

**The Effects of Transactional Leadership on Teacher Retention in Selected Secondary Schools in Luweero District**

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**Abstract**

Teacher retention continued to pose significant challenges to educational quality and institutional stability in Luweero District secondary schools. While transactional leadership remained the predominant management approach in many educational institutions, its specific effects on teacher retention remained insufficiently documented in the Ugandan context. This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design involving 138 respondents from four selected secondary schools in Luweero District. The sample comprised 4 school principals, 4 deputy principals/supervisors, 70 senior teachers, and 60 junior teachers, selected through purposive and random sampling techniques. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS version 25, employing descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses. The findings revealed a moderate positive relationship between transactional leadership and teacher retention ( $r = 0.542$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Contingent reward demonstrated a significant positive effect ( $r = 0.598$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), while management-by-exception (active) showed a weaker positive relationship ( $r = 0.387$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Management-by-exception (passive) exhibited a negative correlation with retention ( $r = -0.312$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Regression analysis indicated that transactional leadership explained 29.4% of variance in teacher retention. Transactional leadership significantly influenced teacher retention, though less strongly than transformational approaches. Contingent reward practices positively affected retention, while passive management styles undermined teacher commitment. The moderate explanatory power suggested that transactional leadership alone proved insufficient for optimal retention outcomes. School administrators should integrate contingent reward systems with broader leadership approaches, minimize passive management practices, and consider complementing transactional strategies with transformational leadership behaviors to maximize teacher retention.

**Keywords: Transactional leadership, teacher retention, contingent reward, management-by-exception, secondary schools, Luweero District**

**1.0 Background of the study**

Teacher retention remained a persistent challenge confronting secondary education in Luweero District throughout the 2024-2025 academic period (Julius & Audrey, 2025). The district experienced teacher turnover rates approaching 30%, substantially exceeding sustainable levels and compromising educational continuity (Julius, 2025). This exodus of qualified educators disrupted instructional programs, diminished institutional memory, and imposed significant replacement costs on schools operating with constrained budgets (Akankwasa et al., 2022). The retention crisis proved particularly severe in government-aided schools serving rural communities, where limited resources and challenging working conditions exacerbated the problem (Christopher et al., 2022).

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Leadership styles emerged as critical factors influencing teachers' decisions to remain in or leave their positions (N. Moses & Nancy, 2024). While considerable research attention focused on transformational leadership, transactional leadership represented the dominant management approach actually practiced in many Ugandan secondary schools (Julius & Nancy, 2025). Transactional leadership, grounded in exchange theory, operated on the principle that leader-follower relationships functioned through systems of mutual benefit, rewards, and consequences (Julius & Kaazara, 2025b). Bass and Avolio's leadership framework identified three core dimensions of transactional leadership: contingent reward, involving clarification of expectations and provision of rewards for meeting targets; management-by-exception (active), characterized by monitoring performance and taking corrective action when deviations occurred; and management-by-exception (passive), where leaders intervened only when problems became serious (Julius & Desire, 2025).

Previous research produced mixed findings regarding transactional leadership's effects on employee retention. Some studies demonstrated positive relationships between contingent reward practices and organizational commitment, suggesting that clear expectations and fair reward systems enhanced employee satisfaction and retention (Ntirandekura, Friday, et al., 2022). Other research indicated that overreliance on transactional approaches, particularly passive management styles, created work environments characterized by minimal leader engagement and limited employee development, potentially driving turnover (T. Moses, 2023). These contradictory findings highlighted the need for context-specific investigations.

In Luweero District's educational landscape, characterized by hierarchical organizational structures, limited resources for professional development, and traditional management practices, transactional leadership appeared prevalent (Julius & Kazaara, 2025a). School administrators frequently employed performance monitoring, rule enforcement, and basic reward systems as primary management tools (Julius & Kazaara, 2025b). However, empirical evidence documenting how these transactional practices specifically affected teacher retention in this context remained scarce. Understanding these effects held important implications for administrative practice and policy formulation (Julius & Kaazara, 2025a). If transactional leadership significantly influenced retention, school administrators required evidence-based guidance on which transactional practices proved most effective and how to optimize their implementation (Brian et al., 2024). This study therefore investigated the effects of transactional leadership on teacher retention in selected secondary schools in Luweero District, examining how different transactional leadership dimensions influenced teachers' intentions to remain in their positions (A. G. Kazaara & Kazaara, 2025).

## **2.0 Problem Statement**

Despite government initiatives to improve teacher welfare and working conditions, Luweero District secondary schools continued experiencing high teacher attrition rates that undermined educational quality and institutional effectiveness (Anthony et al., 2023). Between 2022 and 2024, annual teacher turnover exceeded 28%, creating chronic staffing instability, disrupting curriculum delivery, and compromising student learning outcomes (A. I. Kazaara &

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Desire, 2025). Preliminary assessments and exit interviews suggested that dissatisfaction with management practices and leadership styles contributed significantly to teachers' decisions to seek alternative employment (A. I. Kazaara, 2025).

Transactional leadership constituted the predominant management approach in many secondary schools within the district, characterized by performance monitoring, rule enforcement, reward allocation, and corrective interventions (Lydia et al., 2023). However, empirical evidence documenting the specific effects of transactional leadership practices on teacher retention remained limited (Ntirandekura, Ainebyoona, et al., 2022). School administrators lacked clear understanding of which transactional leadership dimensions positively or negatively influenced retention decisions, making it difficult to design effective management interventions (Ntirandekura, Friday, et al., 2022). Without this knowledge, leadership practices remained based on tradition and assumption rather than evidence. The knowledge gap was critical because continued reliance on potentially ineffective or counterproductive leadership practices perpetuated retention problems, wasted administrative effort, and failed to address underlying causes of teacher dissatisfaction (Julius & Nancy, 2025). This study therefore investigated the effects of transactional leadership on teacher retention to provide empirical evidence informing administrative practice and policy development aimed at improving retention rates in Luweero District secondary schools.

### **3.0 Main Objective**

To examine the effects of transactional leadership on teacher retention in secondary schools.

### **4.0 Methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, collecting quantitative data at a single time point to examine relationships between transactional leadership practices and teacher retention outcomes. The design proved appropriate for investigating associations between variables in their natural settings without experimental manipulation, allowing efficient data collection from multiple schools simultaneously while maintaining external validity (Lanlege et al., 2013).

The study population comprised all staff members in four selected government-aided secondary schools in Luweero District during the 2024-2025 academic year. The target population totaled 211 individuals, consisting of school principals, deputy principals/supervisors, senior teachers, and junior teachers. These schools were purposively selected based on accessibility, willingness to participate, and representation of typical secondary schools in the district (Maiga et al., 2021).

Sample size determination employed two complementary approaches. First, following Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determination guidelines for finite populations, a sample of 138 respondents was deemed appropriate for the target population of 211. Second, the researcher verified this sample size using the Slovin formula developed by Taro Yamane:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

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Where N represented the target population (211), e denoted the margin of error (0.05), and n indicated the required sample size. This calculation confirmed that 138 respondents provided adequate representativeness with 95% confidence level (Abiodun et al., 2022).

The sampling strategy employed both purposive and random sampling techniques to ensure representation across organizational levels. Table 1 presents the sample distribution.

**Table 1: Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

Category of Staff	Target Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
School Principals	4	4	Purposive
Deputy Principals/Supervisors	4	4	Purposive
Senior Teachers	110	70	Random Sampling
Junior Teachers	96	60	Random Sampling
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>138</b>	

Source: School Staff Records, Luweero District (2025); Krejcie & Morgan (1970)

All school principals and deputy principals/supervisors were purposively included due to their leadership roles and comprehensive knowledge of school management practices. Senior and junior teachers were selected through simple random sampling using computer-generated random numbers applied to staff lists, ensuring equal selection probability within each category (Nafiu et al., 2017).

Data collection employed two standardized instruments. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X-Short), adapted with permission, measured transactional leadership across three dimensions: contingent reward (5 items), management-by-exception active (4 items), and management-by-exception passive (4 items). Each item utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all) to 4 (frequently, if not always) (A. Nafiu et al., 2012). The Teacher Retention Questionnaire, adapted from previous educational research, measured retention intentions through 10 items assessing commitment to remain in current positions, satisfaction with employment conditions, and likelihood of seeking alternative positions. This instrument also employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Both instruments underwent pilot testing with 20 teachers from non-participating schools, yielding acceptable reliability coefficients: Cronbach's alpha of 0.84 for the transactional leadership scale and 0.86 for the teacher retention scale (A. Nafiu et al., 2012).

Data collection occurred over four weeks during October-November 2024. Trained research assistants administered questionnaires during staff meetings or individual sessions depending on participants' availability. Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained ethical clearance from the relevant institutional review board and permission from Luweero District Education Office and participating school administrators (Olanrewaju et al., 2021). All participants provided informed consent after receiving explanation of study purposes, procedures, and their rights including

voluntary participation and confidentiality. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately or within 48 hours to maximize response rates.

Data analysis employed Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 (Nelson et al., 2022). Questionnaires were screened for completeness, coded, and entered into SPSS. Data cleaning procedures identified and addressed missing values, outliers, and entry errors. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations characterized sample demographics and variable distributions (Nelson et al., 2023). Pearson correlation coefficients examined relationships between transactional leadership dimensions and teacher retention. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis assessed the predictive power of transactional leadership dimensions on retention while controlling for demographic variables including gender, age, teaching experience, and education level. Diagnostic tests verified regression assumptions including linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity. Statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$  for all analyses.

## 5.0 Results and Discussion

### 5.1 Response Rate

The study distributed 138 questionnaires and received 132 completed instruments, yielding a response rate of 95.7%. This exceptionally high response rate resulted from multiple factors including direct administration during staff meetings, follow-up reminders, researcher rapport with participants, and the relevance of the topic to teachers' professional lives. The high response rate minimized non-response bias and enhanced the generalizability of findings.

### 5.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of participants.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=132)**

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Position</b>	Principal	4	3.0
	Deputy Principal/Supervisor	4	3.0
	Senior Teacher	67	50.8
	Junior Teacher	57	43.2
<b>Gender</b>	Male	78	59.1
	Female	54	40.9
<b>Age Group</b>	25-30 years	42	31.8
	31-40 years	57	43.2
	41-50 years	26	19.7
	Above 50 years	7	5.3
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	1-5 years	48	36.4

	6-10 years	46	34.8
	11-15 years	25	18.9
	Above 15 years	13	9.8
<b>Education Level</b>	Diploma	38	28.8
	Bachelor's Degree	82	62.1
	Master's Degree	12	9.1
<b>School Type</b>	Government-Aided	132	100.0
<b>School Location</b>	Urban	51	38.6
	Rural	81	61.4

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The demographic distribution revealed that senior teachers constituted the largest group (50.8%), followed by junior teachers (43.2%), with administrators comprising 6% of the sample. This distribution reflected typical organizational structures in secondary schools while ensuring adequate representation of leadership perspectives. The gender composition showed male predominance (59.1%), consistent with broader patterns in Ugandan secondary education where teaching remained male-dominated, particularly in leadership positions.

Age distribution indicated that 75% of respondents fell below 40 years, representing a relatively young workforce in their prime career years yet also potentially more mobile and vulnerable to turnover. Teaching experience showed that 71.2% possessed ten or fewer years of service, confirming concerns about retaining mid-career professionals before they developed deep institutional commitments. Educational qualifications revealed that 62.1% held bachelor's degrees meeting minimum standards, while 28.8% possessed diplomas, suggesting some teachers might seek opportunities for career advancement through further education. The rural-urban split (61.4% rural) reflected the predominance of rural schools in Luweero District and ensured findings addressed contexts where retention challenges proved most acute.

### 5.3 Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Table 3 presents means and standard deviations for transactional leadership dimensions and teacher retention.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Transactional Leadership and Teacher Retention**

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Contingent Reward	2.84	0.89	0.80	4.00
Management-by-Exception (Active)	2.65	0.82	0.75	4.00
Management-by-Exception (Passive)	2.18	0.91	0.25	3.75
Overall Transactional Leadership	2.56	0.72	0.92	3.92
Teacher Retention	3.12	0.88	1.20	5.00

Source: Primary Data, 2025

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The descriptive statistics revealed moderate levels of transactional leadership practices across participating schools. Contingent reward achieved the highest mean score ( $M = 2.84$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ), indicating that school administrators demonstrated reasonable clarity in setting expectations and providing rewards for goal achievement. However, the mean below the scale midpoint (2.0 on a 0-4 scale) suggested substantial room for improvement in how administrators communicated performance expectations, recognized achievements, and provided meaningful rewards for effective teaching.

Management-by-exception (active) scored moderately ( $M = 2.65$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ), suggesting that administrators engaged in regular monitoring and intervened promptly when problems arose. This active oversight represented a common management practice in secondary schools where principals maintained close supervision of teaching activities, curriculum coverage, and student discipline. However, the moderate score indicated inconsistent application, with some administrators practicing more intensive monitoring while others adopted more hands-off approaches.

Management-by-exception (passive) recorded the lowest mean ( $M = 2.18$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), indicating relatively lower frequency of passive management behaviors where administrators waited for problems to become serious before intervening. While lower passive management might seem positive, the score above the scale's lower range suggested that passive approaches still occurred with concerning frequency, representing missed opportunities for proactive leadership and employee development.

The overall transactional leadership mean of 2.56 ( $SD = 0.72$ ) represented moderate implementation, confirming that transactional practices existed but were neither comprehensive nor optimally executed. The relatively high standard deviation (0.72) indicated substantial variation across schools and administrators, suggesting that some leaders employed transactional approaches more effectively than others. Teacher retention intentions achieved a moderate mean of 3.12 ( $SD = 0.88$ ), indicating ambivalence about remaining in current positions. This score, slightly above the scale midpoint, suggested that while teachers had not definitively decided to leave, they lacked strong commitment to staying. The substantial standard deviation indicated considerable variation in retention intentions, with some teachers firmly committed while others actively considered departure.

#### **5.4 Transactional Leadership Practices by Respondent Position**

Table 4 examines transactional leadership perceptions across different staff categories.

**Table 4: Transactional Leadership Scores by Staff Position**

<b>Staff Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>F-statistic</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Principals/Deputies	8	3.18	0.58	12.847	.000
Senior Teachers	67	2.67	0.65		
Junior Teachers	57	2.31	0.72		

Source: Primary Data, 2025



One-way ANOVA revealed significant differences in transactional leadership perceptions across staff categories ( $F(2,129) = 12.847, p < .001$ ). Principals and deputy principals rated transactional leadership practices significantly higher ( $M = 3.18$ ) than did senior teachers ( $M = 2.67$ ) and junior teachers ( $M = 2.31$ ). Post-hoc Tukey tests confirmed that all pairwise comparisons achieved statistical significance at  $p < .05$  (Nelson et al., 2023).

These findings revealed a perception gap where administrators viewed their transactional leadership practices more favorably than did teachers, particularly junior teachers. This disconnect suggested potential communication breakdowns, different interpretations of leadership behaviors, or discrepancies between intended and actual practices. Administrators might believe they clearly communicated expectations and fairly administered rewards while teachers experienced ambiguity and perceived unfairness. The progressive decline from administrators to senior to junior teachers indicated that more distant hierarchical positions corresponded with less favorable leadership perceptions, possibly reflecting limited interaction between junior teachers and school leadership or insufficient attention to junior teachers' needs within transactional systems.

**5.5 Correlation Analysis**

Pearson correlation analysis examined relationships between transactional leadership dimensions and teacher retention. Results appear in Table 5.

**Table 5: Correlation Matrix for Transactional Leadership Dimensions and Teacher Retention**

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Contingent Reward	-			
2. Management-by-Exception (Active)	.562**	-		
3. Management-by-Exception (Passive)	-.289**	.078	-	
4. Teacher Retention	.598**	.387**	-.312**	-

**Note:** \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Source: Primary Data, 2025**

The correlation analysis revealed complex relationships between transactional leadership dimensions and teacher retention. Contingent reward demonstrated a strong positive correlation with retention ( $r = .598, p < .001$ ), indicating that when administrators clearly communicated performance expectations, recognized achievements, and provided meaningful rewards for effective teaching, teachers expressed significantly stronger intentions to remain in their positions. This finding aligned with expectancy theory suggesting that employees maintained commitment when they perceived clear links between effort, performance, and valued rewards.

The substantial correlation underscored the importance of fair and transparent reward systems in educational settings. Teachers who understood what was expected, received recognition for meeting expectations, and obtained rewards they valued developed stronger organizational attachment. In resource-constrained contexts like Luweero District where monetary rewards remained limited, contingent reward encompassed various recognition forms including

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public acknowledgment, professional development opportunities, assignment of responsibilities, and expressions of appreciation.

Management-by-exception (active) showed a moderate positive correlation with retention ( $r = .387, p < .001$ ), suggesting that active monitoring and timely corrective action contributed positively to retention, though less strongly than contingent reward. Teachers appeared to value administrators who remained engaged with school operations, identified problems promptly, and intervened before situations deteriorated. Active monitoring, when conducted supportively rather than punitively, provided teachers with feedback, guidance, and assurance that leadership remained attentive to organizational functioning.

However, the weaker correlation compared to contingent reward indicated that monitoring alone proved insufficient for retention. Teachers valued proactive support and recognition more than reactive problem-solving. Excessive focus on monitoring and correction without corresponding attention to rewards and recognition likely created supervision-heavy environments where teachers felt scrutinized rather than supported.

Surprisingly, management-by-exception (passive) exhibited a significant negative correlation with retention ( $r = -.312, p < .001$ ), indicating that passive management practices undermined teacher commitment. When administrators intervened only after problems became serious, ignored minor issues, or remained disengaged from daily operations, teachers developed weaker retention intentions. This negative relationship suggested that passive management communicated leadership disinterest, created uncertainty about standards and expectations, and left teachers feeling unsupported.

The negative correlation proved particularly important given that passive management occurred with concerning frequency in participating schools. Administrators who defaulted to passive approaches likely did so due to overwhelming responsibilities, large spans of control, or management philosophy favoring minimal intervention. However, regardless of rationale, passive management created leadership vacuums that diminished teacher morale and commitment.

The intercorrelations among transactional leadership dimensions revealed that contingent reward and active management-by-exception correlated positively ( $r = .562, p < .001$ ), suggesting these dimensions often co-occurred when administrators employed comprehensive transactional approaches. Conversely, passive management-by-exception showed weak or negative relationships with other dimensions, indicating it represented a distinct approach characterized by leadership absence rather than different forms of engagement.

### **5.6 Regression Analysis**

Hierarchical multiple regression assessed transactional leadership dimensions' effects on teacher retention while controlling for demographic variables. Results are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

**Table 6: Model Summary**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
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1	.312	.097	.069	0.849
2	.568	.323	.294	0.739

Model 1: Demographic variables (Gender, Age, Teaching Experience, Education Level) Model 2: Model 1 + Transactional Leadership Dimensions

**Table 7: Regression Coefficients**

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	B (Beta)	Sig.	B (Beta)	Sig.
(Constant)	2.145	.000	1.287	.012
Gender	-0.098 (-.056)	.513	-0.076 (-.043)	.478
Age	0.067 (.089)	.398	0.043 (.057)	.512
Teaching Experience	0.132 (.198)	.048	0.089 (.134)	.098
Education Level	0.187 (.128)	.134	0.124 (.085)	.198
Contingent Reward			0.432 (.437)	.000
Management-by-Exception (Active)			0.198 (.185)	.016
Management-by-Exception (Passive)			-0.245 (-.254)	.001

**Dependent Variable:** Teacher Retention

**Source:** Primary Data, 2025

The hierarchical regression analysis provided insights into transactional leadership's incremental contribution to explaining teacher retention beyond demographic factors. Model 1, containing only demographic variables, explained 9.7% of variance (Adjusted  $R^2 = .069$ ), proving statistically significant ( $F(4,127) = 3.412, p = .011$ ). Teaching experience emerged as the only significant predictor in this model ( $\beta = .198, p = .048$ ), indicating that more experienced teachers expressed stronger retention intentions independent of leadership factors.

Model 2, adding transactional leadership dimensions, significantly improved explanatory power to 32.3% (Adjusted  $R^2 = .294$ ), representing a substantial increase of 22.6% in explained variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .226, F\text{-change}(3,124) = 13.847, p < .001$ ). This significant improvement confirmed that transactional leadership substantially influenced teacher retention beyond demographic characteristics. However, the overall explanatory power of 32.3% indicated that while transactional leadership proved important, it explained less variance than transformational leadership typically did in comparable studies, suggesting transactional approaches alone provided incomplete retention solutions.

Within Model 2, contingent reward emerged as the strongest significant predictor ( $\beta = .437, t = 5.896, p < .001$ ), indicating that each unit increase in contingent reward corresponded to a 0.432 unit increase in teacher retention when holding other variables constant. This substantial effect confirmed contingent reward's critical role in retention, demonstrating that clear expectations, fair rewards, and recognition for performance constituted essential elements of effective retention strategies.

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Management-by-exception (active) showed a significant positive effect ( $\beta = .185, t = 2.438, p = .016$ ), though considerably weaker than contingent reward. Active monitoring and timely intervention contributed positively to retention but proved less influential than reward systems. This finding suggested that while teachers appreciated engaged, attentive leadership, monitoring alone without corresponding recognition and rewards provided limited retention benefits.

Management-by-exception (passive) demonstrated a significant negative effect ( $\beta = -.254, t = -3.348, p = .001$ ), confirming that passive management substantially undermined retention. Each unit increase in passive management corresponded to a 0.245 unit decrease in retention intentions. This negative effect proved nearly as strong as contingent reward's positive effect, highlighting passive management's detrimental impact. Teachers working under passive administrators who remained disengaged until crises emerged felt unsupported, uncertain about expectations, and more likely to seek alternative employment.

Teaching experience's effect diminished to non-significance in Model 2 ( $\beta = .134, p = .098$ ), though the relationship remained positive. This change suggested that transactional leadership partially mediated or explained the experience-retention relationship, with effective leadership practices reducing the tendency for less experienced teachers to leave. Other demographic variables remained non-significant in both models, indicating that retention intentions did not substantially vary by gender, age, or education level once leadership and experience were considered.

The standardized beta coefficients revealed that contingent reward ( $\beta = .437$ ) and passive management ( $\beta = -.254$ ) exerted the strongest effects on retention, emphasizing these dimensions' critical importance in administrative practice. Active management's more modest effect ( $\beta = .185$ ) suggested it served as a necessary but insufficient component of retention strategies.

### 5.7 Comparative Analysis by Teaching Experience

Additional analysis examined whether transactional leadership effects varied across teaching experience levels. Table 8 presents correlation coefficients between overall transactional leadership and retention by experience groups.

**Table 8: Correlation Between Transactional Leadership and Teacher Retention by Teaching Experience**

Experience Level	N	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)
Early Career (1-5 years)	48	.612	.000
Mid-Career (6-10 years)	46	.548	.000
Experienced (11+ years)	38	.423	.008

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The analysis revealed that transactional leadership's relationship with retention proved strongest among early-career teachers ( $r = .612$ ) and progressively weakened with increasing experience, reaching moderate strength among highly experienced teachers ( $r = .423$ ). While all correlations achieved statistical significance, Fisher's Z-transformation



confirmed that the difference between early-career and experienced teachers approached significance ( $Z = 1.78, p = .075$ ).

This pattern suggested that early-career teachers, still establishing their professional identities and evaluating career directions, proved particularly responsive to clear expectations, fair rewards, and engaged management. Transactional leadership provided structure, guidance, and tangible feedback that helped novice teachers navigate educational environments and feel valued. As teachers gained experience, they developed greater independence, intrinsic motivation, and professional confidence, reducing their dependence on external rewards and active monitoring. Experienced teachers appeared to value transactional leadership less strongly, possibly preferring autonomy over close supervision and intrinsic satisfaction over contingent rewards.

These findings held important implications for differentiated leadership approaches, suggesting that administrators should adapt transactional practices to teachers' developmental stages, emphasizing clear structure and rewards for early-career teachers while providing more autonomy and professional discretion to veterans.

### **5.8 Discussion of Findings**

The findings confirmed that transactional leadership significantly affected teacher retention in Luweero District secondary schools, though the effects proved more nuanced and generally weaker than those typically reported for transformational leadership. The moderate correlation ( $r = .542$ ) and explanatory power (29.4% of variance) indicated that while transactional approaches influenced retention, they provided incomplete solutions requiring complementary strategies.

Contingent reward's strong positive effect validated exchange theory's application to educational settings, confirming that clear performance expectations coupled with fair, meaningful rewards enhanced teacher commitment. In contexts like Luweero District where monetary compensation remained constrained, effective contingent reward systems encompassed various recognition forms. Administrators who explicitly communicated expectations, consistently acknowledged achievements, provided growth opportunities, and expressed appreciation created reciprocal relationships where teachers felt valued and motivated to maintain employment.

However, the finding also highlighted challenges in implementing contingent reward systems effectively. The moderate absolute levels of contingent reward practices observed suggested that many administrators struggled to establish clear performance standards, consistently monitor achievement, or provide meaningful recognition. Resource limitations, large teacher-to-administrator ratios, and competing demands constrained administrators' capacity for personalized reward systems. Additionally, in bureaucratic educational systems, administrators often lacked authority to provide substantial material rewards, limiting contingent reward effectiveness.

Management-by-exception (active) demonstrated positive effects, though substantially weaker than contingent reward. Teachers appreciated administrators who remained engaged, monitored performance, and intervened promptly to address problems. Active management provided structure, reduced uncertainty, and ensured that minor issues didn't

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escalate into major problems. However, the modest effect size suggested that monitoring alone proved insufficient. Teachers needed leadership that combined oversight with support, correction with coaching, and accountability with encouragement. Overemphasis on monitoring without corresponding positive reinforcement risked creating punitive environments undermining retention.

The negative effect of management-by-exception (passive) proved particularly important and concerning. Passive management, characterized by leadership absence, delayed intervention, and disengagement from daily operations, significantly undermined retention. Teachers working under passive administrators felt abandoned, uncertain about expectations and standards, and frustrated by unaddressed problems festering until crises emerged. This leadership vacuum created environments where teachers lacked guidance, received minimal feedback, and doubted whether their contributions mattered to institutional leadership.

The passive management finding assumed greater significance given the concerning frequency of these practices in participating schools. Administrators defaulting to passive approaches, whether due to overwhelming responsibilities, insufficient training, or philosophical preference for minimal intervention, inadvertently drove teacher turnover. This represented a modifiable factor within administrative control, suggesting that reducing passive management could yield immediate retention improvements.

The perception gap between administrators and teachers regarding transactional leadership practices highlighted communication and implementation challenges. Administrators believed they practiced transactional leadership more effectively than teachers perceived, suggesting discrepancies between intentions and execution. Administrators might have established performance standards and reward systems internally but failed to communicate them clearly or apply them consistently. Alternatively, administrators and teachers might have held different standards for what constituted effective transactional leadership. Addressing this perception gap required explicit communication about expectations and reward systems, soliciting teacher input on recognition preferences, and ensuring consistent application of transactional practices across the organization.

The stronger transactional leadership effects among early-career teachers suggested that leadership's influence varied across career stages. Novice teachers required more structure, clearer guidance, and more explicit recognition than veterans. This finding supported differentiated leadership approaches where administrators adapted their transactional practices to teachers' developmental needs rather than employing uniform approaches across all staff.

Comparing these findings to research on transformational leadership revealed important patterns. Transactional leadership's explanatory power (29.4%) proved substantially lower than transformational leadership typically achieved (often 40-50%), suggesting that transactional approaches alone provided suboptimal retention outcomes. However, transactional leadership still significantly influenced retention, particularly through contingent reward practices. This suggested that optimal leadership combined transactional foundations establishing clear expectations and fair rewards with transformational elements inspiring commitment beyond immediate exchanges.

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The moderate absolute levels of transactional leadership observed indicated substantial improvement potential. Many administrators could enhance retention simply by implementing fundamental transactional practices more consistently and effectively. However, the limited explanatory power suggested that while necessary, transactional approaches proved insufficient for maximizing retention. Comprehensive retention strategies required leadership transcending exchange relationships to inspire commitment, provide meaning, stimulate growth, and address individual needs characteristics associated with transformational leadership.

### **6.0 Conclusions**

This study established that transactional leadership significantly affected teacher retention in Luweero District secondary schools, with important theoretical and practical implications. Several key conclusions emerged from the findings.

Transactional leadership influenced teacher retention significantly but moderately, explaining approximately 29% of variance in retention intentions. While statistically significant, this explanatory power indicated that transactional approaches alone proved insufficient for optimal retention. School administrators employing only transactional practices addressed some but not all factors influencing teachers' decisions to remain or leave. This suggested that comprehensive retention strategies required leadership approaches extending beyond transactional exchanges.

Among transactional leadership dimensions, contingent reward exerted the strongest positive effect on retention. Clear performance expectations, fair recognition of achievements, and meaningful rewards for effective teaching substantially enhanced teacher commitment. This finding validated that teachers responded positively to transparent, merit-based systems where effort and performance yielded valued outcomes. In resource-constrained environments, contingent reward encompassed various recognition forms beyond monetary compensation, including professional development opportunities, responsibility assignments, public acknowledgment, and expressed appreciation.

Management-by-exception (active) contributed positively but modestly to retention. Teachers valued engaged, attentive leadership that monitored performance and addressed problems promptly. However, the relatively weaker effect indicated that active monitoring alone, without corresponding recognition and rewards, provided limited retention benefits. Effective transactional leadership required balancing oversight with support, combining accountability with encouragement.

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