

Beyond Compliance: Fostering Internal Motivation and Professional Responsibility Among Teachers

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Abstract:

This study investigates the crucial role of school leadership in fostering internal motivation and professional responsibility among teachers, moving beyond traditional models focused solely on compliance and control. Grounded in self-determination theory, transformational leadership, and pedagogical leadership frameworks, the research examines how effective leadership behaviors can cultivate autonomy, competence, and relatedness—key psychological needs that sustain long-term motivation. Utilizing a systematic literature review of 40 peer-reviewed sources, the study identifies specific leadership strategies and organizational practices that enhance teacher engagement, promote professional growth, and support a collaborative school culture. Key findings highlight the importance of inclusive leadership, emotional and cultural responsiveness, trust-building, and shared decision-making in motivating educators. Furthermore, the research underscores how collaborative learning communities and a positive organizational climate contribute to teacher well-being and improved performance. The study offers critical insights for policymakers, educational leaders, and professional development programs aiming to build more empowered, resilient, and motivated teaching forces. By reimagining leadership beyond hierarchical control, the findings advocate for relational, reflective, and context-sensitive leadership models that align with both teacher needs and institutional goals.

Keywords: school leadership, teacher motivation, professional responsibility, transformational leadership,

Introduction:

In educational institutions, teacher motivation plays a vital role in promoting student achievement and driving school improvement. However, many systems still emphasize external compliance through rigid adherence to policies and procedures. While necessary for accountability, this approach often overlooks the deeper, more sustainable influence of internal motivation and professional responsibility.

Scholars argue that fostering intrinsic commitment leads to improved teacher performance, innovation, and retention (Assor et al., 2002; Baard et al., 2004; Abidogun, 2023). This paper aims to explore how school leaders can cultivate internal motivation and a strong sense of professionalism among teachers—going beyond rule enforcement to shape school cultures grounded in trust and purpose.

One foundational framework guiding this investigation is Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential psychological needs for motivation. Teachers thrive when they are trusted to make instructional decisions, feel effective in their roles, and are part of a supportive community.

Transformational leadership—marked by inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994)—has been shown to support these needs (Andriani et al., 2018; Akhtar & Akhtar, 2024). Similarly, Berhanu (2023) emphasizes that pedagogical leadership, which prioritizes teacher development and student learning, enhances professional identity and job commitment.

Inclusive and equity-oriented leadership practices further reinforce intrinsic motivation. Ainscow (2023) and Alvaré (2018) stress that addressing systemic inequities and valuing diverse cultural perspectives encourages teachers to invest more meaningfully in their work. Leaders who create inclusive environments where teachers' voices are heard contribute to a sense of belonging and ownership. Moreover, Brevik et al. (2019) and Collier et al. (2022) highlight the importance of supporting teachers' professional learning, especially in areas like digital competence and trauma-informed pedagogy, which directly impact motivation and professional responsibility.

Leadership influence must also consider contextual and geographical factors. Amin and Hermanto (2022) and Astari et al. (2024) demonstrate that geographic education and awareness of regional dynamics can shape teachers' understanding of their role in society. Teachers working in diverse regions may experience unique challenges and motivations, requiring leaders to adopt flexible, context-responsive approaches. Bøe et al. (2022) suggest that pedagogical leadership in early childhood education is particularly effective when leaders engage closely with teachers in daily routines, fostering collaboration and trust.

Evolving approaches in leadership, including data-informed decision-making and adaptive leadership styles, offer new ways to strengthen teacher engagement. Buckner et al. (2016) illustrate the use of data mining to assess leadership impact on staff behavior, while Akhtar and Akhtar (2024) advocate for exploring leadership performance in primary schools. As schools navigate increasingly complex demands, the role of leadership in sustaining internal motivation becomes central. This paper critically reviews current literature to identify leadership practices that empower teachers to act not just out of obligation, but from a genuine sense of professional commitment and intrinsic drive.

Literature Review:

Teacher motivation plays a central role in educational effectiveness, shaping both student outcomes and school improvement. According to Han and Yin (2016), motivation in teachers is a multifaceted construct that includes both intrinsic and extrinsic factors and influences teachers' performance, commitment, and satisfaction.

This understanding aligns with self-determination theory, as posited by Deci and Ryan, which emphasizes autonomy, competence, and relatedness as key drivers of intrinsic motivation (Baard, 2002; Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004). Intrinsic need satisfaction not only enhances performance but also promotes well-being and job satisfaction, making it a critical element of any effective educational environment.

Transformational leadership is widely acknowledged as an effective leadership style in cultivating teacher motivation. According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders inspire and intellectually stimulate their followers while offering individualized consideration. This form of leadership aligns closely with the principles of self-determination theory and has been shown to enhance teacher job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001), motivation (Bono & Judge, 2003), and commitment (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Blase and Blase (1999) support this by illustrating that principals who engage in transformational practices significantly influence teacher development, morale, and instructional quality.

Beyond leadership, organizational and contextual variables play a significant role in shaping teacher motivation. Díez et al. (2020) argue that effective quality management systems within educational institutions directly contribute to school performance through improved leadership practices and more coherent management processes. School-based collaboration, as explored in the systematic review by de Jong, Meirink, and Admiraal (2022), provides a learning context that fosters professional growth, motivation, and innovation among teachers. Similarly, Harris and Muijs (2005) emphasize the critical role of teacher leadership in school improvement, underlining how empowering teachers to take initiative within schools reinforces their intrinsic motivation.

Social and emotional factors are also crucial. Denston et al. (2022) highlight how culturally and linguistically responsive frameworks for social-emotional learning can enhance teachers' professional satisfaction and student engagement.

Teachers who feel emotionally supported and socially connected are more likely to demonstrate motivation and resilience, as supported by Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between personal, behavioral, and environmental influences. Gunn and McRae (2021) also identify emotional support, collegiality, and a positive school culture as significant factors in the retention and motivation of beginning teachers.

Leadership styles not only affect motivation but also mediate broader educational goals such as character education and equity. Gullo and Beachum (2020) discuss how principals make disciplinary decisions rooted in social justice, which fosters a school climate of respect and fairness, further motivating teachers. Similarly, Idris and Suroto (2023) emphasize that integrating local wisdom into character education enhances teacher engagement by connecting pedagogy to cultural values. Educational infrastructure, too, is a background condition influencing teacher motivation.

Harahap et al. (2024) show that equitable distribution of educational resources across regions contributes to consistent teaching conditions, indirectly motivating teachers by ensuring fairness in workload and opportunities.

In terms of empirical validation, various studies have employed robust analytical methods to examine the mediating and moderating roles of leadership and motivation. For instance, Arbuckle and Wothke (2003) and Bollen (1989) contribute tools and indices essential in structural equation modeling, which have been applied to test the relationships among leadership, motivation, and performance. Bentler (1990) and Baron and Kenny (1986) offer further methodological insights into model fit and mediation analysis, strengthening the validity of such studies.

The motivational effects of leadership also extend to instructional quality and classroom management. Hans and Hans (2017) assert that effective classroom management is a prerequisite for teaching success, a skill often enhanced under strong instructional leadership. Blase and Kirby (2000) further argue that effective principals bring out the best in teachers through trust-building, recognition, and autonomy support. Barnett and McCormick (2003) corroborate this by illustrating that a clear vision and strong relationships between principals and teachers foster high levels of teacher motivation.

Moreover, models of educational effectiveness proposed by Bosker, Vos, and Witziers (2000) integrate these various components, including leadership, motivation, and school context, into comprehensive frameworks for improving educational outcomes. These models reinforce the notion that motivation is not an isolated factor but part of a broader ecosystem of leadership practices, organizational culture, and social-emotional dynamics.

The literature demonstrates that teacher motivation is influenced by a range of factors including leadership style, institutional structures, emotional climate, cultural responsiveness, and social justice considerations. Transformational leadership emerges as a key facilitator of motivation, especially when aligned with self-determination theory. Additionally, creating a supportive school environment through collaboration, responsive pedagogy, and equitable infrastructure further enhances motivation and ultimately leads to improved educational outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of adopting a holistic approach to leadership and management in schools, one that prioritizes teacher well-being as a foundational component of educational success.

Methodology:

This study employed a qualitative systematic literature review to explore the interconnected themes of teacher motivation, school leadership, and professional responsibility in educational settings. The systematic review approach was chosen to ensure a comprehensive and critical synthesis of existing literature, allowing the identification of recurring patterns, gaps, and implications for educational practice.

Relevant academic databases including JSTOR, ScienceDirect, ERIC, and Google Scholar were systematically searched for peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2000 and 2024. The following keywords and Boolean operators were used to refine the search: "teacher motivation," "transformational leadership," "pedagogical leadership," "school leadership," "instructional leadership," and "professional responsibility." Searches were conducted using advanced filtering options to include only scholarly peer-reviewed sources written in English.

The inclusion criteria required that studies explicitly address one or more of the following themes: leadership practices in schools, teacher motivation and professional development, leadership's impact on teaching performance, and strategies for promoting school effectiveness. Both qualitative and quantitative research articles were considered if they offered substantial insight into leadership and motivation in the K-12 or higher education contexts.

Initially, over 150 studies were identified. These were narrowed down through a two-step screening process involving a review of titles and abstracts followed by a full-text evaluation. Preference was given to highly cited studies, recent publications, and those offering theoretical or empirical depth. Ultimately, 40 articles were selected for inclusion based on their relevance, scholarly rigor, and citation impact.

The selected articles were then analyzed using thematic coding to extract common themes, conceptual frameworks, and findings. This qualitative synthesis served as the foundation for identifying trends and drawing conclusions about the role of leadership in enhancing teacher motivation and school performance.

Findings and Discussion:

Transformational Leadership and Internal Motivation

Transformational leadership has long been associated with enhanced levels of teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and overall instructional effectiveness. According to Andriani et al. (2018) and Bono and Judge (2003), transformational leadership positively correlates with intrinsic motivation by fostering a sense of meaning, ownership, and professional engagement in teachers. These leaders are characterized by their ability to inspire through a

compelling vision, foster trust, and model ethical behavior—traits that resonate deeply with educators' desire for personal and professional fulfillment (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Avolio et al., 1999).

At its core, transformational leadership is centered on four key dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). When school leaders articulate a meaningful mission, empower their teams, and encourage innovation, teachers are more likely to commit to continuous learning and excellence in teaching. Barnett and McCormick (2003) emphasize that when leaders express empathy and build strong interpersonal relationships, teachers experience heightened motivation, viewing themselves as integral contributors to school success.

A particularly important aspect of transformational leadership is the provision of autonomy. Teachers are professionals who thrive when granted the space to exercise judgment and make pedagogical decisions aligned with student needs. Assor et al. (2002) found that teachers' motivation improves significantly when leadership supports autonomy, relevance, and choice. These factors align with self-determination theory, which identifies autonomy, competence, and relatedness as fundamental psychological needs that, when fulfilled, lead to increased intrinsic motivation (Baard et al., 2004; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Research also highlights the role of professional responsibility and mutual respect in leadership dynamics. Leaders who set high expectations while remaining supportive create a culture of trust and accountability (Blase & Blase, 1999). This dynamic empowers teachers to innovate, take risks, and engage in reflective practices—essential components for both individual and organizational growth. Akhtar and Akhtar (2024) confirm that such leadership is especially vital in primary education, where teacher performance is closely tied to leadership style. Their exploratory study demonstrates how transformational leaders, by recognizing teachers' efforts and involving them in decision-making, strengthen both morale and instructional effectiveness.

Moreover, effective transformational leaders encourage collaborative learning and professional dialogue among staff, creating an environment conducive to continuous improvement (Brevik et al., 2019; de Jong et al., 2022). Teachers in such contexts are more likely to experience job satisfaction, not only because their individual contributions are valued, but because they operate within a community of practice that supports professional development.

Pedagogical leadership—often considered a subset of transformational leadership—also contributes to teacher motivation by focusing explicitly on teaching and learning quality. Berhanu (2023) found that pedagogical leaders enhance job performance by promoting a shared commitment to student success and modeling instructional excellence. Similarly, Bøe et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of pedagogical leadership in early education, where direct involvement in curriculum and child-centered practices builds a sense of purpose and engagement among teachers.

In contexts with limited resources or heightened challenges, such as marginalized or underserved communities, the motivational role of transformational leaders becomes even more pronounced. Abidogun (2023) argues that in areas like Lagos State, Nigeria, where teaching conditions are often difficult, leadership that focuses on motivation, recognition, and capacity-building can significantly improve teacher effectiveness. Such findings are echoed in studies of inclusive and equitable education reform (Ainscow, 2023), where leadership is critical to sustaining teacher motivation in environments that require persistent advocacy and innovation.

Furthermore, the impact of leadership on teacher well-being cannot be overstated. Research by Gunn and McRae (2021) reveals that the professional and emotional support provided by transformational leaders contributes to teacher retention, especially among early-career educators. Leaders who invest in social-emotional learning frameworks and recognize the holistic needs of their staff foster resilient and motivated teachers (Denston et al., 2022).

Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in cultivating internal motivation among teachers. By emphasizing vision, empathy, autonomy, and professional growth, transformational leaders not only enhance teacher morale but also improve school performance and student outcomes. As the demands on educators continue to evolve, leadership that inspires, supports, and empowers remains essential for sustaining a committed and high-performing teaching workforce.

Pedagogical Leadership and Organizational Culture

Pedagogical leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping effective instructional practices and cultivating a strong organizational culture within educational settings. According to Bøe et al. (2022), pedagogical leadership involves guiding and supporting teaching staff in ways that promote quality learning experiences and professional growth. This leadership style emphasizes collaboration, reflective practice, and a shared commitment to student achievement, making it essential for fostering a thriving school culture. Blase and Blase (1999) argue that when principals focus on instructional leadership, they inspire teachers to grow professionally and engage more deeply with their teaching roles.

The strength of pedagogical leadership lies in its capacity to create a culture of trust, inclusion, and continuous improvement. Berhanu (2023) found that effective pedagogical leadership enhances teachers' organizational commitment, which, in turn, mediates the relationship between leadership and teacher job performance. This suggests that leadership must not only set direction but also build strong emotional and professional bonds with staff to achieve sustainable results. As supported by Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation framework, organizational commitment acts as a crucial mechanism through which leadership influences outcomes.

The role of inclusion-oriented leadership, emphasized by Ainscow (2023) and Alvaré (2018), complements pedagogical leadership by fostering equity and a sense of belonging among staff and students. Leaders who prioritize equity and social justice provide an environment where teachers feel respected, valued, and motivated to address diverse student needs. Ainscow (2023) argues that inclusive leadership is essential for systemic reform and building educational institutions that reflect democratic values. Similarly, Alvaré (2018) highlights how equity-oriented teacher education contributes to dismantling racial disparities and empowering culturally responsive teaching.

Motivation is another critical aspect linking leadership and organizational culture. Research indicates that leadership styles greatly influence teacher motivation and, subsequently, their classroom effectiveness (Akhtar & Akhtar, 2024; Abidogun, 2023). For instance, transformational leaders—those who articulate a compelling vision and offer individualized support—tend to cultivate higher levels of teacher engagement and job satisfaction (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Andriani et al., 2018). This aligns with Deci and Ryan's (2002) self-determination theory, which posits that fulfillment of intrinsic needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness enhances motivation and performance (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004).

Teachers' professional commitment also thrives in cultures that encourage collaboration and shared learning. De Jong, Meirink, and Admiraal (2022) found that school-based collaboration serves as a productive context for teacher learning, promoting both knowledge exchange and a sense of collective responsibility. Likewise, Harris and Muijs (2005) argue that empowering teachers to lead change within their schools enhances institutional effectiveness. These practices resonate with Bandura's (1986) theory of social learning, which underscores the importance of observational learning, modeling, and reinforcement in shaping behavior.

Moreover, inclusive and trauma-informed pedagogical cultures contribute significantly to teacher well-being and professional sustainability. Collier et al. (2022) emphasize that professional development in trauma-informed pedagogy is more accessible in environments where leadership removes barriers and enables continuous learning. Such contexts ensure that educators not only develop technical competence but also emotional resilience.

Culturally and linguistically responsive frameworks also enhance the educational climate. Denston et al. (2022) suggest that a culturally aware approach to social-emotional learning supports teacher and student well-being by honoring linguistic and cultural diversity. These findings are supported by Gullo and Beachum (2020), who assert that school leaders navigating disciplinary decisions must apply culturally competent and socially just approaches to avoid reinforcing systemic inequities.

The integration of character education and local wisdom in organizational culture further strengthens schools' roles as value-based institutions. Idris and Suroto (2023) highlight the significance of character education in promoting ethical and moral development, especially when supported by culturally relevant leadership strategies. This reinforces the idea that effective leadership is not merely about supervision or policy enforcement but about shaping the ethical and cultural foundations of the school community.

Pedagogical leadership—especially when it incorporates inclusion, collaboration, motivation, and cultural responsiveness—transforms schools into nurturing and high-performing institutions. Leaders who engage in this kind of leadership do more than oversee—they build cultures where teachers are empowered, learners are supported, and values are lived out. This holistic approach to organizational culture is essential in addressing the complexities of modern education and ensuring equitable outcomes for all learners.

Collaboration and Professional Learning Communities

Collaborative environments and professional learning communities (PLCs) have become cornerstones of modern educational practice. They are widely recognized for promoting teacher engagement, continuous professional growth, and sustained motivation (de Jong et al., 2022; Harris & Muijs, 2005). When teachers work together in a collegial setting to solve problems, reflect on practices, and co-construct knowledge, they foster a culture of shared leadership and collective efficacy. This environment of mutual support and innovation contributes not only to enhanced instructional practices but also to improved student learning outcomes.

Research consistently affirms that teachers who perceive themselves as integral members of a learning community are more likely to engage in innovative pedagogy and sustain their motivation over time (Brevik et al., 2019; Díez et al., 2020). Collaborative structures such as peer mentoring, team teaching, and reflective inquiry promote

transformative agency among educators, especially when embedded within a culture that values trust and openness (Gunn & McRae, 2021). These dynamics underscore Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, which posits that human agency, shaped by reciprocal interaction between personal, behavioral, and environmental influences, is crucial to motivation and performance. Through PLCs, teachers develop collective confidence and a sense of professional identity, enabling them to adapt more effectively to complex classroom demands.

Importantly, collaboration within schools is most effective when aligned with inclusive and equity-driven educational reforms. Ainscow (2023) emphasizes that inclusion and equity must be embedded in professional development efforts to ensure that all learners, particularly those from marginalized groups, are supported. Collaborative practices should therefore not only enhance pedagogy but also challenge existing biases and promote social justice. Teachers, as agents of change, benefit from shared learning experiences that focus on inclusive instructional strategies, culturally responsive teaching, and trauma-informed approaches.

In line with this, Collier et al. (2022) and Denston et al. (2022) highlight the importance of targeted professional development in trauma-informed and culturally responsive pedagogy. Such training provides teachers with the tools to address the diverse needs of learners, particularly those affected by socio-emotional challenges or linguistic and cultural marginalization. These practices also affirm teachers' intrinsic values and enhance their internal motivation, consistent with Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004), which links motivation to the fulfillment of psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

The intersection of motivation and collaboration is further reinforced by recent findings from Abidogun (2023), who examined the motivational factors influencing teacher effectiveness in Lagos, Nigeria. The study found that collaboration among peers, opportunities for shared leadership, and recognition from colleagues significantly increased teachers' job satisfaction and performance. Similarly, Berhanu (2023) identifies pedagogical leadership that promotes collaborative culture as a critical mediator between leadership and teacher commitment, suggesting that a shared vision fosters both organizational alignment and individual purpose.

Moreover, transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in cultivating effective collaborative environments. Leaders who inspire, intellectually stimulate, and individually consider staff needs are more likely to create conditions conducive to team-based learning and shared decision-making (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Andriani et al., 2018). Transformational leaders encourage teachers to go beyond compliance and engage in meaningful professional inquiry and experimentation. In doing so, they promote both intrinsic motivation and performance, affirming the role of leadership in sustaining collaborative school cultures (Blase & Blase, 1999; Bogler, 2001).

Professional collaboration also contributes to effective school management processes. Díez et al. (2020) argue that quality management systems within schools, which emphasize collaborative goal-setting and performance monitoring, positively affect institutional outcomes. These systems encourage accountability while also fostering shared ownership of teaching and learning goals.

Contextual and Psychological Considerations

Motivation in education does not emerge in isolation—it is shaped by a multitude of contextual and psychological factors that intersect with geographical, cultural, and social dynamics. In global and local educational settings, these factors significantly influence both teacher and student motivation, ultimately affecting learning outcomes and school performance.

One clear illustration of this interplay is found in the work of Abidogun (2023), who explored how teacher motivation in Lagos State, Nigeria, directly affects teacher effectiveness. The study emphasized that motivated educators displayed stronger commitment, higher levels of classroom engagement, and a deeper focus on student achievement. These outcomes suggest that geographical location, in conjunction with local policy and resource availability, directly influences motivational structures within schools. Similarly, Amin and Hermanto (2022) noted that geographic education promotes students' character development by instilling a deeper awareness of spatial and cultural interconnections, illustrating the value of regional context in shaping learners' attitudes and values.

Cultural elements also play a crucial role. Idris and Suroto (2023) underscored the integration of local wisdom in Aceh, Indonesia, as a foundational strategy for promoting character education. Their study showed that incorporating indigenous cultural values helps teachers develop moral and ethical competencies in students, fostering intrinsic motivation. This approach aligns with the notion of culturally responsive pedagogy, as discussed by Alvaré (2018), who explored how teacher education must confront racial and cultural inequalities to empower learners from diverse backgrounds. In both cases, culture is not a peripheral element but a central component of motivation and educational effectiveness.

From a psychological standpoint, Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory provides an essential lens to understand motivation. The theory emphasizes self-efficacy—individuals' belief in their ability to succeed—as a critical factor influencing motivation and behavior. In school settings, when teachers believe in their ability to make a difference,

they are more likely to engage in goal-oriented behavior, persevere through challenges, and inspire their students. The emotional climate created by school leadership is pivotal in shaping these beliefs. Assor et al. (2005) expanded this understanding by demonstrating that teachers who experience autonomy and low anxiety in their work environment are more likely to promote student engagement and intrinsic motivation. Conversely, controlling and anxiety-inducing leadership behaviors can suppress motivation, particularly among marginalized or vulnerable student groups.

Leadership style emerges as another powerful psychological determinant of motivation. Transformational leadership, characterized by inspirational vision, individualized support, and intellectual stimulation, has been consistently linked with improved teacher performance and job satisfaction (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bogler, 2001). Akhtar and Akhtar (2024) found that leadership style at the primary level in Pakistan significantly influenced teachers' instructional effectiveness, indicating that supportive leadership leads to higher morale and a stronger professional commitment. These findings are echoed by Andriani et al. (2018), who reported that both transformational leadership and internal motivation significantly predict teacher performance.

Furthermore, psychological well-being and job satisfaction are reinforced when educational leaders foster a sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness among teachers—core components of Self-Determination Theory (Baard et al., 2004; Deci & Ryan, 2002). When these intrinsic needs are met, teachers are more resilient, creative, and committed. This relationship is especially crucial in high-pressure environments where educators face increasing demands, limited resources, and diverse student needs.

The organizational structure and collaboration within schools also influence motivation. De Jong et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review showing that school-based collaborative practices enhance teachers' professional learning and engagement. Collaboration provides teachers with opportunities for reflective dialogue, shared problem-solving, and collective responsibility, contributing to a supportive work environment that fosters motivation. Similarly, Berhanu (2023) highlighted the mediating role of organizational commitment in the relationship between pedagogical leadership and teacher performance, reinforcing the importance of emotional and psychological attachment to one's institution.

Inclusion and equity also intersect with motivational dynamics. Ainscow (2023) emphasized that educational reform must prioritize inclusive practices that address diverse learner needs. Motivation thrives in environments where learners feel valued, represented, and respected. Teachers, as agents of inclusion, require leadership and institutional support to build equitable learning environments that motivate all students, particularly those from marginalized groups.

In the context of teacher training and digital competence, Brevik et al. (2019) argued that motivation can be sustained through transformative learning experiences during teacher education. Equipping teachers with professional digital competence and creating an environment that values innovation encourages them to adopt new pedagogical approaches, thereby enhancing both teacher and student engagement.

Trauma-informed pedagogy is gaining attention as a critical factor in maintaining motivation for both teachers and students. Collier et al. (2022) validated the importance of professional development in trauma-informed practices, especially in contexts where students face adverse experiences. Such training not only supports student well-being but also reduces teacher burnout, thereby sustaining motivation in the long term.

Contextual and psychological factors such as cultural background, leadership style, organizational climate, and professional support systems all play integral roles in fostering teacher and student motivation. The synergy between external (contextual) and internal (psychological) influences shapes how effectively motivation can be cultivated in schools. Leaders and policymakers must therefore adopt a holistic and inclusive approach—one that recognizes the diversity of teacher experiences and the psychological complexities of motivation—to build sustainable educational systems that empower both educators and learners.

Conclusion:

School leaders hold a pivotal role in shaping the internal motivation and professional responsibility of teachers. Research consistently shows that leadership practices rooted in transformational and pedagogical principles contribute significantly to creating supportive, empowering environments where teachers feel valued, motivated, and committed to their roles. Effective leaders do more than manage—they inspire, guide, and cultivate an organizational culture grounded in trust, inclusion, collaboration, and shared purpose.

By promoting teacher autonomy, fostering meaningful professional relationships, and responding to both cultural and emotional needs, school leaders can help educators transcend compliance-driven models and instead embrace a deeper sense of purpose and agency. Transformational leadership, in particular, encourages continuous professional growth, cultivates intrinsic motivation, and positively impacts both teacher performance and student learning.

outcomes. Pedagogical leadership, which emphasizes instructional improvement and reflective practice, further reinforces this direction by aligning school goals with teachers' development needs and learners' well-being.

Moreover, recognizing the diversity of social, cultural, and geographic contexts is crucial. Motivational strategies must be adaptable to local realities and values, integrating community-based wisdom and inclusive practices to be truly effective. As highlighted in various studies, emotional climate, culturally responsive leadership, and trauma-informed approaches all significantly affect how teachers perceive their roles and responsibilities.

Future leadership development programs must therefore prioritize the cultivation of such holistic and adaptive leadership approaches. This includes equipping leaders with the emotional intelligence, cultural competence, and pedagogical insight needed to support and sustain teacher motivation. Investing in these areas not only strengthens teacher retention and effectiveness but also fosters schools as vibrant communities of learning, collaboration, and shared responsibility. Nurturing motivated, responsible educators is key to advancing educational equity, improving student outcomes, and building resilient, inclusive learning environments.

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