



## Connecting the Dot: Understanding the Link between Secondary School Heads' Leadership Styles and Teacher Performance

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### ABSTRACT

School Heads assume the ultimate obligation of accountability for student Academic excellence and teachers' performance in their institutions. The current Research exploration endeavored to analyze how the different leadership styles of school heads affect the performance of their teachers at public secondary schools in Multan. A descriptive research approach was employed in the current investigation. Data was collected using a questionnaire from a sample of four hundred and nineteen (419), including 187 male and 232 female teachers selected through stratified random sampling from secondary schools in the district of Multan, South Punjab, Pakistan. According to key highlighted observations of the study, Heads practiced all mixed leadership styles according to contextual requirements. However, no statistically significant differences were observed between teachers in terms of their professional and academic backgrounds or on the basis of their teaching experience. Moreover, according to manifested results, teachers' performance varied significantly according to their locations and gender. This study may help identify leadership approaches that inspire and empower teachers, leading to higher levels of productivity and overall job performance. Additionally, it is recommended that training for cultivating leadership styles that positively impact teacher performance be provided in educational institutions.

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## 1. Introduction

Leadership is the process of empowering those who work for others and encouraging them to contribute to the team's success. Absolutely, leadership is the capacity to recognize and harness inherent skills and influence team strengths to achieve goals. Effective leadership sets the tone for the school's culture and creates a positive environment for teachers. Eventually, leadership styles determine how well school leaders employ physical aspects to achieve goals, with autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership being the best ways to achieve goals (DEUSDEDITH, 2018). However, leadership in education is not just about managing resources and finances; it is also about inspiring and motivating individuals to reach their full potential. This requires a deep understanding of the unique needs and challenges of each student, as well as the ability to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that fosters growth and development (Dean, 2013).

Certainly, leaders are also effective communicators; they are empathetic and able to understand the perspectives of others, which allow them to build strong relationships and create a positive work environment. They are also adaptable and able to pivot quickly in response to

changing circumstances. Ultimately, effective leaders possess a combination of traits that allow them to inspire others, navigate challenges, and achieve success in any endeavor they undertake (Ahmad & Dilshad, 2016). Considering this stance, Mudulia (2012), school heads' leadership styles have a significant impact on teacher performance and institutional efficiency. Within this particular perspective, Vigoda-Gadot and Beerli (2011) explained several leadership styles for school heads, including authoritarian, bureaucratic, democratic, participatory, situational, transactional, charismatic, laissez-faire, and transformational styles.

Correspondingly, Berkovich (2016) argued that leadership styles profoundly influence teacher morale and students' academic outcomes in schools. Leaders play a crucial role in education by identifying inefficiencies and offering solutions to improve overall performance. Supporting this, Yukl (2008) argued that democratic leaders should consult with faculty members during the decision-making process, leading to higher levels of work satisfaction and productivity. Through this lens, Kelvin-Iloafu (2018) also suggested that laissez-faire leadership is an effective style when dealing with highly professional individuals and expert workers. However, this leadership style can lead to a lack of direction and accountability, resulting in decreased productivity and a lack of motivation among employees. Additionally, school heads should foster a positive and inclusive school culture that promotes diversity, equity, and respect. They should encourage collaboration among staff members, provide opportunities for professional development, and create a supportive work environment (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). On the other hand, democratic administration fosters a culture of collaboration and communication where teachers feel empowered to share their ideas and concerns (Warman, Poernomo, Januar, & Amon, 2022). Whereas, dynamic, decentralized administration improves school results and teacher performance, while authoritarian leadership styles score higher on assessments. Indeed, effective democratic leadership emphasizes shared vision, appropriate skills and relationships, communication, and involvement (Adedigba & Sulaiman, 2020). Besides this, involving teachers in school problems expresses appreciation that the school administration values their work (Obama, Eunice, & John, 2015).

Certainly, education is essential for national progress as it transforms students and teachers for work and community participation. On the other hand, human resource management is also essential for organizations to effectively manage individuals and maintain a competitive edge. The Heads are responsible for managing human resources, which includes understanding employee needs, determining requirements, providing training, fostering excellent work, and grooming teachers (Sharma & Jain, 2013). Within this context, (Rooyakkers, 2018) asserted that teachers and students are the most important assets of a school, and their performance affects the economy and society. Considering this angle, Kovaevi and Hallinger (2019) also observed that School leaders significantly impact school development by facilitating collective learning, setting high standards, and promoting accountability. Similarly, Fred Edward Fiedler introduced the contingency theory of leadership in 1964, which stated that effective leaders have to modify their methods of leadership to suit the specific context and make the most of the unique qualities of the group they are responsible for. This research compared democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire styles of leadership to evaluate their effectiveness in different contexts and with different subsets of followers. Results added to existing knowledge and suggested ways to modify approaches to best serve followers.

Moreover, it is indispensable that success of a school depends on the head's leadership style, which can be a catalyst for change and contribute to improving the quality of education. In addition to this, leadership and teacher performance are two key components that are closely intertwined and ultimately contribute to the success of any educational institution. However, the leadership style of school heads plays a crucial role in shaping the performance of teachers within an educational institution. In addition to this, it is crucial to highlight that a few researches related to this phenomenon have been conducted in the realm of Pakistan. For more information (Abwalla, 2015; Ilyas, 2013; Saleem, Aslam, Rafiq, & Rao, 2019). Considering the fact that effective leadership styles can motivate teachers to perform at their best and improve their outcomes, this research was intended to close that knowledge gap by analyzing how the leadership styles of secondary school heads in Multan influence teacher performance in the classroom. The study's findings might help policymakers and school leaders understand why it might be important for secondary schools to adopt democratic leadership styles and to support teachers' ongoing professional development.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

In Pakistan, secondary school teachers face numerous challenges in their quest for success. One of the major issues they encounter is the lack of knowledge and good leadership styles among school heads. Despite conflicting research findings on the correlation between leadership styles and teacher performance, it is crucial to understand how school heads perceive their impact on classroom productivity and teacher performance. This may help to identify areas that need improvement and enable school heads to adopt effective leadership styles that will enhance teacher performance. By doing so, teachers can be better equipped to provide quality education to students, which is essential for the growth and development of any nation. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the improvement of education quality in Multan by providing evidence-based recommendations for enhancing school leadership practices.

### **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

The major objectives of this research were to achieve a better understanding of the leadership styles used by secondary school heads' and how those styles affected teacher performance. Listed below are the specific objectives:

- To identify the leadership styles of school heads' as perceived by secondary school teachers.
- To compare the perceptions of leadership styles used by school heads and teachers' performance.
- To analyze the difference in teachers' performance with reference to their gender, location, academic and professional qualifications, and experience.

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to review the degree of success in achieving good-quality performance by teachers in each school. The identification of leadership styles led to training and retraining school heads for better leadership styles.

- It may serve as the foundation for improving the administration of schools.
- This study may help with appropriate policy, planning, and decision-making for further training for heads of leadership and the performance of teachers.
- Secondary school leaders may adopt better leadership styles, which may boost teacher performance.

## **Literature Review**

Leadership styles and their impact on teacher performance are broad fields of research. A significant number of research studies related to different facets of this specific subject were reviewed. Nonetheless, leadership is a complex subject studied by many researchers for over 50 years, focusing on quality, capability, efficiency, and leadership behaviors as it sets standards for education and fosters a culture of continuous learning (Abdurahman & Omar, 2021). Within this context, Nadarasa (2014) investigated the relationship between school leadership styles and teacher performance in secondary schools in Sri Lanka. The results of this research inquiry concluded that transformational leadership is positively connected with teacher performance. Overall, this study emphasized the crucial role of school leaders in shaping teacher performance and underscored the need for effective leadership practices in educational settings. In addition, Abu-Hamour (2020) analyzed the relationship between school leadership styles and teachers' job satisfaction and performance in their review. For this purpose, the observations from 39 research studies Published between 2000 and 2018 were synthesized. The outcomes of the review highlighted that transformational leadership is the real leadership style. Transformational leaders, by focusing on these key elements, can create a sense of purpose and direction that inspires teachers to perform at their best.

Moreover, Chandrasekhar (2017) investigated the impact of the leadership styles of school principals on teachers' job satisfaction within the context of India. The conclusions of the research examination recommended that transformational leadership is strongly linked with teachers' job satisfaction. On the basis of results, it was recommended that school leaders prioritize transformational leadership in order to create a thriving educational community that benefits both teachers and students alike. In this regard, Glatthorn and Joyner (2005) also concluded that leadership style significantly impacts a school's educational programme management, with a strong correlation between a head's leadership style and the quality of

education provided to students. Additionally, Arif, Zubair, and Manzoor (2012) also suggested in their study that leaders should view themselves as team leaders, working together to achieve goals and collaborating effectively. Likewise, Ahmad and Dilshad (2016) also explored in their research inquiry that effective communication is crucial for group success, involving both nonverbal and vocal information reception and transmission. Furthermore, Idrees and Naazer (2017) also discovered in their investigation that conflict arises as a direct consequence of the communication gap between management and staff. In addition to this, Ahmed, Malik, and Ahmed (2019) also found that effective leaders support teachers in their academic activities and manage issues. Such leaders focus on a culture that fosters team building at their respective organizations. Similarly, Finnigan and Daly (2017) stressed in their research examination the importance of a shared and mutually understood connection among stakeholders, teachers, and administrators. Besides this, Adedigba and Sulaiman (2020) also discovered that democratic leadership styles are more successful than authoritarian leadership styles, as they emphasize the cultivation of a shared vision, relevant skills, relationships, and communication. Conversely, Kinyanjui and Orodho (2014) found autocratic leadership styles to be more effective than democratic and laissez-faire models but may lead to less motivation and investment in work.

### **3. Material and Methods**

This study adopted a quantitative research framework. This approach facilitated a more profound understanding of the phenomenon of how school heads empower and motivate teachers to excel in their roles at secondary schools. In this exploration, all nine hundred and fifty-nine teachers from four tehsils of Multan district Multan Saddar 245, Jalalpur 76, and Shujabad 157 were taken into account as a population. Moreover, a representative sample consisting of four hundred and nineteen 419 teachers, one hundred and eighty-seven 187 males, and 232 two hundred and thirty-two females was attained by employing stratified random sampling techniques. Furthermore, to measure the influence of the school head's leadership style on teacher performance, a self-developed questionnaire containing 43 statements was utilized. However, before administration, the validity of questions to determine how well test items reflected the target attribute or feature was thoroughly ensured by experts by in the respective domain. The reliability index of the research instrument was also determined (0.91) as an integral part of developing a reliable research instrument. The researcher personally visited high schools and obtained authorization to gather data from school leaders. Moreover, the results of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) were used as a key indicator to evaluate teachers' performance at secondary schools. For this purpose, the results of the 2022 Secondary School Certificate (SSC) from the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Multan were obtained. For this study, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used. The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive statistical techniques (frequency, mean, standard deviation, and correlation) and inferential statistical techniques (t-test and ANOVA). Further, ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to throughout the research process by valuing and respecting the diversity of participants and ensuring that participants without undue influence provided their consent to participate in the study.

### **4. Data Analysis**

Table 1 reveals that respondents, 158 (37.7%) were serving in urban areas, while 261 (62.3%) were serving in rural areas. 187 (44.6%). Furthermore, there were 187(44.6) female teachers and 232 (55.4%) were male teachers. Similarly, experience wise profiles of teachers indicate that 167 (39.9%) teachers had experience of teaching between 0-10 years, 158 (37.7%) had between 11 and 20 years' experience, and 94 (22.4%) had 21 years or more. Moreover, in terms of academic qualifications, 16 (2.8%) were graduates (BA/B.Sc.), 227 (54.2%) were MA/M.Sc./BS, 170 (40.6%) were M.Phil./MS, and 6 (1.4%) were PhD. Similarly, in terms of professional qualifications, 203 (48.4%) were B.Ed., and 216 (51.6%) were M.Ed.

The Table 2 portrays overall mean values ranging from 3.54 to 4.18, indicating that teachers perceived that the leadership styles of school heads' have an impact on time management, communication skills, decision-making processes, problem-solving, conflict resolution, team building, and stress management. Table 3 shows that 67.1% of teachers endorsed their heads' leadership styles as democratic, 7.6% as autocratic, and 25.3% as laissez-faire, along with the mean and standard deviation of time management ( $M = 2.17$ ) ( $SD = .55$ ).

**Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents (N=419)**

Demographic Variable		Participants Responses	
		Frequency	%Age
Location	Urban	158	37.7
	Rural	261	62.3
	Total	419	100.0
Gender	Male	232	55.4
	Female	187	44.6
	Total	419	100.0
Teaching Experience	0-10 years	167	39.9
	11-20 years	158	37.7
	21 years and more	94	22.4
	Total	419	100.0
Academic Qualification	BA/B.Sc	16	3.8
	MA/M.Sc/BS	227	54.2
	M.Phil/MS	170	40.6
	Ph.D	6	1.4
	Total	419	100.0
Professional Qualification	B.Ed	203	48.4
	M.Ed	216	51.6
	Total	419	100.0

**Table 2: Leadership Styles of School Heads' as perceived by Secondary School Teachers (N=419)**

Sr. No	Roles of School Head	Mean	SD
1	Time Management	3.82	.56
2	Communication Skills	4.04	.55
3	Decision Making Process	3.54	.64
4	Problem Solving	4.10	.73
5	Conflict Resolution	3.70	.62
6	Team Building	4.12	.56
7	Stress Management	4.18	.63

**Table 3: Leadership Styles used by the School Heads**

Roles of School Heads	Leadership Style	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
Time Management	Autocratic	32	7.6	2.17	.55
	Democratic	281	67.1		
	Laissez-faire	106	25.3		
	Total	419	100		
Communication Skills	Autocratic	24	5.7	2.17	.50
	Democratic	301	71.8		
	Laissez -faire	94	22.4		
	Total	419	100		
Decision Making	Autocratic	30	7.2	2.15	.53
	Democratic	293	69.9		
	Laissez -faire	96	22.9		
	Total	419	100		
Problem Solving	Autocratic	46	11.0	2.11	.57
	Democratic	279	66.6		
	Laissez -faire	94	22.4		
	Total	419	100		
Conflict Resolution	Autocratic	18	4.3	2.26	.52
	Democratic	273	65.2		
	Laissez -faire	128	30.5		
	Total	419	100		
Team Building	Autocratic	28	6.7	2.15	.51
	Democratic	301	71.8		
	Laissez -faire	90	21.5		
	Total	419	100		
Stress Management	Autocratic	16	3.8	2.24	.51
	Democratic	283	67.5		
	Laissez -faire	120	28.6		
	Total	419	100		

In table 3, 71.8% of teachers described their heads' leadership styles as democratic, 5.7% as autocratic, and 22.4% as laissez-faire, along with the mean and standard deviation of

communication skills (M =2.17) (SD =.50). Similarly, 69.9% of teachers identified their heads' leadership styles as democratic, 7.2% as autocratic, and 22.9% as laissez-faire, along with the mean and standard deviation of decision-making (M =2.15) (SD =.53). 66.6% of teachers described their heads' leadership styles as democratic, 11.0% as autocratic, and 22.4% as laissez-faire, along with the mean and standard deviation of problem solving (M =2.11) (SD =.57). 65.2% of teachers identified their heads' leadership styles as democratic, 4.3% as autocratic, and 30.5% as laissez-faire, along with the mean and standard deviation of conflict resolution (M =2.26) (SD =.52). Likewise, 71.8% of teachers identified their heads' leadership styles as democratic, 6.7% as autocratic, and 21.5% as laissez-faire, along with the mean and standard deviation of team building (M =2.15) (SD =.51). 67.5% of teachers described their heads' leadership styles as democratic, 3.8% as autocratic, and 28.6% as laissez-faire, along with the mean and standard deviation of stress management (M =2. 24) (SD =.51).

**Table 4: Leadership Styles by the School Head with regards to Teachers' Annual Performance (N=419)**

Roles of School Head		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Time Management	Between groups	1663.943	2	831.972	8.319	.000
	Within Groups	41601.608	416	100.004		
	Total	43265.551	418			
Communication Skills	Between groups	995.426	2	497.713	4.898	.008
	Within Groups	42270.126	416	101.611		
	Total	43265.551	418			
Decision Making	Between groups	1660.687	2	830.343	8.302	.000
	Within Groups	41604.865	416	100.012		
	Total	43265.551	418			
Problem Solving	Between groups	832.443	2	416.222	4.080	.018
	Within Groups	42433.108	416	102.003		
	Total	43265.551	418			
Conflict Resolution	Between groups	2410.766	2	1205.383	12.274	.000
	Within Groups	40854.785	416	98.209		
	Total	43265.551	418			
Team Building	Between groups	1907.911	2	953.955	9.595	.000
	Within Groups	41357.641	416	99.417		
	Total	43265.551	418			
Stress Management	Between groups	3242.488	2	1621.244	16.851	.000
	Within Groups	40023.063	416	96.209		
	Total	43265.551	418			

\*P > .05 Level of Significance

Table 4 highlights the portrayed sig-value (.000) for all dimensions (time management, communication, problem solving, team building, decision-making, conflict resolution, and stress management) in teachers' perceptions of school heads' leadership style with regards to teachers' performance, indicating that it was significantly different.

**Table 5: Correlation Matrix between Teachers Performance and leadership Styles Perceived by Teachers (N=419)**

	Teachers Performance	Leadership Styles perceived by teachers
Teachers Performance	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.948**
	N	419
Leadership Styles perceived by teachers	Pearson Correlation	.948**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	419

\*\* . Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The given findings in Table 5 indicate that there were statistically strong correlations between teacher performance and leadership styles perceived by teachers. In terms of leadership styles perceived by teachers, the correlation was strong and positive (r =.948, p.01). Table 6 demonstrates the p-value (.009) for teacher's performance on the basis of their gender, indicating that there was a statistically significant difference between male and female teachers and their annual performance. Table 7 shows a p-value (.050) for the teacher's performance in

accordance with their location, indicating that there was a statistically significant difference between teachers from urban and rural areas.

**Table 6: Gender-wise differences in Perceived Leadership Styles of School Heads' based on Teachers' Performance (N=419)**

Factor	Category	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Teachers' Performance	Male	232	76.50	9.49	417	2.636	.009
	Female	187	79.11	10.82			

**Table 7: Location-wise differences in Perceived Leadership Styles of School Heads' based on Teachers' Performance (N=419)**

Factor	Category	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Teachers' Performance	Urban	204	76.68	11.15	417	-1.931	.050
	Rural	215	78.59	9.07			

**Table 8: Professional Qualification-wise differences in Perceived Leadership Styles of School Heads' based on Teachers' Performance (N=419)**

Factor	Category	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Sig
Teachers' Performance	B.Ed	203	78.42	10.39	417	1.475	.141
	M.Ed	216	76.95	9.94			

Table 8 demonstrates the p-value (.141) for teacher's performance, which indicates that there was no statistically significant difference in teacher's performance in accordance with their professional qualifications.

**Table 9: One-way ANOVA for differences in Teachers' Performance and Perceived Leadership Styles of School Heads' based on their Academic Qualifications(N=419)**

Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Teachers' Performance	Between groups	706.777	3	235.592	2.297	.077
	Within Groups	42558.774	415	102.551		
	Total	43265.551	418			

Table 9 depicts the sig-value (.077) for teachers' performance, indicating that there were no significant differences among teachers with academic qualifications in accordance with their academic qualifications.

**Table 9: One-way ANOVA for differences in Teachers' Performance and Perceived Leadership Styles of School Heads' based on their Teaching Experiences (N=419)**

Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Teachers' Performance	Between groups	180.089	2	90.044	.869	.420
	Within Groups	43085.463	416	103.571		
	Total	43265.551	418			

Table 9 presents the sig-value (.420) for teachers' performance, indicating that there was no significant difference among teachers in accordance with their experiences.

## 5. Conclusions and Discussion

The current study was an attempt to advance knowledge of school heads' leadership styles (autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire) and their impact on teachers' performance. According to the revealed findings of the current investigation, the heads employed mix leadership styles according to the demands of specific situations. The study conclusions correlate with those presented by (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019), who directed that for better teaching and learning results, headmasters mix leadership styles based on context and concerns. Similarly, the study outcomes correspond to those of (Aruzie & Adjei, 2019), which revealed that senior high school headmasters might be dictatorial, democratic, or laissez-faire. Leadership styles, pleasant school environments, and teacher attitudes affect school success and student academic achievement. However, the study findings are at odds with those given by Munir, Sial, Faheem, Siddiqui, and Asghar (2023) who found that public secondary school head teachers use autocratic and democratic leadership styles equally. Moreover, the study results contradict those of Mehmood (2011), who found that laissez-faire behavior in Pakistani secondary schools lowers teacher performance.

According to study results, there was a strong correlation between teacher performance and leadership styles perceived by teachers, but there was no statistically significant difference on the basis of professional qualifications, academic qualifications, or the experiences of teachers. There was a significant difference between location-wise and gender-wise teachers' performance. The study outcomes are similar to those of Salfi, Virk, and Hussain (2014), who also found similar patterns in their study, indicating no significant difference in teachers' performance experience-wise or academic qualification-wise at schools. On the basis of the above discussion, it is suggested that a more democratic leadership style leads to higher levels of success among teachers and their respective institutions. It was suggested that schools implement a system of continuous feedback on teachers' performance with the purpose of using such inputs to provide support and counseling to the teachers throughout the year.

### 5.1. Recommendations

In light of the findings the following best practices were recommended.

- Firstly, it is important that School Heads should regularly reflect on their own leadership practices and seek feedback from teachers.
- Further, training for cultivating leadership styles that positively impact teacher performance should be provided in educational institutions.
- Moreover, there should be open communication channels between teachers and School Heads where teachers feel comfortable expressing their ideas and concerns and seeking support.
- Qualitative factors, such as interviews with school or institution administrators, would strengthen the research.
- The research was conducted in Multan, so it could be conducted in any other district of Punjab in order to see the similarities and differences in the leadership styles of school heads and teachers' performances.
- The research can help future researchers compare the leadership styles used by different school heads outside of secondary schools and determine which style is best suited for teachers' performance at different levels.

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