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LEADERSHIP STYLES OF SCHOOL HEADS AND OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KP, PAKISTAN

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Leadership style, Democratic leadership, Autocratic leadership, Laissez-Fair Leadership, Transformational, Transactional and Charismatic leadership, School Performance	<p>The research paper highlights effect of leadership styles of school heads on overall school performance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. In this drive, to determine connection between leadership styles & school performance, study used both qualitative & quantitative approaches. Two samples—N1 276—consisting of school heads from 276 schools and (N2 552), consisting of 552 senior school teachers participated in study using the proportionate stratified random sampling. Study explored and analyzed the relationship between the two variables, namely leadership styles of school heads and school performance. The study found that democratic, transformational, transactional and charismatic leadership styles have a positive impact on school performance with calculated values of Pearson Correlation of 0.618, 0.546, 0.422 and 0.412; while autocratic and laissez fair leadership styles were found to have negative impacts on the school performance having negative coefficients of -0.478 and -0.622. The study suggests that school heads should be educated, that training and skills can be provided to all secondary school heads, that the seminars can be regularly organised by parent department for school heads to improve capacity, and that parent Teacher Councils can be strengthened and updated to ensure parental participation in school activities.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Globally, the most vital strategy for the development of society is educating people, throughout the developing world **Aikman and Unterhalter (2005)**. Most of the studies suggest that it is the human resources of a nation and not its capital or natural resources that ultimately determine pace of economic development and welfare of the people **(Tedla, Redda & Gaikar, 2021)**. Before 19th century, investment in human capital was not considered important throughout the world **(Ferdinandi & Flora, 2023)**. The expenditures allocated for education, training and skills were

quite small and nominal. It is in this century a change occurred radically and the focus turned towards human capital. Countries began to invest and spend huge amounts on the professional education, skills trainings and technology (Maqbool, Zafeer, Zeng, Mohammad, Khassawneh & Wu, 2023). The role of education in social and economic development is quite more crucial in developing countries like Pakistan. KP, North Western province, is one of the most important strategically located province play vital role in economy of Pakistan. It covers area of 74521 sq and inhabits 26.62 million people growing at rate of 2.8% per year. Amongst 9-39 years age group, about 7 million people in KP are illiterate (less than 30% of females in this age group are literate).

The education policy of KP can be understood over its many development projects, governance structure and developments through execution of national education policy. Some prominent recent education development projects in KP are a multi-sectoral programmes financed by GIZ, CIDA, USAID, DFID, DUTCH, AUS-AID & European Union. Mustafa (2012) emphasized main issues in provincial education system and schools. These issues and challenges badly affect the quantity and quality of school education in province. The report identified some of the common challenges to education in the province are: poor quality of teaching, poor teacher attendance, harsh discipline, physical punishment in schools, lack of basic resources and learning materials in schools, poor school management, lack of support and training for heads of schools, poor physical infrastructure/environment of the learning, inadequate water and sanitation facilities, lack of community participation in schools, lack of security and boundary walls. The question is that how can these formidable challenges can be tackled to improve performance of education in province. These issues can not be resolved without reviewing the school system. Schools in the province are headed and controlled by school heads or principals. Teddla, Redda and Villas (2021) consider school head as the main controlling agent and hub of all activities undertaken in school.

The school head is a leader and administrative head that runs the school and manage affairs. The school head plays important role with the intention to make teaching and learning more effective and to give quality education to students. The head of school leads, instructs, mentors, and inspires his personnel to deliver best results possible (Nasim, Khalid, Akhtar & Farzana, 2023). For smooth functioning of school, the school head is also actively involved with parents, local elders, and the parent department. A school principal has a vast amount of duties to carry out every day. The education of a child is ultimate goal. The principal is aware that each of the aforementioned tasks is somewhat related to the academic success of the school. The concrete output that can be obtained in terms of the various performance metrics is school performance. School performance is a broad notion that encompasses all areas and is measured using many performance indicators (Warman, Poernomo, Januar & Amon, 2022). It is not just students' academic success. Only small portion of school performance is academic. Academic excellence, teacher preparation and expertise, efficient teaching and learning, equal labour distribution, a rich environment, the long-term perspective, cooperation and coordination, the supply of all the necessities and facilities, etc. are some of the leading factors that contribute to the best school performance.

The head of the school keeps the close check on all of the activities taking place there. Different participants in school education process take upon these tasks and activities. While carrying out their responsibilities at school, school leaders use several leadership styles. A leader behaviour patterns that are used to direct the actions of their followers are referred to as their leadership

style. Depending upon the personality of the leader, leadership styles vary (Munir, Sial, Faheem, Siddiqui & Asghar, 2023). The choice of leader leadership style depends on their qualifications and talents, their prior experience, environment they are operating in, and their educational level. Each type of leadership has advantages and disadvantages. There isn't an ideal leadership style. The best approach is to strengthen and effectively use the beneficial elements of a specific leadership style while overcoming its flaws. Getting people to go in correct direction, winning their commitment, and inspiring them to reach their objectives are the main goals of leadership (Adedigba & Sulaiman, 2020). To increase efficiency and effectiveness, mass education at the secondary education level, however, may need new leadership strategies. Authors of this study highlighted necessity for a two-stem sequential mixed technique and identified a research gap. They recommended that random sample be drawn from practically all of province's districts for study initial phase, using survey method. That would represent current situation throughout the province.

In sequential phase, they added, some case studies might be chosen over purposive sampling for in-depth study to go deeply into the hows and whys. This research study is an attempt to identify different leadership styles adopted by school heads and to analyse the relationship of leadership styles with school performance. How can a principal use his or her skills and talents to improve performance of school? A school principal uses many leadership styles to achieve this. Principal is aware that each of aforementioned tasks is somewhat related to the academic success of school. To determine whether leadership style is more successful in resolving said issues with education in province, it is necessary to look into relationship between leadership styles and school performance across the entire province. For smooth functioning of school, the school head is actively involved with the parents, local elders, and the parent department. Local studies on the leadership styles and school performance were conducted, for example; Yasmin, Imran and Sultana (2019), Kaleem (2021), Rasheed and Amin (2021) and Naeem, Jamal, Iqbal and Shah (2019), but all these studies have small number of samples and therefore are either insufficient or incomplete to provide deeper. Keeping in view importance and effectiveness of school head, there is a need to undertake a comprehensive and detailed study on subject in the province.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Meaning of Leadership

There are many definitions of leadership, but in its most basic form, it is capacity to persuade people to work towards common objectives. There has been lot of research done on leadership philosophies. A leader rightful authority to use human resources to improve organisation and achieve goals is known as leadership, Armstrong (2004). Although there are numerous valid definitions of leadership, the term simply refers to the capacity to persuade and inspire others to achieve goals. The terms leader and leadership are defined by Nahavandi (2009) in his book *The art and Science of Leadership*. The terms "leader" and "leadership" are distinct. The leader is someone who motivates a group of people to work together to achieve the common objective. Leadership is the skill of persuading a group of people to take action in that direction. For a team to succeed, a leader must therefore select most effective technique. Fortunately, scholars have created a variety of theories and frameworks that help us recognise and comprehend these many leadership philosophies. The primary motivating force behind the performance metrics is the school leader. The leadership style used by the schools' principal is seen to be the primary

factor in determining whether a school performs well or poorly. A dynamic leader is capable of overcoming the tough obstacles that face schools because of his or her abundant potential and abilities.

Theories of Leadership

The leadership theories that evolved during the 20th century are briefly described below. The "Great Man" Theory contends that great leaders are not created; rather, they are born with the ability to lead. It presents leaders in heroic light. Due to the predominance of male leadership during the time, particularly in the military, the epithet "Great Man" was employed. According to "trait theorists", leaders were born with specific physical and psychological features that set them apart from non-leaders. "Contingency theories" of leadership concentrate on the specific environmental factors that could influence which type of leadership is most appropriate for the certain workplace circumstance. According to Lamb (2013), not every circumstance calls for a certain leadership style. The key message of "behavioural theory" of the leadership style is that "great leaders are made, not born." This notion contends that the leadership abilities may be developed via education and practise. This theory, which is known as "style theory," contends that good leaders are not born; rather, they may be developed through the use of the teachable behaviours. According to "Participative theory", a leadership style that considers the opinions of others is optimal. It promotes group members' involvement and contributions (Lamb, 2013). According to Transactional theory, there are interactions between leaders and followers. This idea of leadership is based upon the system of rewards and penalties (Lamb, 2013). The first created and proven theory to emphasise morals and values in leadership was transformational leadership.

Leadership Styles

Based upon the above mentioned theories, various leadership styles emerged and adopted. A leadership style known as "autocratic leadership", often referred to as authoritarian leadership, is characterised by individual control over all decisions and little participation from the group. Autocratic leaders rarely take advice from their followers and frequently make decisions based on their opinions and judgements. A top-down strategy is used in the authoritarian or autocratic leadership. "Democratic leadership", often referred to as the participatory leadership or shared leadership, is a type of leadership in which group members are involved in the decision-making process. Members of the group are taken into consideration while making decisions in this leadership style. "Let them do" is the French phrase "Laissez-Faire." As the result, this kind of leadership allows for the individual decision-making by its members. Laissez-faire leadership defers to others' judgement and adopts a hands-off style of the management. It engages other individuals, which results in better decision-making and a more prosperous business. The term "transformational leadership" was initially used in the late 1970s, while Bernard M. Bass later developed it.

Positive changes can be sparked in groups under direction of transformational leaders who can inspire and encourage their followers. These leaders frequently exhibit emotional intelligence, drive, and enthusiasm. In essence, "Transactional leadership" is a form of supervision. In this, the leader rewards the employee for job well done. They might also punish you for unsuccessful outcome. A "Charismatic leader" sways others with their appeal, charmer, and communication abilities. Leaders with charisma convey their objectives and instructions in creative, emotive, and colourful ways. Relatively recent method of leadership called "transformational leadership" focuses on the ways in which leaders can influence followers to change for the better. Now the

question is which leadership style is the best. There is no one leadership style that works well in all circumstances. This theory holds that the person can be a good leader in one situation or scenario and bad leader in another situation or environment. The style that achieves the goals is thought to be the finest. Therefore, one type of leadership approach could work well in one circumstance but completely fail in another. Therefore, we draw the conclusion that the ideal form of leadership style is one that is appropriate for the given circumstance and achieves the goal.

School Performance

Effective school performance, according to [Nsbunga \(2008\)](#), is the capacity to deliver desirable educational outcomes in relation to the educational objectives. Performance in the context of education refers to teacher's capacity to impart knowledge consistently with assiduity, honesty, and regularity. The student would define performance as consistently outperforming peers in tests and group projects. Researcher does want to stress, still, that other aspects of education, such as the emotive and psychomotor domains, should also be taken into consideration when evaluating a school's performance in addition to its academic rigour. A school that possesses all three domains need to be categorically recognised as being effective and performing at a very high level. All of this is only achievable if the principal of the school concentrates on achieving excellent outcomes across board. Accordingly, one may infer from this definition that a school's success is indicator of how well it is meeting needs of its stakeholders in terms of educational results. In conclusion, a successful performance is focused on outcomes that affect social and organisational needs. Increased academic performance outcomes and utmost respect for the school's objectives are results of school head's leadership efforts. Thus, it is clear that genuine contributions from parents and community members are essential to realizing excellent school performance.

Leadership Style & School Performance

A key factor in how well school performs is school principal. According to research, leadership style, as an independent variable, has a significant influence on dependent variables including student outcomes, teacher job satisfaction, school atmosphere, school performance. Numerous research studies conducted upon relationship between leadership style and school performance. For example, [Tedla, Redda, and Vilas \(2021\)](#), [Richard and Sandada \(2022\)](#) concluded that the democratic leadership style was found to have beneficial and quite effective role as compared to autocratic and laissez-fair leadership styles that have detrimental effect on school performance. [Nsbunga \(2008\)](#) and [Grissom and Loeb \(2011\)](#) found that principals and head teachers cannot significantly raise student success unless they are well-versed in management and leadership techniques. Participation from parents and the community is just as significant as that of other stockholders. The essential role of parents and community involvement in schools' matters is that of a successful school leader in terms of a problem-solving strategy, and this is an indirect democratic approach on the part of school leaders ([Aljaradat & Zaid, 2015](#)). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, province does not contain any thorough and indepth research on the subject.

The relationship amid leadership style and academic achievement in KP government secondary schools has been the topic of some researches in some districts of the province, however there is not enough evidence to support this relationship. A local study was conducted by [Yasmin, Imran, and Sultana \(2019\)](#) on "effects of principal leadership styles on teacher's performance at

secondary schools in Dera Ismail Khan District." The province's alone district was included in this study, and teacher performance rather than school performance was dependent variable. Just two types, namely transformational (20 items) and transactional (12 items), were studied for their effects on the teachers' performance (14 items), with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 7 for both variables. Only 33 schools from district were included in the study. Due to the extremely low Regression value of 0.023, the study discovered that neither of the leadership philosophies supported the performance of the teachers. Another local study, titled "Impact of the Principal Leadership Style on School's Climate and Academic Achievements of the Students in Southern Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" by [Kaleem \(2021\)](#), was conducted. It included province's five smallest districts. Three different leadership philosophies were compared with regard to school atmosphere.

Transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership styles had alpha values of .83, .89, and .78, respectively, while their corresponding adaptation percentages were 2.4%, 67.1%, and 30.5%. However, the school climate's alpha score was 0.88. The general climate of the school was demonstrated to be greatly impacted by leadership of the principal. According to study's findings, among the three leadership philosophies, transformational leadership had the most positive effects on culture of classroom and student accomplishment. The Third local research in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's District Dir Upper was conducted on subject by [Rasheed, Amin, and Amin \(2021\)](#). The survey comprised 32 of the total 64 secondary schools. Three fundamental styles—democratic, transitional, and autocratic and their effects on students' academic success were investigated. The 3-types had consistent mean values of 4.01, 3.78, and 3.77, indicating that majority of district's principals preferred the democratic form. The democratic approach appears to have had a considerable impact on pupils' academic performance, as indicated by Pearson R value of 0.976. In this link, in this sense, the autocratic style displayed a negative association. [Naeem, Jamal, Iqbal and Shah \(2019\)](#) completed a study and included in the study seven main districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Consequently, the findings showed that, despite being more transformational than transactional, school leaders did not perform at the intended level.

The higher ratings were obtained for contingent rewards, inspiring motivation, and idealised influence, respectively. The laissez-faire leadership style was one that was least used. According to the study, school administrators favoured using charismatic (idealised) influence in their early and late years but tended to utilise contingent rewards in their middle years. The goal of the current study is to determine relationship between overall school performance in secondary KP public sector schools and the function of school head, specifically the leadership style. The principal is regarded as primary controlling authority and motivator of academic achievement. Finding out and discussing the effect of overall leadership styles on academic performance is the study's main goal. Another goal of study is to identify recurring challenges and problems that schools' leaders face and offer potential solutions. Thus, the performance of the school is negatively impacted by these issues. The school head will become more likeable and the school will become a high performing school with proper problem solving. The findings of the current study could serve as a model for principals who are vying to lead high-performing schools in their respective provinces. The aforementioned local studies left a demographic research void, and this study is comparatively thorough, encompassing all 25 populated districts in province. Therefore, the survey therefore comprised a total of 1380 male public secondary schools in the province.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are two variables in this study: school performance and leadership styles of school heads. Six of the most popular leadership philosophies, including autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transformative, transactional, and charismatic, were included in study. 30 school performance indicators were used to gauge academic performance similarly. Therefore, Pearson Correlation was utilised to determine the association between leadership styles and academic performance. Both descriptive and correlation survey techniques were used to examine relationship between school head's leadership style and academic achievement. The purpose of this research study was to ascertain the subjects' perceptions of the leadership styles of school heads. To that end, a descriptive research design was adopted. This is so that the researcher may gather and describe wide range of information about leadership style and academic success. [Best and Kahn \(2006\)](#) made the case that conditions or levels of academic performances that are present, beliefs that are held, processes that are occurring, consequences that are obvious/ trends that are emerging are all relevant to descriptive design. The goal of a correlation survey design is to demonstrate the relationship between the study's independent and dependent variables [Nsubuga \(2008\)](#). In this regard, data for this study were gathered on the dependent variable, which was the school performance, as well as independent factors, which were leadership through the various leading styles.

The Pearson correlation coefficient provides a measure of the strength of linear association between two variables [Sedhwick \(2022\)](#). Since, study required a multi-pronged approach that combines different methods that aid in triangulation in order to indicate reliability of findings, both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection & analysis were used. The term "qualitative approaches" refers to the more descriptive data management techniques that were primarily used to manage study of secondary source data and interview data, which could not solely be managed by use of quantitative techniques. The researchers combined quantitative and qualitative research techniques to examine linkages between leadership styles and school performance. The study made use of surveys, interviews, and field trips to observe in schools. The correlation amid leadership philosophies and school performance was examined using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. As result, content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data while SPSS was used for quantitative data. As per [Gay \(2012\)](#) (proportional stratified selection technique), 20% (276) of secondary schools (1380) were chosen for study. As two experienced teachers per school were also included in study, thus total, 552 SSTs and 276 head of schools were involved in study. A five-point rating scale survey questionnaire was used to conduct this investigation.

In each of sampled schools, two different questionnaire formats were created, one for school heads and the other for the teachers. Interviews with school heads were also conducted in order to fully comprehend research findings. Authentic information about students, teachers, stock, and other school facilities was also examined and gathered from the school records and other pertinent papers. The two questionnaires, for school heads and teachers, have three sections A, B and C, covering information relating to the personal background, leadership styles and school performance respectively. For validation purpose, questionnaires were presented to subject and language experts of University of Science and Technology Bannu, KP and rectified accordingly. Prior to the final administration of questionnaires to all respondents, a pilot study was carried out. The pilot study consisted of 15 respondents (5 school heads & 10 school teachers). After validation, 15 questionnaires were handed over to 5 heads of schools and 10 school teachers.

Both questionnaires consisted of items relating to leadership styles & performance indicators. The collected data from respondents were entered in SPSS for calculation of Alpha value. Alpha values for school head questionnaire and school teacher questionnaire are presented in table 1 and 2.

Table 1
School Head Questionnaire Reliability Statistics

	Items/Questions	Number	Alpha Value
Leadership Styles	36	5	0.901
Performance Indicators	30	5	0.865

Table 2
School Teacher Questionnaire Reliability Statistics

	Items/Questions	Number	Alpha Value
Leadership Styles	36	10	0.896
Performance Indicators	30	10	0.881

RESULTS OF STUDY

This part deals with data analysis and interpretation. A sample of 552 teachers and 276 school heads were selected out of 11652 secondary school teachers and 1380 school heads. The sample consisted of 20% of total population. After excluding 10 secondary school teachers and 5 school heads in connection with pilot study, the remaining 271 school heads and 542 secondary school teachers were finally included in the samples. The researcher managed for personal visits to 25 districts and as per schedule for each district. The school heads were invited to district head quarter schools in each district for combined interview session and filling up of questionnaires. The researcher met all school heads during joint interview sessions and it assured not only 100% participation and response but also school heads shared and discussed, in joint sessions, some key issues relating to schools in the province. The researcher collected all these valuable information. The data were put into SPSS version 22. Data were tabulated and interpreted as follows.

Table 3
Background information of school heads and School Teachers

No	Items	Category	School Heads		School Teachers	
			N	%	N	%
1	Age in Years	22-30	25	9.23%	68	12.54%
		31-40	55	20.23%	176	32.47%
		41-49	134	49.45%	212	39.11%
		50-Above	57	21.03%	86	15.86%
		Total	271	100.00%	542	100.00%
2	Qualification	PhD	05	2.9%	27	4.98%
		M.Phil	34	12.55%	92	16.97%
		Master	232	86.35%	325	59.96%
		Bachelor	00	00%	98	18.08%
		Total	271	100.00%	542	100.00%
		Rural	241	88.92%	482	88.92%

3	School Type	Urban	30	11.07%	60	11.07%
		Total	271	100.00%	542	100.00%
4	Experience in this School in Years	1-3	34	12.55%	42	7.74%
		4-10	155	57.20%	225	41.51%
		10-Above	82	30.26%	275	50.73%
		Total	271	100.00%	542	100.00%
5	Total Experience in Years	3-6	25	9.23%	129	23.80%
		7-10	88	32.47%	288	53.13%
		11-15	94	34.69%	110	20.29%
		15-Above	64	23.62%	15	2.76%
		Total	271	100%	542	100.00%

Table 3 shows background information of 542 school teachers and 271 school heads. Total five background variables were used including age, qualification, school type, experience in present school and in total. The maximum number of school heads (N 134) and school teachers (N 212) belong to age group of 41-49 which is maturity age. Master level education is basic requirement for both the school heads and teachers, hence most of school heads (N 232) and school teachers (N 325) belong to this level of education. The quest for the higher education is increasing among teachers and heads as shown in table. Probably it may due to the PhD and M.Phil allowances announced by the Government of Pakistan for the public sector employees. The third variable of school type shows that most of secondary schools are situated in rural areas as compared to urban areas because of the increasing rural population. The ratio of rural to urban population is increasing. The teachers who served totally 15 years or more are small in the number (N 15) because of the existing service rules for the school teachers. The service rules allow teachers for regular promotions to higher posts. All of the background information are crucial for the study and have important bearing upon the ultimate relationship of the leadership styles and school performance.

Leadership Styles

The total of six leadership styles were included and examined in the study as shown in table 4.8.

Table 4
Leadership Styles of School Heads

SN	Leadership Style	N	%	%
1	Autocratic Leadership	42	15.49	15.49
2	Democratic Leadership	93	34.32	49.81
3	Laissez-Fair Leadership	29	10.70	60.51
4	Transformational Leadership	45	16.61	77.12
5	Charismatic Leadership	42	15.49	92.61

Democratic leadership style was found to be the most popular style among school heads. Table 4 shows that, out of the total 271 school heads, 93 (34.32%) heads adopted the democratic style. Another popular style transformational leadership style (N45, 16.61%), followed by transactional (N42, 15.49%), Autocratic (N42, 15.49%), laissez-fair (N29, 10.17%) as well as charismatic (N20, 7.38%).

Relationship of Leadership Style of School heads & School Performance

The Pearson correlation coefficient between school performance and the different leadership philosophies is shown in Table 5. At 0.05 threshold of statistical significance, each coefficient was significant.

Table 5

Correlation Coefficient between Leadership Style & School Performance

Leadership Styles	N	β	School Performance
Autocratic Leadership Style	42	-0.478	Negative Relation
Democratic Leadership Style	93	0.618	Positive Relation
Laissez-fair Leadership Style	29	-0.622	Negative Relation
Transformational Leadership Style	45	0.546	Positive Relation
Transactional Leadership Style	42	0.422	Positive Relation
Charismatic Leadership Style	20	0.412	Positive Relation
Overall Principals' Leadership Styles	271	0.642	Positive Relation

Table 5 shows the relationship between leadership style and school performance. Democratic leadership was most popular among KP school heads adopted by 93 school heads with alpha value 0.618 that means positive effect on school performance. Another popular leadership style was transformational adopted by 45 school heads with 0.546 alpha value and positive effect on performance. The two styles of autocratic and laissez fair adopted by 42 and 29 school heads with minus alpha values of -0.478 and -0.622 respectively. Both these two styles are inversely related with school performance. Transactional and Charismatic leadership styles have positive relation with school performance as indicated by the positive alpha values of 0.422 and 0.412 respectively.

Table 6

Top Five School Problems with Possible Solutions

No	School Problems	N (%)	Possible Solutions
1	Administrative Interferences	N-86 (31.73%)	1. Reconciliation over Parents Teachers Council PTC. N-55/86 (63.95%) 2. Say "NO" to illegalities what consequences may be. N-31/86 (36.04%)
2	Disciplinary Issues	N-72 (26.57%)	1. Call up parents of students. N-41/72 (56.94%) 2. Minor & Major Penalties N-31/72 (43.06%)
	Cheating in Exam	N-54 (19.93%)	1. SLOs (Learning Outcome) based Exam Papers. N-28/54 (51.85%) 2. Strict Check and Supervision N-26/54 (48.15%)
4	Drop Out	N-37 (13.65%)	1. Students' problem solution in parental meetings. N-28/37 (75.67%) 2. Avoiding harsh discipline & physical punishments in schools. N-9/37 (24.32%)
5	F-Teachers' Transfers	N-22 (8.11%)	1. Report to Department and frequently ask for new teachers. N-12/22 (54.54%) 2. Make arrangements for alternate teaching N-10/22 (45.45%)
Total		N-271 (100%)	

During face to face interview sessions with the school heads, some important issues were found and discussed including the school based problems and challenges. Out of 271 school heads, 86 heads told that the administrative interference is the main problem of their schools. One head explained the issue in detail and told that sometimes influential people like politicians, village elders, union leaders and even school teachers interfere in the school administrative affairs for their vested interests. Dealing properly with such like persons is a challenge for them. A lot of time is used while dealing with them. The school heads also presented possible solutions like using Parent Teacher Council PTC in solving some chronic issues confronted to school heads. Some of them told that say “No” to these illegal demands what the consequences may be. It is suggested that such like problems may be solved with the consultation and patience. Another problem, mentioned by 72 school heads was related to discipline. They argued that discipline should be the top priority and all matters should be solved with the merit and equality. When asked about its solution they proposed parental involvement. They also suggested that minor and major penalties may be imposed on students who violated school rules or committed some kind of crimes.

Cheating in examinations is another burning problem in the present time and that needs to be solved through proper checking and supervision, they added. One head proposed SLO based question papers in examination. Therefore, drop out was another gigantic challenge for school administration. There are some psychological issues involved behind this problem and it was suggested by school heads that snags of such students need to be solved in parental meetings. Some of the school heads told that the ratio of dropout students may be decreased if we ease harsh discipline in school and completely ban physical punishments. Some of the school heads told that their school performance badly affected due to incomplete course because teachers were frequently transferred during session. They suggested that in such a situation they should be reported to high ups and till new teachers, alternate teaching arrangements be made in the school so as to complete the course well before the time. All of the above mentioned problems affect the school performance adversely and in this regard quick and appropriate solution is needed.

DISCUSSION

In light of the previous research work, the results of this study are discussed here to make clear the position of this study in existing knowledge database with respect to commonalities and differences:

Leadership Styles & Overall School Performance

Enormous research work carried out on leadership styles and school performance but in KP Province, a limited number of studies exist. It is considered that the leadership styles have an important role in the school performance. In this context, a reasonable number of studies were undertaken on school leadership styles with one or more dependent variables. The two recent studies, one in Eastern Africa by [Tedla, Redda and Vilas \(2021\)](#) and the other in the Philippines by [Richard \(2022\)](#), both examined connection between principals' leadership styles and school performance. Both came to the conclusion that principals' leadership styles do affect the school performance, either favourably or unfavourably, and that no one leadership style is always the appropriate. In contrast to autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles, which were found to have detrimental effects on school performance, democratic and situational styles were found to have useful effects. Both of these recently undertaken studies confirmed results of this study.

This study shows impact of leadership styles on school performance as depicted by Correlation (0.642).

Autocratic Leadership & School Performance

The Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.478 in table 5, which examines relationship between an authoritarian leadership style and school performance, shows that this leadership style has a negative impact on academic achievement. The study by [Leithwood \(1994\)](#) which discovered that an authoritarian leadership style hinders the academic performance, supported the study's findings.

Democratic Leadership & School Performance

The democratic leadership philosophies of school leaders are related to school performance; it was shown that these philosophies have a beneficial impact on school performance as indicated by coefficient 0.618 in table 5. [Mumbe \(1995\)](#), found that democratic styles improved school performance by encouraging the teachers to collaborate with the administrators to meet learning objectives.

Laissez-Fair Leadership & School Performance

The results of this study indicated that laissez-faire leadership styles had considerable negative impact on school performance (table 5), with regard to influence on that performance. When school administrators follow up on those they have given duties to ineffectively, performance suffers as result. They depend entirely on teachers or partners, some of whom be incompetent or lacking the necessary abilities to complete task. Others might merely dislike working without supervision. Research backed up [Katz, Maccoby, and Gurin's \(2007\)](#) earlier investigations. They discovered that groups were ineffective if leaders refrained from imposing authority over their workers.

Transformational Leadership & School Performance

Transformational leadership style produced positive impact on school performance as evident from transformational coefficient 0.546. School performance and transformational leadership style are significantly positively correlated. Evidence suggests that transformational leadership style improves academic performance by having large and progressive impact on subordinates. Early radical empirical research on transformational leaders in education contexts is provided by [Leithwood \(1994\)](#). He contends that transformational leadership is best adapted to meet the demands of schools in the 21st century and favourably influences school leadership's capacity to enable change in school restructuring programmes. And to meet the demand for performance improvement.

Transactional Leadership & School Performance

The transactional style, another novel approach to management, significantly enhanced school performance as shown by coefficient of 0.412. Findings relating transactional leadership style and academic success support those of other studies. According to Turkish study, transactional leadership style plays a big effect in how well students perform in school. Transactional leaders accomplish this by rewarding/punishing students based on their performance or proficiencies, [Sahin \(2004\)](#).

Charismatic Leadership and School Performance

Despite being very rare (7.38%), the charismatic leadership style achieved impressive academic results, as seen by the coefficient value of 0.412. These results are consistent with [Wijayanti's](#)

(2019) findings that charismatic leadership has a significant impact on performance, i.e., that if charismatic leadership is properly implemented, it will encourage an improvement in academic performance.

Comparative analysis of Present Study with Previous Studies in KP

This portion provides comparative analysis of data obtained from the empirical study and the results produced by previous studies conducted in province. Following is comparative analysis of results:

1. A local study [Yasmin, Imran and Sultana \(2019\)](#) found a negligible effect (coefficient of 0.023) of leadership styles on the teachers' performance in secondary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as compared to coefficient value of 0.642 for overall styles in the present study. However, sample of previous study was limited to just one district of the province and effect of two leadership styles was examined on teachers' performance in secondary schools.
2. Another locally conducted study [Kaleem \(2021\)](#) found out alpha values of transactional, transformational and laissez-fair leadership styles as .83, .89 and .78 respectively. The present study, however, concluded that laissez-fair leadership style with coefficient of -0.622 produced negative effect on school performance as per the results obtained in this study.
3. Third local study [Rasheed, Amin and Amin \(2021\)](#) confirmed the result of this study and both studies concluded that democratic and transformational leadership styles produced positive effect upon school performance, however autocratic style has negative in effect in study.
4. [Naem, Jamal, Iqbal and Shah \(2019\)](#) conducted local study and included in the study seven districts of the province. They concluded that transformational and transactional styles widely used in the schools and created favorable impact, however, laissez fair leadership was the least exercised style, thus confirming to results produced by present study.

CONCLUSION

This study was an attempt towards the solution of problems confronting to school heads in the secondary schools of KP. School heads, while running their schools, adopted various leadership styles to achieve desired goals. The leadership styles of school heads had profound impact upon school performance. The researcher selected 271 school heads and 542 school teachers across the province and collected data. The relation of six leadership styles of school heads with their school performances was proved significantly. Results of study were compared with previous studies particularly those conducted locally in province. Most of the results were confirmed. On the basis of the study's outcome, useful suggestions and recommendations are presented to all stakeholders in the following section. Finally, need for further research is suggested to include female schools in future research studies and produce more authentic information regarding the subject. The study found that dominant style of leadership used by the majority of school heads was democratic (34.32%), transformational (16.61%), transactional, autocratic (15.49%), laissez-fair (10.70%) and charismatic (7.38%). Results showed that charismatic was employed by most of the young age heads of 22-30 years, while autocratic style was adopted by old aged school heads of 50 and above. The democratic leadership style was practiced by school heads of lower and upper mid age group of 31-35 and 36-40 years. Similarly, most of the school heads (86.35%) were MA/M.Sc, since this qualification is minimum requirement, yet, highly qualified

(M.Phil & PhD) school heads were found belonged to democratic & transformational leadership style.

The six leadership styles of school heads were examined with reference to school performance. Overall leadership style effect on school performance was significant with coefficient value of 0.642. Leadership styles of democratic, transformational, transactional and charismatic were significantly contributed to school performance with coefficient values of 0.618, 0.546, 0.422 and 0.412 respectively. However, autocratic and laissez fair leadership styles were negatively correlated with school performance with negative alpha values of -0.478 & -0.422 respectively. The qualitative aspect of the study pointed out some challenging problems confronted to school heads while running the school affairs. The school heads, during interview sessions, told that the problems like administrative interferences, disciplinary issues, cheating in examinations, dropout and frequent teachers transfers from one school to another badly affect their school performances and a lot of their precious time and energy are wasted while solving these issues on daily basis. Another alarming complexity is that most of the parents do not take it serious to accept invitation and participate in school activities. The most dangerous challenge confronted to the school heads was that 95.57% of the school heads did not receive any specific training necessary for school heads. They told that they were appointed as teachers not heads. They were promoted to the posts of heads of institutions on the basis of seniority, i.e length of service as teacher.

Recommendations

In this section, the researcher made some recommendations that can be applied to improve the school performances in secondary schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Results of the study shows that six leadership styles were used by 271 school heads with different proportions. Democratic leadership style was found to be most popular style among school heads. Out of total 271 school heads, 93 (34.32%) heads adopted democratic style. Another style was the transformational leadership style (N45, 16.61%), followed by the transactional (N42, 15.49%), Autocratic (N42, 15.49%), laissez-fair (N29, 10.17%) and charismatic (N20, 7.38%). It is, thus recommended that:

1. The school heads may adopt different leadership styles in different situations depends upon the effectiveness of a particular style on a particular occasion. The autocratic leadership style is detrimental toward the school performance in diverse situations and therefore it may be avoided.
2. Democratic leadership has been proved successful always and everywhere as evident from the study results and previous research studies. Democratic leadership style may be applied in schools. School heads are expected to consider his group/team members as part of decision making.
3. Laissez-Fair leadership style in school is total failure and leads to confusion, therefore it may be avoided. Thus, the transformational leaders can influence good changes in organisations
4. Transactional leadership style may be adopted to get short term goals. School heads of highly developed institutions, where teachers listen to and understand, may adopt Charismatic leadership style.
5. It is determined, however, that there is no one perfect leadership style; rather, the key to being relevant and effective school administrator is the capacity to apply all of them based on the situational demand.

School heads have lack of higher education and training

The education and training are keys to the success and dearth of it adversely affects the school performance.

1. It is suggested that school heads, if get higher and proper education as well as relevant skills; it may increase their efficiency and performance.
2. Elementary and Secondary Education Department may make necessary arrangement for in service inductive trainings to the school heads, so that they may be equipped with basic knowledge and able to update their management skills.
3. There is a need of proper forum where school heads may meet and discuss strategies, skills, relevant rules and procedures.

School Heads are confronting with Numerous Problems in Schools

1. It is suggested that school heads may follow rules and regulations while confronting with interference. Moreover, the forum of the Parent Teacher Council PTC may also be used.
2. All disciplinary issues may be solved on merit and with help of discipline committee. Parents may also be called up during chronic incidences.
3. Cheating in examinations is a widespread issue and it may be avoided with the strict supervision and SLO-based (Students Learning Outcomes) strategies that might be applied during examinations.
4. The dropout problem is everywhere in the schools and that needs to be handled with proper planning.
5. Frequent transfers of teachers is a routine activity of education department, however alternate arrangement may be made well before time.

Parents are not actively participate in school activities

1. The PTC scheme needs to be properly and regularly checked and supervised by IMU for the purpose of effective parental participation in school activities.
2. Collaboration between parents and teachers is crucial to student education. A student's teacher and family can work together to develop a relationship and establish the best conditions for learning at home and at school when the two parties can communicate. Parents and children might be required to participate.
3. It is suggested that, the school heads may make arrangements and organize Annual Parents Day in their schools where all parents have to participate and class teachers apprise them of their kids 'performances.

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