



Impact of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Retention at Elementary School Level in Punjab: Teachers' Perspectives

Vol. IV, No. III (Summer 2019) | Page: 234 – 240 | DOI: 10.31703/grr.2019(IV-III).26

p- ISSN: 2616-955X | e-ISSN: 2663-7030 | ISSN-L: 2616-955X

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of transformational leadership on teacher retention at elementary school level (ESL) of Southern Punjab. The elementary school teachers (ELT) of Southern Punjab formed population. For the sample, 240 schools and 960 teachers were selected randomly for the study. The study has measured transformational leadership through factors i.e. job characteristics, school characteristics and personal attributes. When the respondents were asked for their views about teacher retention then there was no significant dissimilarity with respect to gender rather both groups had similar views; whereas significant difference was found between private and public teacher.

Key Words: Retention, transformational leadership, personal attributes

Introduction

Teachers influence students' learning more than any other school-based factor. The maximum motivation tool; however, discovered is the highly motivated teacher. The quality of education is directly linked with the retention of teachers, and for student retention the head teacher should have sufficient transformational leadership styles, so that he can effectively handle the problems and motivate the teachers to perform their jobs well (Urlick, 2016). The word 'Lad' is a noun in Anglo-Saxon with a long 'a' and it means a journey, and a verb 'Laedan' which means to lead (Davies, 2005). Transformational leadership is about constructing a combined shared awareness in which inspiration is reinforced by 'efforts to uplift associates' egoistic morals, beliefs and attitudes (Gunter, 2001. p. 69). Transformational leadership is significant for the employee retention that if the head has the leadership characteristics and handle the routine matters effectively, then the subordinates also follow his vision and it creates motivation for the subordinates and ultimately the employee retention increases. (Thomas et al., 2018) According to UNESCO (2016), Institute of Statistics on World Teachers' Day, has been targeted that 69 million new teachers including Primary and Secondary school teachers have to obtain the goal of education by 2030. The goal is Sustainable Development Goal 4, which explains the comprehensive and impartial quality education for all by 2030. The need for quality is important because a large number of students are out of schools all over the globe. It can be overcome by appointing more qualified and trained teachers through the support of international community. As a number of qualified and trained teachers are going on retirement every year and there is no substitute to fulfill this gap. As there are no new teachers available so their workload will increase and the quality of education will go down.

Simon and Johnson (2015) explain that the greatest single factor in the teaching process is the teacher. No technique, method, advice or tool can guarantee achievement but the teachers. Teachers are the most influential factor in schools for students learning. A highly motivated teacher becomes the best tool for learners' motivation. The quality is directly linked with the retention of teachers. Teachers leave the job due to the nature of school or cultural differences and decide whether they have to leave or continue their job. The quality is reduced due to

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the shortage of trained teacher in the education market. This practice is common in the schools of lower ranks. Further, it is the attitude of the school management or leadership to retain the teachers in the schools. Schuck, Brady, and Griffin (2005) explain that for new teachers, school environment is a main component of job satisfaction. For them school ranking and attitude of the leadership were the basic elements for job satisfaction. They feel better in schools where culture had been helpful and encouraging.

Shah et al. (2010) illustrates that various factors (e.g. personal, push and pull) have contributed in the teacher's turnover. However, some facets of personal factors have significantly contributed in turnover. Enticott (2015) explain that attractive teaching personality is the main factor which helps in the creation of a peaceful and learning environment and comfortable place for learners. Marinell and Shen (2016) state that probable predictors of turnover are teacher-student ratio, participation in decision making, support from authority, teaching level, student characteristics, location of the school, school heads, teachers mutual relationships and school safety.

Most of the teachers leave their jobs due to over work in their early year of teaching. They also have to work in the fields against their interest (Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff, 2002). Buchanan et al. (2013) carried out studies on teacher retention and concluded that teacher retention particularly job characteristics matter. Teaching profession is the last priority for the graduates because they have to do more work than required. Particularly in the first year of their profession they have to take a large number of classes and do some tasks which are not related to their job field. Teacher training department feeds them that this profession also has grown, in-service trainings and institutional policies help to retain more people and make them more skilled.

Khan (2015) explains that researches have been performed in the field of quality education and to improve the conditions of poor education in the school yet the need is there to better the classroom environment. Nadeem et al. (2011) explain that even if a person is very disappointed with his job, he is not likely to leave unless more alternatives that are attractive available. There are many parameters affecting teacher performance such as increased duties, low wages, negative attitude of the students and negative reinforcement in their work. Arnup and Bowles (2016) explain that the turnover of teachers is due to different reasons as retirement, transfer and leaving the education department altogether prior to retirement age. If a teacher is transferred from one school to another though his retention in the department is maintained but an alternate has not to be given to the former school which creates a lot of problems for the department and the school authorities.

Manuel's (2003) report suggested a number of strategies. It has been found that mostly new teachers leave their jobs in the first year of service. It is due to over workload, pressure from the professional teaching associations, and overtime participation in the professional development activities. It can be overcome by forming a link among the educational experts, universities and school authorities. The observation for the beginners to leave the jobs may be different for different teachers and they cannot be governed by the same roles because it varies from person to person.

The percentage of teacher turnover is the collective percentages of leavers and movers. While the movers should not loss to the teaching but yes they do comprise a portion of the cost related to teacher hiring which may appear in state turnover rates. The turnover rate difference among public schools with low poverty versus high poverty was significant. Collin (2013) describes that public schools with high poverty areas have the maximum turnover rates. It is noted that the majority of teachers leave their jobs within the first five years and do not retain because of excessive workload. They further find that low salary was not a major factor but other factors as classroom management difficulties related to students and their parents were main reasons behind teacher turn over. They emphasized on problematic relations with the administration and colleagues. (Lankford, et al., 2002)

Tanya (n.d) carried out a study on teachers' job satisfaction and incentive and concluded that although the private sector attracts highly educated teachers, these teachers are not actually concerned with teaching and are ready to leave teaching whenever other job opportunity become available. Bajwa (2013) carried out a study on teacher retention and concluded that the features of retention are the same for both genders. Though a large number of studied prove that the number of female teachers leaving the teaching profession is greater than male teachers.

From the above studies, the researchers feel the gap and designed study on a large scale having a reasonable representation of the area of Southern Punjab. Therefore, assessment of transformational leadership was done

through various factors and its relationship analyzed with teacher retention in this regard would be a very significant area of study to understand how these factors contribute to teacher retention and cause overall stability and growth in education.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were formulated:

1. To investigate the main determinants of transformational leadership style
2. To investigate effect of transformational leadership style on teacher retention at the ESL.
3. To compare the relation of transformational leadership style and teacher retention in private and public ESL.
4. To compare the gender wise view of teachers about the relation of transformational leadership style and teacher retention at the ESL.

Research Method

The study was supposed to explore the factors (of transformational leadership) affecting teacher retention. It was a descriptive research and survey method was used. This study was delimited to the Southern Punjab, the target population included teachers working in private and private schools at the elementary level of Southern Punjab. Further details of the selected sample are as under.

Table 1. Detail of the sample of the study

District	Number of Schools		Total	Number of Teachers		Total
	Public	Private		Males	Females	
Bahawalpur	30	30	60	4×30=120	4×30=120	240
Lodhran	30	30	60	4×30=120	4×30=120	240
Multan	30	30	60	4×30=120	4×30=120	240
Muzzafargarh	30	30	60	4×30=120	4×30=120	240
Grand Total	120	120	240	480	480	960

A sample of 960 teachers was taken to address the purpose of the study. These 960 teachers were further categorized in four districts of South Punjab i.e. Bahawalpur, Lodhran, Muzzafargarh and Multan. Sample was collected from 60 schools (30 public schools and 30 private schools) from each district and 120 240 schools in total. The purpose to broaden our research geographical area is to find out variety of opinions from our sample population. From every school, 4 teachers were asked to fill out the questionnaires. Hence 480 male teachers and 480 female teachers were taken as a sample.

Development and Validation of the Research Instrument

A careful review of relevant literature, a questionnaire was developed for teachers to measure between transformational leadership factors and teacher retention. Four factors of transformational leadership were identified i.e. personal attributes, school characteristics, job characteristics and external factors' influences. As the purpose of the study is to find out the transformational leadership impact on teachers retention therefore transformational leadership is measured through the above mentioned factors. Personal attributes are the core determinant in transformational leadership style as sufficient personal attributes are required for the transformational leadership style of a person. Transformational leadership style is also affected by the school characteristics, school characteristics may include the working environment, staff members and the policies under which one has to work. Therefore school characteristics are also included in the determinants of transformational leadership style. Another determinant of transformational leadership style, which is included in the study, is job characteristics. Job characteristics may involve the nature of job. If the nature of job does not allow the requisite characteristics then transformational leadership style is not applicable to that job. Therefore heads have been asked about the questionnaire as head teachers have such job characteristics which can able them to adopt

transformational leadership style. Similarly the last factor which was taken in the study to determine the transformational leadership style is external factors. External factors may include the work environment, directions from the higher management and government policies. As these factors are very important in determining once leadership style as the head always have to within the prescribed jurisdictions.

A questionnaire was adapted by considering these factors and attributes. The questionnaire consisted of forty items: 37 were close ended and two items were semi close ended and one item was an open ended apart from demographic details as gender, designation and locality of the school etc. The questionnaire was based on five point Likert scale.

The validity of questionnaire was determined by the view of five experts and was changed accordingly. It was again subjected to validity before the large scale application. The pilot study was performed on 60 teachers from 12 schools (6 public and 6 private). The calculated Cronbach coefficient value was found 0.82, which indicates the high reliability of questionnaire (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012).

Data Collection and Data Analysis

This study was used to identify the relationship between transformational leadership factors and teacher retention at ESL. The questionnaire was personally distributed among ELT as mentioned above. As a whole, 960 questionnaires were administered while 861 were returned. Therefore, the rate of return was 89.68%. The data was processed by SPSS 25. Descriptive statistics and T-test for independent sample was used for comparing responses on demographic variables such as gender or private and public schools. Mean was calculated to check each factor either contributing or not in teacher retention.

Results

The results of the study are presented as follows.

Table 2. Factors of transformational leadership and its effect on teacher retention at ESL of in Southern Punjab

S No.	Variable	SDA	DA	UC	A	SA	Mean	SD
1	Personal Attributes	6.8%	15.2%	7.8%	42.6%	27.7%	3.7	1.09
2	School Characteristics	13.8%	20.4%	2.9%	37%	25.8%	4.3	0.68
3	Job Characteristics	10.3%	17.7%	2.3%	39.1%	30.5%	4.27	0.69
4	External Factors	11.6%	14%	3.6%	44.7%	21.5%	3.99	0.83

Table 2 indicates the respondents' views about different factors (of transformational leadership) that affect teacher retention at the ESL. Seventy percent respondents agreed about personal attributes, 22.0% disagreed while 7.77% respondents were uncertain. The sample mean (3.69) also shows that teachers gave a favorable view about personal attributes. Therefore, it can be inferred that teachers do not retain in the profession because of their different personal attributes as satisfaction, family reasons and boredom.

With reference to the respondents' views about school characteristic, sixty-two percent respondents agreed about school characteristics, 34.0% respondents disagreed while only 2.9% respondents were uncertain. The sample mean (4.28) also supports that teachers gave a favorable view about school characteristics. Therefore, it can be concluded that school characteristic such as climate, living and working conditions and interpersonal relations affect the teacher retention level.

With regard to the teachers' views regarding job characteristics, seventy percent respondents agreed about job characteristics, 28.0% respondents disagreed whereas only 2.36% respondents were uncertain. The sample mean (4.27) also supports the results. As a result, it can be concluded that job characteristics such as lack of training, unclear policies are the causes because of which teachers do not retain in the profession of teaching.

As far as the teachers' views about external factors are concerned, sixty-six percent respondents agreed about external factors, 25.6% respondents disagreed and only 3.58% were uncertain. The sample mean (3.99) also supports the results. So, it is concluded that their external factors; namely, educational background, security

conditions and political interference are the reasons because of which people do not retain in the teaching profession.

In view of the results, it was concluded that job characteristic has the most effects on teacher retention where personal attributes was the least affecting among all four factors. The school characteristics and external factors have average effects on teacher retention level.

Table 3. Institution wise and gender wise comparisons of teachers' views

	Sub-Category	Sample Size (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Sig.
Institution	Public	424	3.85	0.23	-23.69	0.00*
	Private	437	4.16	0.14		
Gender	Male	447	4.01	0.24	0.165	0.87
	Female	414	4.00	0.25		

*0.05

Table 3 shows that institution wise comparison of teachers' view. The calculated value indicates that there was a significant difference in the views of private and public school teachers ($t = -23.69$, $p < 0.05$). The sample mean of private schools (4.16) was significantly higher than public schools (3.85). It shows that transformational leadership affects more in teacher retention at private school as compared to the public schools. In the second part, gender wise comparison of teachers' views about relationship between transformational leadership factors and teacher retention. As far as gender wise results are concerned than the calculated value indicates that there was no significant difference in the views of both groups regarding teacher retention and transformational leadership ($t = 0.165$, $p > 0.05$). The sample mean of male teachers (4.01) was not significantly higher than females' sample mean (4.00).

Discussion and Conclusions

The study was carried out to explore the impact of transformational leadership factors on teacher retention. Four factors; namely, personal attributes, school characteristic, job characteristics and external factors were identified and its impact was examined on teacher retention. A questionnaire was adapted by considering these factors and attributes. The questionnaire consisted of forty items: 37 were close ended and two items were semi close ended and one item was an open ended apart from demographic details as gender, designation and locality of the school etc. The questionnaire was based on five point Likert scale. This study was used to identify the relationship between transformational leadership factors and teacher retention at ESL. The questionnaire was personally distributed among ELT as mentioned above. As a whole, 960 questionnaires were administered while 861 were returned. Therefore, the rate of return was 89.68%.

The results of the study disclose that the majority was agreed about personal attributes. Therefore, it is clear that teachers do not retain in the profession because of their different personal attributes as satisfaction, family reasons and boredom. The majority of the respondents agreed about school characteristics. Therefore, it is concluded that school characteristics as climate, living and working conditions and interpersonal relations affect the teacher retention level. The majority of the respondents agreed upon job characteristics. Therefore, it is concluded that the job characteristics as lack of training, unclear policies are the causes based on which the teachers do not retain in the teaching profession. The majority of the respondents agreed about external factors. It is concluded that external factors such as educational background, security conditions and political interference are the reasons. That is why people do not retain in this profession. The results of the studies carried out by Lankford, Loeb and Wyckoff (2002) and Bajwa (2013) support the findings of current study. According to UNESCO (2016) Institute of Statistics on World Teachers' Day, has been targeted that 69 million new teachers including Primary and Secondary school teachers have to obtain the goal of education by 2030. The goal is Sustainable Development Goal 4, which explains the comprehensive and impartial quality education for all by 2030. The need for quality is important because a large number of students are out of schools all over the globe. It can be overcome by appointing more qualified and trained teachers through the support of international community. As a number of qualified and trained teachers are going on retirement every year and there is no

substitute to fill this gap. As there is no new teachers are available so their workload will increase and the quality of education will go down. Manuel's (2003) report suggested a number of strategies. It has been found that mostly new teachers leave their jobs in the first year of service. It is due to over workload, pressure from the professional teaching associations, and overtime participation in the professional development activities. It can be overcome by forming a link among the educational experts, universities and school authorities.

Comparison of private and public teachers' view about relation between transformational leadership factors and teacher retention indicates that there was a significant difference in their view. The sample mean of private school was significantly higher than public schools. It shows that in private school more factors affect teacher retention as compared to public schools. Tanya (n.d) carried out a study on teachers' job satisfaction and incentive. The results of this study strongly support the findings of the current study. Bajwa (2013) carried out a study on teacher retention and concluded that the features of retention are the same for both genders. Though a large number of studied prove that the number of female teachers leaving the teaching profession is greater than male teachers. The results were much similar in that case as that of the current study.

Gender wise comparison of teachers' views shows that there was no significant difference regarding the opinion about teacher retention. Bajwa (2013) performed a similar study and found that all teachers have almost same views regarding retention behavior but female teachers sample mean was slightly higher than male teachers. Hence the findings of the current study have found that the above factors discussed in this paper are significant factors contributing to retention behavior. Results also found that transformational leadership style is the main factor contributing to retention behavior, that if the head has the skills to manage the workload among teachers and listen to their issues then the teachers show retention and devotion towards job.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, personal attributes had the least mean and the second least mean was of external factors, so it is suggested that teacher training programs should focus on how to deal with their personal attributes and external factors. Further research can also be done on idealized influence and intellectual abilities of leaders and how it could be beneficial for the teachers and for the institute as well. It was recommended that policymakers should, first of all, intensify their efforts to recruit capable graduates into teaching. Better salary and financial benefits should be given to the teachers posted at far flung areas. The policymakers should work to minimize the effects of external factors such as political interference, unpredictable and insecure environment. The administration should consider teachers' personal attributes while taking decisions of posting and transfer. The job characteristic had the highest mean, hence it is suggested that job characteristic like workload, class size, timing, should be dealt without any biases. The teachers should be trained to develop their communicative and interpersonal skills; that is an effort to increase the teacher retention level in the teaching profession. The government should take effective steps to resolve the legal issues to minimize discrepancies among teachers. The head teachers should take steps to create conducive environment in the institutions.

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