
ANALYZING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLES AND TEACHERS' JOB PERFORMANCE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR UNIVERSITIES IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how the leadership styles of Heads of Departments (HODs) influence teachers' job performance in public and private universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, highlighting the vital role HODs play in shaping effective educational environments. It compares how these leadership approaches affect teachers' motivation and performance across the two sectors. The research adopted a quantitative approach, focusing on 113 HODs and 995 teaching staff from four universities in District Peshawar. Using proportionate stratified random sampling, a sample of 88 HODs and 278 teachers was selected. Leadership styles were measured with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire by Bass and Avolio (1995), and teachers' job performance was evaluated using a custom-designed questionnaire. Data analysis was conducted using statistical software. The findings reveal that transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles have no significant impact on teachers' job performance in either public or private universities. In public universities, all three styles showed very weak negative connections to performance, suggesting that bureaucratic structures or limited resources may overshadow leadership influence. In private universities, transformational and transactional styles had weak negative connections, while laissez-faire leadership showed a slight positive but insignificant link, indicating that teacher autonomy or market-driven factors may be more influential. These results challenge the assumption that leadership styles are central to teacher effectiveness, pointing instead to the importance of institutional support, professional development, and addressing regional challenges such as funding shortages and cultural factors. To enhance teacher performance, universities and policymakers are recommended to create a supportive environment by improving resources, offering tailored professional development, encouraging teacher autonomy, fostering a collaborative work culture, and tackling regional issues, while promoting further research into the socio-cultural and institutional factors that drive teacher success in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's universities.

KEYWORDS: leadership style job performance professional development policyresources teacher success

INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational outcomes, particularly in educational institutions where the performance of teachers directly influences the quality of education and student success (Northouse, 2019). In the context of higher education, leadership styles adopted by university administrators can significantly impact teachers' job performance, motivation, and overall satisfaction (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan, hosts a diverse range of public and private sector universities, each characterized by distinct administrative structures and leadership approaches. These differences provide a unique opportunity to explore how varying leadership styles affect teachers' job performance in these two sectors.

The objective of this study is to analyze the relationship between leadership styles and teachers' job performance at the university level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Leadership styles, such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-

faire, have been widely studied for their influence on employee productivity and organizational effectiveness (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Transformational leadership, which emphasizes inspiration and motivation, has been shown to enhance employee performance by fostering a sense of purpose and commitment (Burns, 1978). In contrast, transactional leadership focuses on structured tasks and rewards, while laissez-faire leadership adopts a hands-off approach, often leading to varying outcomes in employee performance (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). However, the specific impact of these leadership styles on teachers in the context of public and private universities in KP remains underexplored. Public universities, often governed by bureaucratic structures, may exhibit different leadership dynamics compared to private universities, which are typically more flexible and market-driven (Khan & Nawaz, 2016). Leader deeply influences the performance of followers, where the leader is co-operative, elective, and democratic and has sympathize heart, he/she can positively affect the subordinate. In university setting the departments run under HODS, who guide and lead other teachers. Now every leader has a unique approach as he/she follows different style of leadership and adhere different philosophy. Therefore, the leadership style is pivotal in persuading teacher role and stimulating learning environment. The leadership style is a double edge sword which either positively or negatively affect the performance of subordinate teaching staff. Moreover, there is also a huge difference in organization framework resource's performance in public and private universities. Even though a lot of study has been done on leadership and how it affects teachers' performance, less research, nevertheless, has emphasized the relative impact of leadership and how it affects teachers' performance in the public and private sectors. This study aims to close the gap in the literature that currently exists.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to Leadership Styles

Leadership styles represent distinct patterns of behavior that leaders exhibit when influencing, motivating, and directing their followers toward organizational goals (Northouse, 2022). In educational settings, leadership styles adopted by university administrators play a crucial role in shaping teachers' attitudes, behaviors, and performance outcomes. The study of leadership styles has evolved significantly, with contemporary research emphasizing context-specific applications, particularly in higher education institutions (Yukl, 2013). This literature review examines the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence linking leadership styles to teachers' job performance, with a focus on public and private sector universities.

Theoretical Framework of Leadership Styles

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in the Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM), which encompasses transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leadership, characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, has been widely recognized for its positive impact on employee performance (Avolio et al., 2009). Transactional leadership emphasizes contingent rewards and management by-exception, focusing on clear structures and performance-based incentives (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Laissez-faire leadership represents a passive, hands-off approach where leaders avoid decision-making and responsibility (Eagly et al., 2003). Recent meta-analyses confirm the relative efficacy of these styles, with transformational leadership demonstrating the strongest positive correlation with follower performance ($r = .44$), followed by transactional leadership ($r = .30$), while laissez-faire leadership shows a negative relationship ($r = -.24$) (Montano et al., 2017).

Leadership Styles and Teachers' Job Performance

Transformational Leadership and Job Performance

Transformational leadership has consistently emerged as the most effective style for enhancing teachers' job performance in higher education. A study conducted in Pakistani universities found that transformational leadership positively predicts teachers' task performance ($\beta = .42, p < .01$) and contextual performance ($\beta = .38, p < .01$) through increased organizational commitment (Iqbal et al., 2021). Similarly, research in Turkish universities revealed that transformational leadership explains 36% of variance in faculty performance, mediated by psychological empowerment (Afsar et al., 2022).

The mechanism through which transformational leadership influences performance involves fostering intrinsic motivation and creating a shared vision. Teachers under transformational leaders report higher levels of job satisfaction ($r = .52$) and organizational citizenship behavior ($r = .48$), both of which contribute to superior job performance (Nguni et al., 2023).

Transactional Leadership and Job Performance

Transactional leadership produces moderate positive effects on teachers' job performance, particularly in structured academic environments. A comparative study of public and private universities in India found transactional leadership to be more prevalent in public institutions ($M = 3.45$) and significantly correlated with core teaching performance (r

= .35, $p < .01$) (Sharma & Singh, 2020). However, its impact is limited by its focus on extrinsic rewards rather than intrinsic motivation (Piccolo et al., 2012).

Recent research suggests that transactional leadership is particularly effective for routine teaching tasks and compliance-based performance but less effective for innovative teaching practices (Hussain et al., 2024). In the Pakistani context, transactional leadership explained 28% of variance in teachers' research output in public universities (Khan et al., 2023).

Laissez-faire Leadership and Job Performance

Laissez-faire leadership consistently demonstrates negative relationships with job performance across educational contexts. A longitudinal study in Malaysian universities found that laissez-faire leadership predicts decreased teaching effectiveness ($\beta = -.31$, $p < .001$) and higher turnover intentions ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$) (Yukl & Mahsud, 2021). In South Asian higher education, laissez-faire leadership was associated with 22% lower performance ratings among faculty members ($r = -.47$) (Rahman & Karim, 2022).

Comparative Analysis: Public vs. Private Universities

Leadership Styles in Public Sector Universities

Public sector universities in Pakistan, characterized by bureaucratic structures and government oversight, predominantly exhibit transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles. A recent survey of 450 faculty members in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa public universities revealed that 62% of administrators practiced transactional leadership, while 18% exhibited laissez-faire tendencies (Hadi et al., 2024). This leadership configuration correlates with moderate job performance levels ($M = 3.2/5$) but lower innovation and research productivity.

The bureaucratic nature of public universities limits transformational leadership practices, as administrative decisions are constrained by regulatory frameworks (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2023). Consequently, teachers in public institutions report lower levels of motivation and creativity compared to their private sector counterparts.

Leadership Styles in Private Sector Universities

Private universities in Pakistan demonstrate greater flexibility in leadership practices, with transformational leadership being more prevalent (48% of administrators) (Sajid & Khan, 2023). This leadership approach aligns with the market-driven nature of private institutions, where performance is tied to institutional reputation and student enrollment. Research indicates that teachers in private universities exhibit 24% higher job performance scores ($M = 4.1/5$) under transformational leadership (Malik et al., 2024).

The autonomy enjoyed by private university leaders enables them to implement innovative leadership practices, including individualized coaching and performance-based incentives, which enhance teacher effectiveness (Zafar & Arshad, 2022).

Contextual Factors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's higher education landscape presents unique challenges that moderate the leadership-performance relationship. Public universities in the region face resource constraints, political interference, and infrastructural limitations, which amplify the negative effects of laissez-faire leadership (Provincial Higher Education Commission KP, 2023). Conversely, private universities benefit from international partnerships and corporate funding, enabling more dynamic leadership practices (HEC Pakistan, 2024).

Cultural factors specific to Pashtun society, including hierarchical respect structures and collectivist values, may enhance the effectiveness of transformational leadership while mitigating some negative effects of transactional approaches (Shah et al., 2023).

Objective

1. To analyze the relationship between leadership style and job performance of teacher at university level

Hypothesis

Ho 1 There is no relationship between leadership style and job performance of teacher at university level

Nature of the study

The researcher applied quantitative approach in this study. Which provide the insight to examine the effect of leadership style on the job performance of teachers and to compare different leadership styles at public and private sector universities.

Population and Sample of the study

The population for this study comprised all Heads of Departments (HODs) from two public sector universities (Islamia College Peshawar and the University of Peshawar) and two private sector universities (Qurtuba University and Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology), totaling 113 HODs. Additionally, all faculty members employed

in the departments of these four universities formed part of the population, numbering 995 in total, as reported on the universities' official websites. Given the diverse composition of these populations across the four institutions, a proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to determine the sample size, ensuring statistical reliability and representativeness. The overall sample size was calculated using the Raosoft online sample size calculator. For the 113 HODs, this yielded a sample of 88; for the 995 faculty members, it yielded a sample of 274. To allocate the sample proportionally to each stratum (i.e., university), the standard formula for proportionate stratified random sampling was applied: $n_h = \frac{N_h}{N} \times n$, where n_h is the sample size for stratum h , N_h is the population size of stratum h , N is the total population size, and n is the total sample size.

Tool of data collection

To assess leadership style, Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass designed the Multifactor Questionnaire for Leadership (MLQ) in 1995. One of the most popular tools for evaluating leadership styles is the MLQ, which is trustworthy and valid for usage in a variety of educational and corporate contexts. It assesses laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational leadership philosophies. To gauge teacher's effectiveness on the job, the researcher used a self-developed questionnaire to assess various dimensions of teacher's performance, mainly focusing on instructional quality, research productivity, classroom management, student development, professional development and interpersonal skills.

Data analysis

Data was analyzed using inferential statistics (Pearson correlation).

Relationship between leadership styles and job performance in public sector universities

Correlations			
			Job Performance
Transactional	Pearson Correlation		-.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.88
	N		61

Table presents the results of a Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between transactional leadership and teachers' job performance in public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The analysis reveals a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.020 ($N = 61$, $p = 0.88$, two-tailed). The p-value (0.88) exceeds the significance level of 0.05, indicating no statistically significant correlation between transactional leadership and teachers' job performance. The correlation coefficient suggests a very weak negative relationship, but this is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant correlation between transactional leadership and teachers' job performance in public sector universities in KP," So the null hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship between leadership styles and job performance in public sector universities

Correlations			
			Transformational
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation		-.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.62
	N		61

Table presents the results of a Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' job performance in public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The analysis reveals a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.065 ($N = 60$, $p = 0.62$, two-tailed). The p-value (0.62) exceeds the significance level of 0.05, indicating no statistically significant correlation between transformational leadership and teachers' job performance. The correlation coefficient suggests a very weak negative relationship, but this is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant correlation between transformational leadership and teachers' job performance in public sector universities in KP," so the null hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship between leadership styles and job performance in public sector universities

Correlations			
			Laissez faire
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation		-.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.55
	N		61

Table presents the results of a Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and teachers' job performance in public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The analysis reveals a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.078 ($N = 61$, $p = 0.55$, two-tailed). The p-value (0.55) exceeds the significance level of 0.05, indicating no statistically significant correlation between laissez-faire leadership and teachers' job performance. The correlation coefficient suggests a very weak negative relationship, but this is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant correlation between laissez-faire leadership and teachers' job performance in public sector universities in KP," so the null hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship between leadership styles and job performance in private sector universities

Correlations		Job Performance	
Transactional	Pearson Correlation		-.166
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.41
	N		27

Table presents the results of a Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between transactional leadership and teachers' job performance in private sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The analysis reveals a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.166 ($N = 27$, $p = 0.41$, two-tailed). The p-value (0.41) exceeds the significance level of 0.05, indicating no statistically significant correlation between transactional leadership and teachers' job performance. The correlation coefficient suggests a weak negative relationship, but this is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant correlation between transactional leadership and teachers' job performance in private sector universities in KP," therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship between leadership styles and job performance in private sector universities

Correlations		Transformational	
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation		-.018
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.93
	N		27

Table presents the results of a Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' job performance in private sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The analysis reveals a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.018 ($N = 27$, $p = 0.93$, two-tailed). The p-value (0.93) exceeds the significance level of 0.05, indicating no statistically significant correlation between transformational leadership and teachers' job performance. The correlation coefficient suggests a very weak negative relationship, but this is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant correlation between transformational leadership and teachers' job performance in private sector universities in KP," thus the null hypothesis is accepted.

Relationship between leadership styles and job performance in private sector universities

Correlations		Laissez faire	
Job Performance	Pearson Correlation		.230
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.25
	N		27

Table presents the results of a Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between laissez-faire leadership and teachers' job performance in private sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The analysis reveals a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.230 ($N = 27$, $p = 0.25$, two-tailed). The p-value (0.25) exceeds the significance level of 0.05, indicating no statistically significant correlation between laissez-faire leadership and teachers' job performance. The correlation coefficient suggests a weak positive relationship, but this is not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "There is no significant correlation between laissez-faire leadership and teachers' job performance in private sector universities in KP," therefore the null hypothesis is accepted.

FINDINGS

- Transactional leadership has no significant correlation with teachers' job performance in KP public universities, showing a statistically insignificant, very weak negative relationship.
- Transformational leadership has no significant correlation with teachers' job performance in KP public universities, exhibiting a statistically insignificant, very weak negative relationship.

- Laissez-faire leadership has no significant correlation with teachers' job performance in KP public universities, showing a statistically insignificant, very weak negative relationship.
- Transactional leadership has no significant correlation with teachers' job performance in KP private universities, showing a statistically insignificant, weak negative relationship.
- Transformational leadership has no significant correlation with teachers' job performance in KP private universities, showing a statistically insignificant, very weak negative relationship.
- Laissez-faire leadership has no significant correlation with teachers' job performance in KP private universities, showing a statistically insignificant, weak positive relationship.

CONCLUSION

This study, using Pearson correlation tests, explored how transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles affect teachers' job performance in public and private universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, uncovering a surprising result, none of these leadership styles significantly influence how well teachers do their jobs. In public universities, the tests showed very weak, statistically insignificant negative connections between transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership and teachers' performance, suggesting that factors like bureaucratic hurdles or limited resources may matter more than leadership. Likewise, in private universities, transformational and transactional leadership had weak, insignificant negative links to performance, while laissez-faire leadership showed a slight, statistically insignificant positive connection, hinting that teacher autonomy or market-driven pressures might play a bigger role. These findings challenge the assumption that leadership styles are key to teacher effectiveness and point to the importance of other factors, such as institutional support, professional development, or regional challenges like funding shortages and cultural expectations. For university leaders and policymakers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, this study is a call to focus on creating environments that empower teachers to thrive, benefiting students and the broader community, while encouraging further research into what truly shapes teacher performance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, which utilized Pearson correlation tests and revealed no significant impact of transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire leadership styles on teachers' job performance in public and private universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance teacher effectiveness: Policymakers should tackle regional issues like funding shortages by advocating for increased budgets for public universities and fostering public-private partnerships to enhance resources, which may have a stronger influence on teacher performance than leadership alone.

Private universities should leverage the slight positive correlation observed with laissez-faire leadership by encouraging teacher autonomy through flexible curricula and decision-making opportunities, allowing faculty to innovate and take ownership of their teaching practices.

University administrators should focus on creating a collaborative and motivating work culture that addresses cultural expectations and supports work-life balance, as these factors may play a larger role in teacher effectiveness than specific leadership approaches.

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