

Original Paper

The Impact of Leadership Styles on Teachers' Stress at Work Place

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of leadership styles on teachers' stress on five schools in Tirana, Albania. Leadership styles and stress are the most important factors that affect the efficiency of teaching.

This research paper aims to investigate how age, gender and educational differences influence the teachers' reaction to interpret and react to the leadership characteristics of their headmasters. A quantitative research method was employed and a questionnaire was chosen as an instrument to collect the data for this research. The questionnaires were distributed to the schools and a total of 102 valid responses were received. The population of this study includes 102 full time and part time teachers in five 9-year-schools located in the city of Tirana. 25 questionnaires were collected at "De Rada" school, 24 questionnaires at "Fan Noli", 20 questionnaires at "Emin Duraku", 10 questionnaires at "Mihal Grameno" 23 questionnaires at "Skënder Caci" school, in the district of Tirana, Albania. The collected data was entered into SPSS version 25 for statistical analysis using descriptive and analytic methods.

In the findings of this study, there was a substantial positive relationship between leadership style and stress at work. As a conclusion, we can affirm that the results of this research will serve to further studies that have to be carried out in pursuit of expanding the leader's roles and strategies in order to improve working conditions, have more motivated and satisfied teachers in the schools where they work.

Keywords

stress, leadership style, students, school, relationship

1. Introduction

This study aims to describe the impact of leadership styles of basic education headmasters on work stress of teachers among five schools in the city of Tirana. Headmasters as leaders of the school are needed to instill some inspiration, drive enthusiasm and above all the appropriate motivation in other members of the institution (Al-Daibat, 2017). Leaders are persons responsible for directing the effect of others. A leader can also be seen as an individual who influences the behavior of others toward pre-determined goals. According to Walk (2022), leadership is the process of directing and influencing tasks related activities of group's member. This implies that leadership must involve people that are followers or subordinates. Leadership is the pivot on which the success of any school stands (Swaffield & MacBeath, 2013).

Different studies show strong correlation between leadership style, and stress at work (Lehal, 2007). High levels of stress work relate to low levels of job satisfaction. Labor stressors are predictors of job dissatisfaction and a greater tendency to not to like the profession of the teacher. The leadership style and stress are important factors that affect the efficiency of teaching (Cummins, 1990).

Ivancevich, Konopaske, and Matteson (2008) described leadership as the process of influencing others to facilitate the attainment of relevant goals. Good leadership style assists in effectively meeting job-related demands, creating higher-performing teams, developing loyal, committed and highly motivated teachers. Researchers have developed various leadership styles which can assist aspiring leaders to understand which styles they should adopt and liked by their followers.

Pardey (2007) expressed that effective leaders can ease the transition if they are committed and have a clear vision that they can communicate to teachers with the conviction that will win their hearts and minds. He stated that good leaders talk to teachers about change, listen to their concern and react to their feedbacks. Pardey pointed out that people need leadership to communicate a clear vision and set directions for others to follow, inspire and trust through consistency in behavior and living up to promote values, empower others to follow by motivating them and trust them to perform effectively. By meeting an employee's legitimate needs, influence is earned by the leader, which in turn builds trust and teamwork in the institution.

Whether a headmaster directs a small or big school, the leader should identify the leadership styles that suits best for him and his school staff. Consciously or subconsciously, a leader uses some of the leadership styles which go along with their personality. However, understanding the different styles and its impact can help headmasters to develop their own personal leadership style that will be accepted by the teachers and administrative staff (Dou et al., 2017).

There are different styles of leadership:

➤ **Authoritarian (autocratic)**

This type is used when the headmaster tells to the school staff what he wants to be done and how he wants it done, without getting the advice of the school staff. Some of the appropriate conditions to use is when you have all the information to solve the problem, you are short on time, or your teachers are

well motivated (Conchie & Donald, 2009).

These types of leaders expect to make all decisions without much input from others. They tend not to get close to staff as they believe that could lead to problems. They generally have little trust in anyone, expect obedience and manage with an “iron fist and fear” to get things done. This type of leadership often has a large amount of negativity surrounding it.

➤ **Participative (Democratic)**

This type of style involves the leader including one or more teachers in the decision-making process to determine what to do and how to do it. However, the headmaster maintains the final decision-making authority. Using this style is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength that your staff will respect (Conchie & Donald, 2009).

These leaders want to work through the problem to come to a decision. Sometimes known as “participation style”, this type of leadership uses empowerment to meet goals and performance. They rely more on the staff to give feedback in order to help the leader make the final decisions.

➤ **Delegate (free-reign)**

This type of leader tends not to be involved as they trust everyone to do what needs to be done. Basically, the leader lets others come to their own decisions about which direction they want to go. This would be appropriate in a school if the teachers had expert knowledge in their area and could take the responsibility of making their own decisions.

➤ **Transactional and transformational leadership**

Transactional leadership styles assumes work is done only because it is rewarded and it therefore focuses on designing tasks and reward structures. According to Burns (cited in Boehnke et al., 2003), transactional leaders are those who lead through social exchange, rewarding or compensating for productivity and denying the rewards or compensation for unproductivity. While it may not be the most appealing leadership strategy in terms of building relationships and developing a long-term motivating work environment, it's used in most institutions on a daily basis to get things done.

Transactional leadership is really a type of management, not a true leadership style, because the focus is on short-term tasks. Burns (cited in Boehnke et al., 2003) contrasted transactional and transformational leadership, believing that they lie at opposite ends of a continuum. He found that the transactional leaders work within the organizational culture as it exists but the transformational leader changes the organizational culture. Bass (Boehnke et al., 2003) also expressed that transactional leaders do not voluntarily involve with employees' work until any failure occurs, whereas transformational leaders act as role models for employees, motivate them, and stimulate their intelligence.

✚ **Theories about stress at work**

Stress is quite difficult to determine due to its subjectivity and complexity. The fact that stress was a topic of interest to researchers from four very different disciplines (medicine, sociology, management and psychology) and that they proposed their concepts and methodologies makes the subject even more complex and diverse.

The term “stress” was introduced for the first time by Hans Selye, an endocrinologist from Hungary, also known as the “father of stress issues” (Fink, 2009). Being a medical student, he noted that patients with various diseases had some common non-specific symptoms at the beginning of their illness. This observation has led to its further investigation of body response to stress stimuli and the development of the General Convergence General Concept (GAS) concept (Fink, 2009). Selye has introduced the term “stress” and has given the first and most general definition: “Stress is the non-specific response of the body to any requirement” (Selye, 1976). In his GAS theory, Selye has identified three phases: alarm, resistance and fatigue. In the first stage, the alarm, the body reacts to the stressor with the first signs of change and the defense processes are activated.

While initial stress research has been done in the medical field, later stress is determined from different perception. Thus, behavioral sciences see stress as “perception of the threat, causing anxiety disturbances, emotional tensions and adaptive difficulties”. Anbazhagan et al. (2013) mentions a more detailed definition by Tobias Schafer: “Stress is an adaptive response, moderated by individual differences that are the result of any action, situation or event that places special demands on a person who perceives an imbalance between the level of demand placed on them and their ability to meet these requirements”.

Researchers have differentiated two confrontation approaches: confrontation with emotions and facing with problems. Facing on emotion focuses on treating stress-free unpleasant emotions, while confrontation with problems is facing problem solving.

Stress at work

Stress is becoming very serious for health at work these days. It has resulted in considerable costs for employees as well as for the organization. Consequently, a large number of organizations are investing heavily in health education at the workplace, and almost every professional magazine, magazine and newspaper devotes a special space to the factors related to stress. Increasing stress expense is fueling the organization to identify different approaches to studying stress at the workplace.

This approach sees stress as perceived forces or incentives that affect an individual who can create demands for the individual. It suggests a discrepancy between the skills of an individual and his working environment in which excessive demands are made by the individual or the individual is not fully equipped to handle a particular work situation (French, 1963).

While stressors refer to an individual’s physiological or physical response to stress. A series of studies have been carried out that identify different organizational stressors and related to work. But there is hardly any available study that represents the relative importance of these stressors. Beehr and Newman (1978) defined the stress as a situation that would force a person to deviate from normal functioning due to change (i.e., breaks or improves) into his psychological and/or physiological state so that the person owed deviation from normal operation.

Stress and negative stress results are recognized as costly financially. Negative work-related stress scores among individuals include illness, decline in overall quality of work, job dissatisfaction, lack of

staffing and staff turnovers. Stress at work can result in psychological, physical and behavioral consequences for individuals. These results, in their various forms, can be quite costly for the individuals and organizations they belong to (Febriani P. Tambalean, 2014).

Extra-organizational stressors include factors such as financial stability, family, health, and other stressors that appear outside working life. Intra-organizational stressors can be divided into four categories: individual, group, organizational and physical environment. Schuler (1982) distinguishes seven kinds of work stressors: work qualities, relationships, organizational structure, physical qualities, career development, change and role in the organization.

Effects of stress at work

Stress at work can have an impact on individuals and organizations. Individuals who suffer from work stress may have different problems, such as inability to relax or to focus, difficulties with logical thinking and decision-making, a sense of anxiety and nervousness. Someone may also have trouble sleeping, feeling tired, depressed, or anxious, or even having serious physical problems such as heart disease, digestive disorders, blood pressure increases, headache or musculoskeletal disorders (Leka et al., 2004). In extreme cases, when stress is left untreated and not properly managed, the consequences may be as serious as psychiatric disorders and psychological problems (Leka et al., 2004).

Researchers have also found that stress can be one of the major factors in such aggressive actions as sabotage, interpersonal aggression, hostility and appeals (Luthans, 2002). Moreover, these actions have proven to be important to poor work performance, lower self-esteem, unsatisfactory oversight, inability to focus and make decisions and dissatisfaction with work. All these consequences of stress (Fauziah, Siti et al., 2021). are costly for the employer and, consequently, of course, unfavorable. Other effects of work stress on companies are sometimes more apparent, for example. The damage done to the image of the organization both inside and outside the organization and consequently the increase of complaints from clients and clients.

Workers can choose to leave the organization (exit), they may prefer to stay and actively engage in seeking improvements and reducing stress sources, some may decide to stay in the company and accept the situation as it is without any effort to improve it (loyalty), or may stay and passively report withdrawal behavior (neglect). According to Hugh Butcher and Jim Robertson (2007), sound output reactions are constructive for organization, while loyalty and neglect are devastating.

2. Method

This study uses a combined method, including primary and secondary data. The primary method is collecting data that has been collected specifically for this research by the researcher through quantitative methods. Literature review includes research papers gathered by other researchers who have used a certain method of collecting data like questionnaires or interviews.

2.1 Problem Statement

According to recent studies, stress at work accounts for 50-60% of all working days. Work-related stress is considered to be detrimental when physical and emotional reactions occur when there is a discrepancy between work requirements and skills, resources or workers' needs. Most researchers agree that workplace factors can cause stress (Grandey, 2000).

2.2 Research Questions

Is there any relationship between leadership style and teachers' level of stress?

2.3 Objective of the Study

To identify the relationship between leadership style and work stress of teachers.

2.4 Research Instruments

For the primary data collection study, the quantitative method would be used by using two questionnaires for measuring data as the main instrument. The questionnaire was dealt with teachers at school. The instrument used for research is a mix of two main instruments, namely: impact of leadership and stress among teachers. The questionnaire is a combination of both questionnaires to extract exactly the variables related to stress, among the teachers at school.

2.5 Participants

The population of this study includes 102 full time and part time teachers in five 9-year-schools located in the city of Tirana. 25 questionnaires were collected at "De Rada" school, 24 questionnaires at "Fan Noli", 20 questionnaires at "Emin Duraku", 10 questionnaires at "Mihal Grameno" 23 questionnaires at "Skënder Caci" school, in the district of Tirana, Albania. Unable to include in the entire population in this study, it was selected a sample of the population. The sample used in the study is non-propagated sample. The selected sample is convenient. This type of sample is used because of the limited time and resources available to the researcher, furthermore because the researcher has more access to these educational institutions.

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed with SPSS 25, using descriptive and analytic methods.

2.6 Procedures

In the research, a total of 76% females and 24% males were respondents in this study. This research started on April 3rd and ended on June 1st, 2022.

2.7 Sample Population

The target group taken into consideration are the teachers of five 9-year-schools "De Rada", "Fan Noli", "Emin Duraku", "Mihal Grameno" and "Skënder Caci" in the district of Tirana, Albania.

3. Results

3.1 Demographic Analysis of Respondents

In this section we will present the results related to the demographic information of the respondents.

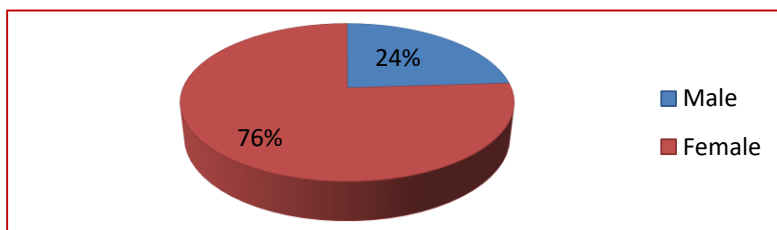


Figure 1. Gender

This survey has been applied to 102 teachers where most of them with 76% are females and 24% are males (Graph 1). This survey has been distributed to five different 9-year-schools “De Rada”, “Fan Noli”, “Emin Duraku”, “Mihal Grameno” and “Skënder Caci” in the district of Tirana, Albania.

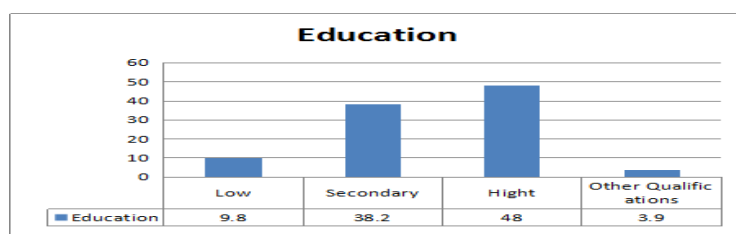


Figure 2. Education

Regarding the education of the respondents taking part in answering the questionnaire, it results that most of the teachers had completed higher education – which means that have a bachelor degree, master degree and the minority had other qualifications such as Doctor of Philosophy. Respondents vary greatly in age and this is visible in Table 1, starting from the age of 25 to the age of 50 years old. The average age of the respondents ranged from the 30s.

Table 1. Age of the Teachers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	102	25.00	55.00	28.4706	5.88286
Valid N (listwise)	102				

3.2 Stress and Satisfaction at Work

In this section we will analyze the respondents' questions on stress and satisfaction at work. The questions are divided into several different dimensions, for example. Measuring stress levels, working autonomy, emotions and facing with the work environment, the activities they perform to face with stress, the relationship with their headmasters/supervisors, etc.

The first section addressed the respondents with questions about the level of stress work, the report

with colleagues and headmasters/supervisors, questions about methods to overcome stress. They were also asked whether their work affected their family or even their social life as a whole. Certainly they were asked about the factors that affect the stress or even the fact that they enjoy the work that they do. Graph 3 describes the level of stress among teachers at work place which results to be above the average level. Teachers showed that stress was always present in their work and many factors were attributed to the work environment, relationship with colleagues and headmasters/supervisors, as well as the working atmosphere in general.

Headmasters were also among the main factors for the high level of stress among the respondents. Work seems to affect most households as well as in their families as well as in their social lives as a whole. The following graph shows all the results by frequency for each question that is addressed to respondents regarding the level of stress at work.

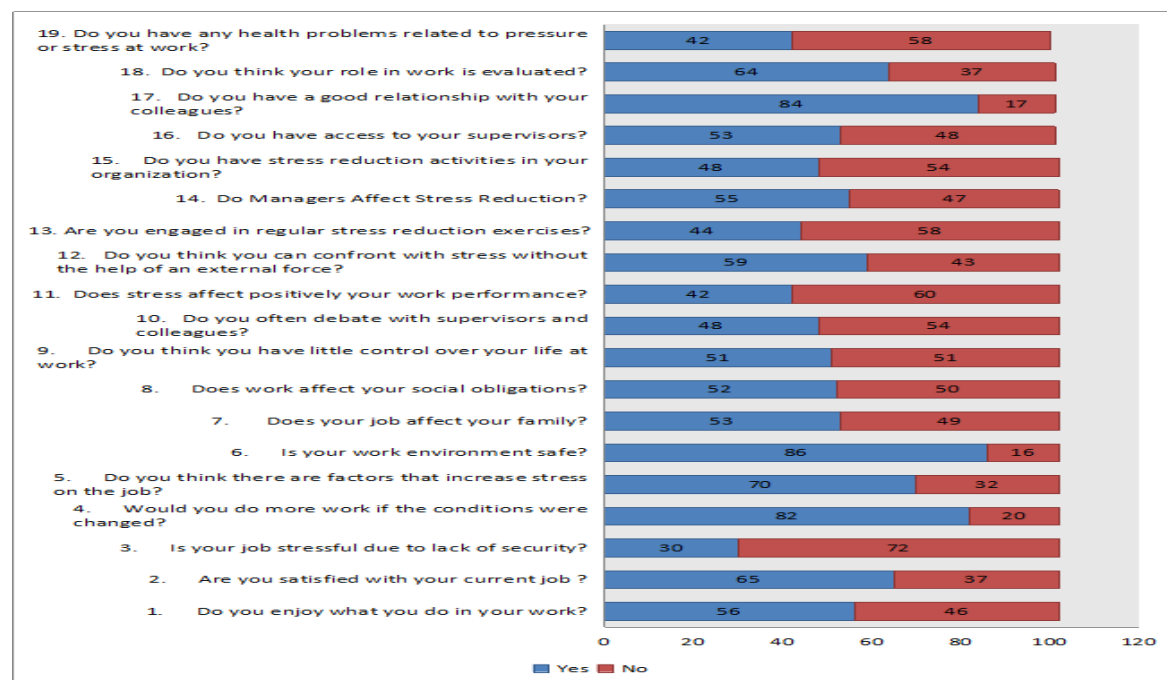


Figure 3. Level of Stress and Factors in the Workplace

Respondents were asked about the activities they are doing to reduce stress and it results that most of the respondents had fun in the main activities for reducing stress on the job inside and out, but among the other methods equally used was spending time with colleagues as well as all the ways together. Only a few respondents were based on the support network for reducing the level of stress.

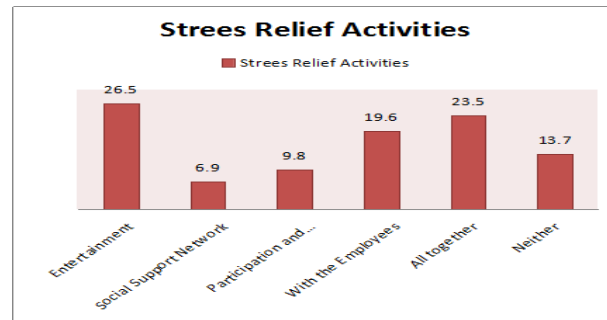


Figure 4. Stress Relief Activity

Respondents were also asked about the relationship with their headmasters/supervisors. Questions ranged from 1 - do not agree to 6 - absolutely agree. Most of the respondents positively approach their headmasters/supervisors, far fewer of them seem to have a poor communication and cooperation with them.

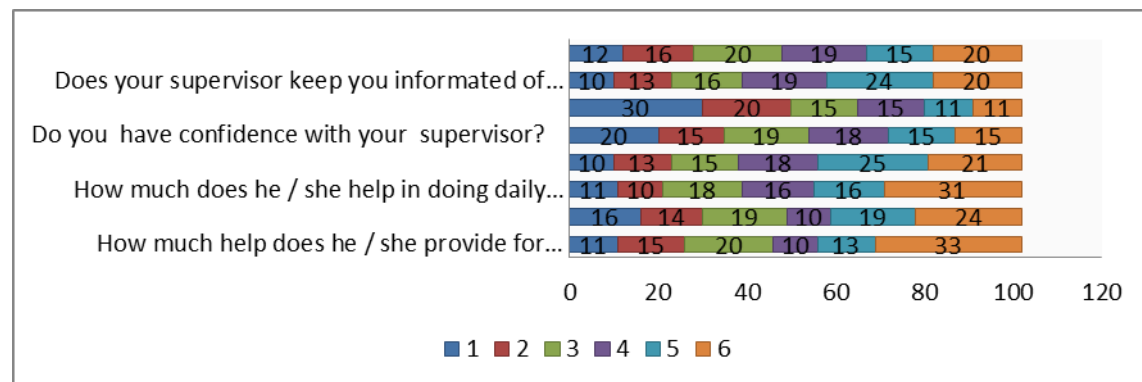


Figure 5. Headmasters / Supervisors

Respondents were asked about the emotions that appear in the workplace and the way they face it. They were asked how often they had such episodes in the workplace, responses ranged from 1- Not at all until 6- Many. From their answers, it was noticed that most respondents showed that they did not show emotions in the workplace or did not exhibit emotions that did not match their inner feelings.

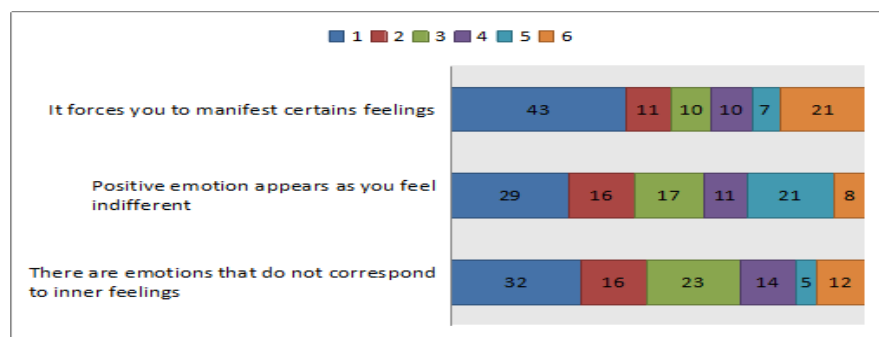


Figure 6. Emotions

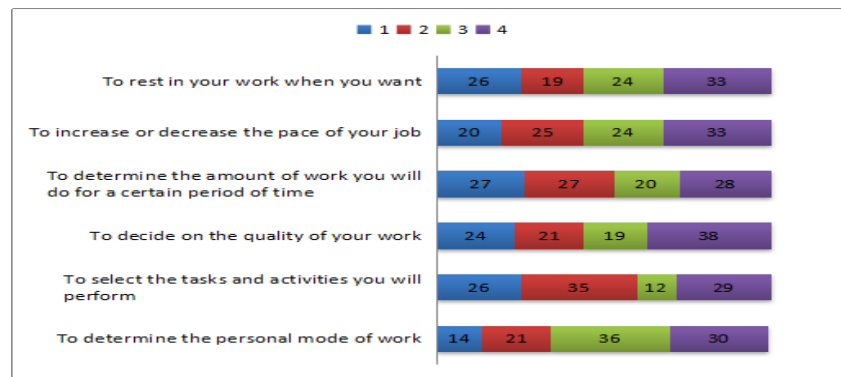


Figure 7. The Degree of Autonomy

Respondents were asked about their degree of autonomy at the workplace. The questions ranged from 1- no autonomy to up to 4-degree autonomy in the workplace. From respondents' responses, it was understood that their degree of autonomy at the workplace was very low.

In the last part of the questions, respondents were asked about their satisfaction at work. The question as to whether they often think to leave their job position, most respondents responded that they agreed, they often thought of leaving that job. And they often thought of it as a second job more than a place they would like to be in forever.

Table 2. I usually Think I'm Leaving My Job

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Do not agree	26	25.5	25.5	25.5
	Neutral	32	31.4	31.4	56.9
	Agree	14	13.7	13.7	70.6
	Fully Agree	30	29.4	29.4	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

3.3 Correlations and Confirmation of Hypothesis

The last question of the questionnaire was whether they would want to move to another school if the salary were the same, most of the respondents admitted they would like it, indicating that stress in the work environment is made affordable for them. To be more satisfied with the study and to validate the elevated hypothesis of the study, which states that "*Transformational leadership style increase the level of satisfaction in the work*", correlations have been built between some of the main variables of our study. Apart from variables such as stress, autonomy, workplace satisfaction, and stress at work, demographic variables as well as variables related to the relationship with headmasters/supervisors and the appearance of emotions as a whole are also included.

Table 3. A job with a Similar Salary in Another School Would be One Interesting Alternative to my Current Job

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Do not agree	27	26.5	26.5	26.5
	Neutral	19	18.6	18.6	45.1
	Agree	18	17.6	17.6	62.7
	Fully Agree	38	37.3	37.3	100.0
	Total	102	100.0	100.0	

Table 4. Correlation

		Headmaster/ Supervisor_							
		Age	Gender	Education	Status	Work	Stress	Emotional	Autonomy Satisfaction
Age	Pearson	1							
	Correlation								
	Sig.								
	(2-tailed)								
	N	102							
Gender	Pearson	.039	1						
	Correlation								
	Sig.	.700							
	(2-tailed)								
	N	102	102						
Education	Pearson	.028	-.003	1					
	Correlation								
	Sig.	.784	.976						
	(2-tailed)								
	N	102	102	102					
Status	Pearson	-.473**	.125	.072	1				
	Correlation								
	Sig.	.000	.212	.470					
	(2-tailed)								
	N	102	102	102	102				
Work	Pearson	-.067	-.116	-.030	.255**	1			
	Correlation								

	Sig.	.501	.245	.762	.010					
	(2-tailed)									
	N	102	102	102	102	102				
Stress	Pearson	.036	.097	.018	.177	.210*	1			
	Correlation									
	Sig.	.716	.330	.858	.076	.034				
	(2-tailed)									
	N	102	102	102	102	102	102			
Headmaster/Supervisor	Pearson	-.003	-.207*	.144	.102	.075	-.106	1		
emotional	Correlation									
	Sig.	.973	.037	.148	.308	.455	.290			
	(2-tailed)									
	N	102	102	102	102	102	102	102		
Autonomy	Pearson	.061	.280**	.232*	.075	-.062	.025	.156	1	
	Correlation									
	Sig.	.540	.004	.019	.451	.536	.802	.118		
	(2-tailed)									
	N	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	
Satisfaction in job	Pearson	.029	-.090	-.102	-.041	.175	-.004	.227*	.003	1
	Correlation									
	Sig.	.771	.368	.306	.682	.078	.968	.022	.976	
	(2-tailed)									
	N	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102

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

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In fact, they came to very interesting conclusions. It seems that part-time or full-time work was related to the status of the respondents. Certainly having a family adds responsibilities, and the necessity to have a full time job.

Very important correlation is that it is the relationship with headmasters/supervisors and overall satisfaction at work. For respondents, work stress and job satisfaction were inevitably linked to the relationship and co-operation that they had with colleagues as well as with their headmasters/supervisors. Therefore, this relationship directly influenced their level of stress and satisfaction at work.

The level of stress, meanwhile, seems to have a direct relationship with whether part-time or full-time respondents worked. It was also directly linked to the status of the respondents. Those who were married felt more pressure and higher levels of stress as they worked mostly at full time.

Another finding of this study was that the level of autonomy in the workplace among the respondents seemed to be related to the level of education of the respondents, those with higher levels of education also seem to have greater autonomy in the country work.

In conclusion, we can say that *“Transformational leadership style increase the level of satisfaction in the work.”* So the hypothesis is confirmed.

4. Discussion

In fact, teachers came to very interesting conclusions. Very important correlation is the relationship with headmasters/supervisors and overall satisfaction at work. For respondents, teachers in our case, work stress and job satisfaction were inevitably linked to the relationship and co-operation that they had with colleagues as well as with their headmasters/supervisors. Therefore, this relationship directly influenced their stress level and satisfaction at work.

However, the headmaster is still responsible for the decisions that are made. This is used when teachers are able to analyze the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to perform it. A single individual cannot do everything! S/he must set priorities and delegate certain tasks.

It seems that part-time or full-time work was related to the status of the respondents. Certainly having a family adds responsibilities, and the necessity to have a full time job.

The level of stress, meanwhile, seems to have a direct relationship with whether part-time or full-time respondents worked. It was also directly linked to the status of the respondents. Those who were married felt more pressure and higher levels of stress as they worked mostly at full time.

Another finding of this study was that the level of autonomy in the workplace among the respondents seemed to be related to the level of education of the respondents, those with higher levels of education also seem to have greater autonomy in the country work.

In conclusion, we can say that the transformational leader has motivation and charisma that help others follow their lead. However, these types of leaders seek to bring change through inspiration, passion and focus. They have a belief and encourage all to come together to achieve change.

The current study shows that the source of stress that is encountered regularly by most individuals in the workplace is stress and its factors. The role of stress consists of two important constructions, ambiguity of roles and role conflict. Doubtfulness of roles arises in the work environment when an employee lacks adequate information for the effective performance of a certain role (Colquitt, J. A., et al., 2017).

During the study, it was found that the potential effects of conflicts with headmasters/supervisors and their lack of cooperation and ambiguity are costly, not just for the individual in terms of emotional consequences such as high work stress and low work satisfaction, but also schools in the aspect of lower quality of performance and higher turnover (Storey, J., 2010). By the term style we generally mean a relatively enduring set of behaviors which is characteristic of the individual regardless of the situation.

5. Conclusions and Findings of the Study

Leadership is a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organization goals, a process whereby one person exerts social influence over other members of the group, a process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group of individuals in an effort towards goal achievement in given situations. Leadership is a relational concept involving influencing agent and the person being influenced. Effective leadership is the extent to which a leader continually and progressively leading and directing his/her followers to the agreed destination which is defined by the whole group.

Poor working conditions may be an important precursor to stress and may contribute to the development of depression or anxiety. The role of the burden, the conflict of authoritarian role and the lack of high-level support contribute more to the stress on the job.

Some people think that this style includes yelling using demeaning language, and leading by threats and abuse of power. This is not the authoritarian style. It is an abusive, unprofessional style of leadership. The transformational leader has motivation and charisma that help others follow their lead. However, it's important these leaders actually have a solid plan so they don't disappoint and demotivate their team.

Examining literature on job satisfaction shows that work status is an important factor for job satisfaction. Some studies showed no apparent difference between employee demographic variables and job satisfaction, but three factors related to work are closely related to job satisfaction. Studies have found that correlation between age and satisfaction level has a negative correlation and there is an important relationship between gender and satisfaction level.

Studies have found that variables such as employee age, gender, years of work experience, organizational position, type of employment, and wages, and benefits are considered to have significant effects on their work satisfaction. Literature reviews of health status studies show increased pressures for women in the workplace. As women increasingly compete with men for better jobs, the lowest level of job satisfaction has been found to lead to negative outcomes such as redundancies, shortages, movement, and intent.

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