# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP STYLES AND TEACHER MOTIVATION

Mi Mi Win<sup>1</sup> and Han Ni Lwin<sup>2</sup>

#### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teacher motivation. The theoretical framework was based on Kurt Lewin's leadership model and Fredreick Herzberg's two factors theory of motivation. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was .639 for overall. A total of 246 teachers from 5 selected Basic Education High Schools in Monywa Township participated in this study. Moreover, mixed research method (quantitative and qualitative research methods) was used in this study. The results of this study indicated that teachers perceived that their principals mostly practiced democratic leadership. And they perceived that they were moderately motivated under their principals and also by other factors such as their students, school climate and their attitudes on teaching profession and good relationships with colleagues. In addition, the teachers were demotivated when their principal cannot lead them well or they face the difficulties in the classroom. The results of this study found that there was a positive and significant relationship between principals' autocratic leadership. And democratic leadership of principals were positively and moderately correlated with teacher motivation. Then, there was a positive and slightly correlation between principals' laissez-faire leadership and teacher motivation.

Keywords: Leadership, Leadership Styles, Teacher Motivation

# Introduction

Leadership is the ability to increase a group toward the vision or set of goals. Principals' leadership is one of the managerial qualities of the school which interact with members of the school organization and has a large impact on the turnover rate of the organization. It is very important for school system to accomplish its goals and its necessary objectives (Mills, 2005, as cited in Chaudhry & Javed, 2012). Motivated teachers are more dedicated to the school organization. They have job satisfaction and as a result of this, they work more productively (Osterloh, Bruno & Frost, 2001, as cited in Dahie, Mohamed & Jam'ale, 2015). For this reason, principals should motivate teachers to use their knowledge and skills towards organizational aims (Lindner, 1998, as cited in Dahie et al., 2015). When a school leader motivates his subordinates, he or she needs to satisfy their desires and make them to behave in an effective manner (Lekia & Emmanuel, 2018). On the other hand, leaders should not create an atmosphere of unmotivated personnel and must lead to an active highly motivated workforce (Kappen, 2012).

When the principals are exhibiting behaviors that can support teacher motivation, there can be not only an increase in student achievement but also the more effective school as a whole. So, if the teachers are more highly motivated by a particular leadership style; then that information would be extremely useful to districts and training organizations worldwide (Price, 2008). Positive leadership influences significantly on the teachers and the turnover of the school organization. Teacher motivation will lead the productivity of the organization (Dahie et al., 2015). And then motivation in an organization influence the leader's desire to meet the needs of the teachers and their increased efficacy (Lekia & Emmanuel, 2018). Therefore, principals should know that teacher-supportive leadership practice is important for students' learning (Shephred-Jones, Jill & Salisbury-Glennon, 2018).

In this study, the relationship between the principals' leadership styles and teacher motivation will be explored by studying the perceptions of teachers from the selected Basic

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Education High Schools in Monywa Township. The information gathered from this study can be helpful for teachers and principals in order to understand the correlation between different leadership styles of principals and teacher motivation. Then the principals become appreciate on how appropriate leadership style of school principals can influence effectively on the teachers' motivation and can improve the qualities and approaches of administration to maintain their schools effectively.

# **Purposes of the Research**

# **Main Purpose**

The main purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teacher motivation at Basic Education High Schools in Monywa Township.

# **Specific Purposes**

The specific purposes were:

- To explore teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership styles in the high schools at Monywa Township
- To explore teachers' perceptions of their motivation levels in the high schools at Monywa Township
- To determine if there are any significant differences in teacher motivation according to their demographic data (gender, age, position, academic qualification and total Service)
- To investigate the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teacher motivation

# **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the direction of the study.

- 1. What are the teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership styles that are mostly practiced at selected high schools in Monywa Township?
- 2. What are the teachers' perceptions of their motivation levels at high schools in Monywa Township?
- 3. Are there any statistical differences in teacher motivation levels according to their demographic data (gender, age, position, academic qualification and total service)?
- 4. Is there any significant relationship between principals' leadership styles and teacher motivation?

# **Definition of Key Terms**

The terms used throughout the current study were identified below for clarifying and understanding.

*Leadership* - is the basic function which mobilizes both leaders and followers to think, believe and motivate in a manner that satisfies emerging organizational needs and also their individual needs or wants (Donaldson, 2001, as cited in Price, 2008).

*Leadership Style*- is the manner in which people are directed and motivated by a leader to achieve organizational goals (Khajeh, 2018).

*Autocratic Leadership* is a type of leadership in which the leaders make decisions without consulting their team members, even if their input would be useful (Mind Tools Content Team [MTCT], 2019).

*Democratic Leadership* is a type of leadership in which the leaders make the final decisions, but they include team members in the decision-making process (MTCT, 2019).

*Laissez-faire Leadership* is a type of leadership in which the leaders give their team members a lot of freedom in how they do their work and how they set their deadlines and support with resources and advice if needed but otherwise they don't get involved (MTCT, 2019).

*Teacher Motivation* is the attribute that moves teachers to do or not to do something. It can be defined as the act of making teachers feel that their work is recognized and valued and at the same time, they get the rewards worth their input (Broussard & Garrison, 2004, as cited in Nyakundi, 2012).

# **Operational Definitions**

*Leadership* is the process in which the leaders manage their subordinates with certain motives and values to achieve the desired goals of their organization.

*Leadership Style is* the behavior that the leaders practice to direct, control and motivate their followers to perform the tasks.

*Motivation* is the force for the people to do something by being satisfied their individual needs so that become have to accomplish the task.

*Teacher Motivation* is the incentive force that makes teachers feel satisfied in their work and moves toward their best performance.

# Limitations of the Study

- The scope of the study aws limited to selected Basic Education High Schools in Monywa Township because this study was based on available time and resources of the researcher.
- The findings of this study could not be generalized to any other group than high schools in Monywa Township and other townships in Myanmar.

# **Review of Related Literature**

Leadership is the basic function which mobilizes both leaders and followers to think, believe and motivate in a manner that satisfies emerging organizational needs and also their individual needs or wants (Donaldson, 2001, as cited in Price, 2008). Psychologist Kurt Lewin developed his framework of leadership styles in 1939 and it provided the foundation of many of the approaches that followed afterwards. Based on Lewin's leadership model, the leadership styles can be identified three approaches: autocratic leadership, democratic leadership and laissez-faire leadership (Price, 2008).

Firstly, autocratic leadership style is the type of leaders in which leaders make decisions without consulting their school members including teachers, even if their input would be useful. (Price, 2008). Democratic leadership style is the type of leaders in which leaders make the final decisions, but they include school members in the decision making process. They encourage creativity and teachers are often highly engaged in projects and decisions. (Price, 2008). Laissez-faire leadership style is the type of leaders in which leaders give their school members a lot of freedom in how they do their work and how they set their deadlines. This autonomy can lead to high job satisfaction but it can be damaging their time well, or if they don't have the knowledge, skills or self- motivation to do their work effectively (Price, 2008).

Teacher motivation is the attribute that moves the teachers to do or not to do something. It can be defined as the act of making teachers feel that their work is recognized and valued and at

the same time, they get the rewards worth their input. (Broussard & Garrison, 2004, as cited in Nyakundi, 2012). Many research found that there are significant correlations between principals' use of democratic and autocratic styles and teacher motivation levels (Dahie et al., 2015; Lekia & Emmauel, 2018; Mary, 2012; Price, 2008). On the other hand, Gilbar (2015) concluded that teacher's perceptions of principals' transformational behaviors were more correlated to the level of their motivation then self-reported behaviors by principals.

Moreover, some studies found that teachers are demotivated by autocratic leadership styles and there are negative correlations between autocratic leadership style and teacher motivation (Mary, 2012; Price, 2008). More teachers were satisfied with their jobs in relation to democratic leaders (Kiboss & Jemiryott, 2014). Many research found that teachers tend to more highly motivated and inspired by democratic principals (Barenge, 2016; Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi & Shaikh, 2012; Lekia & Emmanuel, 2018; Mary, 2012; Price, 2008). Laissez-faire leadership style has a negative relationship with motivation (Chaudhry & Javed, 2012; Kashagate, 2013; Chowdhurg, 2014).

## **Theoretical Framework**

*Leadership* is the basic function which mobilizes both leaders and followers to think, believe and motivate in a manner that satisfies emerging organizational needs and also their individual needs or wants (Donaldson, 2001, as cited in Price, 2008). Based on Lewin's leadership model, the leadership styles can be identified three approaches: autocratic leadership, democratic leadership and laissez-faire leadership (Price, 2008).

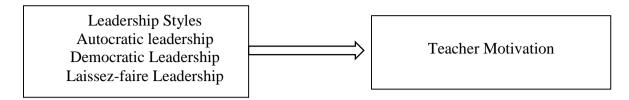
Firstly, *Autocratic Leadership Style* is the type of leaders in which leaders make decisions without consulting their school members including teachers, even if their input would be useful. This style can be demoralizing and it can lead to high levels of absenteeism and staff turnover of teachers. But autocratic leaders give clear direction and do not take much time to do the task so they tend to complete the goals effectively and quickly.

**Democratic leadership Style** is the type of leaders in which leaders make the final decisions, but they include school members in the decision-making process. They encourage creativity and teachers are often highly engaged in projects and decisions. As a result, school members tend to have high job satisfaction and high productivity of teachers. However, in certain situations, the different views of many members in decision making lead to delay to accomplish the task in time.

*Laissez-faire Leadership Style* is the type of leaders in which leaders give their school members a lot of freedom in how they do their work and how they set their deadlines. They provide support with resources and advice if needed but otherwise they don't get involved. This autonomy can lead to high job satisfaction but it can be damaging their time well, or if they don't have the knowledge, skills or self- motivation to do their work effectively. It can also occur when managers don't have control over their work and the teachers.

*Teacher Motivation* is the aspect that comes out from receiving and responding external drives and exploring internal needs of teacher. If the needs of teachers are fulfilled and supported by their leaders, their exhibit their capabilities for the fullest potential.

If different leadership styles of principals directly correlate and affect on teacher motivation, it can provide great opportunities for principals to increase teacher's motivation through the right leadership behaviors and then to improve their schools effectively (Price, 2008). Therefore, this study will determine if there is any relationship between different leadership styles of principals and teacher motivation. In this study, the theoretical framework was illustrated based on literature reviews.



- Figure 1 Framework of Relationship between Principals' Leadership Styles and Teacher Motivation
- Source: Haque, M.A., Haque, M.F., & Islam, M.S. (2014) Motivational theories A critical analysis

**Price (2008).** The relationship between the teacher's perception of the principal's leadership style and personal motivation

# Methodology

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used. For quantitative analysis, "Questionnaire for Teachers" was developed based on two instruments, "Principals' Leadership Styles" and "Teacher Motivation" developed by Price (2008). Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of the instruments were **.536** for leadership questionnaire, **.634** for teacher motivation questionnaire and **.639** for overall questionnaire.

The sample population is selected according to simple random sampling method. For quantitative analysis, 246 teachers from five selected Basic Education High Schools in Monywa Township. Descriptive Statistics, Independent sample *t*-Test, one-way ANOVA and the Pearson correlations of the variables were calculated by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Morgan, Leech, Gloeckner & Barrett, 2004).

For qualitative analysis, the participants of this study were fifteen teachers from three selected Basic Education High schools in Monywa Township. And interviews with selected teachers were conducted to capture phenomena in teachers' own words about principals' leadership styles and teacher motivation by using thematic analysis method (Saldaña, 2009).

# **Research Findings**

#### **Quantitative Research Findings**

The results of quantitative analysis are shown in the following tables.

The descriptive results of principals' leadership styles were shown in Table 1.

 Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Principals' Leadership Styles Perceived by Teachers at Selected Basic Education High Schools in Monywa Township

		Principals' Leadership Styles			
Schools		Autocratic Leadership	Democratic Leadership	Laissez-faire Leadership	
Total	Mean	2.66	2.97	2.29	
N=246	Standard Deviation	0.28	0.34	0.36	

Scoring Direction: 1.00-2.00= less frequently practice, 2.01-3.00=moderately practice, 3.01-4.00= mostly practice

According to Table 1, teachers in selected high schools perceived that their principals mostly practice democratic leadership styles than other two leadership styles. When comparing the mean values of leadership styles in all selected high schools, teachers from these schools perceived

that their principals mostly practiced democratic leadership than other two leadership styles. It can be vividly seen in the following Figure 2.

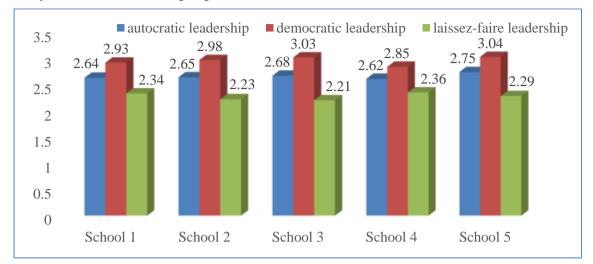


Figure 2 Comparison of Mean Values for Principals' Leadership Styles in Selected Basic Education High Schools

The descriptive results of teacher motivation were shown in Table 2. According to the Table 2, overall mean value of perception of teachers in selected in high schools showed that their motivation level by their principals' leadership was moderate (2.75). When comparing the mean values of motivation for selected schools, the mean value of teachers' motivation by their principal in school 5 was highest (2.81) and those of school 1 and school 2 were second highest (2.76).

# Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Teacher Motivation Levels at Selected Basic Education High Schools in Monywa Township

	Teacher Motivation						
Schools	Mean	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	Level				
Total (N=246)	2.75	0.27	moderate				
Securing Directions (1.00.2.00, Jan. 2.01.2.00, moderate 2.01.4.00, high)							

Scoring Direction: (1.00-2.00=low, 2.01-3.00=moderate, 3.01-4.00=high)

Next, the mean value of teacher motivation of school 3 was 2.72. And it was found that the teachers in school 4 had lowest mean score (2.69). Therefore, it implies that teachers in each of selected schools perceived that they were moderately motivated under their principals. It can be vividly seen in the following Figure 3.

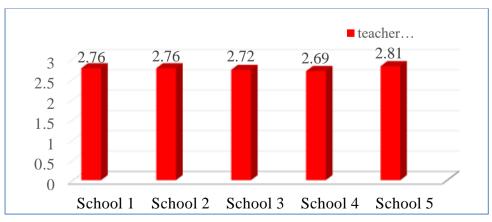


Figure 3 Comparison of Mean Values for Teacher Motivation Levels in Selected Basic Education High Schools

According to the Table 3, autocratic leadership style of principals (r=.522, p<0.01), democratic leadership style(r =.470, p<0.01) and laissez-faire leadership (r =.190, p<0.01) were significantly correlated to teacher motivation of schools.

	1	2	3	4
Autocratic Leadership	1			
Democratic Leadership	.477**	1		
Laissez-faire Leadership	.324**		1	
Teacher Motivation	.522**	.470**	.190**	1

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

#### **Qualitative Research Findings**

For qualitative analysis, the interview transcripts were analyzed by thematic analysis methods. The overall framework for analyzing data was arranged into three levels. Firstly, when teachers were asked about their principal's leadership styles, they showed their different perceptions, for examples;

"Our principal can delegate the school task to do equally to all teachers."

"Our principal likes to control detail on all school works."

"Our principal cannot say anything about school tasks whether good or bad and allow us to do by our own."

Then, when teachers were asked whether they are motivated by their principal, they answered differently, for examples;

"We are really motivated by their effective principals."

"We are also motivated by good relation between colleagues and good school conditions"

"We are sometimes demotivated by bad classroom conditions and also when our principals cannot manage the school well."

At Level 1, these interviews transcripts were analyzed into 28 codes such as task delegation, control detail, motivation by effective principals, motivation by colleague relation and so on. And then, in Level 2, 28 codes were developed under 6 categories. They were related to three types of leadership styles: autocratic leadership, democratic leadership and laissez-faire leadership and the facts that the teachers were motivated not only by their principals but also by other factors and why they were demotivated. And at Level 3, codes from Level 2 were analyzed in search of answers for main research questions. After analyzing the data collected into three levels, three main themes were discovered to answer the research questions. They are:

- 1) The teachers at Basic Education High Schools in Monywa Township perceived that their principals mostly practiced democratic leadership.
- 2) The teachers were motivated by their principals who practiced appropriate leadership styles at different situations and also by other factors such as their students, school climate and their attitudes on teaching profession and relationships with colleagues.
- 3) The teachers could be demotivated when their principal cannot lead them well or they face the difficulties with their students.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

According to the results of both quantitative and qualitative research findings, concerning research question one, it was found that the teachers at selected Basic Education High Schools in Monywa Township perceived that t heir principals mostly practiced democratic leadership. Blake and Mouton (1935, as cited in Price, 2008) maintained that a democratic leader is intent on building relationships, is focused on build an environment in which team members are motivated to reach their highest potential. Therefore, it can be interpreted that principals from all high schools in Monywa Township mostly practiced democratic leadership that can be appropriate in motivating teachers towards educational development.

For research question two, in quantitative and qualitative findings, it was found that teachers are moderately motivated by their principal's leadership styles. In qualitative findings, teachers are also motivated by other factors such as students, school climate, attitudes on their profession and relationships with colleagues. Hygiene factors such as working conditions, coworker relations, policies and rules, their supervisor quality and salary can motivate teachers (Haque et al., 2014). So, these finding is consistent with Haque et al. (2014).

Moreover, it was further found that the teachers can be demotivated by when their principal cannot lead them well or they face the difficulties with their students in the classroom. Haque et al. (2014) pointed that these factors can motivate workers but the dissatisfaction of one of these factors move to demotivation. Therefore, it can be interpreted that teachers in high schools in Monywa Township are motivated if their principals support to increase satisfaction in their job or they fulfill their hygiene needs. Next, the teachers could be demotivated when they did not satisfy intrinsic and extrinsic needs in their job.

When examined whether there were significant differences in teacher motivation levels in selected high schools for research question three, it was found that there were no statistically significant differences in teacher motivation levels in these schools according to demographic data (gender, position, age, academic qualification and total service) of teachers. It can be concluded that motivation levels of teachers in selected schools in Monywa Township could not change depending on their demographic data.

For research question four, there was a positive and significant relationship between autocratic leadership styles and teacher motivation (r = .522, p < 0.01). Mary (2012) and Price (2008) in their research mentioned that there were negative correlation between autocratic leadership styles and teacher motivation. Nevertheless, it can be interpreted that teachers in Basic Education High Schools in Monywa Township are moderately motivated by autocratic leaders who give them clear directions about what need to do and how to be done.

Then, it was found that there was a positive and significant relationship between democratic leadership styles and teacher motivation (r = .470, p < 0.01). This result can be supported by many research findings of Barenge (2014), Lekia and Emmanuel (2018), that there was a positive and highly correlation between democratic leadership style and teacher motivation. Mary (2012) and Price (2008) concluded that teachers tend to more motivated and inspired by democratic leaders. Therefore, it can be suggested that teachers in selected schools perceived that when principals mostly practice democratic leadership in their schools, they can more motivate teachers to work happily and successfully.

Finally, it was found that a positive but slightly correlation existed between laissez-faire leadership styles and teacher motivation levels (r = .190, p < 0.01) in this study. But, Price (2008) mentioned that there is no statistically significant relationship between principals' laissez-faire leadership and teacher motivation. Again, Chaudhry and Javed (2012), Kashagate (2013) and Chowdhurg (2014) found that there was negative relationship between laissez-faire leadership and

teacher motivation. However, the results of this study pointed that teachers in Basic Education High Schools in Monywa Township were slightly motivated when their principals allowed them to work freely by themselves.

#### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the research findings, the recommendation are as follows:

- 1. This research was limited at Basic Education High Schools in Monywa Township, Sagaing Region. Therefore, similar research should be conducted at primary schools, middle schools and high schools in other states or regions.
- Again, this study was conducted based on teachers' perceptions of principals' leadership styles. Therefore, further studies are needed to conduct by principals' ratings and parents' ratings.
- 3. This study was conducted for a short period. Therefore, the period for the intervention and the content to be learnt should be extended. In this research, quantitative and qualitative research methods were utilized. Besides, observations should also be conducted.

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