

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLE, ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE, AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN ARAB SCHOOLS IN ISRAEL

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Abstract. *This study examined the impact of the leadership style of school principals in Arab society on organizational justice and teacher performance from the perspective of teachers. One hundred teachers from elementary, middle, and high schools participated in the study. Participants completed a questionnaire on leadership style, organizational justice, and teacher performance. Findings showed that principals employ both rewarding and shaping styles, with teachers perceiving principals as more shaping than rewarding. Transformational leadership has a more positive effect on organizational justice and teacher performance than transactional leadership. Transformational leadership predicts teacher performance through organizational justice, as teachers with a higher sense of justice perform better. The main conclusion is that transformational leadership, when adopted by principals, positively influences teacher performance by increasing perceived organizational justice.*

Keywords: *leadership style; organizational justice; teacher performance; transformational leadership; transactional leadership; Arab schools; Israel.*

The quality of teachers in Israel today remains far from ideal. Israel ranks among the lowest OECD countries in teacher performance in international mathematics and reading assessments. The average psychometric score of teachers in 2019 was 494, approximately the 40th percentile of the population [1]. The 2019 State Comptroller's Report revealed that many mathematics and English teachers lack appropriate professional qualifications. This negatively impacts Israel's future human resources quality, as teachers are the main component in the teaching and learning process [2; 3].

Teacher quality and performance relate to numerous variables, particularly the principal's leadership style and organizational justice. Principals who strive to achieve school goals and maximize effectiveness develop teachers and provide necessary resources [4; 5]. School leadership has been defined as mobilizing teachers to achieve institutional goals [6]. Principals play a key role in maintaining positive teaching and learning environments [7].

School administrators influence the sense of organizational justice [8], which refers to employees' fairness perceptions regarding how the organization treats them. Organizational justice includes providing rewards based on contributions, responding to needs, decision-making, enforcing regulations, and relationships with leaders and

peers [5; 9]. Employees who believe they are treated unfairly experience declines in performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment [8].

In research [10] was found a positive correlation between leadership and organizational justice, with leadership's impact calculated at 0.72. In research [11] was that understanding the relationship between organizational justice and leadership enables effective management in changing circumstances. Managers must create friendly, honest work environments, providing employees with justice, respect, and trust.

This study is significant due to the lack of research focused on examining school leadership in Israel's Arab education system. It will contribute to educational leaders on improving teacher quality and add to existing knowledge.

Literature Review

Leadership is a group phenomenon involving influential relationships between team members and achieving goals. It is a process where leaders influence followers and vice versa.

More modern styles include transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership focuses on defined goals, rules, and exchanges between leader and followers, where efforts are exchanged for incentives. Transformational leadership raises both leaders and followers to higher levels of morale and motivation,

focusing on emotions, values, ethics, and long-term goals. It reflects risk-taking ability and organizational dynamism, seeing followers as future leaders [12].

Organizational justice refers to subjective judgments about how one is treated within a social context [13]. It describes employee perceptions of fairness regarding organizational decisions, processes, and interpersonal treatment. It shapes employee behavior and attitudes [14]. Organizational justice is a subjective perception assessed by employees and observers using information and cues [9].

Justice matters because its impact extends beyond individual employees. Injustice causes retaliation; low justice climate leads to higher absenteeism and lower performance. Employees perceiving justice express greater trust and commitment and demonstrate conscientiousness.

Types of organizational justice include distributive justice, procedural justice, informational justice, and interpersonal justice [13].

Organizational effectiveness is the ability to consistently achieve strategic and operational goals. Effective schools enable students to master basic skills and demonstrate achievement. Principal participation in school activities impacts teacher and student performance. Research [15] emphasized that principals must develop goal-oriented schools by positively leading teachers.

Research [16] emphasized that effective leaders anticipate and prevent negative impacts of change. Leaders who care about followers' needs

and treat them with respect encourage improved performance and commitment [17]. Managers treating interactional justice had employees performing better and demonstrating pro-organizational behaviors.

Education is particularly important in Arab society as a factor contributing to development, progress, and social change. However, official data reveals huge gaps between Jewish and Arab student achievements. While six out of ten Jewish students are eligible for matriculation certificates, only four out of ten Arab students qualify. Despite quantitative and qualitative changes, Arab schools still lag behind Jewish schools in all educational areas.

Therefore, this study asks: Is there a connection between leadership style, organizational justice, and teacher effectiveness? Hypotheses include: positive correlation between leadership, organizational justice, and teacher performance; transformational leadership affects organizational justice more than transactional; formative leadership affects teacher performance more than rewarding; organizational justice mediates between leadership styles and teacher performance.

Method

The study included 100 teachers from elementary, middle, and high schools in northern Israel. Eighteen male and 82 female teachers participated. Average age was 34 years; average teaching experience was 12.2 years; average seniority at school was 12 years.

Table 1. Characteristics of the research population

Variable	Measurement values	Frequency
Gender	Male / Female	18 / 82
Education	Bachelor's / Master's / Doctorate	46 / 48 / 6
Main role	Professional teacher / Homeroom Teacher	24 / 76
Administrative role	Yes / No	23 / 77

Three questionnaires were used: demographic questionnaire (gender, age, education, seniority); leadership style questionnaire (45 items, 1-5 scale) examining transformational (19 items) and transactional (13 items) leadership; organizational justice questionnaire with 20 items examining distributive (5 items, $\alpha=0.74$), procedural (6 items, $\alpha=0.80$), and interactional (9 items, $\alpha=0.83$) justice (total $\alpha=0.91$); teacher effectiveness questionnaire (15 statements) from Avney Rosha Institute.

Questionnaires were distributed via Google Forms to teachers through social media groups.

Data were statistically analyzed using SPSS version 27. Internal reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. Pearson's test examined relationships; t-test examined group differences.

Results

The data analysis revealed important findings regarding the relationships between the three research variables. The internal consistency of all questionnaires was high, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.750 to 0.912, indicating reliable measurement instruments. Furthermore, the descriptive statistics showed that teachers

perceive their principals as employing more shaping/transformational leadership than

rewarding/transactional leadership, although both styles are utilized.

Table 2. Means, reliability, and standard deviation of study variables (N=100)

Variable	M	SD	Cronbach's alpha
Formative leadership	4.197	0.767	0.750
Rewarding Leadership	3.655	0.987	0.830
Organizational justice	3.945	0.876	0.912
Teacher performance	2.983	1.309	0.910

Strong relationships were found: teacher performance correlated with transformational leadership, rewarding leadership, and organizational justice.

Correlation between leadership, organizational justice, and performance – positive correlation was found between school leadership and organizational justice and teacher performance.

Organizational justice correlated positively with teacher performance. Hypothesis confirmed.

Transformational leadership more positively correlates with organizational justice – transformational leadership showed stronger correlation with organizational justice than transactional leadership.

Table 3. Correlations between leadership styles, organizational justice, and teacher performance

	Transformational leadership	Rewarding leadership	Organizational justice
Teacher performance	**0.724	**0.434	**0.554

** $p < 0.01$

Transformational leadership predicted 57.40% variance in organizational justice. Organizational justice and transformational leadership together predicted 87.21% variance in teacher performance. Organizational justice partially mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance, with beta reducing from 1.1133 to 0.8089.

Rewarding leadership predicted 61.20% variance in organizational justice ($\beta=0.8568$,

$p=0.0000$). Rewarding leadership and organizational justice predicted 74.61% variance in teacher performance ($\beta=0.6272$ and $\beta=0.5674$). Direct relationship showed 66.56% variance ($\beta=1.0597$). Organizational justice partially mediated rewarding leadership and teacher performance, with beta reducing from 1.0598 to 0.6272. Hypotheses 3 and 4 confirmed.

Table 4. Mediation effects summary

Path	Direct β	Indirect β	Mediation
Transformational leadership – Teacher performance	1.1133	0.8089	Partial
Rewarding leadership – Teacher performance	1.0598	0.6272	Partial

Based on the data presented in Table 4, the mediation analysis yields several critical insights. Both transformational and rewarding leadership styles exert significant direct effects on teacher performance, yet their influence is substantially channeled through perceptions of organizational justice, as evidenced by the robust indirect effects.

The partial mediation observed suggests that while leadership directly motivates and guides teachers, a considerable portion of this impact materializes because leaders cultivate an environment perceived as fair and procedurally just. Specifically, the stronger indirect effect for

transformational leadership implies that visionary inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration achieve their maximum efficacy precisely when embedded within a culture of equitable treatment.

A compelling vision, when articulated in isolation, proves insufficient; transparency and impartiality in the processes governing teachers' work and the distribution of outcomes must also be perceived by teachers. Effectiveness in rewarding leadership is derived not merely from the dispensing of tangible and intangible incentives, but rather from the perception of equity within the

system of reward allocation. Significant erosion of motivational potential occurs when rewards are viewed as procedurally flawed, as the substantial indirect path suggests.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between leadership, organizational justice, and teacher performance. The more positively teachers perceive leadership style, the higher their sense of organizational justice and performance. These results align with previous research [16; 17] showing that effective leaders who care for subordinates, treat them with respect, and encourage improved performance create positive organizational outcomes.

The first hypothesis revealed transformational leadership's dominant role in explaining teacher performance, with higher correlation compared to transactional leadership. These findings support research by [15] who found transformational leadership positively impacts school functioning.

The second hypothesis confirmed organizational justice's mediating role in linking leadership styles and teacher performance. These findings align with [11], showing that organizational justice enables effective management in changing circumstances. Managers who provide fairness, respect, and trust motivate employees to work efficiently.

The third hypothesis demonstrated that rewarding leadership partially predicts organizational justice and teacher performance. These findings support [15], who found transformational leadership more effective than rewarding leadership for school functioning. The predictive role of transformational leadership is stronger in determining teacher performance by strengthening organizational justice compared to transactional leadership.

Conclusions

This study examined the relationship between school principals' leadership styles, organizational justice, and teacher performance in Arab schools in Israel.

A positive effect on both organizational justice and teacher performance is demonstrated by transformational leadership in comparison to transactional leadership, according to the findings. Higher levels of organizational justice and better performance outcomes are reported by teachers who perceive their principals as employing transformational leadership characteristics. The magnitude of the indirect effect of transformational leadership through justice perceptions approaches that of its direct effect, as the empirical evidence reveals; this underscores the near-equivalence of fairness mechanisms to charismatic inspiration in terms of influence. Through justice pathways confirming that incentive structures succeed only within equitable procedural frameworks. Partial mediation of the relationship between both leadership styles and teacher performance is thus provided by organizational justice, indicating that the improvement of teacher performance can be achieved by principals through the fostering of a fair and equitable school environment.

Recommendations include adopting transformational leadership practices, developing transparent performance evaluation mechanisms, and strengthening organizational justice perceptions among teachers through consistent, bias-free administrative procedures. Future research should expand the sample geographically and examine additional factors influencing teacher performance beyond leadership and organizational justice.

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ВЗАИМОСВЯЗЬ МЕЖДУ СТИЛЕМ ЛИДЕРСТВА, ОРГАНИЗАЦИОННОЙ СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТЬЮ И ЭФФЕКТИВНОСТЬЮ РАБОТЫ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ В АРАБСКИХ ШКОЛАХ ИЗРАИЛЯ

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Аннотация. В исследовании проведён анализ влияния стиля руководства директоров школ в арабском обществе на организационную справедливость и эффективность работы учителей. В исследовании приняли участие 100 учителей начальных, средних и старших классов, участники заполнили анкету по стилю руководства, организационной справедливости и эффективности работы учителей. Результаты показали, что директора используют оба стиля, как поощряющий, так и формирующий, при этом учителя воспринимают директоров как более формирующих. Трансформационное лидерство оказывает положительное влияние на организационную справедливость и эффективность работы учителей, чем транзакционное. Трансформационное лидерство формирует эффективность работы учителей через организационную справедливость. Таким образом, директора, применяющие трансформационное лидерство, оказывают положительное влияние на эффективность работы учителей, повышая восприятие организационной справедливости.

Ключевые слова: стиль лидерства; организационная справедливость; эффективность работы учителей; трансформационное лидерство; транзакционное лидерство; арабские школы; Израиль.