

Head Teachers' Leadership Practices as Determinants of School Climate and Student Academic Performance at the Secondary Level: Evidence from Nasirabad Division, Balochistan

Maqbool Ahmed Jamali

*Doctoral Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Sindh,
Jamshoro, Sindh, Pakistan*

Dr. Abdul Sattar Almani

*Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Sindh,
Pakistan*

Abstract

The aim of this research study was to investigate the Leadership Practices, School Environment and Academic Achievement at Secondary Schools in Nasirabad division, Balochistan province. The study was also aimed at exploring the effect of head teachers' Leadership Practices on Academic Achievement and School Environment at Secondary Schools. The related literature was reviewed which dealt with different aspects of leadership practices along with school environment which suits to run the school matters better of learning and teaching environment which eventually lead to improve academic achievement of students.

Methodology: The descriptive survey design with quantitative approach was used to conduct this study. A descriptive survey approach is more appropriate for collecting a huge data from the large number of sample at one point in time (Babbie, 2007; Cresswell, 2008). Likert Scale Questionnaire 0.5 was used to collect the response from participants.

Data Analysis: Statistical analysis technique was used to analyze the data via SPSS statistical software

Findings: The findings of the regression analysis revealed that there is a positive impact of leadership practices on school environment. It

was also revealed by the statistical analysis that the better leadership practices can bring about a prominent change in students' academic achievement.

Key Words: Leadership, Leadership Practices, School Environment, Academic achievement, Secondary Schools

Introduction: Education creates the foundation for the growth of individuals competent to achieve strategic aims. Therefore, education needs to be a top priority. Schools that are well-run have leadership that demonstrates their authority and works in concert with other important members of the community. That's in line with what a study that say about how principals' top priority being boosting, measuring, and enhancing teachers' productivity.¹ In addition, administrators in educational institutions are in a prime position to generate and distribute novel knowledge and to make the most of available resources. Therefore, effective schools have principals who invest a great deal of time in lesson planning and supervision, who are a constant presence on campus, and who are dedicated to the success of their students. The principal serves as the center of gravity around which the rest of the school revolves. Subsequently is in charge of all academic and organizational aspects of the system. The principal of the school should be empowered to make most of the important decisions. As a result, the principal of a school needs leadership, strategic thinking, and sound judgment skills. A reliable school leader will employ collaboration as a method of getting things done, forming teams and subgroups within teams to analyses ideas and strategies. As a result, it is the principal's responsibility to be a successful collaborator in order to improve classroom education.²

School administrators should adopt the mindset and do the work necessary to become effective leaders, as defined in the five excellent leadership practices released by.³ Such as (i) setting an example (by creating standards for achievement and offering a pattern for other people to follow), (ii) influencing a shared vision (by producing new ideas and an ideal and different imagine of what an organization ought to become), (iii) difficult the process (by viewing obstacles as opportunities for growth), (iv) empowering others by

acting (by fostering collaboration, establishing trust, and producing momentum), and (v) promoting the spirit (by producing a sense of purpose and passion). If a school principal has these qualities, they will likely achieve their goals.

School leadership practice should aim to establish a group of educators (i.e., principals and teachers) who can lay the groundwork for shared leadership to guarantee students' academic success. By facilitating communication across cultural divides and creating new models for growth, schools have the potential to become powerful forces for positive social change. They need to encourage lifelong education, adaptability, social and cultural engagement, and the growth of both theoretical and applied knowledge. Principals and instructors, being the primary factors in students' and schools' successes or failures, should be held responsible for their roles in these outcomes. Thus, in order to decrease academic inefficiency, principals, teachers, parents, and members of the school board need to work together.⁴

Educational leaders have the power to pave the way for students to grow in their ability to learn and adapt in the face of adversity. According to a study, a strategic analysis of school leadership reveals connections between classroom management, the school's atmosphere (both internal and external), and student achievement.⁵ The academic path of a school can be altered by the leadership practices of its administrators and educators. According to a study, it is through the combined efforts of educators, institutions, and communities that real change may occur.⁶ The school serves as a community hub for education and information sharing. The academic success of a school depends on its instructors more than anything else. The leadership in a school can help direct the flow of cultural details in a way that benefits students' education. Leaders in schools who are responsive and proactive can support educators in becoming role models for their students. Understanding, getting ready, education, and ongoing professional development are essential for effective school leadership practices that encourage students' active engagement. Leadership practices were found as effective in raising students' academic performance.⁷ These practices are as follows: setting lofty goals,

engaging students in the learning process, preparing thoughtfully, adjusting and changing as needed, and working ceaselessly.

Statement:

School is the basic center of the society to develop because the new generation learn, achieve and perform the academic objectives designed by the education policy. These objectives are achieved only by the effective, motivating and inspiring teachers. more importantly, these school teachers are led by the sincere, honest, hard worker school leaders who play their vital role in managing and shaping the transformational culture of helping out the students' academic achievements. These school leaders play their action-oriented responsibilities and also assist their teaching staff to be the role model and symbolize the values and make successful teaching and learning environment.⁸ The school leaders are considered as the most influential persons who encourage teachers to create an appropriate learning environment so that set targets of the school could be achieved. Therefore, the school leaders ensure the engaging learning environment which impacts directly on students' academic achievement.⁹ The school leadership and management are the main factors contributing towards school environment and students' academic achievement through effective, dedicated flexible measures for gaining excellence.¹⁰ School leaders effectively and positively promote the relationship between teachers and students. For that reason, it has believed that the effective school leaders and engaging learning school environment have potential and competencies to transfer the working knowledge among stakeholders.¹¹ The teaching staff ensures to utilize their skills and understanding properly when the school leaders ensure the collaboration, coordination and time-based decision-making strategies in the school environment. However, these school leaders should have enough theoretical and conceptual understanding of how to arrange the school environment conducive to learning and how to help teachers to deliver inspiring lessons so that the academic achievement can be obtained. Therefore, school leaders are thought as most important organizational assets to transform the organizational directions, to achieve the set desired goals, to

raise the organizational standards, and to improve academic achievements.¹² National Education Policy (NEP) of Pakistan (2009) has stressed on the importance of professional development, competence and attribution of school leaders so that they can lead teachers and students effectively for better academic achievement. Hence the researcher intended to investigate the impact of head teachers' Leadership Practices on School Environment and Academic Achievement at Secondary Schools in Nasirabad division, Balochistan province.

Objectives:

1. To evaluate the impact of head teachers' Leadership Practices on School Environment at Secondary Schools in Nasirabad division, Balochistan province
2. To analyze the impact of head teachers' Leadership Practices on Academic Achievement at Secondary Schools in Nasirabad division, Balochistan province
3. To provide suggestions for better school environment and Academic Achievement at Secondary Schools

Hypotheses:

1. Head teachers' Leadership Practices have no significant impact on School Environment at Secondary Schools in Nasirabad division, Balochistan province.
2. Head teachers' Leadership Practices have no significant impact on Academic Achievement at Secondary Schools in Nasirabad division, Balochistan province.

Various research studies have been reviewed to understand the leadership practices of school leaders for managing teaching and learning environment and improving the academic achievement of schools. In school leadership, many people are involved in collaboration and coordination with a degree of interdependence for achievement of the shared goals and objectives.¹³ In this connection, it has been described that the leadership involves three elements. They are leaders, followers and situation where everyone has a shared responsibility to achieve the desired goals. This leadership is used as

diagnostic and analytical tool for focusing on collective attention on core task of teaching and learning in the schools and plans are prepared to improve the underperforming areas.¹⁴

Literature also suggested that schools require coordination and collaboration between school leaders and school staff so that the learning facilitating programs can be developed properly and organizational practices, routines and tools could be developed to develop instructional strategies for enhancing delivery of knowledge in the school environment.¹⁵ Focusing on the importance of the leadership, a study has suggested that the successful leaders in Pakistan contribute significantly in empowering subordinates and stakeholders with emphasizing on collaborative and coordinated activities, decision making, functions and communication practices.¹⁶ This leadership works as tool to assess and identify the school areas to be improved immediately. Framework of leadership improves the school performance, facilitates the transformational activities through shared responsibilities of the school staff.¹⁷ As the leadership involves the member of the whole school for shaping the school environment conducive to learning through productive and meaningful teaching and learning process therefore, there is demand of willing leaders for exploring the organizational tools, routines and practices that could be useful for enhancing educational development. This demands willingness, commitment, expertise, shared understanding and planning of leaders to achieve the institutional objectives properly.¹⁸ Therefore, selection of this framework enabled researcher to explore the commitment, experiences, understanding and planning activities of school leaders for improving the academic performance of schools because this leadership involves not only heads but all the members of school community for shaping the meaningful and productive learning environment.

The meaningful interactions before, during and after tasks and activities between school leaders and teachers indicate the expertise, knowledge and in-depth understanding of the school leadership because school leadership is an integrative and interactive process between leaders and followers. Therefore, the distributive leadership indicates how school leaders inspire, nurture

capacity for collective task of teaching, interpersonal skills and mentoring; and how they define, present and carry out the designed tasks as a foundation to improve the academic performance. Therefore, school system requires leaders who are capable to manage the school system and influence on the students' academic performance.¹⁹

Regardless of the field of service, developing into a leader who inspires others is not a simple feat. Still, the fundamental practical ideas for leadership in education have not changed. It has been argued that leadership isn't the result of any one thing or person, but rather a conglomeration of factors. It is the ability of school administrators to create and carry out measures that may ensure an ongoing increase in effectiveness and a cordial corporate connection between the staff and the community it serves that makes for successful and long-lasting regulation of any organization. Thus, administrators in the education sector are looking for teachers who can get the job done quickly.²⁰ Improvements in school leadership are strongly linked to the requirement for institutions to attract and retain talented educators. Personal skills (improved self-awareness; critical and complicated anxiety and stress leadership; conflict resolution); interpersonal abilities (relationship building through beneficial interaction; establishing power and strength; boosting efficiency; resolving and resolving tensions); and group skills (inspiring and empowering others; constructing successful efficiency) are at the core of effective leadership practice.

Methodology: The descriptive survey design with quantitative approach was used to conduct this study. A descriptive survey approach is more appropriate for collecting a huge data from the large number of sample at one point in time.²¹ The participants of the study were consisting of 998 teachers of Naseerabad Division Balochistan. Simple random sampling method was used for selection of the sample. The sample was extracted by using Yamani formula which consists of 285 teachers. Questionnaire Likert Scale 0.5 was used to collect the response.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Analyzing the Security Aspects of Islamophobia through Hollywood Films

The inferential statistics was used to analyze the data through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) 26 Version. The regression analysis was undertaken to investigate the impact of head teachers` Leadership Practices on School Environment and Academic Achievement at Secondary Schools.

FINDINGS

The statistical tests were applied and presented to answer the research null hypotheses, as displayed in all the tables below.

Objective: I. to investigate the impact of head teachers` Leadership Practices on School Environment at Secondary Schools

Hypothesis: HoI: There is no significant impact of head teachers` Leadership Practices on School Environment in the context of Secondary Schools.

Regression Analysis Table

Hypotheses	Regression Weight	Beta Coefficient	t	R Square	F	p-value	Hypotheses Supported
Ho	LP SE	.713		.508	112.76 6	.000	No

Table I: Summary of Findings

The above mentioned table demonstrates that regression analysis was used to analyze the impact of Leadership Practices as predicting variable on dependent variable School Environment to test the hypothesis Ho. The results indicates that Leadership Practices significantly affect School Environment with the values of $F = 83.425$, $P < 0.001$. It could be asserted that Leadership Practices can play a significant role in influencing School Environment ($B = 1.245$, $p < .001$). These findings explicitly predict direct and positive effect of the Leadership Practices on School Environment. In addition, the value of R square = .508 indicates that the regression model is showing 50.8% of variance in the School Environment. Hence, according to the results, null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis verifies that head teachers` Leadership Practices have significant impact on School Environment at Secondary Schools is accepted.

Objective: I. To determine the effect of head teachers` Leadership Practices on Academic Achievement at Secondary Schools

Hypothesis: HoI: Head teachers` Leadership Practices have no significant impact on Academic Achievement at Secondary Schools

Regression Analysis Table

Hypotheses	Regression Weight	Beta Coefficient	t	R Square	F	p-value	Hypotheses Supported
Ho	LP → AA	.628		.489	111.399	.000	No

Table 2: Summary of Findings

The above demonstrated table illustrates that regression analysis was used to analyze the impact of predicting variable Leadership Practices on dependent variable Academic Achievement to test the hypothesis Ho. The findings indicated that Leadership Practices significantly affect Academic Achievement, with values of $F = 111.399$, $P < 0.001$. These results portrayed that Leadership Practices are likely to have a significant role in influencing Academic Achievement. The values of $B = .628$ and $p < .001$ clearly predicted positive and direct effect of Leadership Practices on Academic Achievement. Additionally, the value of $R \text{ square} = .489$ indicated that the regression model shows 48.9% of variance in the Academic Achievement. In this way, the results identified that null hypothesis was rejected. Conversely, the findings proved that hypothesis Head teachers` Leadership Practices have no significant impact on Academic Achievement at Secondary Schools was accepted.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The study was aimed at investigating the effect of head teachers` Leadership Practices on School Environment and Academic Achievement in the context of Secondary Schools. It was concluded based on the consequence of the research showed the statistically significant positive impact of school leadership practices on school environment and students` academic achievements at secondary school level. Principals and instructors alike have

reported receiving feedback in both official and informal settings. Particularly substantially as it relates to teacher evaluation, feedback has recently been linked to studies of effective school leadership practices. The results further demonstrates that the leadership practices of head teachers help to identify the areas of improvement in the school setting that facilitates improvement of school performance, and facilitates the transformational activities through shared responsibilities of the school staff. Strong school leaders, according to a research, "concentrate more on the developmental dialogue of teacher evaluation and blend a formal opinion during evaluating sessions with unofficial suggestions throughout their daily practice."²² Important feedback conversations are also the principal's role.

According to a research, principals play a pivotal role in sparking discussions that lead to teaching strategies linked to higher student achievement in the classroom.²³ During one of the focus groups, participants provided varying degrees of input. This amount of customization is in line with the recommendation made by Blasé and Kirby to "tailor responses to the individual teacher. These phases of inquiry, contemplation, conversation and suggestions, and establishing targets may provide instructors with fresh perspectives as well as frequently and appropriate opinions to support their academic growth. Authors wrote to explain the function of opinions in the new evaluation process."²⁴ Teachers and principals who took part in this study affirmed the importance of opinions and detailed its practical applications in the classroom.

Several of the focus groups also mentioned confidence in the principal as an important feature of their connections with the principle and the usage of feedback in the evaluation process. A study has made a connection between trust and how instructors are managed and evaluated. If principals "supervise in a way that the extra attention is regarded as an increased caring with a focus on problem resolution and coaching," they will have a chance to show off their skills and knowledge.²⁵ A study provide more backing for relationships built on trust between teachers and principals by explaining that when one "intentionally create[s] an atmosphere of trust as well as give[s]

autonomy", ownership and responsibility rise.²⁶ Two of the teacher focus groups identified principal trust as an important characteristic of their working relationship with the principal. When asking school administrators and teachers about their top concerns, two themes emerged: children and maintaining a secure and orderly learning environment. According to an analysis of learning-centered leadership, "Modeling significant concern in students' achievement, classroom, and pedagogical processes signals to all individuals that the essential purpose of the school is uppermost in the minds of the leaders."²⁷ Participating principals cared about their kids as individuals, not just as potential learners. Effective principals make student respect a central focus of their communication and actions.²⁸ All of the principals surveyed placed student safety and school discipline above all else. A secure and organized environment was highlighted as one of the components for the "what works in school" model.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the principal should lead by example in promoting a growth mindset focusing on adult and peer relationship building and facilitating discussions with staff and peers on these areas of study. The researcher suggests training for developing leadership skills and abilities of the principals to lead the school in a better way. The role of a principal's own educational philosophy on the selection of academic programs for students this needs to be more powerful and engaging. This study makes recommendations as proposals for action based on the study findings after acknowledging the limitations of the data analysis that more complete picture of the principal's decision-making process in the student area of academic programming may be attained through further work on the personality of the principals` and their decision making abilities. The study's findings imply that a graduation coach should be a central figure in the group's deliberations. Because of the principals` emphasis on building rapport with each student and teacher, the path to becoming a principal is also an intriguing part to be focused by the administration.

By looking at the principal through the lens of the type of license they hold, may gain insight into the traits shared by effective principals, which may then be used to shape leadership development programs and guide districts in the selection of new principals.²⁹ In addition, the leadership practices of a school's administration can help improve student achievement by fostering an environment of open communication, productive teamwork, and supportive partnerships among educators, parents, and the local community which the principals should focus on.³⁰ The way in which a school's administration handles unanticipated change can range from being proactive to being neutral to being reactive. In order to effectively delegate tasks, leaders should exude assurance in their own abilities as well as in the abilities of their subordinates to carry out their assigned tasks.

References

¹ Beatriz, Pont, Nusche Deborah, and Moorman Hunter. *Improving school leadership, volume I policy and practice: Policy and practice*. Vol. I. OECD publishing, 2008.

² Budiharso, Teguh, and Bulent Tarman. "Improving quality education through better working conditions of academic institutes." *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 7, no. 1 (2020): 99-115.

³ Kouzes, Tae Kyung, and Barry Z. Posner. "Influence of managers' mindset on leadership behavior." *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* 40, no. 8 (2019): 829-844.

⁴ Masci, Chiara, Kristof De Witte, and Tommaso Agasisti. "The influence of school size, principal characteristics and school management practices on educational performance: An efficiency analysis of Italian students attending middle schools." *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences* 61 (2018): 52-69.

⁵ Huang, Tiedan, Craig Hochbein, and Jordan Simons. "The relationship among school contexts, principal time use, school climate, and student achievement." *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 48, no. 2 (2020): 305-323.

⁶ Day, Christopher, Pam Sammons, and Kristine Gorgen. "Successful School Leadership." *Education development trust* (2020).

⁷ Ingersoll, Richard M., Philip Sirinides, and Patrick Dougherty. "Leadership Matters: Teachers' Roles in School Decision Making and School Performance." *American Educator* 42, no. 1 (2018): 13.

⁸ Thor, Daniel, and Peter Karlsudd. "Teaching and fostering an active environmental awareness design, validation and planning for action-oriented environmental education." *Sustainability* 12, no. 8 (2020): 3209.

⁹ Day, Christopher, Pam Sammons, and Kristine Gorgen. "Successful School Leadership." *Education development trust* (2020).

¹⁰ Kiral, Erkan. "Excellent Leadership Theory in Education." *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies* 4, no. 1 (2020): n1.

- ¹¹ Naidoo, Parvathy. "Perceptions of teachers and school management teams of the leadership roles of public school principals." *South African Journal of Education* 39, no. 2 (2019).
- ¹² McBrayer, Juliann Sergi, Julie Chance, Summer Pannell, and Pamela Wells. "A System-Wide, Collaborative, Purposeful, and Sustainable Distributed Leadership Plan Utilizing Teacher Leaders to Facilitate Professional Learning Communities." *Educational Planning* 25, no. 4 (2018): 27-46.
- ¹³ Clark, L. Jeneva, Emily Braley, and Jack Bookman. "DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP." *Handbook of STEM Faculty Development* (2022): 291.
- ¹⁴ Strasser, Tim, Joop de Kraker, and René Kemp. "Developing the transformative capacity of social innovation through learning: A conceptual framework and research agenda for the roles of network leadership." *Sustainability* 11, no. 5 (2019): 1304.
- ¹⁵ Ugur, Naciye Güliz, and Tugba Koç. "Leading and Teaching with Technology: School Principals' Perspective." *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management* 7, no. 1 (2019): 42-71.
- ¹⁶ Rani, Muqaddas, Asifa Ishaq, Fazal Abbas, Khalid Mahmood Arif, and Rizwana Bashir Zia. "Empowering Education: Unraveling the Administrative Role of Head Teachers in Nankana Sahib, Punjab, Pakistan." *OEconomia* 6, no. 2 (2023): 362-377.
- ¹⁷ Al-Husseini, Sawasn, Ibrahim El Beltagi, and Jonathan Moizer. "Transformational leadership and innovation: the mediating role of knowledge sharing amongst higher education faculty." *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 24, no. 5 (2021): 670-693.
- ¹⁸ Pan, Hui-Ling Wendy, and Wen-Yan Chen. "How principal leadership facilitates teacher learning through teacher leadership: Determining the critical path." *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 49, no. 3 (2021): 454-470.
- ¹⁹ Mahoney, Joseph L., Roger P. Weissberg, Mark T. Greenberg, Linda Dusenbury, Robert J. Jagers, Karen Niemi, Melissa Schlinger et al. "Systemic social and emotional learning: Promoting educational success for all preschool to high school students." *American Psychologist* 76, no. 7 (2021): 1128.
- ²⁰ Oyedotun, Temitayo Deborah. "Sudden change of pedagogy in education driven by COVID-19: Perspectives and evaluation from a developing country." *Research in Globalization* 2 (2020): 100029.
- ²¹ Moser, Albine, and Irene Korstjens. "Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 3: Sampling, data collection and analysis." *European journal of general practice* 24, no. 1 (2018): 9-18.
- ²² Driscoll, Amy, and Swarup Wood. *Developing outcomes-based assessment for learner-centered education: A faculty introduction*. Taylor & Francis, 2023.
- ²³ Pangrazi, Robert P., and Aaron Beighle. *Dynamic physical education for elementary school children*. Human Kinetics Publishers, 2019.
- ²⁴ Robinson, Viviane, and Emma Gray. "What difference does school leadership make to student outcomes?." *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 49, no. 2 (2019): 171-187.
- ²⁵ Goldring, Ellen B., Jason A. Grissom, Mollie Rubin, Laura K. Rogers, Michael Neel, and Melissa A. Clark. "A New Role Emerges for Principal Supervisors: Evidence from Six Districts in the Principal Supervisor Initiative." *Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.* (2018).

²⁶ Mehmet, K. A. R. S., and Yusuf Inandi. "Relationship between school principals' leadership behaviors and teachers' organizational trust." *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research* 18, no. 74 (2018): 145-164.

²⁷ Howard, Francis Ellison. "Faculty and Staff Mentors' Experiences Supporting Academic Success with At-Risk Undergraduates." PhD diss., Walden University, 2021.

²⁸ Stronge, James H. *Qualities of effective teachers*. Ascd, 2018.

²⁹ Allen, Stephen, Ann L. Cunliffe, and Mark Easterby-Smith. "Understanding sustainability through the lens of ecocentric radical-reflexivity: Implications for management education." *Journal of Business Ethics* 154 (2019): 781-795.

³⁰ Tan, Cheng Yong. "Examining school leadership effects on student achievement: The role of contextual challenges and constraints." *Cambridge journal of education* 48, no. 1 (2018): 21-45.