

IMPACT OF PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP STYLE ON SCHOOLS' CLIMATE, TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE STUDENTS IN SOUTHERN DISTRICTS OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

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Abstract- This research study was conducted to observe the impact of principals' leadership styles on schools' climate and students' academic achievement. The research study was done in secondary schools of southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. In this study survey research design was used. Through stratified sampling technique a sample of 527 (male and female) secondary school teachers and 400 (male and female) students were selected. To collect the data questionnaires created by researcher were used. Content Validity Ratio (CVR) was used to measure the content validity while reliability was assessed through Cronbach's Alpha. To analyze the data of demographic variables, mean and standard deviation was used. Linear Regression was employed to find out the impact of independent variable (leadership styles) on dependent variables (schools' climate and students' academic achievement) and independent sample t-test was used to find out the significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers regarding school climate and the significant difference of the academic achievement of male and female students. The results of the study show that transformational leadership style has significantly great impact on schools' climate and students' academic achievement. It was also explored that males use transformational leadership style more than females and female students show good academic performance as comparison to the male students. The study recommended that educational institutions should focus on leadership style to create a positive and healthy school climate.

Keywords: leadership style, school climate, academic achievement

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important element of the life of human being. It helps the people of every age, group, religion and region. Education gives knowledge, beliefs, abilities and ethical values (Sibuyi, 2016). A well-organized education system is significant for human development and to save the financial and political structures of the society (Modisaotsile, 2012). It is the need of the time to be aware about the importance of education. Education is essential for every individual to improve learning, enhance lifestyle, and develop the social and economic status of the life (Sibuyi, 2016). Leadership style is the main concern of education system. In the early 20th century Frederick Winslow Taylor changed the vision of the way leaders or managers dealt with employees. Leadership is an important process in all fields of management to do different tasks to achieve the goals of organization. Leadership styles contain a leader's overall personality, character and communication skills in managing others to achieve organizational or personal goals and it is thought to affect the performance of the teachers as well (Wallace, 2019). So, leaders and scholars suggest effective directions to gain better results (Razik & Swanson, 2010; Marn, 2012). School leadership gives a practical vision to develop a healthy school climate which contains goal oriented teaching-learning environment and students' performance (Yildiz, *et al.*, 2014). There are a lot of studies trying to find the link between leadership styles and students' learning outcomes, which lead to explore the school climate (Myers, 2014; Mc Carley, *et al.*, 2016). To attain the academic achievement of the students at its standards, research studies concentrate on the importance of a positive school climate to develop a highly conducive environment for teaching and learning (Robinson, 2007; Wang and Degol, 2016).

School Leader

The most influential factor for the improvement of the quality and standard of the school is a school leader (Anastasiou, 2021; Cohen *et al*, 2009). Principal is the only prominent 'person who has both the authority and potential for inspiration (McCarley *et al*, 2016). Leaders encourage the teachers to take decisions. Principal's thought and specific features utilizes teaching and coaching abilities of the specific team; gives respect to all staff members as individuals; understands the abilities, requirements, and objectives of all staff members; and assists in the development of personal characteristics. (McCarley *et al*, 2016). A dynamic leader can make an institution successful (Ali, 2014; Abdul Wahab, 2014). There are a lot of leadership factors which play an important role in school and teachers' effectiveness to achieve preferred goals (ten Bruggencate *et al*, 2012).

Leadership styles

Studies have proved that school leaders directly and indirectly influence academic success (Abdul wahab, *et al.*, 2014). Schools, whose students do well in academics, have the services of those heads that have developed leadership qualities (Haris, *et al.*, 2019). Terrific leadership is the most important feature in synchronizing educational plans, institutional programs, and encouragement of teachers and resources having the purpose of nurturing the improvement and triumph of the educational institution (Adegbesaw, 2012). Various leadership styles can affect institutional performance. When the task is extremely planned and the leader has good association with the staff, efficiency of the employees will be extraordinary (Nanjun Deswara Swamy *et al*, 2014). The principal has to present leadership management, must have interaction with the community and have a high level intellectual power and skills to improve the teaching-learning standard of the institution (Ibrahim, 2021). Mamat (2019) is of the view that transformational and transactional leadership styles are very effective on schools' climate. Transactional leaders are unable to influence academic-related matters, and promote positive interactions among the staff (Harris, *et al* 2019. Adams, 2018 Robinson, 2019), While transformational leader is considered as influential with the qualities of inspiration, motivation and honor. They are able to achieve the academic objectives through involvement of the staff members of the organization (Avolio 2011). Principals of the schools practicing the transformational leadership style improve schools' environment and teachers' performance. (Leithwood and Sun, 2012).

School climate

Climate encompasses the formation of the institute and assessments of teachers in that organization. School climate is also called school environment or school – level learning environment. (Tajasom, A & Ahmad, 2011). School climate refers to schools' features where there is a balanced relationship between students and teachers and within the students to develop the abilities, attitudes, and performances of the teachers. (Thapa, *et al.*, 2013) Leadership styles of the principals contribute a lot to create a fabulous school climate (Ibrahim 2021). School climate has great potential to understand the institutional environment of schools to study the students' academic achievement (Wang and Degol, 2016). School climate is the pillar of the institutional dynamics which shows a special association between different school factors and stakeholders to maintain the teaching -learning environment. (Nir & Kranot, 2006). Instructional leaders support a positive school climate in important dimensions. (Hallinger, 2011; Robinson, 2007). It can be measured through concepts as organizational health to measure morale of the staff, flexibility and coordination. So a positive school climate can be described if all these dimensions are achieved. (Nir & Kranot, 2006) With these dimensions, many research studies have observed the impact of leadership style on the schools climate (Velarde *et al.*, 2020). To describe the impact of leadership style in educational institutions it is clear that positive school climate is a by- product of effective leadership style (Velarde *et al.*, 2020). Critics were of the view that there are many other factors i.e teacher's collegiality and school environment that can create a positive learning environment (Wang and Degol, 2016)

Students' academic achievement

School leader is a person who has the ability to improve the skills of the students in educational environment by using discipline and honour, and by presenting himself as a role model (Ibrahim 2021). The impact of school leadership on academic achievement was examined by Dutta and Sahney (2016). Students' academic performance is a main apprehension in teaching learning process. Shareholders like parents, teachers, policy makers and society always remain concerned for learners' achievement in their academics (Budohi, 2014). Academic achievement of the students is greatly affected

by school leadership style. (Igwe, 2017). The outlook of the principals is not directly involved in giving instructions. A helpful and responsive leader can have a positive impact on school climate, teachers' performance and students' academic achievement (Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2011). When the principal makes a solid, faultless and joint vision, and pays attention on the overall development of the institutions, it brings a positive change in student's academic achievement (Finnigan & Stewart, 2009). Onorato (2013) is of the view that educational strategies and activities by educational leaders effectively lead staff and observe development in students' academic achievement. Principals who pay attention to shape institutional competency according to the culture can positively influence student's academic achievement (Murakami, *et al.*, 2010).

School climate, and leadership styles are the factors that are present in educational environment to affect the students' academic achievement as students' academic achievement is the major concern of the parents of southern districts. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the province with low rate of education. Along with that, standard of education is not very high. Educationists are concerned with this level of standard of education. So there is a gap of finding out the elements, missing to make the education level upgraded. Question arises that has leadership style any influence on schools' climate or academic achievement of the students?

This study concentrates on the impact of transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership styles on schools' climate and students' academic achievement in secondary schools in southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to Walliman (2019), in quantitative research, a survey research design is supportive to describe recent events, by collecting data in specific scenario through questionnaire. Using a survey research design, this study employed a logical approach to examine the impact of transactional, transformational and laissez faire leadership style of school leaders on their schools' climate and students' academic achievement.

Statement of the problem

This study discussed the principals' leadership styles and their impact on the schools' climate, and students' academic achievement of secondary schools in southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The problem under study was, "Impact of principals' leadership styles on schools' climate, and student's academic achievement.

Research objectives

The specific objectives of this study were to:

- 1) To explore the impact of leadership styles on schools' climate
- 2) To investigate the impact of leadership styles on students' academic achievement
- 3) To assess the perceptions of male and female teachers regarding schools' climate.
- 4) To investigate the difference in academic achievement score of male and female students

Research Hypotheses

For this study, impact of transactional, transformational and laissez faire leadership styles was investigated on schools' climate and students' academic achievement.

H₀₁: There is no significant impact of principal's leadership style on schools' climate

H₀₂: There is no significant impact of principal's leadership style on students' academic achievement

H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers regarding principals' leadership styles

H₀₄: There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers regarding school climate

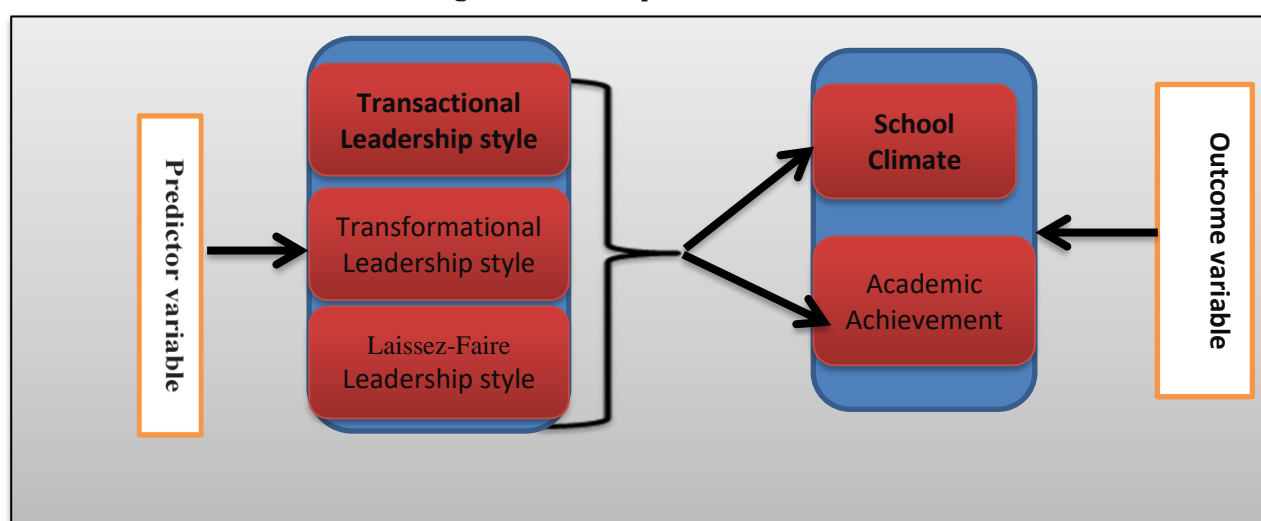
H₀₅: There is no significant difference in the academic achievement score of male and female students

Significance of the Study

Leadership styles play a fundamental role to affect the school environment to achieve the educational goals. Leadership in Education has the responsibility to lead the respective schools to develop the concepts according to the national educational policy. (Ibrahim, 2021). School environment mostly depends upon the attitude of the leaders to get required objectives which can be utilized in the outcome

of the students which has key importance for stake holders.(Robinson,2010) The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore the impact of leadership styles (transactional, transformational and laissez faire) on schools' climate and students' academic achievement of the students in government secondary schools of southern districts (Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Lakki, Bannu, Kohat and Karak) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Every educational institution is dynamic and has complicated system of education. This system needs a vibrant leadership to manage and transform the institution (Ahmad, 2017). In the present condition resources are limited and expectations are high. As a result, there is a need of innovative strategies to move schools in an effective manner and produce safe environments for students and teachers. This research study is a contribution to the area of leadership at secondary level of education. It is significant to understand the association among principals, teachers and students. There is a lot of research work on this topic in the developed countries but in the developing countries a very little attention has been given to this topic. This study proved that it is very valuable in the context of Pakistani educational system.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Model



II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

In order to find the impact of principals' leadership style on schools' climate, teachers' performance and academic achievement of the students in southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa descriptive research design was used.

Data Sources

This research study has primary and secondary data. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers of secondary school teachers. Published materials on leadership, school climate and students' academic achievement was used from educational journals, books, internet and articles. Questionnaire with closed-ended questions were filled by the teachers in secondary schools of southern districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Population and sampling

To apprehend the impact of leadership styles on schools' climate and students' academic achievement, population was composed of 2392 (1505 male and female 887) secondary school teachers (general) (strata 1) and 33749 (21888 male and 11861 female) students of grade 10th (strata 2) of 506 (322 male and 184female) secondary schools (strata 3) of southern districts (Bannu, D.I.Khan, Karak, Kohat, Lakki & Tank) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Table: 1 Population of the study

Southern Districts	Schools		Teachers (SSTs)		Students of 10 th	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Bannu	58	42	279	236	3664	1842
D.I.Khan	78	47	393	240	4474	3175
Karak	54	29	196	88	3723	2290
Kohat	49	29	261	154	4759	2465
Lakki	57	26	251	123	4397	1622
Tank	26	11	125	46	871	467
Total	322	184	1505	887	21888	11861
Total	506		2392		33749	
Grand total	36647					

Sampling

Stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample. The disproportionate stratified sampling was adopted as there was a lot of difference between the samples. Researcher selected 1198 individuals according to the guideline of Gay (2003) in which 527 secondary school teachers (301 male & 226 female) and 400 students (260 male & 140 female) were included from 271(162 male & 109 female) schools. From each districts 20% of the teachers and 1.2% of students from 50%of the schools were taken according to the Gay (2003)

Table: 2 Details of Sample

Southern Districts	Schools (50% of Gay (2003))		Teachers (SSTs) 20% of Gay (2003)		Students of 10 th 1.2 % of Gay (2003)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Bannu	29	21	56	48	43	22
D.I.Khan	39	39	79	48	53	38
Karak	27	15	39	64	44	27
Kohat	25	15	52	31	57	29
Lakki	29	13	50	25	53	19
Tank	13	6	25	10	10	5
Total	162	109	301	226	260	140
Total	271		527		400	
G.total	1198					

Research Instrument

The items of the questionnaires of this study were constructed to measure transformational, transactional and laissez faire leadership styles and school climate. The first section of the instruments had demographic information of the respondents. In the second section 34 items were constructed to measure the leadership style while in the second questionnaire the 34 items were constructed to measure the school climate.

Validation and Reliability

The researcher contacted experts in education field to validate the content and structure of the instruments. Validation of research instruments were done through Content Validity Ratio (CVR) whereas Cronbach's Alpha (Cronbach, 1951) was done to measure the reliability of the instruments.

Table 3 CVR and Reliability Score

Research Variables	CVR	Cronbach's Alpha
Transactional leadership style	.8-0.9 (minimum and maximum value of item in questionnaire)	.83
Transformational leadership style	.6-0.9 (minimum and maximum value of item in questionnaire)	.89
Laissez faire leadership style	.7-0.9 ((minimum and maximum value of item in questionnaire)	.78
School climate	.5-0.9 ((minimum and maximum value of item in questionnaire)	.88

Data collection

The main tools for gathering the data were questionnaires. Once the content validity and internal consistency of the questionnaire was established, the researcher started the research. Researcher visited the schools to administer the survey questionnaire. Each questionnaire contained the details of the research. To collect the data two different questionnaires were used. The Leadership Styles Questionnaire (LSQ) and School Climate Questionnaire (SCQ) were used to check the principals' leadership styles and to analyze impact of leadership styles on schools climate. There were closed- ended questions in the structured questionnaires focused on the research hypotheses and the objectives of the study to get categorical information.

Data Analysis

From 271 schools, questionnaires were distributed among 527 secondary school teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, from which 496 teachers responded showing 94.11% response rate. Questionnaires were thoroughly checked and questionnaires with incomplete information were rejected. 465 were correct, constituted 88.23% of the original sample. Accuracy of the received questionnaires was checked and data was decoded and analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package for social science) 21.0 version. In descriptive statistics mean and standard deviation were used and multiple regression and independent sample t-test were used as inferential statistics.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to investigate the influence of principals' leadership styles' on schools' climate and students' academic achievement and to find out the significant difference between the perception of male and female school teachers regarding schools' climate, and to investigate the difference in the male and female students regarding their academic achievement.

Perceived leadership style of the principals

To investigate the impact of leadership styles of the principals on schools' climate and students' academic achievement, the researcher first identified the dominant leadership style of the principals of sample secondary schools. The perception of the teachers regarding principals' leadership style was analyzed through scale with 36 items on a 5-point Likert Scale from 'strongly agree to strongly disagree'. The reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.83. The scale explained perceived leadership style into three sorts: Transactional leadership style, transformational leadership style and Laissez-Faire leadership style. High scores represented transformational leadership style, low scores represented transactional leadership style whereas average scores represented the Laissez-Faire leadership style.

Table: 3 perceived leadership styles by the teachers

Leadership styles	Numbers	Percent %
Transactional	12	2.4
Transformational	333	67.1
Laissez-Faire	151	30.5
Total	496	100.0

Teachers' Perceptions about principals Leadership Styles

The results in Table 3 showed that 67.1% respondents supposed their principals as transformational leaders and 30.5% showed that their principals displayed the laissez Faire leadership style while about 2.4 % declared that their principals exhibited transactional leadership style.

Association between principals' Leadership Styles, Schools' Climate and students' academic achievement

Table: 4 Descriptive statistics of research variables

Variables	Dimensions	Mean	SD
Leadership styles	Transactional	3.56	.872
	Transformational	4.19	.511
	Laissez faire	2.17	1.23
School climate		4.22	.502
Students' academic achievement		3.74	.783

The Table 4 indicates the results of descriptive statistics of the predictors (leadership styles) and outcome variables (school climate and students' academic achievement). The results showed transactional leadership style with Mean value (3.56) and Std. Deviation .872, transformational leadership style with Mean value (4.19) and Std. Deviation (.511) and laissez faire leadership style with Mean value (2.17) and Std. Deviation (1.23).

Table: 5 Model summary of regression output about impact of leadership styles on school climate

Predictors	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Beta	F	Sig	Tolerance	VIF
Transactional				.443			.480	2.082
Transformational	.715 ^a	.543	.539	.776	21.980	.000	.483	2.069
Laissez-faire				.236				

Dependent variable: school climate

Table 5 indicates the model summary regarding impact of principals' leadership styles on schools' climate. The table indicates that the value of R-square = .543 reveals 54% variations in Dependent variable (school climate) explained by Independent Variable (Leadership styles). The value of F = 21.980 at P = .000 which shows that there is significant impact of leadership style on school climate. The positive beta value for transactional leadership (.443), transformational leadership (.776) and laissez faire leadership (.236) shows that for every one unit increase in Independent variable (leadership styles), the dependent variable (school climate) will increase by the calculated beta values. The last two columns indicate the values of tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) diagnosing the multi collinearity in the Regression model. The values of tolerance and VIF show that there is no multi collinearity issue in the model.

Table: 6 Model summary of regression output about impact of leadership styles on Students' Academic achievement

Predictor	R	R-square	Adjusted R-square	Beta	F	Sig	Tolerance	VIF
Transactional				.527			.377	1.721
Transformational	.701 ^a	.491	.478	.841	56.610	.000	.392	2.107
Laissez-faire				.376			.268	1.414

Dependent variable: students' academic achievement

Table 6 indicates the model summary regarding impact of principals' leadership styles on students' academic achievement. The table indicates that the value of R-square = .491 reveals 49% variations in Dependent Variable (students' academic achievement) explained by Independent Variable (Leadership style). The value of F = 56.610 at P = .000 which shows that there is significant impact of principals' leadership style on students' academic achievement. The positive beta value for transactional leadership (.527), transformational leadership (.841) and laissez faire leadership (.376) shows that for every one unit increase in Independent Variable (leadership styles), the dependent variable (school climate) will increase by the calculated beta values. The last two columns indicate the values of tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) diagnosing the multi collinearity in the Regression model. The values of tolerance and VIF show that there is no multi collinearity issue in the model.

Table: 7 Mean difference regarding leadership styles, school climate and students' academic achievement across gender

Variable	Sex	Mean	SD	t _{cal}	Sig
Transactional	Male	4.479	.475	-2.73	.007
	Female	4.259	.522		
Transformational	Male	4.210	.423	-2.76	.006
	Female	3.890	.465		
Laissez faire	Male	2.716	.728	-.615	.539
	Female	2.774	.721		
School climate	Male	4.53	.621	2.57	.012
	Female	4.22	.831		
Students' academic achievement	Male	4.19	.760	-2.36	.019
	Female	4.45	.616		

The Table 7 indicates the gender wise mean difference of the respondents regarding leadership styles, schools' climate and academic achievement of the students. The table indicates that There is significant difference between the male and female leadership styles in perspective of transactional (.007) less than .05 transformational (.006) less than .05 and there is no significant difference between male and female leadership styles in perspective of laissez faire (.539) greater than .05. The table indicates that there is a significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers regarding school climate (.012) and significant difference between the male and female students' academic achievement (.019) more precisely. Male principals adopt transactional and transformational leadership styles more as compare to female principals. Additionally the academic achievement of girls is much better than boys.

IV. DISCUSSION

School principals play a significant role in overall school success. They are considered as academic leaders in modern perspective and lead the school to achieve the desired goals. The principals' leadership styles change the whole school climate and performance of the students. This research study concentrated to examine the impact of principals' leadership styles on schools' climate and students' academic achievement in secondary schools of southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The results of the research study show that there is a significant impact of principals' leadership styles (transactional, transformational and Laissez-Faire) on the overall schools' climate. Amongst the other leadership styles, generally principals' transformational leadership style is more effective on the schools' climate.

Amedome (2018) presented the same results. He explored the strong relationship between school climates. The other results of this research study indicated that there is a significant impact of principals' leadership styles on students' academic achievement too. The same results are shown by Allen (2015). She found that teachers are the part and parcel of the decision making process. Transformational leadership style of the principals was dominant and had positive impact on academics of the schools.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Amongst three leadership styles (transactional, transformational and laissez faire), transformational leadership style has greatest effect on schools' climate and students' academic achievement. The intention is that the principals take the teachers as associates who can work with them for common objectives. Teachers are influenced by each other and cooperate with each other. The research study concluded that male principals show transformational leadership style more than female principals as comparison to transactional and laissez faire leadership styles. This research study recommends that government should arrange trainings to enhance the leadership qualities of the principals to make the school environment positive and to get good results in students' academic achievement. For future studies, some other variables like teachers' performance, perceptions of principals concerning leadership styles at elementary and higher secondary level should be used in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Research Implications

The most significant contribution of this research study is that the research results have added reliable and valid information in the field of leadership styles, schools' climate and students' academic

achievement. The research study has provided evidence about the impact of principals' leadership styles on schools' climate and academic achievement of the students. Higher authorities and Policy makers should imply the results by arranging trainings and workshops to get practical results of this study.

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