



# THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION IN SOTHERN NATIONS AND NATIONALITIES REGIONAL STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS, SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of leadership styles on employees' motivation in education departments that are located in SNNPRS, Ethiopia. To achieve the study objectives a mixed research design was employed. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to run the study. A survey was conducted from 105 randomly selected employees from education departments. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight purposefully selected employees to validate the results of the survey. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, mean scores) and inferential (multiple linear regression). The results indicate that the employees' motivation was found at moderate level. The types of leadership styles which are dominantly practiced in the study area were transformational and transactional. Regression results revealed that there is statistically significant impact of leadership styles on employee motivation at education departments. Besides, among the different styles, the transformational leadership style has the highest effect size. On the basis of the finding, it was recommended that the heads of zonal education departments should enhance the level of employees' motivation through the practice of appropriate leadership style which attracts employees attention to devote their full efforts.*

**Keywords:** Education departments; Employees motivation; Ethiopia; Leadership styles

## **Introduction**

In the contemporary world, the issue of leadership has become a burning issue. Today many people worry about the issue of leadership and its role for the success or failure of the organization whether it is profit-making or service rendering. Leadership plays an important role in employees' creativity, feelings and satisfaction, also in organizations strategy formulation and implementation (Robbins, 2009). Based on the role and importance of leadership, many scholars have tried to define the term leadership yet not they come up with common consensus (Nel, Muller, Hugo and Dwyer, 2004; Hill, 2008; Lussier & Achua, 2013; Kumar, 2014; Wammy & Swammy, 2014).

According to Nel et al.(2004) leadership as the process whereby one individual influences others to willingly and enthusiastically direct their efforts and abilities towards attaining defined group or organizational goals. Similarly, Cole (2005) defines leadership as a dynamic process whereby one man influences other to contribute voluntarily to the realization and attainment of the goals objectives; aspiration of values of the group that is representing the essence of leadership is to help a group or an organization to attain sustainable development and growth. Another definition by Harem (2004),stated that leadership as a set of acts that the leader displays within the organization as a result of internal or external pressure and thus has direct effects on organization's employees behavior positively or negatively. Leadership is the process in which leaders of certain organization influences their followers to achieve an organizational goal.

Secondly, leadership style is a leader's behavior and attitude of governance and supervision. It is the result of personality traits, experience, attitude and philosophy of the leaders (Newstrom & Davis, 1993). According to (Gençer & Samur, 2016) Leadership Style is a set of characteristics used by leaders to influence subordinates so that organizational goals are achieved or it can also be said that leadership style is a pattern of behavior and strategies that are preferred and often applied by a leader. Harem (2004) define leadership style as a set of acts that the leader displays within the organization as a result of internal or external pressure and thus has direct effects on organization's employees behavior positively or negatively.As we can observe from various definitions of leadership style, it is the manner of the leader to direct or lead the workers of the organization to perform their activities to achieve the goal. A leadership style refers to a leader's methods and behaviors when directing and managing others in the work place. According to Mosadeghrad (2003) there are numerous leadership styles such as: autocratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, democratic, participative, situational,

transformational, and transactional and laissez faire leadership style. Hersey and Blanchard indicated that there are four leadership style- telling, selling, participating and delegating (Robbins & Coulter, 2009). Besides, Bass (1985) identified three leadership styles - laissez faire style, transformational leadership style, and the transactional leadership style. On the other hand, Blake and Mouton (1960) identified five leadership styles according to leader's concern for people and concern for production: impoverished management style, authority-compliance style, middle of the road management style, country club management style and team management style (Robbins, 2009). Different scholars classified leadership style in different ways. All of them have their own basis for classification. It may include the manager's personal background, the Staff being supervised and the organization that they work. However this study employed the three leadership styles identified by Bass (1985) to assess their impact on employee motivation.

The other variable used in this study is about employee motivation. Different authors define motivation differently for example for Cameron and Green (2019), Daft and Marcic, (2007) it is the inner force within or external to a person which gives energy to accomplish organizational and personal goals. Additionally (Wang et al., 2016) argues Motivation is a personal condition in a person who encourages an individual's desire to carry out certain activities in order to achieve goals. Furthermore "motivation is a goal-directed behavior which involves taking a course of action which leads to the attainment of a goal or a specific valued reward" (Armstrong, 2006, p. 252). Motivation to work, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, is critical in the lives of employees because it forms the essential reason for working in life (Ololube 2006). Intrinsic motivation is regulated by personal enjoyment, interest or pleasure (Lai 2011) and it involves the performance of an activity for the inherent satisfaction of an activity. Extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently stimulating or enjoyable (Ryan & Deci 2000). So motivation is an effort that is in a person in meeting their needs to achieve organizational goals.

Leadership, as mentioned before in this paper, has been defined as the ability to influence group members to get the highest productivity from them (Schaffer, 2008). Leaders cannot be successful at an organization without increasing the motivation of employees because motivated employees tend to perform their best in their work. Their best effort is closely related to the satisfaction of their individual needs.

In different organization, the relationship between leadership style and employee motivation were extensively conducted. A study conducted by Riedle (2015) on the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with the types of leadership styles that are transactional and transformational. He found that a close positive relationship between transformational and intrinsic motivation, while there is a relationship between transactional and extrinsic motivation. Gobal and Chowdhury (2014) surveyed 50 employees in a petrochemical company in India to find out the relation between leadership style and motivation. They found that employees tend to be more motivated with transformational style of leadership than transactional or laissez-faire styles.

Employee motivation is an important variable to understand the behavior of employees in the organization and its effects on employees' attitudes towards work such as a desire to stay in the organization, absenteeism rate, and job satisfaction and work turnover rate. Organizationally motivated employees have better job performance and strong attachment with the organization (Al-Daibat, 2017). Leadership style plays an important role in

employees' creativity, feelings and satisfaction, also in organizations strategy formulation and implementation (Robbins, 2009).

Like other organizations educational sectors also demands effective leadership styles that play an important role on employees' creativity, feelings and satisfaction. To this end leadership styles and employee motivation are interrelated. From researchers' own experience as an expert at zonal education department for recent time there is a problem on the practice of appropriate leadership style to enhance employee motivation under study area. Furthermore, the leaders of the departments were implement uniform leadership styles for both able or unable and experienced and inexperienced employees. To get research based response to implement suitable leadership styles among the three leadership styles (transformational, transactional and laissez- faire) for different types of employees in the education department and to maximize their motivation level, the current study was conducted in zonal education departments of Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples Region, Ethiopia. The authors thus realize this gap hence this study assess how the three leadership styles (transformational, transactional and laissez- faire) influences (intrinsic and extrinsic) motivation of an employees' in zonal education departments.

Accordingly, the following objectives were raised to guide the overall activities of the study.

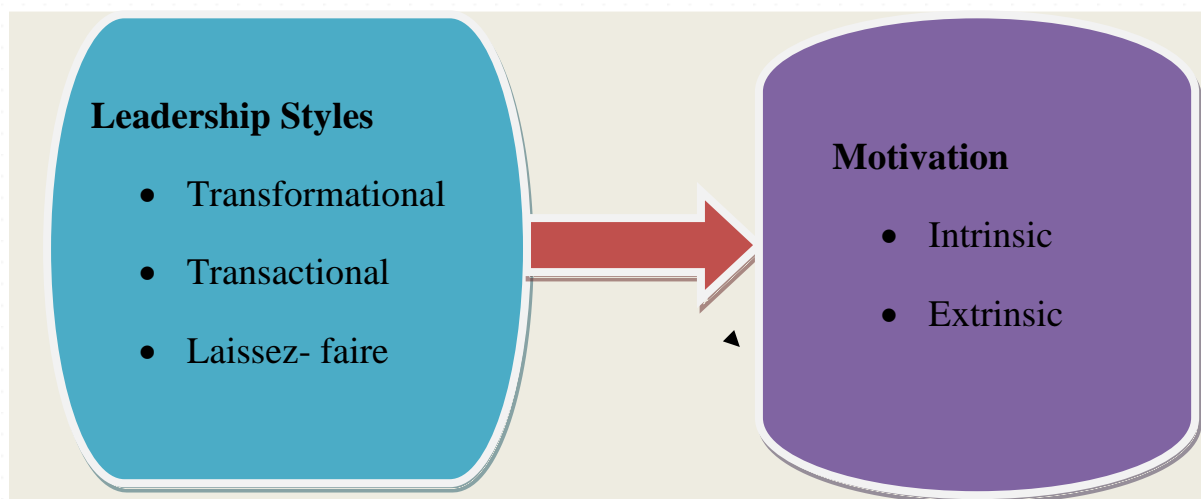
1. To investigate the extent of employees' motivation in the study area.
2. To assess the frequency of leadership style practiced in the education departments of the study area.
3. To investigate the impact of leadership styles on employees' motivation in education departments, SNNPRS in Ethiopia

The study is expected to contribute to different bodies in many ways. First, the findings of this study will add to the wealth of knowledge in other leadership and employee motivation studies. It could also be helpful for individuals who want to conduct further studies in related topics and other organizations those face similar problems. Inevitably, this study will contribute to the growing body of research on the impacts of leadership styles on employee motivation by examining the three important leadership styles and their impact on employee motivation. It is believed that this study will add value to the literatures on zonal education departments' leadership styles, especially in the Ethiopian settings, since there were limited literatures done on similar settings. The results of the study will also help zonal education departments to practice leadership style that will develop employee motivation, and will also contribute a great extent to anyone who is interested by providing information on the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the research was guided by the conceptual framework of the study which was based on the theories of leadership and motivation. This conceptual framework was adopted from full range leadership model which was introduced by Avolio and Bass (1991). Thus, this theoretical model includes three styles of leadership: (a) transactional, (b) transformational, and (c) Laissez- Faire and Tremblay, Blanchard, Taylor, Pelletier and Villeneuve (2009), Work Extrinsic Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS). As shown in the framework, leadership styles are taken as the independent variables whereas employee motivation was treated as the dependent variable.

### **Figure 1:**

#### *Conceptual Framework*



**Source:** Based on Avolio and Bass(1991) and Trembly et al.(2009)

### Research Methods

This study used a mixed research design. A mixed method design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study so as , to understand a research problem more completely (Creswell, 2002;Tashakkori & Teddlie,2003). The rationale for mixing is that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are sufficient by themselves to capture the trends and details of the situation. From different types of mixed method design, concurrent embedded mixed method was employed. Thus by analyzing quantitative data first and supporting the findings with qualitative research findings (Creswell, 2014).

The population of this study was comprised from Education Departments which are located in Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples Regional State, Ethiopia. The target population of this study contained 126 employees. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), 20-30% sample is considered to be adequate. However the researcher used 105 respondent employees include department heads and workers (directorates and common service providers) working with in the year 2021/2022 which are about 83.3% of the total population. The respondents of quantitative data were selected through simple random sampling technique. Additionally, eight employees from education departments were selected by purposive sampling technique to participate in the interview to provide adequate information.

The research instrument used for collecting primary data was Questionnaire which is the most widely used data collection methods in research work. The Questionnaires used for the final data collection were close-ended and semi structured interview helped to gather information on attitudes, opinions, behaviors, facts, and other information. With this regard, the researcher adapted and modified standard instruments of Avolio and Bass (2004) the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) by; Tremblay et al. (2009), to fit the existing context. With this regard, a 5-point Likert scale for the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire was used with magnitudes ranging from; 1 = not at all, 2 = once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = fairly often, 5 = frequently (if not always). A 7-point Likert scale for Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale with ten questions were condensed into a 5-point Likert scale comprising of; 1= Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree which was used to measure employee motivation.

The original reliability of the instrument used in this study was good. The reliability coefficient (alpha) of transformational leadership was .96; transactional leadership .88; laissez- faire leadership .81and employee motivation was .853. To ensure reliability of this instrument pilot study was conducted at Konso Zone education department. Accordingly, the reliability results were; .96 for transformational, .78 for transactional, and .76 for Laissez- faire leadership style, and .900 for employee’s motivation. Thus when we compare to the original reliability value, the pilot result was good and it fits alpha value which indicated on the literature. As suggested by Burg-Brown (2016), if the coefficient is between .700 - 1.0, it is generally found to be internally consistent. Moreover, both content and face validity of this research instruments were judged by members research of advisory committee and statistics department expertise at Arba Minch University, and their comments incorporated in this study. To analyze and draw meaning from the collected data, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used. Accordingly, the analysis was made by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

## Results

To run this study a total of 105 questionnaires were distributed to workers (directorates, expertise and common service deliverers) and 101 (96%) were filled and returned back for further analysis.

**Table 1.**

*Demographic Characteristics of respondents (n=101)*

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	71	70.3
	Female	30	29.7
Work Experience	Under 5	4	4.0
	6-10	10	9.9
	11-15	32	31.7
	16-20	22	21.8
	21 and above	33	32.7
Educational Level	Up to 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12	11.9
	Certificate	21	20.8
	Diploma	15	14.9
	BA/BSc	41	40.6
Employee Status	MA/MSc	12	11.9
	Directorate	21	20.8
	Expertise	66	65.3
	common service deliverers	14	13.9

The data in Table 1 above shows that from the total employee respondents, 70.3% are males and 29.97% are females. From the employees,4.0% have under 5 years of experience,9.9%

have 6 - 10 years, 31.7% have 11 - 15 years, 21.8% also have an experience of 16 – 20 and 32.7% have 21 and above. From this we can conclude that, employees of zonal education department have adequate working experience that they can perform the given tasks. Regarding educational level, the majority of the employees are BA/BSc degree holders (40.6%). From the total employees, 20.8% are directorates, 65.3% expertise and the remaining (13.9%) are common service deliverers. The demographic information of the respondents implies that the respondents participated on this study have competency to generate ideas with regard to the information that appropriate to this study. According to MoE (2008), individuals who qualified with TVET and above have competency of knowledge skill and attitude.

### 3.1 The Extent of Employees' Motivation with Respect to Leadership Styles

The two motivation factors such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of zonal education employees were assessed by using mean rates. The eleven item questions were used to assess employee motivation. Among them seven items are used to assess intrinsic and four are used for extrinsic motivation.

**Table 2.**

*The Level of Employees' Motivation with Respect to their Immediate Leaders' Leadership Styles*

Items	Mean	Std. D.	Level
Has leader who is helpful.	3.36	1.016	Low
Gives you prestige.	3.31	.869	Low
Provides satisfactory material rewards.	4.01	9.603	High
Allows you to develop your full potential.	3.34	.962	Low
Allows you to learn new skills for career advancement.	3.33	.981	Low
Provides opportunities to improve your experience	3.34	.972	Low
provides good physical working conditions	3.31	.935	Low
Has an open channel of communication to interact with head.	3.41	.885	Moderate
is one where your good work is appreciated	3.39	.990	Moderate
Provides chance to share ideas with colleagues.	3.48	.912	Moderate
Initiates you to set goals for yourself.	3.50	.890	Moderate
Intrinsic Motivation	3.40	.689	Moderate
Extrinsic Motivation	3.54	2.623	Moderate
Grand Mean	3.47	1.656	Moderate

According to Zaidaton & Bagheri (2009) the mean score below 3.39 was considered as low, the mean score from 3.40 up to 3.79 was considered as moderate and mean score above 3.8 was considers as high.

Table (2) shows that the level of employee motivation as a whole among members of study sample at Zonal education departments in SNNPR, Ethiopia was moderate, with a mean of (3.47) and a standard deviation of (1.65), similarly also it was reported that the mean of the responses of the participants of the study area concerning extrinsic motivation with a mean of (3.54) and a standard deviation of (2.62) and a moderate degree of assessment. Intrinsic

motivation measured with a mean of (3.40) and a standard deviation of (0.68) and also indicated moderate level. These results indicates that, the employees under the study area were not achieved their highest motivation level due to the practice of present leadership style which is exhibited by their leaders. Therefore the leader should employ transformational leadership style to enhance the motivation level of employees to highest degree.

In responses to employee motivation level, the expertise and directorates were interviewed to express their opinions. With regard to this point one expert reported that: “the employees’ motivation level was found at medium level in our education department.” On the same tone all the other experts and directorates are replied that: “in our department, the employees including as were found at moderate motivation level.”

### 3.2 Leadership Styles which are Frequently Practiced in the Study Area

This research question was answered both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative aspect was analyzed by comparing the mean values of the three leadership styles.

**Table 3.**

*The Leadership Styles which are Frequently Practiced in the Sample Zones*

<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Transformational	101	3.2779	.91705
Transactional	101	3.0066	.65373
Laissez- faire	101	2.9340	.96496

The above Table 3 shows also that the means of the responses of the participants of the study concerning leadership styles which are frequently practiced in the sample Zones, the frequently practiced one was transformational leadership style, with a mean of (3.27) and a standard deviation of (0.91) followed by transactional leadership style with a mean of (3.00) and standard deviation of (0.65), and lastly came the laissez faire leadership style with a mean of (2.93) and a standard deviation of (0.96). These results indicates that transformational leadership style is more commonly used than the other two leadership styles in the study area. The participants opinion regarding this issue indicated that, from the 8(eight) interview participants two zonal education department heads replied that: the dominant leadership style practiced in the sample zones of the study area is transformational leadership style where as the remaining 4(four) directorates and 2(two) expertise provided similar response that, the dominant leadership style practiced in the sample zones of the study area is transaction leadership style. They elaborated that, in our department each and every employee has get signed agreement of work plan and everyone tries to accomplish only this plan; no consideration is given to do extra activities. They also explained that, even we perform extra activities in our initiation no any value was given.

### 3.3 The Impact of Leadership Styles on Employees Motivation under the Study Area

In this study, three predictor variables (transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles) were included in the regression analysis with motivation (intrinsic and



extrinsic) as the dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis was done to confirm the impact of leadership styles with employee motivation.

This analysis was takes place by taking the average motivation value as a dependent variable.

**Table 4.**

*Model Summary*

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics				
					R square change	F	df1	df2	Sig.
	.350 <sup>b</sup>	.122	.104	3.47239	.122	6.826	2	98	.000

The above result in Table 4 shows that leadership styles had statistically significantly effects on employee motivation, multiple correlation coefficient value as  $F_{1, 98} = 6.826, p < .001$ . The (R<sup>2</sup>) was (.122) which indicates that leadership styles were capable of accounting for (12%) of the changes in the dependent variable (employee motivation). Therefore leadership styles ( $p < .001$ ) significantly predict the employee motivation hence the equation is greater than zero and extremely unlikely to have occurred by chance.

In response to this, participants supplied different ideas but all in common express the same results. One of directorate reported that:

“All leadership styles in general and transformational leadership style in particular has effect on employees’ motivation under the study area.”

To support this, another directorate argued that:

“Leadership style especially appropriate leadership style brings high motivation of employees. To tell the truth, transformational leadership style has great effect on employees motivation; because it allows individuals to create and innovate new ideas.”

One of the expert interview result reported that:

Leadership style is good to influence employees’ motivation. If it well done it enhances motivation, if not well managed it disturbs employees and employees are turnover from the organization or the sector. Therefore leaders of any sector should understand the impact of the leadership style for their employees and these on the other way make sector very effective. Education sector is very sensitive because it works on student behavior and knowledge; it highly demands effective leadership style which promotes education sector and student results. To do this, the leader of an education system should motivate employees of the sector at first level. Therefore leadership style has great impact on employees motivation that in turn maximize students academic achievement.

**Table 5.**

*Multiple linear regression analysis*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
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	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6.427	1.782		3.608	.000
Transformational	1.086	.420	.271	2.584	.011
Transactional	.126	.669	.022	.188	.851
Laissez-faire	-1.089	.420	-.286	-2.595	.011

\*Significant at 1% level

From Table 5, results indicate a positive relationship for the transformational and transactional leadership styles with employees' motivation, and a negative relationship for the laissez-faire leadership style. However, only transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles significantly predicted employees' motivation.

From Table 5, results show that transformational leadership style positively and significantly predicts employees motivation at 1% statistical level ( $t=2,484, p=.011$ ). A unit change on transformational leadership style would increase employees' by .271 standard deviations all other factors held constant.

From Table 5, results show that laissez-faire leadership style negatively and significantly predicts employees' motivation at 1% statistical level ( $t=-2.595, p=.011$ ). A unit change on laissez-faire leadership style would decrease employees' motivation by .286 standard deviations all other factors held constant.

## Discussion

The main objective of this study was to examine the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation. The following is an explanation of the results of this study. The results of this study denoted that, the employee motivation level is moderate in Southern Zonal Education Departments. The average mean of employee motivation as a whole is (3.47) with a standard deviation of (1.656) , as shown in table (2) which indicates the moderate level of employee motivation under the study area. When we see an average mean score of intrinsic is (3.40) with a standard deviation of (0.689) and an average mean score of extrinsic is (3.54) with a standard deviation of (2.623) . This implies that, the employees under the study area were not achieved their highest motivation level due to the practice of present leadership style which is exhibited by their leaders. The results showed that employees of Southern Zonal Education Departments were not highly motivated on their leaders' leadership style. This result is consistent with other researches such as the research conducted by Alghazo and Al-Anazi( 2016), Riedle (2015), and Haywood (2014).

With regard to leadership styles which are dominantly practiced in the sample Zones of the study area was assessed by using mean ratings and the result shows that, the mean score of transformational leadership style is (3.27) with a standard deviation of (0.917), the mean score of transactional is (3.00) with a standard deviation of (0.653) and the mean score of laissez-faire is (2.93) with a standard deviation of (0.964). Therefore, the dominant leadership style practiced in the study area is transformational leadership style. Transactional leadership style is follows the transformational leadership style. This finding is in congruent with that of Bass and Avolio (1997) and they suggested that, the scores for transformational leadership include a mean of 3.0 or higher.

During the course of the interview process, the voices of 2 (two) experts supported the findings of quantitative data. They responded that: “in our education department leaders frequently used transformational type of leadership style than the other transactional and laissez-faire types.” In contrast 4 (four) directorates and 2 (two) experts with the same tone clearly elaborated that “the leadership style which practiced in our departments is transactional.” “We work only what we agreed and signed by our heads, no one considering about extra work.” We are enforced only to do that we made agreement with our heads of the departments.”

To attain the third objective of the study multiple regression analysis was carried out to investigate the impact of leadership styles on employees’ motivation under the study area. Accordingly, leadership styles have significant effect on employee motivation. From the three leadership styles, transformational leadership highly and significantly predicted the dimensions of employee motivation. This depicts that when the leaders of zonal education department heads practice the behavior of inspiring a shared vision, encouraging creativity, recognizing accomplishments and rewarding the best performer/s, the employees become motivated. This finding is congruent with the findings of the study conducted by (Bučiūnienė & Škudienė, 2008)

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Achievement of organization’s goals requires effective leaders and motivated employees. To motivate their employees’, leaders’ of any organization tried to practice an appropriate leadership style that equally treats all employees. The main objective of this paper was to assess the impact of leadership styles on employees’ motivation in zonal education departments. Based on the results of this study, the researchers concluded that the level of employee motivation was found at moderate level. On the other hand, the results indicated that the dominant leadership style which frequently practiced in the sample zones of the study area was transformational. Further conclusions can be made that from the three leadership styles, transformational leadership style has shows significant effect on employees’ motivation under the study area.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made. The finding indicated that employees’ of zonal education department were not highly motivated. This indicates that the employees were not performing their activities up to their maximum effort. Therefore the zonal education department heads should practice an appropriate leadership style that enhances employees’ motivation. Besides, it would be better to communicate with employees how to support and encourage them to achieve organizational goals.

The use of transformational leadership style under the study zones is very appreciable but the finding of the response from an interviewee shows that there is an implementation of transactional leadership style. So the heads of zonal education department should digest these two paradox findings and give due attention to fully implement the use of transformational leadership style. Transformational leadership style has highest effect on employee motivation. Therefore the leader of zonal education department head should practice this leadership style because it brings motivation on this particular area. Furthermore the heads of zonal education department should briefly implement which leadership is more appropriate to maximize employees’ motivation at the same time. The present study was only conducted on the impact of three leadership styles (transformational, transactional and laissez-faire) leadership styles on employee motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) Therefore, future researchers should conduct on including other types of leadership styles with respect to these

variables on different Zonal education departments to enhance motivation of an employees' which directly can affect the teaching learning process under lower level.

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