RESEARCH ARTICLE:

Is there a Relationship between Transactional Leadership Style, Communication and Job Satisfaction of Administrative Employees in the South African Public Sector?

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine whether there is a relationship between a transactional leadership style, communication and job satisfaction of administrative employees in the South African Public Sector. Transactional leadership, communication and job satisfaction have all been examined in different contexts, but it remains unclear how these three variables interact in the South African public sector. The study adhered to the theory of social exchange that provided an organised approach to understanding the emergence, development, and consequences of group interactions. A descriptive cross-sectional survey was undertaken with 184 administrative personnel who were not part of a probability census. A quantitative research approach was used. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) were used to assess the contributions of each item based on its loading. Structural equation modelling (SEM) and bootstrapping using r² were used to test the validity and some of the patterns indicating how the transactional leadership style, communication and job satisfaction are related. The study found a substantial link between transactional leadership and employee job satisfaction and a significant link between transactional leadership and communication. This research project has the potential to help managers in South Africa's public sector comprehend the relationship between leadership styles, communication, and job satisfaction. In addition, this study makes a significant contribution by broadening our understanding of transactional leaders, emphasising the importance of relying on rewards for employee satisfaction, and raising awareness of the potential consequences of direct and transparent communication.

Keywords: transactional leadership; job satisfaction; communication; administrative employees; public sector

Introduction

The role of leaders has resulted in beneficial outcomes in the workplace, and organisational success depends on using successful leadership styles (Ichsan *et al*., 2021). A transactional leadership style boosts organisational staff productivity and commitment (Abdelwahed *et al*., 2023). Effective leaders improve the relationship between management representativeness and job satisfaction by fostering a sense of employee inclusion (Jha *et al*., 2024). Job satisfaction and organisational commitment of administrators, supervisors and leaders are indicators of shaping an organisation's success (Wai *et al*., 2024). Transactional leadership, job satisfaction, and communication are of particular importance because communication and job satisfaction create a positive mediator between leadership styles and organisational commitment (Azura *et al*., 2023). Transactional leaders are often seen as challenging to collaborate with because of their straightforward and honest approach to leadership. Administrative employees working under transactional leaders have been perceived to struggle with job satisfaction because of the characteristics associated with transactional leadership when motivating their employees to improve performance (Abdelwahed *et al*., 2023). Transactional leadership is founded on a clear exchange between leaders and followers, and it relies significantly on effective communication to enhance job satisfaction.

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Leaders must effectively articulate expectations, ensuring employees comprehend the behaviours necessary to earn rewards or avoid penalties. Regular feedback, both positive reinforcement and constructive criticism, is essential, as is creating an open dialogue that encourages employees to share concerns and suggestions. Transparent and honest communication fosters trust in the fairness of the reward system, which further contributes to overall job satisfaction. Ultimately, the effectiveness of transactional leadership in promoting job satisfaction rests on the quality of communication. Concerning this study, it has been observed that within the chosen public sector, administrative employees face barriers concerning the communication and leadership styles employed by its leaders as well as their effect on their job satisfaction. This study examined the connection between a transactional leadership style, communication and job satisfaction as a key characteristic. Additionally, this study sought to close the literature gap by revealing a relationship between a transactional leadership style, communication, and job satisfaction of administrative employees in the South African public sector. Therefore, there is a concern about the potential correlation between transactional leadership, communication, and job satisfaction among administrative staff in the South African public sector. The following objectives emerged in this study to try to address the research problem:

- To explore the relationship between transactional leadership style and job satisfaction.
- To explore the relationship between transactional leadership style and communication.
- To explore the relationship between transactional leaders' communication style and employees' job satisfaction.

This paper is organised as follows: literature review, methodology, results, discussion and conclusions.

Literature Review

Relationships in the workplace could be viewed as interpersonal interactions in a professional setting, involving both individuals and the organisation, as explained by the social exchange theory on these relationships (Ahmad *et al*., 2023). This literature review delves deeper into exploring the connection between a transactional leadership style, Job satisfaction, and communication and how it relates to this study's variables.

Transactional leadership

Strong leadership is essential for an organisation and its employees to function effectively. Effective leadership can help maintain employee motivation and willingness to prioritise the organisation's needs over their own (Wahyuni *et al*., 2019). Transactional leadership is a leadership style in which the leader determines what employees must do to achieve organisational goals and helps employees gain confidence in performing those tasks (Wahyuni *et al*., 2019). Transactional leaders make resources available for their employees to perform given tasks. The transactional leadership style indicates that there should be honesty in agreements between leaders and their employees (Benmira and Agboola, 2021). Management by exception and contingent rewards are the two primary aspects of transactional leadership. When an employee completes a task effectively, they may be eligible for contingent rewards, which may include a pay raise or promotion (Hoxha, 2019). A contingent award is given to employees as a token of appreciation for their hard work. Managers who practice management by exception monitor their employees to ensure that they follow instructions and take the appropriate action as necessary. Employees under transactional leaders carry out assigned tasks and provide outputs with a clear expectation of return (Kateb and Ramanathan, 2019). By contrast, transactional leaders prioritise accomplishing organisational goals and making it clear to employees that rewards would be offered for good performance. The foundation of the connection between transactional leaders and their employees is the exchange of rewards for good performance. However, overreliance on transactional leadership may negatively affect innovation and long-term progress (Dong, 2023). Employee self-interest in reaching and attaining goals is the aim of transactional leadership behaviour. Transactional leaders believe that with the right incentives, employees' self-interests may align with the organisation's interests (Jensen *et al*., 2019).

Job satisfaction

Organisations use job satisfaction to gauge how happy or dissatisfied their employees are with their jobs (Nurlina, 2022). Job satisfaction becomes necessary for individual employees to be fulfilled in their work environment (Goestjahjanti *et al*., 2020). Therefore, it is important to avoid creating a stressful work environment that could lower employee job satisfaction (Mawardi, 2022). The nature of the job, responsibilities, willingness to participate

in daily activities, compensation opportunities for promotion, leaders' leadership style, resilience, and connection with co-workers can affect employee job satisfaction (Arifin *et al*., 2019). Employees who are resilient with all the highs and lows in the work environment are more satisfied than those who are less resilient (Chollett, 2020). When employees are satisfied, they become reliable; they do not work to receive incentives but always present their best performance (Arifin *et al*., 2019).

Employees' involvement is important in a manner that motivates them to achieve performance and adds to job satisfaction (Riyanto and Herlisha, 2021). Employees should be committed to their jobs before they can focus on satisfaction and performance (Rai and Maheshwari, 2021). To become accustomed to the atmosphere and culture of their workplaces, employees should try to adapt (Davidescu *et al*., 2020). Prioritising employee job satisfaction will encourage commitment, yet others may lack motivation or engagement, leading to dissatisfaction (Cherif, 2020). It is vital to mention that dissatisfied employees lack patience, whereas satisfied employees are willing to learn new skills that will help them thrive in their fields of employment (Arifin *et al*., 2019). Dissatisfied employees are often confused, which leads to thoughts of quitting their jobs (Ramlawati *et al*., 2021). Work engagement limits employee turnover and contributes to growth in satisfaction (Jaharuddin and Zainol, 2019). The leaders' leadership style is the primary factor in employee satisfaction (Mugira, 2022). As a result, managers must operate in a way that does not disrupt personnel or negatively impact their contentment. Leaders should help employees advance their careers and provide opportunities to share knowledge (De Clercq and Belausteguigoitia, 2021).

Communication

Leadership and communication are essential to instil commitment in an organisation (Syakur *et al*., 2020). When change occurs in an organisation, leaders can align their employee's perspectives with their vision through communication (Hartge *et al*., 2019). Leaders should communicate effectively and briefly with all levels of the organisation using all accessible channels of communication and a variety of communicative resources such as words, gestures, and sounds (Darics, 2020). Employees and leaders can communicate ideas and concerns to develop their work environment (Kremer *et al*., 2019). The existence of leadership depends on communication in a manner in which it is necessary for leaders' leadership strategies to be understood (Adigwe *et al*., 2024; Badjie, 2021). Employees may form an opinion of a leader's leadership style based on how they communicate with their employees (Brown *et al*., 2019). Leaders employ different leadership styles to motivate their employees to achieve organisational goals, but this can only be successful if leaders communicate these goals to their employees (Saputra, 2021). Thus, since communication may affect employees' psychological well-being, leaders must engage with their employees (Kelly and MacDonald, 2019).

Transactional leadership style and job satisfaction

When employees' interests align with the significance of their work, leaders are attentive to these interests (Purwanto *et al*., 2020). With regard to job satisfaction, the degree of satisfaction that employees experience can significantly impact the organisation's overall effectiveness (Kateb and Ramanathan, 2019). Part of the reason for this may be traced back to the organisation's leader, whose guidance helps inspire employees to be productive. Employees' job satisfaction is reduced when they have negative and unfavourable thoughts about their leaders (Wongsuwan *et al*., 2023). Transactional leaders believe that increasing employee job satisfaction with rewards will result in improved performance (Mufti *et al*., 2020). Transactional leaders use rewards and punishments to drive performance, which could make underperforming employees feel less satisfied with their jobs (Siregar *et al*., 2023) and employees' job satisfaction will only last temporarily if rewards are given only when performance is good (Alkandi *et al*., 2023). In an organisation, one of the key factors is improving job performance (Hoxha, 2019). A transactional leaders' rewards system could be created as an efficient compensation plan that boosts performance and employee satisfaction. When determining what constitutes an effective organisation, employee job satisfaction matters (Ali and Anwar, 2021). Improving employee job satisfaction is important because it increases long-term employee productivity, which is important to better organisational performance (Kurdia *et al*., 2020).

Transactional leadership and communication

Communication serves as a key component of leadership conduct and may be used to outline perceptions of a leader (Bedoya, 2021). A leader should be capable of adjusting their communication and leadership styles to accomplish the goals and objectives of the organisation (Kateb and Ramanathan, 2019). Transactional leaders believe that their relationship with their employees may be visible through honest communication and the exchange

of rewards to satisfy their employees and increase performance (Varela *et al*., 2022). However, transactional leaders should share and respond to information promptly, consider the opinions of others, and communicate clearly and concisely (Abbas and Ali, 2023). Transactional leaders place a high value on communication only because it allows them to provide feedback to their employees on whether they are getting closer to the rewards or not. If the employees' performance does not meet the pre-established benchmark, they will also face consequences (Lee *et al*., 2023). Employees may be impacted by the words and ways in which leaders communicate. As a result, leaders and employees must focus on communication to foster a positive interpersonal environment (Yue *et al*., 2023). A well-designed, implemented, and communicated reward system can create a constructive and cooperative work environment (Ali and Anwar, 2021). To avoid disappointments, transactional leaders must ensure that their staff members are aware of critical information, and in exchange, they provide them with rewards to acknowledge their hard work (Nguyen *et al*., 2021). Transactional leaders prioritise rewarding or disciplining their employees based on their performance (Lee *et al*., 2022). They encourage trust and loyalty among their employees by communicating openly and honestly. The advantages of this communication approach are that it makes clear what is expected of the leaders and their objectives for each (Rabiul *et al*., 2023). As a result, there is less uncertainty and misunderstanding and more productivity and efficiency. communication encourages a culture of honesty and responsibility (Rathi *et al*., 2021)

Communication and job satisfaction

To increase employee job satisfaction and positively impact the organisation, transactional leaders should communicate effectively, positively, and beneficially (Silva *et al*., 2023). How leaders present themselves to their employees when communicating is also important (Mehra and Nickerson, 2019). A leader's actions might positively or negatively impact employees' job satisfaction. A leader's nonverbal cues can convey more information to their employees than their spoken words (Bella, 2022). To prevent misunderstandings in the workplace, leaders should be open to discussing new ideas with their employees to establish whether they understand (Kilag *et al*., 2024). Organisations should have a platform where employees are free to express their feelings, and leaders should provide solutions to employees' grievances. When an employer tries to familiarise themselves with their employees, it leads to increased job satisfaction (Mendonça, and Kougiannou, 2023). Leaders who are not willing to communicate with their employees will not know the extent of their employees' satisfaction (Hajiali *et al*., 2022). Open communication channels help an employer to know and understand their employees better (Imam *et al*., 2023). Furthermore, employees are more satisfied with their jobs when a leader is approachable and transparent in sharing information (Rego *et al*., 2022). To further explore the objectives of this study the theories assisted and highlighted some of the important factors among leaders and employees.

The concept of leadership is a suitable focus for studying social exchange, as it involves creating a distinct social atmosphere with a particular style of distributing rewards to facilitate social, economic, and political advancements in hierarchical structures, ultimately leading to a standard mode of social engagement (Romani-Dias and Carneiro, 2020). Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a perspective from social psychology and sociology that describes how social change and stability happen through exchanges negotiated between parties. It suggests that human actions are a product of trading resources, encompassing both tangible and intangible objects (Cook and Hahn, 2021). Concerning this research, leadership style is described as the leader's behaviour pattern that aims to motivate subordinates to reach goals while also showing care for their well-being. Contemporary leadership theories highlight the importance of the interpersonal connection between leaders and their followers. Therefore, the social basis of leadership can achieve optimal explanatory capability only when SET is merged with the same rational foundation of analysis as that of social structure and leadership style (Cortez and Johnston, 2020).

Methodology

This study followed a descriptive cross-sectional research design as the population was chosen to participate in the study and was measured on all the significant variables. Descriptive cross-sectional design data is collected on a specific population at a given point in time (Maier *et al*., 2023). The study used a quantitative research technique and a questionnaire was utilised to obtain data from respondents for statistical reasons. Transactional leadership, communication, and job satisfaction questionnaires were tailored to the needs of the study. Questionnaires were disseminated online via a URL link provided by Google Forms to collect data. Online data collection provided a higher level of confidentiality. The transactional leadership style section of the questionnaire was adapted and taken from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Avolio and Bass 2004), which questions related to transactional leadership style were selected to measure it as a construct. The questionnaire

for the communication and job satisfaction portions was based on research conducted by Zhang (2018) and Moyo (2014), who measured communication and job satisfaction as a construct. The questionnaire utilised in this study comprised 60 questions separated into four sections: biographical profiling, leadership styles, job satisfaction, and communication.

Data analysis helps a researcher to determine the study's conclusions, and data is interpreted through tables and conversations (Leavy, 2017). Numeric data responses were plotted on an MS Excel spreadsheet and then analysed with statistical software for data science (STATA) version 17.0. Descriptive statistics provided structural evaluations based on the frequencies and percentages acquired from collected data, making them more interpretable (Andrews *et al.*, 2020). At the same time, inferential statistics enable researchers to test the link between variables (Doucette, 2017). The statistical data collected was subsequently analysed, and conclusions were reached. A pilot research was undertaken and 10 respondents from the public sector to pilot test the questionnaire were selected using convenience sampling to establish face validity. To ensure content validity, a statistician reviewed the questionnaire. Construct validity was established by doing a CFA on the subscales. Response reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient formulas. For this study, the population comprised (*N*=184) administrative employees within the chosen Public Sector. This study used non-probability sampling because the sample consisted of elements with the most traits, representatives, or typical attributes of the population that best served the objective of this study (Struwig and Stead, 2013). Census sampling was utilised in this study because it has a small sample size, which raises the likelihood of a high non-response rate among respondents. However, convenience sampling was utilised in the pilot project to test ten questionnaires before the main data collecting began.

The Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) Faculty of Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee accepted the study (Ref: FCRE2021/FR/04/009-MS). The gatekeeper granted authorisation to conduct the investigation. To maintain confidentiality, the information about respondents was not revealed. To maintain anonymity, the researcher stated on the informed consent form that all responses were completely anonymous and that no one outside the study panel could identify any response with the respondent's department in any discernible way. The respondents were fully aware that participation in the study was entirely voluntary. The researcher followed the ethical norms of the Faculty of Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Yeptho and Chandrasekharan, 2019).

Results and Discussion

The study applied descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were presented via graphs and tables to demonstrate percentages and frequencies. EFA and CFA were used to explain the influence of underlying factors on variables. EFA was employed to help discover the underlying factors. EFA was conducted on communication and job satisfaction to observe the contribution of each item based on communication and job satisfaction as constructs or factors. To promote the understanding of the factorability of the collected data, the KMO assisted the researcher in better understanding and evaluating the contributions of each item based on the loadings. The KMO had to be >0.50 to display the strength (shamsudin, Ali, Ali and Shabi, 2019). CFA was employed to help confirm the validity of the transactional leadership style. CFA was confirmed based on the Root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA) <0.08, Comparative fit index (CFI) >0.90, and standardised root mean squared residual (SRMR) <0.08 (Romero *et al.*, 2020).

SEM formed part of the inferential statistics used to measure the link between variables. The SEM-Covariance was set to test and confirm correlations between the transactional leadership style and job satisfaction, the transactional leadership style and communication, and communication and job satisfaction. Bootstrapping was used in this study to assess the statistical significance and accuracy of the data collected and to further determine the relationship between variables. A total of (*N*=184) respondents participated in the study, as reflected in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic profiling of respondents

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Cumulative (%)
Age			
18-21 years	0	0.00	0.00
22-29 years	36	19.57	19.57
30-39 years	72	39.13	58.70

40-49 years	50	27.17	85.87
50 years or older	26	14.13	100.00
TOTAL	**184**	**100.00**	
Highest educational qualification			
Lower than Grade 12	0	0.00	0.00
Grade 12/Matric	3	1.63	1.63
Certificate (1-year qualification)	12	6.52	8.15
Diploma (3-year qualification/N6)	59	32.07	40.22
Bachelor Degree / Advanced Diploma/B Tech	74	40.22	80.43
Honours Degree/Post Graduate Diploma	24	13.04	93.48
Master's Degree/M Tech	10	5.43	98.91
Doctoral Degree/D Tech	0	0.00	0.00
Missing Data	2	1.09	100.00
TOTAL	**184**	**100.00**	
Duration of service at current employer			
1 year to less than 5 years	62	33.70	33.70
5 years to less than 10 years	78	42.39	76.09
10 years to less than 20 years	29	15.76	91.85
20 years to less than 30 years	13	7.07	98.91
30 years or more	1	0.54	99.46
Missing Data	1	0.54	100.00
TOTAL	**184**	**100.00**	

Respondents were required to name their age in four categories: 18-21, 22-29, 30-39, 40-49, and 50 years or older. According to the data (Table 1), 19.57% of the respondents were between the ages of 22 and 29, 39.13% were between the ages of 30 and 39, 27.17% were between the ages of 40 and 49, and 14.13% were over the age of 50. There were no responses aged 18 to 21 years. The data show that most administrative workers (39.13%) were between 30 and 39. The findings show that a substantial proportion of administrative employees in the selected public sector were under 40. In addition, the participants were required to specify their highest educational qualification. The results illustrated that 90.76% (32.07%+40.22%+13.04%+5.43%) of the respondents had a post-matric qualification of 3-years or higher qualification. The findings indicated that most participants possessed a post-matric qualification of three years or more. It is possible to deduce from this that most of the respondents who had completed the questionnaire had post-secondary education and were aware of the purpose of the study and the questionnaire. The results aligned with a study conducted by Mabasa (2018), which indicates that administrative employees who work within the public sector are qualified, with the majority having a bachelor's degree. The respondents were also required to indicate their years of service with their current employer. Of interest is that 65.76% (42.39%+15.76%+7.07%+0.54%) of the respondents were employed for more than five years in the public sector. This indicates a relatively stable and experienced workforce. The duration of service appears to moderate the link between employee career adaptability and organisational commitment (Liu *et al.*, 2020).

Reliability analysis

The Cronbach's alpha(α) for the study was computed for sections B (Leadership styles), C (Job satisfaction), and D (Communication) of the questionnaire. The reliability analysis was done to evaluate the reliability of the questions in the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was utilised to establish the research questionnaire's reliability and measure the corresponding latent constructs. This was determined through calculations on the averages of all possible split-half reliability coefficients. Cronbach's alpha is acceptable if it is 0.6-0.7 and 0.8 or greater is regarded as good reliability. The reliability analysis of the study was based on three constructs: transactional leadership, job satisfaction, and communication. The Cronbach alpha for transactional leadership was (α=0.6574) and communication (α=0.6683), indicating a moderate reliability coefficient internal consistency. The Cronbach alpha for job satisfaction was 0.5290, indicating poor internal consistency. However, during the pilot study, job satisfaction was measured as reliable with a (α=0.8504).

Factor analysis

EFA was conducted on communication and job satisfaction. The questionnaire had 14 questions covering job satisfaction. EFA was conducted on job satisfaction, and three items were excluded because the absolute value was below 0.3. Seven items had positive loadings of 0.4009, 0.4510, 0.3846, 0.4799, 0.4795, 0.5419, and 0.4030 and were considered considerable. Four items of values, -0.3394, -0.5609, -0.05380, and -0.3456, had negative loadings indicating low contributions but correlated. These questions illustrated a low link and a negative impact. These item loadings were low, which indicates that there was no significant strength based on the factor loadings. The questionnaire had nine questions covering communication. EFA was conducted on communication, and one item was excluded because the absolute value was below 0.3. The contribution of item loadings in this factor was considered considerable, with the highest positive loading of 0.6739. The other item loadings were 0.5808, 0.3527, 0.5010, 0.5794, 0.6048, 0.5895 and 0.4775. Significantly, no questions had negative loadings for communication. From the factor analysis with Varimax, the rotation yielded the following factor analysis correlations based on the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin criterion.

Table 2: Varimax rotation correlations

Sections	Factors	Variance	Difference	Proportion	Cumulative	Overall KMO
Job satisfaction	Factor 1	2.27179	0	0.1623	0.1623	0.5962
Communication	Factor 1	2.51947	0	0.2799	0.2799	0.5990

The results of the factor analysis correlations of this study were restricted to one factor per variable due to the small sample size. The findings of a Varimax orthogonal rotation factor analysis on job satisfaction showed one factor that accounted for 16% of the overall variation, and the KMO measures resulted in an acceptable sampling adequacy of 0.5962. The findings of a Varimax orthogonal rotation factor analysis on communication showed one factor with a total of 27% variation with an overall KMO of 0.5990, regarded as acceptable.

To further analyse the data, CFA was employed to test and confirm the validity of the questionnaire on transactional leadership style. According to Priharsari *et al.* (2020), validity can be confirmed only if the Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is below 0.08, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) is above 0.90, and the Standardised Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR) is below 0.08. Table 3 indicates the fit statistic value description in the CFA results on transactional leadership style. Both the RMSEA (0.051) and SRMR (0.065) showed an excellent fit, which confirms the validity of transactional leadership questions.

Table 3: Fit statistic value on transactional leadership style

RMSEA	0.051
CFI	0.835
SRMR	0.065

To further confirm the relationship between variables in this study, the SEM-covariance analysis was conducted.

SEM-covariance

The SEM-covariation was used to understand link patterns between transactional leadership, job satisfaction, and communication. With the SEM analysis, path coefficients with absolute values of less than 0.10 have a small effect, values around 0.30 have a medium effect, and those greater than 0.50 greatly affect the correlation that may exist among variables (Murray *et al.*, 2019). The P-value should be <0.05 to confirm the significance of the relationship. The SEM process contains individual constructs, and all variables are presented. It also contains the load and error terms of the CFA variables. SEM-covariance in this study was employed to examine the relationship between:

Transactional leadership style and employee job satisfaction: The SEM loadings comprised 13 items on transactional leadership and 11 on job satisfaction. SEM results indicate a coefficient value of 0.65 (strong effect), displaying a positive influence, and -0.57 (medium effect), displaying a negative influence on transactional leadership. The SEM results indicate a coefficient value of 0.50 (medium effect) on job satisfaction, which displays a positive influence. The covariance value of 0.44 confirms a medium effect and positive relationship between transactional leadership and job satisfaction. The relationship between the two variables observed was highly significant, with a P-value of 0.00.

Transactional leadership style and communication: The SEM loadings comprised 13 items on transactional leadership and nine on communication. For transactional leadership, a -0.59 coefficient (medium effect) displays

a negative influence, whilst a 0.62 coefficient (strong effect) displays a positive influence. A 0.63 coefficient (strong effect) displays a positive influence on communication. The covariance value of 0.24 confirms a medium effect and positive relationship between transactional leadership and communication. The relationship between the two observed variables was insignificant, with a P-value of 2.35.

Communication and job satisfaction: The SEM loadings consisted of 14 job satisfaction items and nine communication items. Items for job satisfaction with the highest coefficients were a 0.46 coefficient (medium effect) and a 0.46 coefficient (medium effect), both displaying a positive influence. For communication, the highest coefficients were a 0.79 coefficient (strong effect) and a 0.73 coefficient (strong effect), both displaying a positive influence. The covariance value of -0.31 confirms a medium effect and a negative relationship between communication and job satisfaction. The relationship between the two variables observed was highly significant, with a P-value of 0.00.

Bootstrapping was used to analyse the sampling distributions of estimators to compute approximate standard errors and determine appropriate confidence intervals.

Bootstrapping Results for SEM

A weak or considerable relationship is indicated by a bootstrap indicator weight near 0, whereas a strong relationship is indicated by a weight close to +1 or -1. It does not necessarily indicate that a measurement is inaccurate if an indication of weight is insignificant. Instead, the indicator's absolute contribution to the constructs is considered. An acceptable R^2 value is 0.10, and within the range of 0 to 1 indicates a greater explanatory power. R^2 values between 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 might be considered substantial, moderate, and weak. P-values of <0.05 show statistical significance (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Table 4 presents the bootstrapping results for the SEM.

Table 4: Bootstrapping results for SEM

Paths	Bootstrap	R^2 value	P-value
Transactional Leadership Style and Employee Job Satisfaction	0.439	0.188	<0.001
Transactional Leadership Style and Communication	0.302	0.086	0.128
Communication and job satisfaction	0.426	0.177	<0.001

Finding: The bootstrapping results for the SEM show a significant relationship between transactional leadership and employee job satisfaction, with a bootstrap value of 0.439. Though the relationship was weak, indicated by the R^2 value of 0.188, the relationship was significant with a P-value of <0.001.

Finding: Transactional leadership and communication indicated a considerable relationship with a bootstrap value of 0.302. The R^2 value of 0.086 shows a weak correlation, and the P-value of 0.128 indicates no significant difference between the two variables.

Finding: Communication and job satisfaction had a bootstrap value of 0.426, which shows a considerable relationship between the two variables. The R^2 value of 0.177 shows a low correlation, and the P-value of <0.001 indicates a significant relationship between the two variables.

Leaders must adapt to a leadership style suitable for their work environment and accommodate their administrative employees. Furthermore, results revealed that the transactional leadership style has a different way of enhancing administrative employees' ability to be more innovative and devoted to their work environment. Transactional leaders believe that the needs of an organisation are more important than those of administrative employees. Leadership behaviour contributes to the job satisfaction of administrative employees. Transactional leaders contribute to the job satisfaction of administrative employees through extrinsic rewards (remuneration and bonuses). The results are in accordance with the study by Aljumah (2023) that the transactional leadership theory describes a relationship built on exchanges between leaders and followers. It emphasises task-driven actions, rewards tied to performance, and the clear communication of role expectations.

Results indicate that when administrative employees are willing to support their leaders' leading strategies and accept the characteristics of these leadership styles, leadership becomes functional. Furthermore, leadership could be more effective when there is communication. According to the findings, transactional leaders should understand that communication is important because it allows leaders to pass important information to administrative employees. Leader's leading strategies have an impact on the job satisfaction of administrative employees. How

leaders behave and conduct themselves is easily transferred to their administrative employees, positively or negatively. Additionally, these results are consistent with a study by Mustafa *et al.* (2023) that Leader-member exchange facilitates leaders in emphasising the significance of being aware of one's actions while fostering creativity. Communication plays a crucial role in helping employees understand their leaders' expectations and objectives

The Bootstrapping results, as indicated in Table 4, show that the transactional leadership style and job satisfaction had a significant relationship with a bootstrap value of 0.439. Research indicated that these two variables could have a significant relationship so that transactional leaders' rewards system could be created as an efficient compensation plan that boosts performance and employee satisfaction. The results are in accordance with the study by Shakib (2024) indicating that transactional leadership prioritises the use of rewards that are based on performance. Secondly, bootstrapping results indicated that transactional leadership style and communication had a considerable relationship with a bootstrap value of 0.302. However, the R^2 value of 0.086 shows a weak correlation, and the P-value of 0.128 indicates no significant difference between the two variables. According to the study's findings, transactional leadership and communication do not have a strong relationship. Literature has suggested that transactional leaders should share and respond to information promptly, consider the opinions of others, and communicate clearly and concisely. Lastly, the bootstrapping results further indicate that communication and job satisfaction had a considerable relationship with a bootstrap value of 0.426. Communication allows leaders to discern the importance of their employees' satisfaction, increase employee satisfaction and have a good impact on the organisation, leader's communication should be effective, positive, valuable, and beneficial.

Conclusion

While transactional leaders can be successful in the short term, their strategy frequently lacks a long-term vision. Instead, they concentrate on accomplishing short-term goals. Future advantages of transactional leaders could, nevertheless, include the ability to boost productivity, achieve goals, and maintain stability. A well-designed performance management system presents employees with clear expectations. It requires them to perform tasks aligned with those expectations. Consequently, this fosters high work engagement among employees. However, the literature has indicated that the traits that come with transactional leadership have been proven to manage employees' day-to-day performance. Employees' satisfaction has been at stake, and they are either punished or rewarded for their performance the study further concludes that a rewards system could be created as an efficient compensation plan that boosts performance and employee satisfaction. Communication has also been highlighted as an important tool towards employees and leaders understanding each other towards achieving organisational goals. These reveal that the transactional leadership style has a different way of enhancing administrative employees' ability to be more innovative and devoted to their work environment. The study aimed to determine the link between transactional leadership style, job satisfaction, and communication among administrative employees in the public sector. Research has shown that leaders depend on focused administrative employees who enjoy their work to achieve organisational goals. A healthy work environment relates to different factors of which leadership styles form part. Effective administration and leadership are important as both include the foundation of an organisation running smoothly. It may thus be concluded that there are factors and certain characteristics that accompany leadership styles, which administrative employees may not appreciate, affecting job satisfaction. Effective communication allows leaders and executive employees to know and understand each other better. Additionally, honest communication and keeping administrative employees informed about departmental matters contribute to job satisfaction. The results of this study further showed a significant relationship between transactional leadership and job satisfaction. However, the relationship between transactional leadership and communication was not significantly effective, with a P-value above 0.05.

Management in the public sector should ensure that staff understand the qualities associated with various leadership styles. The study is intended to contribute to the understanding of transactional leadership style, which has been proven to impact employee work satisfaction significantly. Communication is one of the features that might serve as a link between transactional leadership style and employee work satisfaction. The study will help individuals better understand the relationship between transactional leadership styles, job satisfaction, and communication. The study's findings revealed a strong association between transactional leadership and employee work happiness, a substantial but negligible relationship between transactional leadership and communication, and a meaningful relationship between communication and job satisfaction. The findings of this study indicate that

excellent communication is essential for connecting transactional leadership and job happiness. Leaders who communicate well with their teams are likelier to foster a healthy work environment and boost job satisfaction. Due to their demanding leadership style, transactional leaders should prioritise communication to ensure that staff completely grasp what is expected of them to avoid penalties and unpleasantness.

The following recommendations are made based on the study results:

- Leaders should obtain the necessary knowledge to understand the link between transactional leadership styles, communication and job satisfaction of administrative employees to benefit the organisation in the future run.
- Leaders should be able to understand the needs of their administrative employees as individuals and as a team, as this will enable them to have appropriate knowledge of the employees and encourage team engagement.
- Leaders should note that whenever administrative employees are given a platform to express their feelings or ideas, this will add to their job satisfaction and encourage an innovative mindset to benefit the public sector.
- Appropriate communication channels should be in place. The communication process should be transparent, with clear objectives set for administrative employees to avoid confusion. Communication may be more effective through strategic meetings where leaders meet with their administrative employees to look deeply into challenges and plan for the future.
- Communication should be practised in the form of feedback during meetings. Feedback will enable all parties to understand if clarification is required for change and help to avoid poor team engagement.

Declarations

Interdisciplinary Scope: The article demonstrates an interdisciplinary approach by integrating insights from leadership theories, communication studies, psychology, human resource management, public administration, sociology, economics, and development studies to explore how transactional leadership, communication, and job satisfaction interrelate in the South African public sector

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