). Maslow's theory posits that the fulfilment of esteem and self-actualization wants is contingent upon the earlier satisfying of basic and social needs (Tandeas et al., 2021: 169–170).

In the educational setting, teacher motivation is a vital factor influencing instructional quality, professional commitment, and ongoing contribution (Cabaron & Oco, 2023: 2). Herzberg's theory highlights the necessity of differentiating between extrinsic factors, including compensation and working conditions, and intrinsic factors associated with accomplishment and professional development, to comprehend the improvement of job satisfaction and the sustenance of motivation (Bugyei & Aidoo, 2022: 21–22). Research demonstrates that a supportive work environment, characterised by guidance and acknowledgement of teachers' contributions, mitigates burnout and bolsters self-efficacy and professional dedication (Astuti, 2020: 117).

### **The Influence of School Leadership Styles on Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Work Motivation**

Educational literature indicates a strong and significant correlation between school leadership style and both job satisfaction and work motivation among teachers, which are key measures of professional performance quality in educational institutions. Research indicates that principals who exhibit support and sensitivity to teachers' needs, while prioritising their psychological and professional well-being, foster enhanced sentiments of safety, belonging, and trust. This is evidenced by elevated job satisfaction levels among educators (Kheir-Faddul & Dănăiață, 2019: 26). Research demonstrates that transformational leadership, characterised by inspiration, support, and the promotion of professional development, correlates with elevated job satisfaction levels when contrasted with transactional leadership, which predominantly emphasises material rewards and fails to nurture intrinsic motivation or constructive professional conduct (Meney, 2024: 891).

In contrast, findings from alternative studies indicate that the implementation of a laissez-faire or avoidant leadership style is associated with a significant decline in teachers' job satisfaction and work motivation, while a greater embrace of transformational leadership markedly enhances this satisfaction (Haxhihyseni, 2023: 194). Work motivation is a crucial component of the educational process. Research indicates that transformational leadership increases teachers' dedication to school objectives, their readiness to invest additional effort,

and their involvement in activities that exceed conventional job performance standards. These attributes elucidate the elevated professional motivation among educators in institutions that use this leadership approach, in contrast to those governed by transactional or avoidant leadership (Meney, 2024: 892; Kheir-Faddul & Dănăiață, 2019: 21–24).

**Research Methodology**

This research adopts a quantitative methodology based on the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to arrive at precise and reliable results. This methodology was chosen for its suitability in studying relationships between variables objectively using measurable tools amenable to statistical analysis, such as closed-ended questionnaires (Queirso, Faria & Almeida, 2017). The quantitative method relies on a representative sample and the application of appropriate statistical analysis techniques, ensuring the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the findings.

**Research Instrument**

The study utilized a set of standardized measurement tools to assess the research variables. The research instruments included: a School Leadership Styles Questionnaire consisting of 45 items (Bass & Avolio, 1990); a Teachers' Job Satisfaction Questionnaire consisting of 25 items (Shahar & Magen-Nagar, 2010); and a Work Motivation Questionnaire consisting of 18 items (Tentama & Nabilah, 2020). Responses to the items were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the study variables ranged between 0.90 and 0.94.

**Research Sample**

Data were collected from 240 male and female teachers from Arab schools in Israel, representing diverse personal and professional characteristics. Female teachers constituted 75% of the sample; 61.3% of the participants held a Master's degree, while 46.3% worked in elementary schools. The average years of teaching experience was 17.2 years, as detailed in Table (1) below:

**Table (1): Demographic Data of the Study Sample (Teachers)**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	60	25%
Female	180	75%
Teaching Experience		
1-5 years	24	10%
6-15 years	75	31.3%
16-25 years	90	37.5%

Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
26+ years	51	21.2%
<b>Educational Stage</b>		
Elementary	111	46.3%
Middle School	48	20%
High School	81	33.7%
<b>Academic Qualification</b>		
Bachelor's Degree	75	31.3%
Master's Degree	147	61.3%
Doctoral Degree	18	7.4%

**Results and Discussion**

**Table (2): Descriptive Statistics of the Research Variables**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Job Satisfaction	3.71	0.69	.93
Work Motivation	3.67	0.79	.94
Leadership Styles	---	---	.92
Transformational Leadership	3.76	0.83	.91
Transactional Leadership	3.62	0.86	.91
Laissez-faire/Avoidant Leadership	2.45	0.73	.93

The results presented in Table (2) for the measurement of leadership styles, job satisfaction, and work motivation indicate that school principals exercised transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire/avoidant leadership styles. Transformational leadership had the

highest mean score (3.76), followed by transactional leadership (3.62), both of which were more prominent than laissez-faire/avoidant leadership (mean = 2.45).

Regarding the measurement of teachers' levels of job satisfaction and work motivation, teachers showed a relatively high level of job satisfaction (mean = 3.71) and a relatively high level of work motivation (mean = 3.67) on a scale of 1 to 5. Concerning  $\alpha$  Cronbach's values, the results show that all variables possess good reliability, with values ranging between 0.90 and 0.94.

**The Impact of School Leadership Styles (Transformational, Transactional, Laissez-faire) on the Level of Job Satisfaction and Degree of Work Motivation Among Teachers**

**Hypothesis (1):** There is a statistically significant relationship between school leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire) and the level of job satisfaction among teachers.

**Table (3):** Relationship between school leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire) and the level of job satisfaction among teachers

Variable	Job Satisfaction
Transformational Leadership Style	.667***
Transactional / Contingent Reward Leadership Style	.697***
Laissez-faire / Avoidant Leadership Style	-.156*

The results in Table (3) indicate a positive and statistically significant correlation between the transformational leadership style and teachers' level of job satisfaction ( $r = .667$ ,  $p < .001$ ), signifying that a higher level of transformational leadership is associated with higher job satisfaction. These results align with the literature that emphasizes the role of transformational leadership in enhancing job satisfaction through its focus on motivation, encouragement, and professional development (Meney, 2024: 891), and by building a shared vision, providing individualized consideration, and fostering active participation (Kheir-Faddul & Dănăiață, 2019: 21–23). These results also support findings from studies by (Goktas, 2021: 1024; Abu Alhaija et al., 2021: 489) regarding the contribution of transformational leadership to developing a sense of mission, self-actualization, and internal commitment among teachers—factors linked in the current study to a higher level of job satisfaction.

Furthermore, the results indicate a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between the transactional leadership style and the level of job satisfaction ( $r = .697$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This finding highlights the role of transactional leadership, based on clear expectations, contingent rewards, and recognition of achievements, in enhancing job

satisfaction. Contrary to some literature, the study's results show that transactional leadership is perceived by teachers as having a greater impact on job satisfaction compared to transformational leadership, as its correlation coefficient is higher. This may reflect teachers' focus on stability, clear roles, and tangible incentives. These results largely agree with previous studies (Chepkirui et al., 2023: 65; Hutama, 2024: 154) indicating that transactional leadership relies on direct communication and contingent rewards as an externally incentive-based system, while transformational leadership focuses more on values, intrinsic motivation, and indirect exchange of benefits (Meney, 2024: 893).

Conversely, the study's results indicate a negative and statistically significant correlation between the laissez-faire/avoidant leadership style and the level of job satisfaction ( $r = -.156, p < .05$ ), suggesting that increased teacher perception of this leadership style is associated with decreased job satisfaction. This result demonstrates the negative impact of manifestations of administrative avoidance, such as the absence of leadership presence, delayed decision-making, and lack of accountability. These findings are consistent with previous studies describing laissez-faire/avoidant leadership as an ineffective style characterized by a lack of managerial engagement, abdication of effective intervention in work, and absence of guidance and support (Bsoul & Vasiliuță, 2021: 53). In this context, (Mshelia & Emmanuel, 2022: 59) confirm that this style reflects an actual absence of leadership presence, especially during crises, supporting the hypothesis that avoidant leadership is unsuitable for the requirements of educational work and contributes to declining job satisfaction among teachers.

**Hypothesis (2):** There is a statistically significant relationship between school leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire) and the degree of work motivation among teachers.

**Table (4):** Relationship between school leadership styles (transformational, transactional, laissez-faire) and the degree of work motivation among teachers

Variable	Work Motivation
Transformational Leadership Style	.674***
Transactional / Contingent Reward Leadership Style	.706***
Laissez-faire / Avoidant Leadership Style	-.137*

Table (4) demonstrates a positive and statistically significant link between transformational leadership style and work motivation level ( $r = .674, p < .001$ ), indicating that increased transformational leadership correlates with elevated teacher motivation. This discovery underscores the critical importance of transformative leadership, characterised by inspiration, vision, and professional assistance, in augmenting job motivation within the

educational sector (Goktas, 2021: 1024). This outcome substantiates the premise that motivation among educators is fortified by transformational leadership, which fosters intrinsic drive for engagement in work and professional development (Haxhihyseni et al., 2022: 195). The literature affirms that transformational leadership is predicated on value-driven direction, emotional empowerment, and the cultivation of a shared vision, in contrast to methods that depend on external incentives (Bugyei & Aidoo, 2022: 21–22). This corresponds with research conducted by Cabaron and Oco (2023: 2) and Astuti (2020: 117) concerning the influence of transformational leadership on improving competence and professional commitment, which is evidenced by increased intrinsic motivation among educators. The findings reveal a robust, positive, and statistically significant correlation between the transactional leadership style and work motivation levels ( $r = .706$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that leadership characterised by explicit expectations and contingent rewards correlates with increased teacher motivation. The findings indicate that the magnitude of this connection somewhat exceeds that documented for transformational leadership ( $r = .674$ ), implying a more rapid influence of explicit rewards on motivation enhancement. These findings correspond with the research conducted by Hutama et al. (2024: 154), which emphasised the significance of transactional leadership in augmenting teacher motivation through the cultivation of appreciation, equity, and clarity on professional standards within the workplace. A collection of studies (Chepkirui et al., 2023: 65; Raupu et al., 2021: 1567; Surur et al., 2020: 1198) corroborates these findings, elucidating that transactional leadership is pivotal in motivating educators and augmenting their professional involvement, thereby positively influencing the quality of educational practices and the efficacy of schools. Thus, transactional leadership can be seen as an effective management approach for augmenting motivation, especially extrinsic motivation, in demanding professional environments. The research findings reveal a negative and statistically significant correlation between the laissez-faire leadership style and work motivation levels ( $r = -.137$ ,  $p < .05$ ), indicating that heightened teacher perception of this leadership style correlates with diminished professional motivation. This outcome underscores the detrimental influence of ineffective leadership on motivational elements, including self-efficacy and professional dedication. The findings align with a series of studies depicting laissez-faire leadership as a detrimental style marked by insufficient guidance, evasion of decision-making, and minimal support for teaching staff (Bsoul & Vasiliuță, 2021: 53), illustrating a genuine absence of leadership in educational settings that necessitate stability and clarity (Mshelia & Emmanuel, 2022: 59). The absence of support, recognition, and supervision for instructors, essential factors for professional motivation (Kheir-Faddul & Dănăiață, 2019: 20), may lead to diminished professional dedication and job motivation.

**Hypothesis (3):** There are statistically significant differences according to gender in the level of work motivation, job satisfaction, and perception of leadership styles, where female teachers show higher levels of motivation and transactional leadership, while male teachers show higher levels of job satisfaction, transformational leadership, and avoidant leadership.

**Table (5):** Gender Differences in Work Motivation, Job Satisfaction, and Perception of Leadership Styles

Variable	Male (N=60)	Female (N=180)	T value (78)
Work Motivation	3.62 (.96)	3.69 (.73)	-1.33*
Job Satisfaction	3.74 (.87)	3.69 (.63)	1.25*
Transactional Leadership	3.67 (.88)	3.83 (.82)	-1.70*
Transformational Leadership	3.82 (.80)	3.73 (.84)	1.40*
Laissez-faire/Avoidant Leadership	2.71 (.73)	2.60 (.74)	1.56*

\* $p < .05$

Table (5) demonstrates statistically significant differences in work motivation, job satisfaction, and leadership styles based on gender. Female educators exhibited elevated levels of work motivation and transactional leadership in contrast to their male counterparts, whereas men educators shown more job satisfaction, transformational leadership, and avoidant leadership, all with statistically significant differences ( $p < .05$ ). The results indicate a disparity in professional experience by gender, including motivation, contentment, and perceptions of leadership styles. The findings correspond with research demonstrating elevated internal motivation and professional awareness among women in the teaching profession (Jugović et al., 2022: 14; Štefko et al., 2017: 219-221), in contrast to the greater job satisfaction reported among male teachers (Meney, 2024: 899), notwithstanding discrepancies in the literature (Baluyos et al., 2019: 207; Smagina, 2020: 225-227). A propensity for males to embrace transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles was noted (Musarrat & Liaqat, 2023), highlighting that these variations are shaped by diverse cultural, institutional, and personal contexts (Tiwari, Kumar & Dhiman, 2023: 573–574; Alharthi, 2024: 5-7).

**Hypothesis (4):** There are statistically significant differences in work motivation, job satisfaction, and leadership styles according to years of teaching experience, where a high level of experience (16 years or more) is associated with higher levels of motivation, job satisfaction, and transactional leadership, medium experience (6–15 years) is associated with transformational leadership, while low experience is associated with higher levels of avoidant leadership.

**Table (6):** Differences According to Teaching Experience in the Study Variables

Variable	1-5 years (N=24)	6-15 years (N=75)	16 years and above (N=141)	F value (2,237)
Work Motivation	3.16 (.34)	3.63 (.74)	3.78 (.94)	2.20*
Job Satisfaction	3.41 (.71)	3.68 (.64)	3.77 (.72)	1.94*
Transactional Leadership	3.15 (.21)	3.70 (.87)	3.81 (.90)	2.09*
Transformational Leadership	3.10 (.48)	3.85 (.84)	3.82 (.83)	2.88*
Laissez-faire/Avoidant Leadership	2.74 (.54)	2.63 (.80)	2.62 (.74)	1.09*

\* $p < .05$

The results in Table (6) indicate the existence of statistically significant differences in work motivation, job satisfaction, and perception of leadership styles according to teaching experience. ANOVA and Bonferroni analyses showed that teachers with high experience (16 years or more) recorded higher levels of motivation, job satisfaction, and transactional leadership compared to teachers with medium experience and those at the beginning of their careers ( $p < .05$ ). In contrast, teachers with medium experience (6–15 years) recorded higher levels of transformational leadership, while teachers at the beginning of their careers (up to 5 years) showed higher levels of laissez-faire leadership ( $p < .05$ ). These results support the study's hypothesis and are consistent with literature indicating that teachers with long experience enjoy higher professional efficacy and lower burnout rates in the advanced stages of their career path (Preechawong et al., 2021: 16; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023: 6–8; Layek & Koodamara, 2024: 9). The transformational tendency among teachers with medium experience may reflect a pursuit of broader pedagogical influence (Abuhassira et al., 2024: 72), while perceptions of laissez-faire leadership among beginning teachers align with studies emphasizing the increased need for guidance and support in the early stages of the profession (Kheir-Faddul & Dănaiață, 2019: 17; Jackson, 2023: 44).

**Hypothesis (5):** There are statistically significant differences in work motivation, job satisfaction, and perception of leadership styles according to teachers' level of academic qualification.

**Table (7):** Differences According to Level of Academic Qualification in the Study Variables

Variable	Bachelor's (N=75)	Master's (N=147)	Doctorate (N=18)	F value (2,237)
Work Motivation	3.45 (.79)	3.80 (.78)	3.60 (.80)	1.64*
Job Satisfaction	3.48 (.61)	3.83 (.70)	3.67 (.90)	2.14*
Transactional Leadership	3.51 (.88)	3.84 (.84)	3.52 (.87)	1.32*
Transformational Leadership	3.63 (.88)	3.85 (.80)	3.48 (.79)	1.94*
Laissez- faire/Avoidant Leadership	2.60 (.65)	2.57 (.75)	3.28 (.64)	2.67*

\* $p < .05$

The results in Table (7) indicate the existence of statistically significant differences in work motivation, job satisfaction, and perception of leadership styles according to teachers' level of academic qualification. ANOVA and Bonferroni analyses showed that teachers holding a Master's degree recorded the highest levels of motivation, job satisfaction, and perception of transactional and transformational leadership, compared to those holding Bachelor's and Doctoral degrees ( $p < .05$ ). In contrast, teachers holding a Doctoral degree recorded higher levels of avoidant leadership, while those holding a Bachelor's degree reported relatively lower levels of motivation and job satisfaction. These results align with literature indicating that advanced academic achievement, particularly a Master's degree, is associated with higher feelings of self-efficacy, professional recognition, and organizational engagement (Zubeidat, 2024: 6522; Pérez Fuentes et al., 2023: 2). The elevated levels of avoidant leadership among doctorate holders may reflect a gap between professional aspirations and the possibilities of achieving them within the educational system (Nkwatsibwe et al., 2025: 48). Meanwhile, the lower levels of motivation and job satisfaction among Bachelor's holders are consistent with studies addressing professional instability and early burnout at the beginning of the career path (Mateo et al., 2023: 6). Despite some mixed results in the literature (Meney, 2024: 900), the overall picture confirms that the level of academic qualification is an influential factor in shaping work experience, motivation, and perception of leadership styles among teachers.

**Hypothesis (6):** There are differences according to school type in work motivation, job satisfaction, and leadership styles, where teachers in elementary schools report higher levels of motivation and transactional leadership, teachers in secondary schools report higher levels of

job satisfaction and transformational leadership, while teachers in middle schools report higher levels of avoidant leadership.

**Table (8): Differences Among Schools in the Various Research Variables**

Variable	Elementary (N=111)	Middle School (N=48)	Secondary (N=81)	F value (2,237)
Work Motivation	3.78 (.66)	3.34 (.74)	3.72 (.94)	1.84*
Job Satisfaction	3.71 (.66)	3.47 (.89)	3.83 (.60)	1.41*
Transactional Leadership	3.80 (.85)	3.43 (.78)	3.75 (.92)	1.15*
Transformational Leadership	3.74 (.83)	3.40 (.79)	3.86 (.85)	1.88*
Laissez- faire/Avoidant Leadership	2.56 (.79)	2.73 (.62)	2.67 (.73)	1.05*

\* $p < .05$

The results in Table (8) indicate the existence of statistically significant differences according to school type in work motivation, job satisfaction, and leadership styles. Bonferroni analyses showed that teachers in elementary schools recorded higher levels of work motivation and transactional leadership compared to middle and secondary schools ( $p < .05$ ), while secondary school teachers showed higher levels of job satisfaction and transformational leadership ( $p < .05$ ). Middle school teachers recorded higher levels of avoidant leadership compared to the other two stages ( $p < .05$ ).

These results align with literature pointing to the strength of socio-ethical motives among elementary school teachers (Kheir-Faddul & Dănaiață, 2019; Wiyono, 2016; He, 2024), in contrast to the role of professional autonomy and competence in enhancing job satisfaction and transformational leadership among secondary school teachers (Braga et al., 2024; Duong et al., 2023; Tran et al., 2022). The higher levels of laissez-faire leadership in middle schools are also consistent with studies linking this style to lower motivation and satisfaction and weak belongingness, amid the specific organizational challenges of this stage (Kheir-Faddul & Dănaiață, 2019; Braga et al., 2024; Rexha et al., 2024).

### Summary and Conclusions

The study's results highlight the pivotal role of school leadership in shaping teacher motivation and job satisfaction. The strong positive effects of both transformational and transactional leadership indicate that effective school leadership should be based on integrating an inspiring vision with organizational clarity and fair reward systems. Principals who balance meaning-making, professional support, and clear expectation-setting are more capable of enhancing teachers' motivation, satisfaction, and professional commitment.

The results also show that the absence of leadership or an avoidant leadership style is associated with a decline in teachers' professional well-being, underscoring the importance of effective leadership presence, timely decision-making, and continuous communication within the school. Accordingly, educational leadership preparation programs and principal performance evaluations should focus on active and responsible leadership skills.

The strong relationship between motivation and job satisfaction suggests that initiatives aimed at improving working conditions, recognizing teachers' efforts, and providing professional development opportunities can have a cumulative positive effect on both dimensions.

Finally, the differences related to gender, educational stage, years of experience, and level of academic qualification demonstrate that leadership styles are not perceived nor do they impact all teachers uniformly. Therefore, there is a need to adopt flexible and adaptive leadership practices tailored to teachers' characteristics and their work contexts, rather than relying on uniform leadership models, particularly in educational environments characterized by cultural and social specificity.

### **Recommendations**

The research findings point to the central role of effective school leadership in enhancing teacher motivation and raising their level of job satisfaction, through active leadership presence, continuous professional support, and building relationships based on trust and appreciation.

The importance of empowering school leaders to adopt motivational leadership styles that combine clear expectations and recognition on the one hand, with inspiration, psychological support, and vision-building on the other, is emphasized, given their direct impact on improving the school climate and increasing professional engagement.

The study also recommends integrating targeted training programs within the plans for preparing and developing school leaders, while reconsidering the principal evaluation system to include indicators related to their ability to motivate teachers and support their professional well-being.

The results further confirm the necessity of creating a supportive psychological and professional school environment based on respect and effective communication, contributing to enhancing teachers' intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction, and supporting the quality of educational performance.

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