

Head Teachers' Transactional Leadership Styles And Teachers' Job Commitment: A Case Of Primary Schools In Bundbuyo District, Uganda

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Abstract

The study examined the effect of head teachers' transactional leadership style on the teachers' job commitment in primary schools in Bundbuyo district, Uganda. A total of one hundred and forty-seven (147) respondents including 7 head teachers and 140 teachers were selected. The research instrument used to collect data for the study was questionnaire and the study used quantitative data analysis technique. Reliability of the instrument was established with the use of pilot study and the value of 0.983 and validity was determined through face and content validity with a CVI value of 0.825. One hundred and forty-seven (147) sets of questionnaire were administered to head teachers and teachers in the seven (7) selected government primary schools in Bundbuyo district. However, ninety (95) sets of questionnaire were returned. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics including Pearson correlation coefficients and regression analysis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study showed a significant positive relationship between transactional leadership styles and teachers' job commitment. Basing on the findings, the study therefore recommends that the head teachers should also have their own visions and development plans for teachers, working in groups and champion team work Spirit.

Keywords: Leadership, Transactional, Job Performance, Head Teacher.

Introduction

Leadership is the process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse2014). While leadership style is the pattern of interactions between *leaders and subordinates*, Crosby (2009). Leadership style according to this study refers to the transformational, transitional and laissez faire patterns of interactions between head teachers and teachers in the primary schools. The study considers head teachers' transactional leadership style as used in primary schools in Bundbuyo district, Uganda. Transactional leadership style uses reward and punishment in order to achieve compliance from followers, Bass (2009).

According to Holdford (2013), transactional leadership style motivates people to work through the use of reward and punishment. This suggests that leaders should accord serious attention to it. In primary schools in Bundbuyo district there are no clear procedures of reward and punishment especially rewards like certificates awards, praise, promotions, handshakes, recognitions and training among others. Each School practices its own criteria of reward when they wish to do it. This is likely to impact negatively on teachers' job commitment and generally school performance. This therefore points to the need to determine the views and opinions of the head teachers

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and teachers concerning the issue of leadership styles of head teachers vis-a-vis teachers' job commitment given the current complexity of the education system. Douglas theory Y and theory X believes that transactional leadership can be compared with theory X where managers need to rule by fear and consequences. In this style negative behavior is punishment and employees are motivated through incentives. Functional leadership theory (Hackman & Wageman, 1995; McGrath, 1962), argues that the leader's main job is taken care of, thus, a leader can be said to have done their job well when they have contributed to group effectiveness and cohesion.

Both propositions suggest that motivation is an important ingredient in transactional leadership that leads to employee job commitment. However, they both fail to address the issue of the relationship between Head teachers' transactional leadership and teachers' job commitment specifically on, teacher preparation of schemes of work and lesson plans, provision of guidance and counseling services to learners and attendance to duty, a thing the researcher is set to do. Basing on the above scenario, the relationship between Head teachers' transactional leadership style and teachers' job commitment should be characterized by leadership working within the school centre, employees achieving objectives through rewards and punishments set by the leader, management-by-exception: maintain status quo; stressing correct actions to improve performance and motivating employees by appealing to their own self-interests.

Bass and Avolio (2013) suggest that characteristics of transactional leadership consist of two aspects, namely contingent reward and exception management. Contingent reward is where leaders make agreement about what must subordinate do and promising reward obtained when goal is achieved. While exception management is where a leader monitors deviations from established standards and take corrective action to achieve organizational goals. Yukl (2007) asserts that transactional leadership style is the one that emphasizes on transaction between leaders and subordinates. Transactional Leaders motivates and influence subordinates by exchanging reward with a particular performance. In a transaction the subordinate is promised to be given rewards when subordinate is able to complete their duties in accordance with agreements. In other words, he encourages subordinates to work. Transactional leadership styles can affect positively or negatively on employee commitment. It depends on employee assessment. Positive effect can occur when employees assess transactional leadership positively and a negative effect can occur if employee considers that transactional leadership styles cannot be trusted because they do not keep their promises, dishonest or not transparent (Sundi, 2013).

Bass (2015) described transactional leadership in terms of two characteristics; the use of contingent rewards and management by exception. He described contingent reward as the reward that the leader will bestow on the subordinate once the latter achieves goals that were agreed to. Contingent reward is, therefore, the exchange of rewards for meeting agreed

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on objectives. By making fulfillment of promises of recognition, pay increase and advancements for employees who perform well, the transactional leader is able to get things done. Bass (2015) therefore argues that by providing contingent rewards, a Transactional Leader might inspire a reasonable degree of involvement, loyalty and commitment from subordinates.

These definitions agree that transactional leadership is the use of rewards and punishments in order to achieve compliance from followers. And that transactional leader seeks to maintain the status quo not aiming for progress. However, they ignore the importance of articulating explicit agreements regarding what the leader expects from organizational members and how they will be rewarded for their efforts and commitment and provide constructive feedback to keep everybody on tasks which are considered useful ingredients of transactional leadership. The researcher in this study is set to address this.

According to Douglas (1992) transactional leadership is where the managers need to rule by fear and confidence. This implies that committed employees are less likely to develop partners of tardiness or to be chronically absent from work (DevenPort, 2010). Gbadamosi (2013) contends that the more favorable individuals' attitudes towards the organization the greater the individual acceptance of the goals of the organization as well as their willingness to exert more efforts on behalf of the organization. Employees who are committed are also more likely to attain: professional development, adequate teacher preparation, high morale in providing adequate

Guidance and Counseling Services to students and get more involved in School Management Activities.

Basing on the above definitions, the operational definition of transactional leadership style can be derived from Bass (2008) and Nyengane (2007). That transactional leadership is the type of leadership style where the head teacher uses rewards and punishment to ensure that the teachers adequately prepare schemes of work and lesson plans before they enter to school to teach, meaningfully involved in Guidance and Counseling of the learners and effectively and willingly attend to their professional duty. This definition is considered appropriate because head teachers are entrusted with the task of promoting quality standards in primary schools and enforce the observance of teachers' professional code of conduct (Legal Notice, 2012).

Several theories have been advanced to describe the relationship between head teachers' transactional leadership style and teachers' job commitment. According to the path-goal theory (1971), transactional leaders are expected to set goals, articulate explicit agreements regarding what a leader expects from organizational members and how they will be rewarded for their efforts and commitment, and provide constructive feedback and to keep everybody on task (Vera & Crossan, 2014). While Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs theory suggests that Transactional Leadership works at the basic levels of needs satisfaction, where transactional leaders focus on the lower level needs of the hierarchy. He adds that transactional leaders use an exchange model with

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rewards given for good work or positive outcomes and
punish poor work or negative outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Whereas head teachers' leadership has been considered as being crucial in determining teachers' job commitment, the challenge is that it is a difficult and complicated process and not simple to directly associate with commitment. Atim (2015), reported that 40% and 15% of teachers in urban and rural schools respectively had schemes of work and approved lesson plans. In addition, the Directorate of Education Standards Report (2022) indicated that, 61% of the teachers in Bundbuyo district primary schools attend to their duties regularly and out of which only 40% report to their duty stations before 8:30am. Unless this trend is drastically reversed, more than 20% of the students who register for PLE will continue failing examinations. Bukenya (2015) ranked primary schools in Bundbuyo district in 2022 PLE results and found they were in the bottom of list. It is also true that unless the Head teacher is keen, it may be difficult to realize the goals of the school. A primary school head teacher as a leader plays a strategic role in activating other school organs to function. Although the Ministry of Education and Sports has developed Training Manuals that could be used to enhance the competencies of head teachers, Board of Governors and teachers in administrative and supervisory positions in leadership for better school management, teachers' job commitment is still questionable in most primary schools in Uganda (Nassali, 2014). There is need to better establish the effect of head teachers' transactional leadership style on the teachers' job commitment in primary schools in Bundbuyo district, Uganda.

Objective

To examine relationship between head teachers' transactional leadership styles and teachers' job commitment.

Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant relationship between head teachers' transactional leadership style and teachers' job commitment.

Methodology

This study used descriptive and cross-sectional survey research design which involved quantitative method of data collections. The sample comprised of the head teachers and teachers of selected primary schools in Bundbuyo district. The respondents were composed of 7 head teachers and 140 teachers totaling 147 respondents and were selected because of their unique roles in the primary schools' education system. The study used questionnaires tool for collecting data. The selection of this tool was guided by the nature of the data that was collected, and the objectives of this study. The researcher was mainly concerned with the views, opinions, perceptions and feelings and attitudes, such information was best collected through the use of questionnaire technique (Bell, 1993, Touliatos and Compton 1988).

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The value of CVI obtained, which is a measure of the validity of the instrument, was interpreted basing on George and Mallery (2003) scale. Accordingly, a value of 0.825 obtained is greater than the Standard Value of 0.7 which indicates that the items were extremely relevant for the kind of data that was needed by the study.

The calculated value of reliability was 0.983 as given in appendix IV. This value indicates a good degree of reliability of the entire questionnaire, as supported by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) and George and Mallery (2003). Hence, it is proved that the questionnaire is reliable and suitable for the study.

The results of reliability and validity analyses are as presented in the Table 1:

Table 1: Reliability Value and Content Validity Index

S/N	Variables	No of Items	Reliability Value	Content Validity Index
1	Transactional leadership styles	11	.941	0.732
2	Teachers' job commitment	14	.957	0.703
	Overall	26	.983	0.825

Source: Researcher (2024)

Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: My leader has a firm believer in “if it isn’t broken, don’t fix it”

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	17	17.9
AGREE	24	25.3
NOT SURE	6	6.3
DISAGREE	48	50.5
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0.0
Total	95	100.0

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

The results in Table 2 show that simple majority (50.5%) of the respondents were in disagreement that leaders have firm beliefs in “if it isn’t broke, don’t fix it ” while 43.2% were in agreement and 6.3% were undecided. This implies that Head teachers do not have firm beliefs in “if it isn’t broken, don’t fix it”.

Table 3: My leader always waits for the things to go wrong before taking action

	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	10	10.5
AGREE	27	28.4
NOT SURE	6	6.3

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DISAGREE	52	54.7
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0.0
Total	95	100.0

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

The results in Table 3 show that simple majority (54.7%) of the respondents were in disagreement that leaders always wait for things to go wrong before taking action while 38.9% were in agreement and 6.3% were undecided. This implies that Head teachers do not always wait for things to go wrong before taking action.

Table 4: My leader fails to step in before the problem becomes serious

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	39	41.1
AGREE	0	0.0
NOT SURE	7	7.4
DISAGREE	17	17.9
STRONGLY DISAGREE	32	33.7
Total	95	100.0

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

The results in Table 4 show that simple majority (51.6%) of the respondents were in disagreement that leaders fail to step in before the problem becomes serious while 41.1% were in agreement and 7.4% were undecided. This implies that Head teachers do not fail to step in before the problem becomes serious.

Table 5: My leader steps in only when problems arise

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	15	15.8
AGREE	47	49.5
NOT SURE	5	5.3
DISAGREE	28	29.5
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0.0
Total	95	100.0

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

The results in Table 5 show that simple majority (65.3%) of the respondents was in agreement that leaders step in only when problems arise while 29.5% were in disagreement and 5.3% were undecided. This implies that Head teachers step in only when problems arise.

Table 6: My leader always keeps track of all mistakes for teachers

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	9	9.5
AGREE	39	41.1
NOT SURE	7	7.4
DISAGREE	40	42.1
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	0.0
Total	95	100.0

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

The results in Table 6 show that simple majority (50.6%) of the respondents were in agreement that leaders always keep track of all mistakes for teachers while 42.1% were in disagreement and 7.4% were undecided. This implies that Head teachers always keep track of all mistakes for teachers.

Table 7: My leader records mistakes and exceptions from standards and takes measures to correct them

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	8	8.4
AGREE	47	49.5
NOT SURE	6	6.3
DISAGREE	1	1.1
STRONGLY DISAGREE	33	34.7
Total	95	100.0

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

The results in Table 7 show that simple majority (57.9%) of the respondents were in agreement that leaders record mistakes and exceptions from standards and takes measures to correct them while 35.8% were in disagreement and 6.3% were undecided. This implies that Head teachers record mistakes and exceptions from standards and takes measures to correct them.

Table 8: My leader specifies the standards for compliance and what constitutes ineffective performance

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	31	32.6

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AGREE	37	38.9
NOT SURE	7	7.5
DISAGREE	12	12.6
STRONGLY DISAGREE	8	8.4
Total	95	100.0

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

The results in Table 8 show that majority (71.5%) of the respondents were in agreement that leaders specify the standards for compliance and what constitutes ineffective performance while 21.0% were in disagreement and 7.5% were undecided. This implies that Head teachers specify the standards for compliance and what constitutes ineffective performance.

Table 9: My leader keenly observes employee's performance

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	65	68.4
AGREE	11	11.6
NOT SURE	7	7.4
DISAGREE	8	8.4
STRONGLY DISAGREE	4	4.2
Total	95	100.0

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

The results in Table 9 show that majority (80.0%) of the respondents were in agreement that leaders keenly observe employees' performances while 12.6% were in disagreement and 7.4% were undecided. This implies that Head teachers keenly observe teachers' performances.

Table 10: My leader provides me with the rewards in exchange of my efforts

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	41	43.2
AGREE	34	35.8
NOT SURE	11	11.6
DISAGREE	3	3.2
STRONGLY DISAGREE	6	6.3
Total	95	100.0

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

The results in Table 10 show that majority (79.0%) of the respondents was in agreement that leaders provide them with the rewards in exchange of their efforts while 9.5% were in disagreement and 11.6% were undecided. This implies that Head teachers provide teachers with the rewards in exchange of their efforts.

Table 11: My leader clarifies the expectations and provides recognition when goals are achieved

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	51	53.7
AGREE	24	25.3
NOT SURE	12	12.6
DISAGREE	5	5.3
STRONGLY DISAGREE	3	3.2
Total	95	100.0

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

The results in Table 11 show that majority (79.0%) of the respondents was in agreement that leaders clarify the expectations and provides recognition when goals are achieved while 8.5% were in disagreement and 12.6% were undecided. This implies that Head teachers clarify the expectations and provides recognition when goals are achieved by the teachers.

Table 12: My leader motivates me to achieve the targets

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	61	64.2
AGREE	15	15.8
NOT SURE	13	13.7
DISAGREE	0	0.0
STRONGLY DISAGREE	6	6.3
Total	95	100.0

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

The results in Table 12 show that majority (80.0%) of the respondents were in agreement that leaders motivate them to achieve the targets while 6.3% were in disagreement and 13.7% were undecided. This implies that Head teachers motivate their Teachers to achieve the targets.

Correlation Analysis

The study aims at examining the effect of transactional leadership style on teachers' job commitment in primary schools.

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Table 13: Pearson’s Product-moment Correlations between Leadership Styles (LS), Transformational leadership styles (TLS), Transactional leadership styles (TRLS), and Laissez faire leadership styles (LFLS) and teachers’ job commitment (TJC).

	TJC	TLS	TRLS	LFLS	LS
TJC	1.000				
TLS	.901	1.000			
TRLS	.928	.713	1.000		
LFLS	.910	.966	.739	1.000	
LS	.987	.939	.910	.938	1.000

Source: Results of the Analysis (2024)

From Table 13, the relationship between Leadership Styles (LS) (as measured by its subscales of TLS, TRLS, and LFLS), and teachers’ job commitment (TJC) was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality and linearity homoscedasticity. To judge the strength threshold provided for by Cohen (1988) was used. Accordingly, when $r = .10$ to $.29$, the relationship is weak; when it is between $r = .30$ to $.49$, it is median; and if it is $r = .50$ to 1.0 large (strong). The results further indicate that all the relationships investigated are strong and positive as all of them are above $.5$ (p value $< .05$). For the case of general objective (i.e. the relationship between LS and TJC, there was strong positive relation found between the variables ($r = .987^{**}$, $p < .01$). There was also a strong relationship between TLS and TJC ($r = .901^{**}$, $p < .01$); and other relationships include: TRLS and TJC ($.928^{**}$, $p < .01$) and LFLS and TJC ($r = .910^{**}$, $p < .01$).

Regression Analysis

To assess fitness of data to explain the variance in the dependent variable (teachers’ job commitment (TJC)), standard Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was performed. Initially, all the components of Leadership Styles (LS) i.e. TLS, TRLS, and LFLS were all included in the model as independent variables.

Table 14: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B
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	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Constant	6.335	.461		13.743	.000	5.420	7.251
TLS	.381	.006	.987	58.886	.000	.368	.393
TRLS	.260	.046	.673	5.632	.000	.168	.351
LFLS	.113	.083	.100	1.363	.176	-.052	.278

Dependent Variable: JOB COMMITMENT

TLS is Transformational leadership styles

TRLS is Transactional leadership styles

LFLS is Laissez faire leadership styles

The model summary shown in Table 14 indicates that there is a high multi-co linearity as tolerance and variance inflation factor. For such cases that scores of the variables should be combined as all measure one thing (multi-co linearity) or, some of the dimensions (variables) should be excluded in the study (Pallant, 2007). Therefore, TLS having highest correlation was excluded and tolerance and VIF moved nearer to more acceptable limits (.026 and 37.7 respectively). Furthermore, as the results remained unacceptable, the scores of TRLS, and LFLS were all combined formed Leadership Styles (LS). The relationship between Head teachers’ transformational leadership styles and teachers’ job commitment was statistically significant (p value = .000< .01), the relationship between Head teachers’ transactional leadership styles and teachers’ job commitment was statistically significant (p value =.000< .01) while the relationship between Head teachers’ laissez faire leadership styles and teachers’ job commitment was not statistically significant (p value= 0.176> .01).

Table 15: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
	.987	.974	.974	1.51098	.974	3467	1	93	.000

The model summary presented in Table 15 shows the multiple regression used to assess the ability of Leadership Styles (LS) measures (TLS, TRLS, and LFLS sub scale), and to predict levels of teachers’ job commitment (TJC). Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no any assumption (normality, linearity and multi-co linearity) was violated. The total variance explained by the model was 98.7 percent (Adjusted R Square of .974). In other words, if

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we are trying to explain why teachers' job commitment is more pronounced in the education sector in Uganda than in others, we can look at the variation in Leadership Styles. There might be other factors that can explain this variation, but the fit model above which includes only leadership styles, can explain approximately 2.6 % of it.

Discussion Of Findings

The results indicate a significant positive relationship between head teachers' transactional leadership styles and teachers' job commitment ($r = 0.928$, $P\text{-value} < 0.01$), and this means that head teachers' transactional leadership styles positively influences teachers' job commitment. When the education sector through the ministry of education and local government prioritizes the head teachers' leadership styles which are mainly transactional, it will lead to the realization of improved performance of teachers because teachers' job commitment will be enhanced. This is supported by (Sundi, 2013) who pointed out that Transactional leadership motivates and influences subordinates by exchanging reward with a particular performance. In a transaction the subordinate promised to be given rewards when subordinate is able to complete their duties in accordance with agreements. In other words, he encourages subordinates to work. Transactional leadership styles can affect positively or negatively on teachers' commitment. It depends on teacher's assessment. Positive effect can occur when teachers assess transactional leadership positively and a negative effect can occur if teachers considers that transactional leadership styles cannot be trusted because they do not keep their promises, dishonest or not transparent (Sundi, 2013). Bass (2015) also found that transactional leadership in terms of two characteristics; the use of contingent rewards and management by exception. He said that by making fulfillment of promises of recognition, pay increase and advancements for teachers who perform well, the transactional leader is able to get things done. Bass (2015) therefore argues that by providing contingent rewards, a transactional leader might inspire a reasonable degree of involvement, loyalty and commitment from subordinates.

Conclusion

This study concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between head teachers' transactional leadership styles and teachers' job commitment in primary schools in Bundbuyo district. Transactional leadership styles have a significant strong positive effect on teachers' job commitment. These are some of the effects: The Head teachers step in before the problem becomes serious, they also keep track of all the mistakes and exemptions of teachers and take measures to correct them, specify the standards for compliance and what constitutes ineffective performance. In addition, head teachers keenly observe teachers' performance and provide rewards accordingly, clarify the expectations and provide recognitions when goals are achieved by teachers and motivate them to achieve the targets.

Recommendation

Basing on the summary of findings and the conclusions, the study recommended that head teachers should promote compliance of teachers through use of both rewards and punishments. They should specifically apply the aspect of Transactional Leadership Style to positively enhance Teachers Job Commitment in Primary Schools in Bundbuyo district. They step in before the problem becomes serious; keeps track of all mistakes and exemptions of teachers and

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take measures to correct them. Besides, Head teachers should also specify standards for compliance and what constitutes ineffective performance; keenly observe Teachers' performance and reward or punish accordingly. They should as well clarify the expectations and provide recognition when goals are achieved by teachers and motivate them further to achieve the set targets at school.

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