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School Principals' Leadership Styles and Teachers' Performance in Government and Private Higher Secondary Schools: A Quantitative Study

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ABSTRACT

School leadership plays a key role in influencing professionals' performance, relationships and teaching methods within a school setting. Principals set standards, delegate tasks, provide communication channels and create an environment for teachers. This study investigates the relationship between three styles of leadership (democratic, autocratic and laissez faire) by principals and teacher performance within government and private higher secondary schools. A quantitative cross-sectional correlational design was used to investigate the relationship between the variables. Pearson correlations and multiple regression were used. From the correlation output, it can be seen that there was a weak negative non-significant relationship between democratic leadership and teacher performance (\ (r=-.064, \ p=.370\)). Autocratic leadership had a positive relationship (\ (r=.210, \ p=.003\)). Laissez-faire leadership had a moderate positive relationship with teacher performance (\ (r=.438, \ p<.001\)). The regression model was statistically significant (\(F (3,192) =19.016, \ p<.001\)) and explained 22.9% of variance in teacher performance(\(R^2=.229\); adjusted \(R^2=.217\)). The adjusted regression model showed positive coefficients for autocratic and laissez-faire leadership. However, the democratic leadership variable had a negative coefficient. This suggests that there could be different relationships between leadership styles and teacher performance. However, the results must be treated with caution as there are varying sample sizes and the regression coefficient for democratic leadership is opposite to the zero-order

correlation. This paper highlights the importance of contextual leadership styles, transparency and further research using validated samples and instruments.

***Keywords**: School Leadership, Democratic Leadership, Autocratic Leadership, Laissez-Faire Leadership, Teacher Performance, Higher Secondary Education, Pakistan*

1. Introduction

School leadership plays an important role in educational administration. School principals have many responsibilities and their leadership can have an impact on teachers' motivation, teacher relationships and teaching methods. They will provide administrative support, enable communication among teachers, monitor teaching activity and support a productive environment. Effective leadership can be achieved through providing a vision and encouraging involvement. School principals can also provide professional support and overcome any challenges within the school. Successful school leadership can lead to conditions associated with improvement (Leithwood et al., 2020). This demonstrates how leadership should be viewed in relation to the organisational structure. There are three common school leadership styles; democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire. Democratic leadership encourages involvement, consultation and shared decision making. Autocratic places emphasis on decision making with set rules and guidance. Laissez-faire provides teachers with a large amount of autonomy but can be effective if guidance and accountability are provided. Each leadership style can have varying impacts depending on the situation. For example, autocratic leadership may be beneficial when the school principal needs to make quick decisions to deal with an urgent disciplinary issue. Whereas democratic leadership may be useful when creating improvement plans. Laissez-faire can give teachers autonomy to be more proactive but there may be a lack of oversight causing confusion around the school's responsibilities. Research has been carried out within Pakistan. Parveen et al. (2022) looked to investigate the relationship between the leadership styles of school principals and teacher job performance within public secondary schools in Faisalabad. Correlational research was carried out with the Autocratic, Democratic and Laissez-Faire styles investigated. Different relationships were found. This demonstrates how each leadership style should be looked at individually to determine their impact. Maqbool et al. (2024) looked to investigate how leadership styles and sustained academic performance relate to high school teachers in various regions within Multan, Punjab. Quantitative research was carried out with 358 teachers and educators. This again shows how leadership styles are still an important area to look at within the education sector in Punjab. However, academic performance should be viewed as a separate outcome. Government and private higher secondary schools may have different administrative structures, resources, reporting systems, expectations and staff management. Therefore, investigating leadership styles within government and private schools is important. This study looks to investigate how the Democratic, Autocratic and Laissez-Faire leadership styles relate to teacher performance within government and private higher secondary schools. This will contribute to understanding how these leadership styles relate and what implications this can have on school leadership.

1.1 Problem statement

Teacher performance can be impacted by a variety of factors such as teacher expertise, resources available, workload, motivation, school culture and administrative support. The leadership style provided by the school principal can have a large impact on how communication, decision making, monitoring and responsibilities are

managed. However, how effective each leadership style is can depend on how it is applied. For example, an Autocratic leadership style can provide clarity but may not allow much involvement. A Democratic leadership style can help with consultation but may not be as effective when decisions need to be made quickly. A Laissez-Faire leadership style can provide autonomy to experienced teachers but can become an issue when clear guidance is needed. The problem within this research is to investigate how the three leadership styles relate to teacher performance within government and private higher secondary schools. The provided statistical results have been used to determine the associations and what implications this can have on school leadership.

1.2 Research objectives

1. Investigate the relationship between the Democratic leadership style and teacher performance.
2. Determine how the Autocratic leadership style relates to teacher performance.
3. Investigate how the Laissez-Faire leadership style relates to teacher performance.
4. Investigate how the three leadership styles together can predict teacher performance.
5. Provide recommendations to improve school leadership and teacher professional performance within government and private higher secondary schools.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of School Leadership

School leadership refers to the process of providing direction, influencing staff, and ensuring the school functions effectively to achieve educational goals. This can involve communication with teachers, assigning roles, monitoring teaching, managing school resources, overcoming issues within the workplace and providing support for professional development. Effective leadership should be considered in relation to the school's goals and context. Principals will need to strike a balance between the administrative role and building trust. They will also need to balance accountability and autonomy and ensure the school meets standards whilst also considering individual teacher needs. An effective framework can be seen within Leithwood et al. (2020).

2.2 Democratic Leadership

Democratic leadership involves seeking consultation, shared decision making, communication and involvement from staff. A principal using a Democratic leadership style may seek teachers' opinions when creating school plans, organising academic activities, overcoming departmental issues and implementing changes to teaching. This can provide teachers with opportunities to utilise their professional expertise and feel responsible for decisions being made. However, it can also improve communication between teachers and administration if decisions are being made that affect their teaching and workload. However, this does not mean all decisions will be made after lengthy consultation. The principal will still have responsibility for accountability within the school and may need to make decisions quickly. The value of this leadership style can depend on how much genuine involvement there is.

2.3 Autocratic Leadership

Autocratic leadership involves centralised leadership, direct monitoring, clear instructions and little involvement from subordinates. Within schools this may involve a principal directly assigning roles, enforcing rules and having close monitoring of teachers. This can be beneficial when roles are unclear, quick decisions are needed and ensuring compliance

with essential processes. Clear expectations can help teachers know what is expected of them. However, too much centralisation can cause a lack of autonomy and prevent teachers from providing ideas. If teachers feel they are being unfairly monitored this can have a negative effect on relationships and willingness to get involved in school improvements. Parveen et al. (2022) looked to investigate how Autocratic leadership styles and other styles relate to teacher job performance within public secondary schools in Faisalabad. This can be an important consideration within the education sector in Pakistan. However, this should not be assumed to be the same for the sample within this study or within private higher secondary schools.

2.4 Laissez-Faire Leadership

Laissez-Faire leadership involves less direct leadership and more autonomy for staff. Teachers may have autonomy over how they run their classes, choose the best teaching strategies and manage their professional development. This can be valuable if teachers have the correct expertise, knowledge of the school's expectations and can manage their roles. The principal may provide general direction but allow teachers to make professional judgements. However, this should not be confused with having no leadership. If teachers are not receiving enough guidance, feedback or coordination this could cause confusion around priorities and accountability. The impact this can have will depend on the experience of the teachers, clarity of processes within the school and appropriate support. Parveen et al. (2022) included Laissez-Faire leadership within their research. Maqbool et al. (2024) also looked to investigate how the three leadership styles relate to sustained academic performance within high schools. This shows how important it is to continue to investigate these leadership styles within education institutions in Pakistan.

2.5 Concept of Teacher Performance

Teacher performance refers to how well teachers perform their professional roles within the school. This can include creating lesson plans, teaching, managing classes, assessing students, providing feedback, keeping records, collaborating with professionals and meeting appropriate educational requirements. This is a complex concept. One teacher may have strong subject knowledge but require further support with class management. Another teacher may create effective lesson plans but require further development with assessment. Therefore, a good measure of teacher performance should use clear indicators and an appropriate measuring tool. Teacher performance is the dependent variable within this study relating to the three leadership styles. The exact aspects and how they are scored should be reported based on the questionnaire used.

2.6 Relationship between Leadership Styles and Teacher Performance

Leadership can be related to teacher performance through clarity of instructions, resources, communication with management, autonomy, feedback, recognition and involvement in decisions. Democratic leadership can help teacher performance if consultation improves commitment and issues are overcome. Autocratic leadership can be related to teacher performance if there is clarity due to direct monitoring and clear expectations. However, too much control can cause issues. Laissez-Faire can help experienced teachers with autonomy but may not be the best choice if regular coordination and guidance is required. Evidence should be interpreted with consideration to the context. A positive statistical relationship does

not indicate that the leadership style will cause improved performance. A relationship found within one sector may not be the same within another.

2.7 Gap in Research

Research has been carried out looking at leadership styles and teacher performance within schools in Pakistan. This has been carried out within Faisalabad and Multan. This study looks to investigate the provided statistical relationships within a proposed sample of government and private higher secondary schools.

The aim of this study is to investigate the three leadership styles together to determine how they relate to teacher performance. This can provide insight into how the leadership styles correlate simply and how they relate with adjusted regression coefficients. Comparing the two sectors would be an added benefit if it can be identified that data has been collected from government and private schools. However, this cannot be claimed as the current statistics do not show whether there is a difference.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables
Leadership styles of Principal
Democratic
Autocratic
Laissez-Faire
Dependent Variable
Teacher performance

It is proposed that each leadership style may relate to teacher performance. The three leadership styles may also jointly explain variation within teacher performance. This does not indicate causality.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Approach & Design

This research uses a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional correlational design. Using quantitative research means the relationships between variables can be analysed using numerical data and statistical techniques. Cross-sectional means the variables were analysed at one point in time. Correlational analysis was used to determine the direction and strength of relationships between variables. Multiple regression was used to determine how each leadership style uniquely relates to teacher performance whilst controlling for the other two leadership styles. As this was a correlational design the results should be described as associations or statistically predicted.

3.2 Population & Context

The target population for this research are teachers and principals working within government and private higher secondary schools within the chosen area of Pakistan. This research looks to investigate the relationship between the leadership styles of principals and teacher professional performance. The area and schools should be confirmed before submitting. If data was only collected from Faisalabad this should be clearly stated within the population and title. If data was collected from multiple districts this should be stated along with the sampling frame.

3.3 Sample & Sampling Technique

The sample size was approximately 200. This included teachers and principals from government and private higher secondary schools. The exact number of people invited to take part, completed questionnaires, valid responses and cases used within each analysis should be confirmed from the original dataset. Some analyses used 201 respondents based on the background information provided. The correlations and regression for teacher performance used 196 cases. These numbers have been included within the results as this is what has been provided. The sampling technique used by the researcher was Convenient sampling.

3.4 Research Tools

Three variables were analysed; Democratic leadership, Autocratic leadership and Laissez-Faire leadership. Teacher performance was the dependent variable.

Within the final manuscript details should be provided regarding the questionnaire used to measure each variable. This should include the original author, year published, number of questions, scale used, scoring system and any changes made to fit the current context. If the questionnaires have been adapted from previous research, then permission should be checked. If the questionnaire was created by the researcher, then details should be provided regarding how it was developed, expert reviewed and piloted. The exact tools used within this dataset cannot be determined. Therefore, no specific questionnaire or reliability coefficient can be assumed.

3.5 Validity & Reliability

Validity refers to whether the tool is measuring what it is trying to measure. Reliability refers to whether the measurements are consistent. If expert review was carried out then details should be provided. If a pilot study was carried out then details of the sample and findings should be provided. Internal consistency should be calculated using the actual data from the items within each scale. A reliability estimate should be provided using Cronbach's Alpha or other appropriate method. This should state the number of items and sample used. Reliability coefficients should not be copied from another study and presented as results from this research.

3.6 Data Collection

Details should be provided on how the data was collected. The final article should state when the data was collected, which schools were approached.

how many questionnaires were distributed and returned, response rate and how consent was obtained from participants. If permission was obtained from relevant educational authorities and schools then this should be stated. Participants should be given the option to take part and their answers should be kept confidential. Any ethics approval should be accurately reported including the approving body and reference number if applicable.

3.7 Data Analysis

Pearson's product-moment correlation and multiple linear regression were used to analyse the provided results. Pearson's correlation was used to determine the direction and strength of bivariate relationships between each leadership style and teacher performance. Multiple regression was used to determine how the three leadership styles relate together to teacher performance.

This can be represented using the following formula:

\ [Y=b_0+b_1X_1+b_2X_2+b_3X_3+\varepsilon \]

Where:

\(Y\) = Teacher performance

\(b_0\) = Regression intercept
\(X_1\) = Democratic leadership
\(X_2\) = Autocratic leadership
\(X_3\) = Laissez-Faire leadership
\ (b_1, b_2, b_3\) = Unstandardised regression coefficients
\(\varepsilon\) = Error
Statistical significance was determined using the p-values provided. \(p<.05\) was used as the cut off. Within the final analysis any relevant assumptions should be checked. This includes checking for linearity, independence, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity and normality of residuals.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Participants should be given the option to take part; their privacy and confidentiality should be respected. Teachers and principals should be informed about the purpose of the research, how the data will be used and their right to refuse to take part.
Only the permissions and ethical considerations that were completed should be stated within the final article. If no formal ethical approval was required then this should be justified using the relevant policy.

4.1 Correlation between leadership styles and teachers' performance

Pearson's correlation coefficients were used to examine the relationships between the three leadership styles and teacher performance. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table: 4.1

Influence of School Principals' Leadership styles on Teachers' Performance

Predictor	B	SE	B	T	P
Constant	1.566	0.235	—	6.653	< .001
Democratic Leadership Style	−0.265	0.094	−0.273	−2.829	.005
Autocratic Leadership Style	0.295	0.102	0.294	2.886	.004
Laissez-Faire Leadership Style	0.317	0.066	0.342	4.792	< .001
Model Summary					
R	.479				
R^2	.229				
Adjusted R^2	.217				
SE of the Estimate	.50415				
Model Test					
F(3, 192)	19.016				< .001

This table interpreted that democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles predict teacher's performance; a multiple regression analysis was performed. The overall regression model was statistically significant, F (3, 192) = 19.02, p < .001. The model yielded an R of .479 and an R^2 of .229, meaning that the three styles of leadership accounted for 22.9% of the variance in teacher's performance. The R^2 adjusted was .217. Results of the regression coefficients indicated that democratic leadership had a significant negative relationship with teachers' performance (β = −.273, p = .005). This was in contrast to autocratic leadership which was a significant positive predictor (β = .294, p = .004). Laissez-faire leadership also had a significant positive association with teachers' performance and was the most powerful predictor of the three styles (β = .342, p < .001). The results suggest that there were

significant differences in teachers' performances depending on their leadership style, and the greatest positive predictive effect of the model was for laissez-faire leadership

Table 4.2

Correlation of School Principals' Leadership styles on Teachers' Performance

Variable		Teachers' Performance
Democratic Leadership Style	r = 1.00 p = — N = 201	r = −.064 p = .370 N = 196
Autocratic Leadership Style	r = .708** p < .001 N = 201	r = .210** p = .003 N = 196
Laissez-Faire Leadership Style	r = .000 p = .996 N = 201	r = .438** p < .001 N = 196

The correlation analysis was used to analyze the relationship between democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership style and teacher's performance. The direction and strength of the relationship was detected using Pearson's correlation coefficient. Positive correlations show that as a person's score on one variable increase, their corresponding score on the second variable also increases, while negative correlations show that as a person's score on one variable increase, his or her score on the second variable decreases. The p-values given for each relationship should be interpreted as the level of statistical significance.

5.3 Laissez-faire leadership

This leadership style had a moderate positive correlation with teacher performance and a positive adjusted regression coefficient. It had the highest standardised regression coefficient out of all three variables in the regression model. This could mean that professional autonomy could be a positive factor in some of the schools involved. Teachers with enough knowledge, experience and confidence can be seen to want the freedom to choose what teaching methods and classroom organisation they use. However, the phrase laissez-faire leadership can be interpreted in many ways depending on the type of delegation and level of leadership that is being used. Even though there was a positive correlation in this study there was no way of knowing what type of laissez-faire leadership this was referring to. This is an important point to consider when looking at the questionnaire. If the score indicated strong professional autonomy with clear expectations and trust then this could be seen as a positive. However, if it indicates that there wasn't much guidance or decision making then the positive regression coefficient could be interpreted differently. It is important to think about what instrument was used to measure this variable. Research has been carried out in Punjab relating to laissez-faire leadership and other leadership styles (Parveen et al., 2022 in Faisalabad and Maqbool et al., 2024 in Multan). This gives some context to this study but cannot be assumed to have the same effect in this higher secondary school sample.

5.4 Combined influence of leadership styles

The regression was significant and explained 22.9% of the variance. This indicates that when looking at all three leadership styles together they were associated with a meaningful amount of the variance in teacher performance. However, most of the variance was not explained. Teacher performance can be a complex variable so could be associated

with many other variables such as professional experience, knowledge, workload, teaching resources, school culture, professional development, student characteristics and others. These variables were not included in the regression output so cannot be looked at in this study. Future research could look at adding in other variables and seeing if the relationships differ depending on the sector, experience or setting. This also shows the importance of taking care when looking at standardised regression coefficients. The highest coefficient indicates the strongest relationship when adjusting for other variables. But this doesn't show any evidence that this variable would be the best in practice.

5.5 Implications for Government and Private Higher Secondary Schools

These findings indicate that:

¬ The principals should ensure that roles and expectations are clear. Teachers should know what they are expected to do during lessons, assessments and what they are responsible for.

¬ The school leadership should encourage professional autonomy. Teachers could benefit from having a degree of freedom in their classroom but should still have proper guidance, resources and clarity.

¬ Consultation should be meaningful. If teachers are constantly not listened to then asking for their opinion is unlikely to improve the relationship. The consultation should be meaningful and appropriate.

¬ Principals should not use one leadership style in all situations. There are many demands to run a school and effective leadership may involve a balance of different leadership styles.

Overall, if possible, the research should look at Government and Private schools separately. The regression output does not include a variable to indicate the sector of the school nor compare the coefficients. Therefore, there is no way of knowing if the relationships differ.

6. Conclusion

This study explored the relationships between democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles and teacher performance in Government and Private Higher Secondary Schools. The results indicated that there was a weak negative non-significant relationship between democratic leadership and teacher performance. There was a weak positive significant relationship between Autocratic leadership and teacher performance and a moderate positive significant relationship between laissez-faire leadership and teacher performance. The multiple regression was significant and explained 22.9% of the variance. In the adjusted regression, democratic leadership had a negative coefficient whilst Autocratic and laissez-faire had positive coefficients. There was a discrepancy between the bivariate correlation and adjusted regression so this needs to be checked. The findings indicate that the relationships between the principal's leadership styles and teacher performance could be more complex than simply saying that a certain leadership style is better. The leadership styles should be considered based on how they are implemented, the needs of the teachers and the requirements of the school. The findings are correlational and the sample sizes need to be reconciled so the conclusions should be taken with caution. This study can provide a foundation for further research into school leadership and teacher performance in Pakistan.

7. Recommendations

1. Improve leadership skills. Principals should have professional development on communication, teaching leadership, staff management, conflict resolution and data driven decision-making.

2. Clear expectations. The school leadership should ensure that teachers know what they are responsible for, what they are expected to do in assessments and what their expectations are.
3. Provide appropriate autonomy. Principals should give teachers an appropriate level of autonomy when deciding how to teach. They should have clear expectations, professional support and be held accountable.
4. Increase staff involvement. The school should provide appropriate opportunities for teachers to be involved in improving the school.
5. Use data driven leadership. The leadership should consider feedback from teachers, observations, assessment data and other relevant data.
6. Compare Government and Private schools. Future research should compare Government and Private Higher Secondary Schools by ensuring they are correctly labelled and that there is an adequate sample size.
7. Improve quality of measurements. Researchers should use validated questionnaires. Reliability scores should be indicated for this data set. Clear information should be given on how each item was scored.
8. Replicate. Future research should have a larger sample size with clear information. Relevant variables should be added such as school and teacher characteristics. This will determine if the relationships remain consistent.

8. Limitations

There are several limitations to this study:
1. The design was a cross-sectional correlational study so no causality can be determined. Whilst there was a statistical relationship there is no evidence to show that the leadership styles caused any differences.
2. The sample sizes were inconsistent. Some information indicated that 201 participants were used whilst the correlations between teacher performance and the variables only used 196 cases. The sample size was supposed to be 200. This needs to be reconciled before publishing.
3. The output does not include the full questionnaire, item level data, reliability scores for this sample or detailed information on how the sample was collected. This means that the quality of the measurements cannot be fully determined.
4. The regression only explained 22.9% of the variance so most of the variance was not explained. Many variables could be influencing teacher performance which was not included in the regression.
5. There was no direct comparison between Government and Private schools. This means that it cannot be concluded that one sector has more effective leadership and higher teacher performance.
The positive regression coefficient for laissez-faire needs to be taken with caution. The questions and scoring direction has not been checked. This will depend on how the variable was operationalised.

9. Future Research

Future research could look at larger samples from multiple districts in Punjab or other Provinces in Pakistan. Researchers could directly compare Government and Private schools by including the school sector. Longitudinal research could be conducted to see if changes in leadership styles correlate with changes in teacher performance. Qualitative interviews could be carried out with

teachers and principals to gain further understanding on how consultation, management, delegation and professional autonomy are felt in schools. Further research could include other variables such as teacher motivation, job satisfaction, school culture, professional experience and resource availability. This may help to provide clarity on how leadership styles relate to professional performance. Future research should provide full descriptive statistics, correlation matrix, reliability scores, regression diagnostics, handling of missing data and confidence intervals. This would increase transparency and enable other researchers to evaluate and replicate the findings.

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