

A Framework of Teacher Satisfaction in UAE Primary Schools

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Abstract

Schools face a lot of challenges related to the teaching staff. School principals who possess the traits of transformational leadership can change the behavior of teachers and inspire them to be productive and highly motivated in their work. Thus, the aim of this study is to develop a framework linking transformational leadership with teacher motivation and teacher satisfaction in Abu Dhabi primary schools. To validate this framework, quantitative methods based on SEM for conducting data analysis. Self-administrated questionnaire is data instrument. The data collection has been conducted on a sample of 450 teachers. Simple random sampling technique has been applied in the survey procedure. The findings reveal that modeling transformational leadership with teacher satisfaction through the mediating influence of teacher motivation is theoretically developed and empirically validated according to the result of fit-indices, specifically RMSEA = 0.042, CFI = 0.942, and TLI = 0.938. This result indicates that adopting transformational leadership style in schools provide clear vision of the teachers which influence them and raise their satisfaction, those teachers have the ability to foster a sense of direction and purpose among the teachers. They establish a collaborative and inclusive culture which motivate the teachers through inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, idealized influence. This not only boosts teacher morale but also promotes a sense of ownership and commitment to the school's vision and mission.

Keywords:

Transformational Leadership, Teacher Motivation, Teacher Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Today, leadership is critical for the success of schools due to the rapidly changing educational landscape and the complex challenges that schools face at the present time (Day et al., 2020). Effective leadership ensures that schools are able to adapt to these changes and provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the 21st century (Leithwood et al., 2020). Therefore, strong leadership sets the tone for a positive school culture and fosters a sense of community and collaboration among staff, students, and parents (Khalifa, 2020). Transformational leadership is of utmost importance in the context of schools. This style of leadership goes beyond simply managing day-to-day operations; it focuses on inspiring and motivating individuals to reach their full potential. In a school setting, transformational leaders have the power to create a positive and empowering environment that fosters growth and development among both students and teaching staff (Rizkie & Suriansyah, 2022; Purwanto, 2022). In the same context, teacher satisfaction and motivation play a crucial role in the success

of students in their study and help them to attain high level of academic achievement. To that end, the role of transformational leadership of school principal is imperative for the success of education. When teachers are satisfied with their work environment, they are more likely to be motivated and committed to their profession. This, in turn, positively impacts student learning outcomes and overall school performance (Pratomo & Kuswati, 2022). However, attaining teacher satisfaction and high level of motivation is not always an easy goal to achieve, as it requires addressing various factors that can influence their morale and attitude. Thereby, studying the impact of transformational leadership among school principals is crucial in this scenario because those leaders have the personal ability to inspire and motivate their followers, creating a positive work environment that encourages growth and development. When school principals exhibit transformational leadership behaviors, such as setting a clear vision, providing support and encouragement, and fostering a sense of autonomy and trust, teachers feel valued and motivated to excel in their roles. This ultimately leads to increased job satisfaction, improved teacher retention rates, and enhanced student outcomes. Understanding the relationship between the leader of school and teachers is essential for policymakers in the Ministry of Education of United Arab Emirates (UAE), as well as school principals in primary school. The literature still lacks evidence of how transformational leadership fits with teacher motivation and satisfaction into a theoretical framework. Therefore, the aim of this study is to develop a framework that link these concepts and explain the interrelationships between in the educational context.

The Issues of Teaching in UAE Schools

A number of studies have already found that work satisfaction among teachers in the UAE is low, particularly in public schools (Shallal, 2011; Hijazi et al., 2017; Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020). Although the UAE's public institutions outperform their regional counterparts, they face challenges in increasing employee productivity. Nonetheless, there is a noteworthy lack of study on the factors that influence the level of job satisfaction reported by educators in the UAE (Jawabri, 2017). In this regard, Alkhateri et al. (2018) suggested that the leadership style has the ability to raise the level of job satisfaction among Emirati teachers, resulting in an increase in their willingness to leave their jobs. While Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji (2019) stated that motivational factors such as the enjoyment of teaching, professional advancement, and the satisfaction gained from working with children were found to have a diminished impact on overall satisfaction in Abu Dhabi public schools. As a result, it is unclear how transformational leadership affects the degree of work satisfaction among teachers in schools.

According to various studies in this field, e.g., Siddiqui and Rida (2019); Navaneetha and Bhaskar (2018), the literature does not provide sufficient evidence on the mediating function of teacher motivation in the relationship between leadership and work satisfaction. Teachers frequently relate their weak performance to the low levels of job satisfaction and motivation (Toropova et al., 2021). However, more evidence is needed to support this claim. Furthermore, school administration has an issue of increasing teachers' workload and, as a result, hamper their job satisfaction. As a result, the deployment of effective leadership methods has the ability to effectively address these challenges while also increasing overall job satisfaction among educators (Bin Nordin et al., 2020). However, more research on these issues is necessary to highlight the role of transformational leadership in facing this challenge that affect the performance of teachers. Thus, this study is a novel academic work in educational context, notably primary schools in the UAE.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership style that uses high levels of passion, energy, and enthusiasm to influence change in individuals, society, and management systems (Afsar & Umrani, 2020; Awaru, 2015). Managers' shifting levels of confidence in charismatic, inspiring, and stimulating behavior act as a catalyst for motivating, inspiring, and promoting creativity, innovation, and stimulation among employees. It is critical to create an environment that encourages problem discovery and resolution through creative approaches, while also offering individualized support to each employee. Transformational leaders, according to Bass and Riggio (2006), are likely to encourage and urge their followers to advance their professional and personal growth, boosting their trust in the successful execution of their tasks (Qistina & Khashini, 2017). During the mid-1980s, Bennis and Nanus (1985) identified four traditional techniques used by transformative leaders. These techniques included developing a well-defined agenda, pursuing social change, actively engaging as agents of social change, and cultivating the leader's unique leadership style.

According to Bass (2008), the inventor of transformational leadership theory, a transformational leader's attitudes and actions can be divided into three categories: charm, intellectual motivation, and human concern. Furthermore, Bass argues that charisma is not required to be a transformative leader. According to Bass (2008), transformative leaders help their followers improve their cognitive abilities, allowing them to adopt new viewpoints and actions and effectively confront obstacles as needed. Furthermore, transformational leaders display a significant commitment to their followers' personal development by providing specialized attention, creating favorable settings for growth, raising their awareness, and encouraging the learning of new skills.

Bass has made numerous changes to the notion of transformative leadership and its key characteristics. Following the identification of charisma as a valuable influence in 1990, the notion of Bass transformational leadership was enhanced (Bass, 1990). Later, Bass and Avolio (1992, 1997) established a theoretical framework for transformational leadership that includes four major dimensions: idealized influence, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

The idealized influence of transformational leadership refers to the ability of a leader to inspire and motivate their followers through their own exemplary behavior and personal characteristics (Ali et al., 2020). It encompasses the notion of being a role model and earning the respect and admiration of others (Demir & Budur, 2019). The meaning of the inspirational motivation of transformational leadership lies in its ability to inspire and motivate individuals towards a common goal or vision (Iqbal et al., 2019). It is a leadership style that focuses on creating a sense of purpose and enthusiasm among team members, encouraging them to go above and beyond their own self-interests for the greater good of the organization (Bass & Avolio, 1992, 1997). While intellectual stimulation of transformational leadership lies in leaders' ability to challenge and inspire individuals to think critically, question assumptions, and seek innovative solutions (Al-Sada et al., 2017). It encourages a culture of continuous learning and growth, where followers are encouraged to explore new ideas, perspectives, and approaches. Intellectual stimulation fosters a sense of intellectual curiosity and creativity, pushing individuals to expand their knowledge and skills beyond their comfort zones (Buil et al., 2019). Ultimately, individualized consideration is a key aspect of transformational leadership that focuses on recognizing and addressing the unique needs, strengths, and aspirations of each individual within a team or organization (Imran & Masood, 2018). It

involves treating each person as an individual, rather than just a member of a group, and tailoring leadership strategies and actions to meet their specific needs and goals (Eyal & Kark, 2004; Yang, 2009).

Teacher Motivation

Teacher motivation is a crucial factor in the success of any educational institution. When teachers are motivated, they bring enthusiasm and passion to their classrooms, which in turn inspires and engages their students (Dörnyei, 2018). Motivated teachers are more likely to go the extra mile to ensure that their students are learning and growing. They are constantly seeking new ways to improve their teaching methods and are committed to their own professional development (Roohani & Dayeri, 2019). Additionally, motivated teachers are more likely to form positive relationships with their students, creating a supportive and nurturing learning environment. This positive rapport encourages students to take risks, ask questions, and actively participate in class (Pourtoussi et al., 2018). Motivated teachers also serve as role models for their students, demonstrating the importance of hard work, dedication, and lifelong learning. Their energy and enthusiasm are contagious, sparking a love for learning in their students that extends beyond the classroom. Ultimately, motivated teachers play a crucial role in shaping the future of their students and instilling in them a lifelong passion for education (Sala, 2019).

Studying teacher motivation is important for several reasons. Firstly, understanding what motivates teachers can help schools and educational institutions create a positive and supportive work environment. When teachers feel motivated and engaged, they are more likely to be effective in their teaching practices, leading to improved student outcomes (Safdari, 2018). Additionally, exploring teacher motivation can also provide insights into the factors that contribute to teacher burnout and attrition, allowing for the development of strategies to retain and support educators in the long term. There are two components of teacher motivation. First, intrinsic motivation of teachers refers to the internal drive and passion that educators have for their profession (Jiyong et al., 2016). It is the deep-rooted desire to make a positive impact on students' lives, to inspire and ignite a love for learning, and to continuously improve their own teaching practices. Intrinsic motivation goes beyond external factors such as salary or recognition, as it is driven by personal satisfaction, fulfilment, and a genuine love for teaching. Second, extrinsic motivation refers to the external factors that drive teachers to perform their duties and achieve desired outcomes (Stirling, 2014). These factors can include rewards, recognition, promotions, and even financial incentives. While intrinsic motivation, which stems from personal satisfaction and a genuine passion for teaching, is often seen as the ideal driving force for educators, extrinsic motivation also plays a significant role in shaping their behaviors and performance in the classroom (Ortega-Torres et al., 2020).

Teacher Satisfaction

The satisfaction of teachers refers to the level of contentment and fulfilment a teacher experiences in their work. It encompasses various factors such as the nature of the job, the work environment, the relationships with colleagues and school principal, and the overall sense of accomplishment and recognition (Hui et al., 2013). In general, job satisfaction plays a crucial role in an individual's overall well-being and can significantly impact their motivation, productivity, and commitment to their job. Job satisfaction is a crucial factor for teachers, as it directly impacts their overall well-being and effectiveness in the classroom (Ibrahim & Al-Taneiji, 2019). While teaching can be an incredibly rewarding profession, it also comes with its unique set of challenges and demands. However, despite these challenges, many teachers

find immense satisfaction in their work, driven by the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of their students (Olsen & Huang, 2019). For example, a teacher may feel a deep sense of job satisfaction when they witness a struggling student finally grasp a difficult concept and experience a boost in their confidence and academic performance. This tangible evidence of their impact can be incredibly rewarding and fuel their passion for teaching. Additionally, Ali and Dahie (2015) discussed the supportive relationships formed with students, where teachers become mentors and role models, can also contribute to job satisfaction as teachers see the positive influence, they have on shaping students' minds.

Teacher satisfaction could be measured based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which is measure individual satisfaction according five component needs (Zhang et al., 2014). First, psychological needs which refer to the essential requirements of individuals that are related to their biological needs (Qasimov & Israyilova, 2017). The psychological needs of individuals display variances and typically conform to a hierarchical framework, with fundamental physiological needs taking priority over social needs at a higher level (Aktaş & Şimsek, 2015). Second, safety needs refer to a range of criteria that are essential for ensuring protection, confidence, structure, compliance, limits, and consistency (Cüceloğlu, 2016). The authors (Uysal et al., 2017) believe that meeting these desires will contribute to the long-term satisfaction of fundamental requirements. Third, belongingness needs which encompasses various variables, including the dynamics within work groups, familial connections, loving alliances, and interpersonal relationships. These needs are commonly known as social needs (Uysal et al., 2017). Fourth, esteem needs refer to various dimensions of an individual's self-esteem, such as their sense of accomplishment, competence, autonomy, social standing, influence, prestige, and leadership roles. In this particular context, individuals demonstrate a propensity for acknowledgment and a feeling of belongingness, endeavoring to assimilate themselves into a network of interpersonal relationships (Griffin & Van Fleet, 2013). Finally, self-actualization needs which pertain to individuals' quest for personal advancement, self-fulfillment, and the actualization of their complete potential in life, occasionally accompanied by a yearning for exceptional experiences (McGregor, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

The link and association between the transformational leadership of school principals and Maslow satisfaction theory among the teachers are crucial in understanding the impact of leadership styles on employee satisfaction and motivation. Transformational leadership, characterized by inspiring and motivating followers to achieve their full potential, aligns closely with Maslow's theory of satisfaction, which posits that individuals have different levels of needs that must be met in order to achieve overall satisfaction (Lin et al., 2022). When school principals exhibit transformational leadership behaviors, such as providing support, fostering a positive work environment, and empowering teachers, they contribute to fulfilling the basic psychological and self-fulfillment (Novita & Sulaiman, 2022). To that end, transformational leadership of school principals can greatly influence and motivate teachers by aligning their actions with the principles of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Medley & Larochelle, 1995).

Maslow's theory suggests that individuals have a set of hierarchical needs, starting from basic physiological needs, such as food and shelter, to higher-level needs, such as self-esteem and self-actualization. By understanding and addressing these needs, transformational leaders can create an environment that fosters teacher motivation and satisfaction. In addition, transformational leadership of school principals has been shown to have a profound impact on teacher motivation. By employing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors outlined in Herzberg's theory, these leaders are able to create a positive and inspiring work environment.

Through their visionary guidance and ability to foster a sense of purpose, transformational principals tap into the intrinsic motivation of teachers, encouraging them to strive for excellence and personal growth (Hyseni & Hoxha, 2021). Additionally, they also recognize the importance of providing extrinsic rewards and recognition, such as praise, promotions, and opportunities for professional development, which further fuel teachers' motivation and commitment to their work. Based on these arguments and claims, this study will test the model fit of the following framework that links transformational leadership, teacher motivation, and teacher satisfaction.

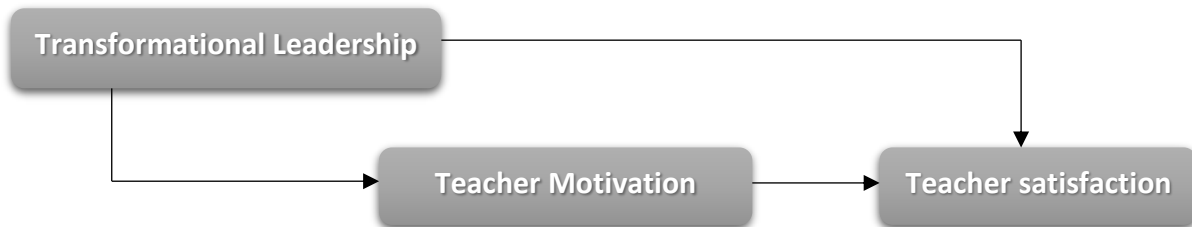


Figure 1: The framework of teacher’s satisfaction in UAE primary schools

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applied quantitative methods to analyze the model fit of a proposed framework that link transformational leadership with teacher motivation and teacher satisfaction. Data instrument is self-administrated questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed in two sections. The first section contained respondents' background information including their demographic data such as gender, years of working experience, and education level. The second section asked respondents to rate survey items (1-5) of all studied variables using a five-point Likert rating scale as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The constructs and indicators of the questionnaire

Transformation Leadership			
Construct	Source	#	Indicators
Idealized influence	Bass and Bass, 2008	1	My school principal instils the values of pride among teachers
		2	My school principal goes beyond self-interest for the good of teachers
		3	My school principal promotes learning values among us
		4	My school principal emphasizes the importance of the collective mission
		5	My school principal displays a sense of power and self-confidence
Inspirational Motivation	Bass and Bass, 2008	1	School principal speaks optimistically about the future of learning in our school
		2	My school principal expresses an interesting vision for the future
		3	My school principal speaks enthusiastically about what I need to do in the teaching process
		4	My school principal expresses his/her confidence that goals will be achieved
		5	School principal encourages me to work within a team
Intellectual Stimulation	Bass and Bass, 2008	1	My school principal looks for different perspectives in solving the problems we face in teaching students

		2	My school principal makes me look at problem(s) from different angles
		3	My school principal continually encourages creative thinking
		4	My school principal recommends new ways for accomplishing the task assigned to me
		5	My school principal focuses on creative learning methods to ease learning process
Individualized consideration	Bass and Bass, 2008	1	My school principal gives adequate attention to development the teachers' performance
		2	My school principal promotes self-development of teachers
		3	My school principal deals with a humanitarian perspective with teachers as individuals
		4	My school principal is interested in developing the career of teachers
		5	My school principal listens to my opinions and concerns
Teacher Motivation			
Construct	Source	#	Indicators
Intrinsic motivation	Lepper et al., 2003	1	I like hard work in my school because it's a challenge to me
		2	I like to learn as much as I can in teaching
		3	I have the self-determination to do difficult teaching works
		4	I like those schools that make me think fairly hard and figure things out on my own
		5	I like difficult problems because I enjoy trying to challenge myself
		6	I like difficult schoolwork because I find it more interesting
Extrinsic motivation	Didas, 2015	1	My school provides relevant and adequate instructional materials
		2	The school provides staff trips (educational and recreational tours)
		3	I receive awards/prizes in recognition of achievement
		4	I receive appreciation by school administrator on my good performance at work
		5	I receive attractive salary and allowances for my work at this school
		6	The school has a fair appointment and promotion system based on merit
Teacher Satisfaction			
Construct	Source	#	Indicators
Self-Actualization needs	Al-Rubaish et al., 2011	1	I am free to decide on how to accomplish my assigned duties and assigned tasks
		2	My job encourages competitive spirit
		3	My job is compatible with my experience
		4	The school helps me to pursue my professional growth
		5	I have sufficient professional authority and autonomy at work
Esteem needs	Al-Rubaish et al., 2011	1	I am pleased with the benefits I receive from my school
		2	I have freedom of choice when performing my duties
		3	I have a sense of friendship and team spirit inside this school
		4	I have adequate flexibility to do my work
		5	My school principal treats me fairly
Belongingness needs	Al-Rubaish et al., 2011	1	I am ready to put extra efforts to accomplish my work
		2	I like the spirit of teamwork while performing my duties
		3	I have a high degree of loyalty to my school
		4	I have clear achievable goals and standards for my position
		5	I have the freedom to socialize with other teachers while at work
Safety needs	Al-Rubaish et al., 2011	1	My present job provides good opportunities for promotion
		2	The work in my school is comfortable and safe
		3	My school helped me to develop my career

		4	My school has clear policies regarding salaries and allowances
		5	I feel that my job is secure in this school
Physiological need	Al-Rubaish et al., 2011	1	The schools provide me with the latest technological tools to help me do my work
		2	The available teaching equipment works properly
		3	My school provides good amenities and convenient rooms for teachers
		4	Adequate financial resources are available
		5	My school provides comfortable study environment

In this study, the population consists the teachers distributed in a total working in 134 primary schools in Abu Dhabi district. According to Abu Dhabi Council, the number of teachers in primary schools = 2535. The number of distributed questionnaire and the received ones is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Number of distributed questionnaires

Abu Dhabi cities	Teachers	Distributed questionnaires	Valid questionnaires
Abu Dhabi capital	1136	201	174
Al Dhafra	223	41	36
Al Ain	1176	208	181
Total	2535	450	391

Simple random sampling technique has been applied in the survey procedure. SPSS software is deployed to conduct data analysis. SEM analysis is the principal approach used to conduct data analysis and validate the model fit of the propose framework.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

During the survey phase, the researcher has distributed questionnaires to a sample of the teachers consists of 450 teachers working in primary school in three districts of Abu Dhabi. Out of the 450 questionnaires distributed to the study sample, 391 valid questionnaires have been considered for the analysis. This implies a response rate of 86.00%. Scholars in statistics found that a response rate should be more exceed the defined sample to make a correct generalization of results with respect to the whole population (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The remaining 59 questionnaires are redundant because they identified with missing data or totally incomplete. Missing data is one of the most persistent problems during data analysis procedure (Berchtold, (2019), and could deviate the conclusions so that any detected questionnaire with missing data should not be included in data analysis (Nugroho & Surendro, 2019). Table 3 indicates the responses rates, and the number of valid questionnaires and incomplete copies.

Table 3: Survey response rate

Questionnaire response	Frequency	Rate
Number of questionnaires distributed	450	100.00%
Valid questionnaires	391	86.00%
Incomplete questionnaires	59	13.11%

The descriptive analysis provided an insight on the perspective of teachers on the variables, i.e., transformational leadership, teacher motivation, and teacher satisfaction as shown in Table 4. The result of descriptive analysis reveals that the magnitudes of arithmetic mean of transformational leadership = 3.62, teacher motivation = 3.40, and teacher satisfaction = 3.47. These values report a moderate agreement among the teachers on the statements mentioned in the questionnaire. With respect to skewness, transformational leadership data is negatively skewed (skewness = -0.63), while teacher motivation data is positively skewed (skewness = -0.65), and teacher satisfaction data is negatively skewed (skewness = -0.52). This result reveals a general acceptance among the respondents towards these concepts. However, further analysis and interpretation of the data should be conducted to understand the reasons behind their agreement and to identify any potential areas of improvement or clarification. Next, the analysis of the proposed framework has been done through the application of SEM analysis as shown in Figure 2.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of constructs

	N	Min.	Max	Mean	St. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
1 Transformational leadership	391	1.60	4.90	3.62	0.56	-0.63	0.46
2 Teacher motivation	391	1.30	4.60	3.40	0.69	-0.65	-0.25
3 Teacher satisfaction	391	1.56	4.80	3.47	0.52	-0.54	0.64

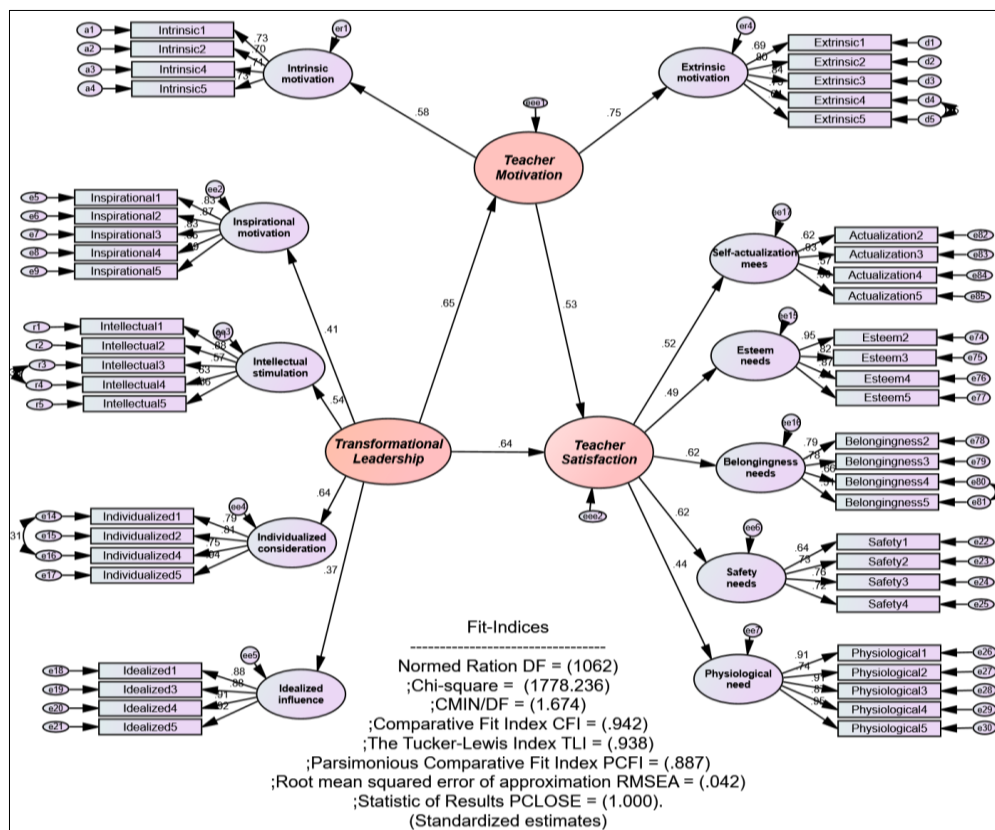


Figure 2: The proposed framework output

Based on Figure 2, the evaluation of path analysis result reports that all fit-indices are compatible with the cut-off points for SEM standards. Starting with PCLOSE = 1.00 (perfect non-significant), while RMSEA = 0.042 (≤ 0.08) which reflects a high degree of model-fit. Moreover, CMIN/DF = 1.674 (≤ 3.00), CFI = 0.942 (≥ 0.80), TLI = 0.938 (≥ 0.80), the typical range for TLI and CFI lies between zero and one, whereas TLI and CFI values close to 1 indicate a very good model fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; McDonald and Marsh, 1990). These are the standard fit-indices in SEM standards that should be used to assess the validity of a theoretical model with an empirical data (Dash & Paul, 2021). These magnitudes are typical (Hair et al., 2020) and shows that hypothesized framework in theory is valid and fit the empirical data, so that modeling transformational leadership with teacher satisfaction through the mediating influence of teacher motivation is theoretically developed and empirically validated.

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study is to develop a framework linking transformational leadership with teacher motivation and teacher satisfaction in Abu Dhabi primary schools. This study concludes that transformational leadership in schools has been found to have a significant impact on teacher motivation and satisfaction. Modeling transformational leadership with teacher satisfaction through the mediating influence of teacher motivation is theoretically developed and empirically validated. In one framework, the transformational leadership style focuses on inspiring and motivating teachers to go above and beyond their roles, encouraging them to embrace innovation and change. This style of leadership creates a positive and supportive work environment where teachers feel valued and empowered, leading to higher levels of motivation and satisfaction. Furthermore, the study found the transformational leaders in schools often provide clear goals and expectations, allowing teachers to have a sense of direction and purpose in their work. By fostering a collaborative and inclusive culture, these leaders motivate the teachers through inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, idealized influence. This not only boosts teacher morale but also promotes a sense of ownership and commitment to the school's vision and mission. Conclusively, understanding the role of transformational leadership on teachers has significant implications for both educators and the overall educational system. It can empower teachers to become effective leaders who inspire and motivate their students to achieve their full potential. Additionally, it can foster a positive school climate, enhance teacher satisfaction and retention, and ultimately improve student outcomes. To that end, it is recommended that the principals of primary schools to practice transformational leadership, such as encouraging collaboration and teamwork among teachers, and providing continuous professional development opportunities for educators is essential to enhance their leadership skills and keep them updated with the latest educational practice. Future research should examine other factors in the developed framework of this study in order to understand the extend our understanding on the factors that influence teachers in primary schools.

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