

UMT Education Review (UER)

Volume 7 Issue 2, Fall 2024

ISSN(P): 2616-9738, ISSN(E): 2616-9746

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/uer>



Article QR



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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/uer.72.04>

History: Received: Oct 25, 2024, Revised: November 25, 2024, Accepted: December 20, 2024, Published: December 20, 2024

Citation: Sylvain, T. T. A. (2024). Leadership style and job satisfaction: Comparative study in public and private school teachers at secondary level in Mfoundi division, Cameroon. *UMT Education Review*, 7(2), 69–93. <https://doi.org/10.32350/uer.72.04>

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Conflict of Interest: Author(s) declared no conflict of interest



UMT

A publication of

Department of Education, School of Social Sciences and Humanities
University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan

Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction: Comparative Study in Public and Private School Teachers at Secondary Level in Mfoundi Division, Cameroon

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Abstract

This study aims to ascertain whether discrepancies exist in job satisfaction levels based on the leadership style of public and private secondary school head-teachers, within a social context influenced by country risk. If such differences exist, this study seeks to pinpoint their origins. This research uses two instruments previously developed for large-scale surveys on leadership style CELID (Castro and al., 2004) and job satisfaction S2/26 (Dominguez and al., 2016). For the purpose of this study, two questionnaires were designed: the CELID questionnaire, comprising 32 items and 3 options, and the S2/26 questionnaire, which includes 24 items and 2 options. A sample of 195 teachers was selected for the study, out of a population size of 902 teachers and an effective population of 656 public and private school teachers. The findings of the study indicate the presence of disparities in the levels of job satisfaction among teaching professionals in private and public schools. This divergence can be attributed to the intrinsic or extrinsic motivational choices originating in a situational leadership style, in particular the employee variant, which is prevalent in both the public and private sectors. This leadership style is characterised by an emphasis on achieving organisational goals within the context of school activities. The predominant leadership factors contributing to these variations are predictors such as transformation, transaction and laissez-faire, which serve to reinforce the institutional and social interaction between secondary school heads and teachers.

Keywords: country risk, job satisfaction, leadership style, predictors

Introduction

Following the promulgation of the Education Orientation Law of Cameroon (Law N. 98/004) in April 1998, education was established as a national

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priority, entrusted to the government for provision and support by private partners. Consequently, all public and private institutions established within the nation are obligated to adhere to the guidelines and criteria provided in the legislation. The State, through its legislative and regulatory framework, establishes the fundamental structure of the education system, including the curricula and textbooks to be utilised, the procedures for the establishment, operation, and financing of private educational institutions, the mechanisms for their supervision, the procedures for the assessment of pupils and students, and the organisation of national examinations and the academic year on a nationwide scale (Bambe, [2023](#)). In summary, the State is the primary institution responsible for organising Cameroon's education system, and through its policies and decisions, it exerts a more significant influence on the supply and demand for education than any other agent or institution (Bambe, [2023](#)).

Despite the numerous crises currently being experienced by Cameroon, the country is also facing several global challenges in ensuring access to education. Since May 2013, the actions of Boko Haram on Cameroonian territory in the Far North region, and since October 2016, Cameroon has been experiencing a political crisis with divisive origins in the North West and South West regions. The education sector in Cameroon is in a state of crisis, with these attacks undermining the nation's sovereignty and the collapse of the State's monopoly over national education. The ongoing insecurity and violent attacks have also resulted in significant population movements, with more than 900,000 people displaced within the country by 2023 (Reliefweb, [2022](#)). In the Far North region, for instance, more than 1,560 displaced children attended secondary school during the 2021/2022 academic year. Furthermore, in the North-West and South-West regions, an estimated 667,000 school-age children are in need of humanitarian assistance, including 367,000 IDPs. Consequently, there has been an influx of disaster-stricken populations into major cities, seeking refuge and the assurance of a lasting peaceful situation that can facilitate their full development in an environment conducive to their well-being.

In the aftermath of the resurgence of these security crises, the field of education in Cameroon has undergone significant restructuring, with promoters opting for systems geared towards bilingualism and an expansion in the range of educational offerings. Private schools, supported by international organisations, are collaborating with public authorities to

reduce social divisions and to formally recognise the right of all citizens to education. The leadership style of schools that prioritise financial gain differs from that of public schools, with the former adopting a more entrepreneurial approach.

The current study intends to examine the nature of the relationship between leadership style and teachers' job satisfaction. Leadership is recognised as a fundamental element in the development and sustainability of any organisation, whether it be a business or an institution. In the context of education, leadership assumes a particularly salient role, given its profound impact on the attainment of institutional objectives and the actualisation of educational goals. Consequently, Ezeuwa (2005) conceptualises leadership as the act of influencing individuals to work diligently and enthusiastically towards achieving their objectives.

Numerous studies have provided statistical evidence that teachers' job satisfaction is associated with self-efficacy (Gazi et al., 2022) and head-teacher leadership behaviour (Toropova et al., 2021). However, additional variables within the school environment — such as working conditions, training opportunities, administrative support and staff collegiality, have been identified as more effective predictors of teacher job satisfaction (Bogler, 2001). Bogler (2001) conducted a study on leadership styles and found that teachers reported satisfaction with their work when the headmaster shared information and maintained open channels of communication, a method which has been found to produce good results (Hannagan, 2006). Nevertheless, the present study focuses specifically on the extent to which leadership style influences job satisfaction of the teachers working in secondary schools in the Mfoundi Division of Cameroon.

Frame of Reference

A substantial corpus of scientific research has been published on the subject of leadership and job satisfaction, predominantly in developing countries; this extensive literature has generally demonstrated a significant relationship between the two variables. However, the present study explores different aspects of the subject.

In its simplest definition, job satisfaction refers to the degree of satisfaction an employee derives from their job. Dziuba et al. (2020) defines job satisfaction as employees' sense of achievement and success. Cranny et

al. (1992) claims a common definition of job satisfaction, which they define as the emotional reactions of individuals to their work (Weiss, 2002). This assertion is corroborated by extant research, which demonstrates a positive correlation of well-being and employee satisfaction and Job satisfaction, therefore, may be defined as the aggregate of emotional responses exhibited by an individual in response to their organisation and their work, when consideration is given to both their expectations and the fulfilment thereof.

As previously stated, job satisfaction is comprised of two constituent elements: the worker's behaviours and their negative and positive emotions within the organisational environment. Internal rewards, such as personal achievement and self-fulfillment, are intrinsic sources of satisfaction, while external motivators, like organizational benefits and support, serve as extrinsic sources (Galbraith, 1997). Ahmed et al. (2010) identified a significant relationship between intrinsic motivators, including the work itself, opportunities for advancement, professional growth, responsibility, a sense of belonging to the organisation, and employee satisfaction. In contrast, no notable correlation was identified between external factors and employee satisfaction in their roles.

Greater job satisfaction was observed among employees in the treasury department, followed by employees in the examinations and student registration departments. The study revealed no notable differences in job satisfaction between permanent and temporary employees. The findings of this study are particularly relevant in the context of our country, where teachers express discontent with their profession. Secondary school teachers have been vocal in expressing discontent with their salaries and working conditions. Consequently, educational institutions are provided with minimum budgets, which include satisfactory facilities and adequate teaching materials, thereby enabling teachers to function effectively in the classroom. The public sector provides a range of benefits to its employees, including a competitive salary with annual increases, as well as pensions and allowances. Conversely, the private sector may offer alternative forms of compensation, such as a respectable working environment and challenging tasks, despite relatively low salaries. A study conducted by Latham (1998) found that teachers place a greater emphasis on internal factors that contribute to job satisfaction. The quality of relationships with students, the dynamics of the classroom environment, the educational resources available to students, the autonomy afforded to educators in their

teaching methods, and the nature of interactions within the classroom and with other educators and administrators were found to be more significant in job satisfaction than external factors. The findings of Protheroe et al. (2002) study indicate that the degree of communication and collaboration between teachers and administrators are crucial determinants of job satisfaction when addressing challenges in the workplace.

The effectiveness of a leadership style is contingent upon the decision-making process that accompanies it, a fact that is particularly important in the context of teacher job satisfaction in an educational setting. Conventional management models have a tendency to amalgamate leadership and decision-making styles, thus overlooking the pivotal role of decision-making as an autonomous process (Hui et al., 2013). Some studies have indicated a positive relationship of employees' perceptions of transformational leadership exercised by managers with their levels of job satisfaction (Gill et al., 2010). In a similar vein, a positive correlation was identified between employee perceptions of empowerment and job satisfaction (Hui et al., 2013). The present research analysed the influence of transformational leadership and organisational commitment on job satisfaction and employee performance. The Structural Equation Model (SEM) was utilised as the primary data analysis technique in this study. The findings of the study demonstrated that transformational leadership exerts a positive influence on organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Thamrin, 2012). Conversely, other studies have demonstrated a significant correlation between transactional leadership and employee job satisfaction, with transactional leadership being more prevalent than transformational leadership (Rahim et al., 2014). Laissez-faire is a leadership style whereby managers allow their colleagues to work independently. This approach can be effective if the manager monitors the work being done and provides regular feedback to their team Mishra (2024). It is most often seen in teams where the individuals are highly experienced and capable of working independently Bwalya (2023). However, it can also be used to describe situations where managers are not exerting sufficient control (Shepherd et al., 2024). In transactional leadership, the leader exerts considerable power over the team (Liden et al., 2025). It has been widely documented that individuals often develop a sense of resentment when confronted with such treatment. Consequently, autocratic leadership is often associated with elevated rates of absenteeism and staff turnover. Moreover, the team's output may not fully capitalise on the collective creativity and experience

of all team members, resulting in the potential loss of some of the benefits associated with teamwork. Nevertheless, within specific contexts, notably routine and unskilled roles, this approach can prove effective when the benefits of control outweigh the drawbacks. The study by Long and Thean (2011) yielded results that were not in alignment with those of previous research. While transformational and transactional leadership styles were found to have a negative relationship with employee turnover intention, the correlation between these two variables was not statistically significant. In contrast, the seminal study by Jogulu (2010) proposed a novel conceptualisation of transformational leadership, defining it as a style characterised by the emphasis on work standards and task-oriented aims. The leader upholds high moral standards, which the followers seek to emulate. The concept of idealised influence, as posited by Lai (2011), can be attributed to the followers. Leaders provide subordinates with a sense of purpose and assign them tasks that are both challenging and meaningful. The team spirit is invigorated, and enthusiasm and optimism are exhibited. Leaders communicate expectations, demonstrate commitment to goals, and share their vision (Quible, 2015).

Furthermore, leaders adopt the roles of mentors or coaches, fostering relationships with individuals, addressing their need for achievement and growth, and facilitating the development of subordinates in a supportive environment to enable them to realise their potential. Individual differences in terms of needs and desires are acknowledged (Hogg et al., 2012). Erkutlu (2008) advances the concept that transactional leaders engage in communication with their subordinates with the objective of elucidating the methodology that is required for the completion of tasks and of conveying that commendation will be bestowed upon those who perform their duties in an exemplary manner. Chang and Lee (2007) further propose that a defining feature of the transactional leadership style is the provision of rewards contingent on performance. The congruence of a reward system is predicated on the assumption that there has been an accord between the leader and the subordinates regarding the terms and conditions of a transaction, as well as the means of achieving organisational goals. Consequently, the leader is then able to offer rewards to the subordinates. In contrast, the laissez-faire leadership style is characterised by a high degree of autonomy granted to group members in decision-making. This leadership style has been demonstrated to be an effective means of achieving desired outcomes in contexts where group members possess

considerable expertise, motivation, and autonomy. However, this approach is often associated with diminished cohesion and motivation within the group. This approach is distinguished by the absence of hands-on management, although the leader maintains an open and accessible stance towards members for consultation and feedback (Chaudhry & Javed, [2012](#)).

Govender et al. ([2013](#)) aimed to explore how employees perceive their leadership style and assess the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction. Their findings revealed a notable connection between the laissez-faire leadership approach and employee satisfaction. However, Limsila and Ogunlana ([2008](#)) argue that laissez-faire leadership is unsuitable in situations where team members lack the necessary expertise or experience to effectively perform tasks and make sound decisions. According to Goodnight ([2004](#)), when employees are unable to set deadlines, manage their own projects, or address challenges independently, the absence of guidance and feedback from leaders can cause projects to veer off track, leading to missed deadlines. Numerous studies have focused on the effects of leadership styles on job satisfaction among teachers in secondary schools across various regions. These studies consistently show that leadership styles positively impact teachers' job satisfaction. Based on this literature review, the researchers proposed the following hypothesis for further investigation:

H1. There is a significant discrepancy between the transformational leadership style and job satisfaction levels in both public and private secondary schools in the Mfoundi Division.

H2. There is a significant discrepancy between transactional leadership styles and job satisfaction levels in both public and private secondary schools in the Mfoundi Division.

H3. There is a significant discrepancy between the laissez-faire leadership style and job satisfaction levels in both public and private secondary schools in the Mfoundi Division.

Methodology

Sampling

In accordance with the objectives of the study and the necessity to formulate an empirical approach, a questionnaire was devised. This questionnaire comprised a series of written questions to be answered by

teachers in the selected private and state schools. The questionnaire contained 35 statements grouped into five categories, including questions relating to situational leadership styles, such as leading, persuading, participating, and delegating, with which job satisfaction is associated. The questionnaire also incorporated inquiries pertaining to respondents' demographic information, including age, academic qualifications, current job title, years of experience, and gender. The complete demographic breakdown is presented in the following table. The sampling technique employed was simple random sampling, and the selection criteria were as follows.

The following criteria are to be met in order to be included in the study:

- Teachers employed in public and private general and technical secondary schools on a professional basis.

The following criteria are to be considered for exclusion on the basis of missing data:

- Vocational secondary school teachers from comprehensive schools, which are almost non-existent on the Mfoundi Division school map.

The final study population, as outlined in Table 1, encompassed 284 male and 372 female subjects, all of whom were employed as teachers in public and private secondary schools within the Mfoundi Division.

Table 1

Demographic Distribution of Participants' Gender

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
Women	372	41.2	56.7
Men	284	31.5	43.3
Total	656	72.7	100.0
Missing	246	27.3	
Total	902	100.0	

As illustrated in Table 2, the descriptive statistics of the respondents in this study are presented, having been classified into distinct categories for each demographic inquiry. The sample consisted of 451 individuals from private institutions and 205 from public institutions.

Table 2
Type of School

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
Private	451	50.0	68.8
Public	205	22.7	31.3
Total	656	72.7	100.0
Missing	246	27.3	
Total	902	100.0	

As illustrated in Table 3, the duration of service at the post is classified into distinct categories. The lowest frequency of period 16 and up to years is observed in 82 respondents, while the highest frequency is recorded in 263 respondents, indicating a tenure of 1-5 years. The next frequency is observed in 204 respondents, indicating a tenure of 6-10 years. Finally, 107 respondents indicate a tenure of 11-15 years.

As depicted in Table 4, a cross-tabulation of the Type of school (TeB) and Period of duty (PDP) at the post reveals the following frequencies. In public schools, for durations of 1-5 years, TeB = 31.2%, PDP = 24.3%, while for 6-10 years, TeB = 22.1%, PDP = 22.1%. For the 11-15 year period, the percentage of teachers with years of experience (TeB) was 14.6%, while those with years of experience (PDP) accounted for 36.6%. For the 16-year and above period, the percentage of teachers with TeB was 32.2%, while those with PDP accounted for 61.7%. A similar pattern is observed in private schools, where for a duration of 1-5 years TeB = 44.1%, and PDP = 75.7%, while for 6-10 years TeB = 35.3%, and PDP = 77.9%.

Table 3
Period of Duty at the Post (Grouped)

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage
1-5	263	29.2	40.1
6-10	204	22.6	31.1
11-15	107	11.9	16.3
16 and up	82	9.1	12.5
Total	656	72.7	100.0
Missing	246	27.3	
Total	902	100.0	

Furthermore, it was observed that for the period of 11-15 years, the proportion of teachers with the Basic Teacher Certificate (TeB) was 11.5%,

while the proportion with the Professional Teacher Certificate (PDP) was 63.4%. For the period of 16 years and above, the proportion of teachers with the TeB was 9.1%, while the proportion with the PDP was 38.3%.

Table 4

*Cross-Tabulation Type of School * Period of Duty at the Post*

Type of school		Period of duty at the post (PDP)				Total up
		1-5	6-10	11-15	16 and up	
Public	Frequency	64	45	30	66	205
	% included in TEb	31.2%	22.0%	14.6%	32.2%	100.0%
	% included in PDP	24.3%	22.1%	36.6%	61.7%	31.2%
	% of total	9.8%	6.9%	4.6%	10.1%	31.2%
Private	Frequency	199	159	52	41	451
	% included in TEb	44.1%	35.3%	11.5%	9.1%	100.0%
	% included in PDP	75.7%	77.9%	63.4%	38.3%	68.8%
	% of total	30.3%	24.2%	7.9%	6.2%	68.8%
Total	Frequency	263	204	82	107	656
	% included in TEb	40.1%	31.1%	12.5%	16.3%	100.0%
	% included in PDP	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of total	40.1%	31.1%	12.5%	16.3%	100.0%

Variables and Measurements

As displayed in Table 5, the reliability of the MSQ scale is illustrated through the measurement of the Cronbach alpha coefficient. The transformational leadership value is 0.969, while the transactional leadership and laissez-faire leadership values are 0.939 and 0.892, respectively. A value exceeding 0.85 is generally deemed to be highly satisfactory. In comparison, the respective Cronbach's alpha values reported in the research conducted by Palmero Sandra and Gallois Isabelle were 0.86 and 0.836, while Paillé's (2004) study yielded a value of 0.79. The SPSS V.27 program was employed for the calculation of the mean value for each item and for the execution of the remaining statistical analyses.

Table 5
Leadership Style Reliability Index

Dimensions	Reliability
Charismatic	0.967
Leadership transformational	0.969
Intellectual stimulation	0.968
Inspiration	0.966
Leadership transactional	0.939
Individualized consideration	0.967
Leadership laissez-faire	0.892
Conditional reward	0.932
Direction by exception	0.934
Lack of initiative	0.878

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the job satisfaction measurement scale is 0.9105, representing a highly favourable score. This finding indicates that the scale demonstrates adequate internal consistency.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were entered and processed in the IBM SPSS 23.0 system for statistical analysis. This enabled us to employ a multiple linear regression model.

$$\text{Job satisfaction} = a + b_1 \times \text{TL} + b_2 \times \text{SL} + b_3 \times \text{LP} + e_i$$

In this formula:

a = Constant that considers omitted variables by the model

β_1 = Weight of the independent variable or partial correlation coefficient

TL = Transformational Leadership

SL = Transactional Leadership

LP = Laissez-faire Leadership

e_i = Error term

Results

The present study aims to evaluate the reliability of the Job Satisfaction Scale S2/26 (Dominguez et al., 2016; Satisfaction Questionnaire). To this end, the internal consistency reliability of each variable was assessed. Table

6 presents the mean and standard deviation for each variable. It is important to note that, despite the low correlation between the variables and the scale score, all the items are conceptually aligned. The scale demonstrates internal reliability when the variables are removed one by one, according to their distribution in the private and public domains. While the alpha coefficient for each variable is excellent, it varies between 0.87 and 0.97 ($0.87 < \text{Cronbach's alpha} < 0.97$).

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics

	Type of school	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Job Satisfaction	Public	0.3703	0.09854	205
	Private	0.3763	0.10600	451
	Total	0.3744	0.10369	656
Leadership transformational	Public	0.3823	0.09013	205
	Private	0.3986	0.10292	451
	Total	0.3935	0.09932	656
Leadership transactional	Public	0.4220	0.14260	205
	Private	0.4220	0.14450	451
	Total	0.4314	0.14394	656
Leadership laissez-faire	Public	0.4379	0.17598	205
	Private	0.4470	0.16987	451
	Total	0.4441	0.17172	656
Leadership administrative	Public	0.4106	0.08890	205
	Private	0.4220	0.09330	451
	Total	0.4184	0.09203	656

As presented in Table 7, the data set presents the distribution of years of service among the respondents in this particular study. The findings reveal that for those with 1-5 years of experience in transformational leadership, the mean score (0.39) is lower than that of employees who maintain a balance between transactional and laissez-faire styles, with a mean score of 0.43. This finding indicates that, on average, respondents in transformational roles are less prevalent than those in other leadership styles. Furthermore, Table 7 provides a comprehensive illustration of the frequency of tenure for employees with more than six to ten years of service. The means demonstrate a gradual increase from 0.38 for the transformational style to 0.42 for the transactional style and 0.45 for the

laissez-faire style. A similar pattern is evident in the data for respondents aged between 11 and 15 years, as well as those with 16 or more years of experience, with the respective means being 0.40, 0.44 and 0.45, and 0.38, 0.41 and 0.43.

The standard deviation of teachers by years of experience demonstrates a positive correlation with the number of years spent in the profession. For instance, a proportion of the participants had accumulated between one and five years of teaching experience in private or state schools. The standard deviation of the transformational style is 0.10, which is lower than the standard deviation of the transactional style (0.13) and the laissez-faire style (0.16). For the 6-10 category, the standard deviation ranged from 0.10 to 0.17. For teachers with 11-15 years' seniority, the standard deviation ranged from 0.10 to 0.17, with the highest value observed for the 11-15 category. For teachers with 16 years' seniority, the standard deviation ranged from (0.10) < (0.15) < (0.17). This finding indicates that, in comparison with the other categories, the teachers in this group have been in their posts for a comparatively extended period, ranging from eleven to fifteen years. The leadership style in question appears to be a contributing factor to this phenomenon. As illustrated in Table 6, professional experience is comparatively limited, ranging from one to five years, in private schools that adopt the transformational leadership style. Conversely, job tenure appears to be considerable, ranging from six to ten years, and up to 15 years in the public sector, for the transactional leadership style. Conversely, the laissez-faire leadership style is associated with a correlation between seniority and tenure in the context of public education.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics

	Period of duty at the post	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Job Satisfaction	1-5	0.3712	0.10056	263
	6-10	0.3764	0.11021	204
	11-15	0.3890	0.10100	82
	16 and up to	0.3672	0.10069	107
	Total	0.3744	0.10369	656
Leadership transformational	1-5	0.3955	0.10310	263
	6-10	0.3929	0.10216	204
	11-15	0.4010	0.09653	82

	Period of duty at the post	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
	16 and up to	0.3840	0.08597	107
	Total	0.3935	0.09932	656
Leadership transactional	1-5	0.4336	0.13773	263
	6-10	0.4290	0.15411	204
	11-15	0.4469	0.14719	82
	16 and up to	0.4188	0.13688	107
	Total	0.4314	0.14394	656
Leadership laissez-faire	1-5	0.4374	0.16910	263
	6-10	0.4516	0.17020	204
	11-15	0.4553	0.17986	82
	16 and up to	0.4380	0.17601	107
	Total	0.4441	0.17172	656
Leadership administrative	1-5	0.4167	0.09040	263
	6-10	0.4194	0.09766	204
	11-15	0.4321	0.09248	82
	16 and up to	0.4105	0.8435	107
	Total	0.4184	0.09203	656

As illustrated in Table 8, a positive correlation is evident between the independent variable (i.e. leadership style) and the dependent variable (i.e. job satisfaction). Utilising a 0.05 level of significance, a two-tailed test, and Pearson coefficient, the study ascertains a low positive correlation value of $r = 0.392^{**}$.

The decision rule that can be deduced from this is as follows: the null hypothesis should be accepted if the p -value is greater than 0.05; otherwise, it should be rejected.

The p -value, which was obtained at 0.000 (less than the critical value at 0.05), indicates a significant difference between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction in public and private secondary schools in the Mfoundi Division, as per Hypothesis 1.

In accordance with the second hypothesis, which was tested at a 0.05 level of significance with a two-tailed test, the Pearson coefficient demonstrates a moderate positive value of $r = 0.302$.

The decision rule is as follows: The null hypothesis should be accepted if the p -value is greater than 0.05; otherwise, it should be rejected.

The decision that can be made on the basis of these findings is as follows: The p -value was obtained at 0.000, which is less than the critical value at 0.05. Consequently, it can be deduced that a substantial discrepancy exists between the transactional leadership style and job satisfaction in public and private secondary schools within the Mfoundi Division.

In accordance with the third hypothesis, which was evaluated at the 0.05 level of significance with a two-tailed test, the Pearson coefficient demonstrates a moderate positive value of $r = 0.140$, which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

The decision rule is as follows: the null hypothesis should be accepted if the p -value is greater than 0.05; otherwise, it should be rejected.

The p -value was obtained at 0.000, which is less than the critical value of 0.05, thus supporting the hypothesis that a significant difference exists between the laissez-faire leadership style and job satisfaction in both public and private secondary schools in the Mfoundi Division.

Table 8
Correlations

	Job satisfaction	Leadership transformational	Leadership transactional	Leadership laissez-faire
Job Satisfaction	1	0.392***	0.302***	0.140***
Leadership transformational		1	0.269***	0.164***
Leadership transactional			1	0.245***
Leadership laissez-faire				1

Note. ***The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

The results for the constant, slope, t -value, and coefficient of determination (R^2) are presented in Tables 9 and 10. The coefficient of determination (R^2) facilitates the calculation of the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that can be attributed to the independent variable. The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that each leadership style accounts for at least 20% of the variation in job satisfaction. The residual variation is attributed to other factors that influence job satisfaction in the public sector secondary institution. A similar outcome is observed in the private secondary institution, where each leadership style accounts for a

minimum of 19% of the variation in job satisfaction, with the residual variation being attributed to other factors.

Table 9*Models Overview*

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE	R^2 Change	F Change	$df1$	$df2$	p
Institution = public	0.46	0.21	0.20	0.09	0.21	17.4	3	201	0.000

Note. Predicted values: (constants), Leadership laissez-faire, Leadership transformational, Leadership transactional.

Table 10*Models Overview*

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE	R^2 Change	F Change	$df1$	$df2$	p
Institution = private	0.439 ^a	0.193	0.188	0.96	0.193	35.636	3	447	0.000

Note. Predicted values: (constants), Leadership laissez-faire, Leadership transformational, Leadership transactional.

Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a positive correlation (0.455) and (0.439), respectively, for public and private secondary institutions between the independent variables and the dependent variable. It is therefore essential to gain an understanding of the extent to which leadership styles predict and influence job satisfaction. Additionally, the data from the ANOVA model is presented in Tables 11 and 12 to evaluate the suitability of the explanatory variable (leadership styles) on the response variable (job satisfaction). The model is deemed appropriate based on the score, with F -values of 17.487 and 35.636, respectively, for public and private secondary institutions, and a p -value of 0.00.

Table 11*ANOVA*

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	Sig.
Regression	0.410	3	0.137		
Residue	1.571	201	0.008	17.49	0.000
Total	1.981	204			

Note. Exclusive selection of observations for which Type of school = public.

Table 12
ANOVA

Model	Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean of squares	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Regression	0.976	3	0.325		
Residue	4.081	447	0.009	35.64	0.000
Total	5.057	450			

Note. Exclusive selection of observations for which Type of school = private.

Tables 13 and 14 present the constant, slope, *t*-value, and the standardised coefficients (*B*) results. The regression coefficient (*B*) for transformational style is 0.335 in public institutions compared to 0.353 in private institutions. This indicates that an increase of one unit in transformational style will result in a 0.335 point increase in job satisfaction in the public sector and a 0.353 point increase in the private sector. In addition, the regression coefficient (*B*) for transactional style is 0.174 in public institutions compared to 0.135 in private institutions. This indicates that an increase of one unit in transactional style will lead to a 0.174 increase in job satisfaction in public sector education and a 0.135 increase in private sector education.

Furthermore, the regression coefficient (*B*) for laissez-faire style is 0.043 in the public institution compared to 0.011 in the private institution. This indicates that an increase of one unit in laissez-faire style will lead to a 0.043 increase in job satisfaction in the public sector and a 0.011 increase in the private sector.

Table 13
Coefficients

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	Partial <i>r</i>	Part <i>r</i>	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.150	0.032		4.75	0.00					
TL	0.335	0.070	0.306	4.76	0.00	0.363	0.318	0.299	0.955	1.048
SL	0.174	0.045	0.251	3.85	0.00	0.325	0.262	0.242	0.924	1.082
LP	0.043	0.036	0.078	1.19	0.23	0.181	0.084	0.075	0.935	1.069

Note. Exclusive selection of observations for which Type of school = public.

Table 14
Coefficients

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>	Partial <i>r</i>	Part <i>r</i>	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.172	0.021		8.07	0.00					
TL	0.353	0.046	0.343	7.66	0.00	0.401	0.341	0.325	0.900	1.111
SL	0.135	0.033	0.184	4.03	0.00	0.291	0.187	0.171	0.869	1.151
LP	0.011	0.028	0.017	0.39	0.70	0.121	0.018	0.016	0.927	1.078

Note. Exclusive selection of observations for which Type of school = private.

The initial hypothesis proposed a significant divergence between the transformational leadership style and job satisfaction in both public and private secondary schools located within the Mfoundi Division. The findings of the study indicated a substantial positive relationship between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction, with a low positive correlation coefficient of 20 percent in the public sector and 19 percent in the private sector. The regression coefficient demonstrated a predominance of the transformational leadership style in private schools. These findings are consistent with those reported in the study by Barnová et al. (2022). Mingyu et al. (2024) found that transformational leadership style, particularly in private schools, is characterised by supportive and hardworking leaders who motivate teachers through constructive criticism and support in both personal and professional lives, thereby directing them towards task achievement.

The second hypothesis posits that a significant difference exists between transactional leadership styles and job satisfaction in both public and private secondary schools in the Mfoundi Division. The independent variable, proxied by employee commitment, was hypothesised to be a function of job satisfaction, while the dependent variable, proxied by conscientiousness, was hypothesised to be a function of transactional leadership style. The results of this study indicated that transactional leadership style was more prevalent in public schools than in private schools in secondary education. These findings are consistent with those reported by Mwove et al. (2023). The findings demonstrated a weak positive yet statistically significant correlation between transactional leadership style and students' academic performance. Indeed, transactional leadership practices have been shown to improve academic performance (Mwove et al., 2023).

A notable discrepancy has been identified between the laissez-faire leadership style and job satisfaction in both public and private secondary schools in the Mfoundi Division. The results of the third hypothesis indicate a significant positive relationship between laissez-faire leadership style and job satisfaction in the private sector. The regression coefficient indicates that the laissez-faire leadership style is more prevalent in public schools. These findings are consistent with those reported in the study by Tiwari (2021), which identified that laissez-faire leadership styles were deemed desirable in private schools and by deduction have been prevalent in public higher secondary schools in Nepal. The laissez-faire leadership style, particularly in public schools, is characterised by a lack of involvement and guidance from the leader, which is considered to be at the extreme end of the democratic-style spectrum (Eagly et al., 2003; Iqbal et al., 2021). Laissez-faire leaders empower their followers to make decisions, thereby fostering valuable learning opportunities. This approach is particularly effective when employees possess high levels of skill and motivation, as it enables them to flourish in their professional roles (Iqbal et al., 2021).

Conclusion

This article explores the impact of diverse leadership styles on employee job satisfaction, a pivotal factor for organizational success. The objective of the study was to ascertain the most efficacious leadership style for enhancing employee job satisfaction and attaining organizational objectives. The findings indicate that transformational leadership styles positively influence employee job satisfaction in private secondary schools, while transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles positively influence employee job satisfaction in public secondary schools within the Mfoundi Division in Cameroon. However, the laissez-faire leadership style has been found to have a detrimental impact on both employee job satisfaction and productivity.

The extant literature indicates that strong leadership is an essential factor in enhancing organizational productivity and establishing a positive workplace ambience for staff. The findings can be used by organizations to address the concerns of their employees and to improve their knowledge, thus increasing job satisfaction and helping to achieve organizational goals. The findings of this study offer valuable insights to organizations seeking to enhance their performance through effective leadership.

Conflict of Interest

The author of the manuscript has no financial or non-financial conflict of interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data associated with this study will be provided by the corresponding author upon request.

Funding Details

No funding has been received for this research.

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