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ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN ENHANCING TEACHER MOTIVATION: A MENTORSHIP AND COACHING IDEOLOGY FOR TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of school leadership in enhancing teacher motivation. The educational background of the teachers is mostly a bachelor's degree which indicates a fairly educated teaching workforce with practical classroom experience suitable for assessing leadership influence on motivation. School leadership supported professional development mainly by organizing workshops and training sessions and providing mentorship and coaching. This study concludes that school leaders who engage in decision-making, invest in their professional growth, and foster a positive work environment create conditions that enhance motivation and job satisfaction, ultimately contributing to better education outcomes. Based on findings, it was recommended that school leadership should prioritize adopting transformational and participative leadership styles to create a more supportive and motivating environment for teachers.

Keywords: School leadership, Bachelor's degree, professional, Mentorship and Coaching

Introduction

Leadership within the school setting plays a pivotal role in shaping the attitudes, commitment, and performance of teachers. The effectiveness of a school often hinges on how well its leaders are able to influence and inspire teachers towards achieving educational goals. Bush (2018) asserted that leadership in education is not merely about holding a managerial position but about creating a shared vision, fostering collaboration, and motivating teachers to excel in their duties. The leader's approach to administration significantly affects the motivation and professional behavior of teachers within the school environment (Bush, 2018).

According to Leithwood et al. (2020), successful school leadership contributes directly to school improvement by building teachers' capacities, creating a supportive climate, and promoting professional learning communities. They reported that when school leaders provide teachers with opportunities for growth, recognition, and autonomy, teacher motivation tends to

increase, which in turn enhances student learning outcomes. Hallinger and Heck (2010) affirmed that collaborative and participative leadership practices have a significant impact on teacher morale and their willingness to engage in innovative teaching strategies.

In the context of Nigerian schools, teacher motivation has remained a critical concern, often linked to poor leadership practices. Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010) reported that many teachers in Nigerian primary and secondary schools experience low motivation due to inadequate leadership support, lack of professional recognition, and limited involvement in school decision-making. Olatunji (2015) stated that the authoritarian leadership style common in many public schools undermines teachers' sense of belonging and adversely affects their motivation.

Nguni et al. (2006) contended that transformational leadership characterized by inspiration, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence is crucial for enhancing teacher motivation. They argued that when school leaders adopt transformational practices, they positively impact teachers' organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and willingness to go beyond their basic job descriptions. Aydin et al. (2017) affirmed that leadership styles that emphasize support, recognition, and involvement foster an environment where teachers feel valued and motivated to contribute their best efforts.

According to Bush (2018), school leadership refers to the process by which individuals in positions of authority within a school setting influence, guide, and direct both staff and students towards achieving institutional goals (Bush, 2018). In the context of education, leadership is not confined to administrative duties alone but extends to inspiring, motivating, and empowering teachers to perform their roles efficiently and effectively (Leithwood et al., 2020). Teacher motivation, on the other hand, is the internal drive or willingness of teachers to perform their duties with enthusiasm, commitment, and a sense of professional responsibility. Motivation influences teachers' attitudes towards their work, their level of engagement, and ultimately their effectiveness in delivering quality education (Aydin et al., 2017). The role of school leadership in enhancing teacher motivation has been widely acknowledged in educational literature. Leaders who adopt supportive, transformational, and participative leadership styles are known to create an environment where teachers feel valued, respected, and empowered. Such leadership practices include effective communication, recognition of teachers' efforts, provision of professional development opportunities, and involving teachers in decision-making processes (Nguni et al., 2006). This research study is set against the backdrop of examining the role of school leadership in enhancing teacher motivation.

School Leadership

School leadership is a vital component in the management and success of educational institutions. It refers to the ability of school administrators, particularly principals and headteachers, to influence, guide, and

coordinate the efforts of teachers, students, and other stakeholders toward achieving the goals of the school. Bush (2018) asserted that school leadership goes beyond mere administrative functions to include setting a vision, inspiring commitment, building positive relationships, and creating a supportive environment for teaching and learning.

The concept of school leadership emphasizes the strategic role leaders play in shaping the school's culture, climate, and performance. Leithwood et al. (2020) contended that effective school leaders act as change agents who mobilize resources, foster collaboration, and encourage continuous professional development among teachers. They influence not only the structural operations of the school but also the motivation, morale, and effectiveness of the teaching staff. This perspective of leadership highlights the human-centered approach, where leaders focus on empowering teachers, promoting trust, and encouraging participation in decision-making.

According to Hallinger and Heck (2010), successful school leadership involves instructional leadership, which focuses on improving teaching practices and student outcomes. They reported that instructional leaders engage teachers in reflective practice, provide professional support, and create opportunities for growth, all of which contribute to a motivated and high-performing teaching workforce. This approach moves leadership from traditional top-down control to a more inclusive and supportive framework.

Transformational leadership theory further enriches the understanding of school leadership by emphasizing the importance of vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Nguni et al. (2006) affirmed that transformational leaders positively impact teachers' motivation by fostering a sense of purpose, commitment, and professional engagement. Such leaders work collaboratively with teachers, recognizing their contributions and involving them in key decisions, which enhances their job satisfaction and dedication.

Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010) reported that in the Nigerian educational context, the quality of school leadership is directly linked to teachers' motivation and overall school effectiveness. They highlighted that where leadership is proactive, supportive, and participatory, teachers are more likely to be committed and motivated. Conversely, authoritarian and unsupportive leadership styles often lead to teacher demotivation, poor performance, and high turnover rates.

School leadership is not just about enforcing rules or managing resources but about inspiring people, cultivating talents, and creating a school environment where teachers and students thrive. Effective school leaders understand the importance of balancing managerial duties with the emotional and professional needs of teachers. This human-centered leadership approach ultimately contributes to the success and sustainability of educational institutions.

Teacher Motivation

Teacher motivation is a critical factor that influences not only the performance and commitment of teachers but also the overall success of educational institutions. It refers to the internal drive, enthusiasm, and willingness of teachers to engage in their professional duties with dedication and a positive attitude. Motivation determines the level of effort a teacher puts into instructional delivery, student engagement, professional development, and collaboration with colleagues. According to Aydin et al. (2017), motivated teachers are more likely to be innovative, committed, and effective in their teaching roles, which in turn enhances student learning outcomes.

Teacher motivation is influenced by a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivation arises from internal satisfaction, such as the joy of teaching, the desire to impact lives, and personal growth. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is driven by external rewards like salary, recognition, promotion opportunities, and favorable working conditions (Herzberg, 1959). Herzberg asserted that while intrinsic motivators lead to job satisfaction, the absence of adequate extrinsic factors could lead to job dissatisfaction. This balance is essential for maintaining a motivated teaching workforce.

Leadership plays a vital role in shaping both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors for teachers. Bush (2018) affirmed that effective school leadership contributes significantly to teacher motivation by creating a supportive work environment, fostering professional development, recognizing teacher efforts, and promoting participatory decision-making. Leaders who demonstrate empathy, fairness, and openness help to build trust and inspire teachers to perform at their best.

In the educational context, motivated teachers are known to have higher levels of job satisfaction, lower rates of absenteeism, and a stronger commitment to student achievement. Leithwood et al. (2020) contended that when teachers feel motivated, they are more likely to embrace school reforms, adapt to new teaching methods, and actively participate in school improvement initiatives. This underscores the importance of leadership strategies that prioritize teacher motivation as a means of achieving educational excellence.

On the contrary, lack of motivation among teachers can lead to a host of challenges, including poor teaching performance, high turnover rates, professional burnout, and low student achievement. Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010) reported that in Nigeria, many teachers experience demotivation due to factors such as inadequate leadership support, poor working conditions, limited recognition, and lack of professional growth opportunities. These issues highlight the pressing need for leadership practices that actively promote teacher motivation.

Teacher motivation is not a static attribute but a dynamic aspect that responds to the school environment, leadership practices, and personal experiences of teachers. Motivated teachers serve as role models for students, contribute positively to school culture, and are central to the success of educational

reforms. Therefore, fostering teacher motivation through effective leadership is essential for improving the quality of education and achieving institutional goals.

Aim of the Study

The aim of study is to examine how school leadership practices influence and enhance teachers' motivation.

Role of School Leadership in Teacher Development

School leadership plays a critical role in promoting teacher development, which is a key factor in enhancing teacher motivation and improving educational outcomes. Teacher development refers to the continuous process of acquiring new knowledge, refining teaching skills, and enhancing professional competencies necessary for effective classroom practice. Bush (2018) asserted that school leaders serve as facilitators of teacher development by creating supportive environments, providing access to professional learning opportunities, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

One of the most significant ways school leaders contribute to teacher development is by promoting access to professional development programs. Leithwood et al. (2020) affirmed that effective leaders organize workshops, training sessions, mentoring programs, and collaborative learning activities that help teachers update their skills and stay informed about innovative teaching practices. These activities not only enhance teachers' instructional capacities but also increase their confidence and motivation to perform their duties effectively.

Leadership also influences teacher development through the provision of constructive feedback and performance appraisal. Hallinger and Heck (2010) contended that when school leaders offer meaningful feedback and recognize teachers' efforts, it motivates them to improve and take ownership of their professional growth. Constructive feedback helps teachers identify areas of strength and aspects that require development, thereby fostering a sense of direction and purpose in their careers.

Moreover, school leaders play a role in creating a collaborative school culture where teachers engage in shared learning experiences and peer support. Nguni et al. (2006) reported that transformational leaders who encourage teamwork, open communication, and professional dialogue among teachers contribute significantly to their development. Such collaboration promotes reflective practice, collective problem-solving, and shared accountability, which are essential for professional growth and motivation.

Leadership practices that promote autonomy and involve teachers in decision-making processes also enhance teacher development. Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010) stated that when teachers are empowered to take part in key decisions affecting their work and professional growth, they develop a stronger sense of commitment and responsibility. This involvement not only boosts their motivation but also fosters leadership skills and confidence among teachers themselves.

In the Nigerian context, where professional development opportunities are sometimes limited, the role of school leadership becomes even more crucial. Olatunji (2015) reported that proactive school leaders who prioritize teacher development initiatives, despite resource constraints, often see improved teacher performance, reduced turnover, and better student outcomes. Such leaders make deliberate efforts to mentor teachers, support innovation, and create opportunities for continuous learning within the school environment.

Ultimately, school leadership is instrumental in shaping the professional journeys of teachers. By fostering an environment that values growth, collaboration, and continuous learning, school leaders not only enhance teacher motivation but also contribute to the overall improvement of the educational system. Teachers who are supported and encouraged by effective leadership are more likely to remain committed, perform optimally, and contribute meaningfully to student achievement and school success.

School Leadership Styles and Teacher Motivation

The leadership style adopted by school leaders plays a significant role in shaping teacher motivation, influencing how teachers perceive their work, their level of commitment, and their willingness to perform at their best. Leadership style refers to the approach and behavior a leader adopts in guiding, directing, and managing people within an organization. In the school environment, leadership style determines how school heads interact with teachers, manage school activities, and create a conducive atmosphere for professional growth and teaching effectiveness.

One of the most studied leadership styles in education is **transformational leadership**, which emphasizes vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Burns (1978) introduced this concept, asserting that transformational leaders inspire followers to transcend their personal interests for the sake of the organization. Nguni et al. (2006) affirmed that transformational school leaders positively influence teacher motivation by fostering trust, respect, and a sense of belonging. These leaders encourage innovation, support professional development, and recognize teachers' contributions, which in turn boosts teachers' morale and job satisfaction.

Transactional leadership is another common style where leaders focus on routine tasks, supervision, and performance-based rewards and punishments. Bass (1985) stated that while transactional leadership may help maintain order and achieve short-term goals, it often lacks the inspirational and motivational aspects necessary for long-term teacher commitment and development. Teachers working under purely transactional leaders may perform tasks to meet requirements but may lack intrinsic motivation and professional engagement.

Democratic or participative leadership style is characterized by involving teachers in decision-making processes, promoting open communication, and encouraging collaboration. According to Northouse

(2018), democratic leaders build a sense of ownership among teachers by valuing their input and involving them in shaping school policies and practices. This inclusive approach enhances teacher motivation, as teachers feel respected, heard, and integral to the school's success. Teachers who experience participative leadership are more likely to be committed, innovative, and satisfied with their roles.

On the contrary, **authoritarian or autocratic leadership** style involves centralized decision-making, strict control, and limited teacher autonomy. Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010) reported that authoritarian leadership often leads to teacher demotivation, low morale, and resistance to change. Teachers under authoritarian leaders may feel undervalued and disempowered, which negatively impacts their job performance and professional growth. This leadership style tends to foster a climate of fear rather than motivation and trust.

Laissez-faire leadership is a hands-off style where leaders provide minimal guidance and allow teachers to operate independently. While this style may work with highly experienced and self-motivated teachers, it often leads to confusion, lack of direction, and low motivation in structured school environments (Leithwood et al., 2020). Teachers in such settings may feel unsupported and disengaged, especially when faced with challenges that require leadership intervention.

In the Nigerian educational context, the impact of leadership styles on teacher motivation has been widely recognized. Olatunji (2015) reported that schools with leaders who adopt transformational and participative leadership styles experience higher levels of teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment compared to those led by authoritarian administrators.

Leadership Practices that Enhance Teacher Commitment

Teacher commitment is a crucial element in the success of any educational institution, as it reflects the degree to which teachers are dedicated to their profession, their students, and the overall goals of the school. Leadership practices significantly influence teacher commitment by shaping the work environment, fostering a sense of belonging, and supporting professional growth. According to Leithwood et al. (2020), leadership practices that prioritize teacher development, involvement, and recognition are essential in enhancing commitment and sustaining motivation.

One of the key leadership practices that foster teacher commitment is promoting participative decision-making. When school leaders actively involve teachers in important decisions related to curriculum planning, school policies, and classroom management, teachers feel valued and respected. Northouse (2018) contended that participative leadership builds a sense of ownership and accountability among teachers, which strengthens their commitment to the school and its objectives. This practice not only enhances motivation but also encourages collaborative problem-solving and innovation.

Providing professional development opportunities is another leadership practice that plays a significant role in boosting teacher commitment. Hallinger and Heck (2010) affirmed that leaders who invest in the continuous learning and growth of their teachers create a supportive environment where teachers feel empowered to improve their skills and advance in their careers. Opportunities such as workshops, mentoring programs, and collaborative learning sessions contribute to teachers' confidence, job satisfaction, and long-term commitment to the profession.

Recognition and appreciation of teachers' efforts are powerful motivators that drive commitment. Bush (2018) stated that school leaders who consistently recognize and reward the hard work, achievements, and contributions of their teachers foster a culture of appreciation and respect. Recognition does not always have to be monetary; even simple acts of acknowledgment can significantly boost morale and reinforce a teacher's sense of purpose and belonging within the school community.

Supportive leadership behavior, characterized by empathy, approachability, and responsiveness, also enhances teacher commitment. Nguni et al. (2006) affirmed that transformational leaders who demonstrate genuine concern for teachers' welfare and work-life balance are more likely to inspire loyalty and dedication. By creating a trusting and supportive work environment, leaders help teachers feel secure, valued, and motivated to give their best efforts consistently.

Setting a clear vision and communicating high expectations are leadership practices that positively impact teacher commitment. Burns (1978) asserted that leaders who articulate a compelling vision for the school and align it with shared values inspire teachers to commit to a common goal. When teachers understand the vision and see how their roles contribute to its achievement, they develop a stronger sense of commitment and responsibility.

In the Nigerian educational context, where teachers often face challenges such as inadequate resources and low remuneration, the role of leadership in enhancing commitment becomes even more critical. Ofojebe and Ezugoh (2010) reported that in schools where leaders practice open communication, fairness, and active support for teachers' needs, teachers tend to show higher levels of commitment despite prevailing systemic challenges.

Conclusion

In summary, school leadership plays a pivotal role in enhancing teacher motivation, which is essential for improving teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Effective leaders inspire teachers through clear vision, supportive supervision, participatory decision-making, recognition of efforts, and provision of professional development opportunities. When teachers feel valued, supported, and involved in school affairs, their job satisfaction and commitment increase significantly. Thus, the success of any educational institution is closely tied to the quality of its leadership and

the extent to which it motivates and empowers its teachers.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are hereby suggested that:

1. **Promote Participatory Leadership**: School leaders should adopt inclusive decision-making practices that involve teachers in key administrative and academic decisions, thereby fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.
2. **Provide Continuous Professional Development**: Regular training, workshops, and seminars should be organized to update teachers' knowledge and skills, boosting their confidence and enthusiasm for teaching.
3. **Ensure Timely Recognition and Reward**: Leaders should implement systems that recognize and reward teacher excellence, dedication, and innovation, which can significantly enhance morale and motivation.
4. **Create a Supportive Work Environment**: Leaders must cultivate a positive school climate where communication is open, resources are adequate, and teachers feel psychologically safe and supported.
5. **Strengthen Mentorship and Coaching**: Experienced teachers should be encouraged to mentor new staff, and school leaders should provide coaching to nurture professional growth and job satisfaction.
6. **Encourage Work-Life Balance**: Leadership should consider teachers' well-being by avoiding excessive workloads and promoting policies that allow for a healthy balance between personal and professional life.
7. **Conduct Regular Feedback Sessions**: School leaders should establish channels for regular feedback from teachers regarding leadership effectiveness, job challenges, and suggestions for improvement.
8. **Support for school leaders**: Education authorities and policymakers should support school leaders by providing adequate resources and training to effectively implement these motivational leadership practices.

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