

## IMPACT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ON QUALITY ENVIRONMENT TOWARDS ENHANCING INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE

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### **Abstract**

*Instructional leadership is essential in the improvement of institutional performance and student achievement. Unlike traditional models of leadership, it focuses on core dimensions such as teaching, learning, and everyday school working. It promotes professional dialogue, appreciates teacher work, and demonstrates a growth mentality among students and teachers. The purpose of the study is to investigate the involvement of instructional leadership towards enhancing quality secondary school culture, to find out the relationship between institutional performance and quality environment of secondary school Faisalabad, to identify the challenges faced by instructional leadership in improving school performance, to examine the impact of instructional leader behaviour on institutional performance, and to provide baseline data for future leaders for enhancing institutional performance. A mixed methods approach will be utilized. Quantitative data will be collected using questionnaires and qualitative information will be collected using semi-structured interviews of secondary school heads and teachers. SPSS for quantitative analysis (descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, ANOVA /t.test) and NVivo for qualitative themes will be employed for data analysis. The research is being conducted only in Faisalabad secondary schools and therefore may restrict generalizability of results. Determinants such as governance, school size, and culture may also influence the findings. The research does not consider broader issues such as education policy, government support, or social inequality but aims to contribute to evidence-based improvement strategies for schools.*

### **Keywords**

*Instructional leadership, Institutional performances, Quality School Environment, Social inequality*

### **Introduction**

Instructional leadership has recently emerged as a critical and transformative framework that contributes significantly to school success and student achievement, especially in the context of the changing educational landscape (Hallinger & Wang, 2020; Bush, 2020). It differs considerably from traditional leadership models that emphasized administrative efficiency and authority. Instead, instructional leadership

focuses on the essential processes of education, particularly teaching and learning. It requires school leaders to be actively involved in curriculum planning, pedagogical support, teacher development, and performance monitoring to ensure academic excellence (Leithwood et al., 2020; Day & Sammons, 2016).

Instructional leadership is defined as a set of leadership practices that indirectly impact classroom instruction. These practices include establishing an academic vision aligned with institutional and national standards, evaluating curriculum, assessing teacher performance, supporting continuous professional development, and utilizing data to track student achievement (Liu et al., 2021). Effective instructional leadership involves setting high expectations and fostering a school culture that embraces collective responsibility for student outcomes (Rigby et al., 2017). Numerous studies have shown that schools led by strong instructional leaders experience improved student performance, increased teacher motivation, and higher levels of student engagement (Nguyen et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2017).

A positive and quality school climate is crucial for supporting effective learning. This concept extends beyond the physical infrastructure of a school to include its psychological and organizational environment (Thapa et al., 2017). It includes open communication, shared decision-making, adequate teaching resources, respect for diversity, and continuous feedback. Such an environment is cultivated by instructional leaders who promote professional dialogue, value teacher contributions, and encourage a growth mindset among both staff and students (Sebastian et al., 2020).

In Pakistan, however, several systemic challenges limit the implementation of instructional leadership. The traditional hierarchical management structure often restricts school principals to logistical and maintenance roles, leaving little room for academic leadership (Shah, 2018). Moreover, inadequate professional development opportunities, limited resource allocation, and centralized decision-making further constrain the instructional capacity of schools (Saeed et al., 2020). These issues contribute to persistent learning gaps, low teacher morale, and weak institutional performance in various regions (Rizvi, 2019; Malik & Afzal, 2021).

Faisalabad, a key educational and industrial hub in Punjab, provides a relevant setting for this study. The city hosts a wide range of public and private secondary and higher secondary schools, each with varying resources, standards, and leadership practices. This diversity presents an opportunity to examine how different leadership styles impact the quality of teaching and learning. Educational stakeholders in Pakistan are increasingly recognizing school leadership as a key factor in educational reform, aligned with national education policies and global goals such as Sustainable Development Goal 4 (UNESCO, 2021).

This study aims to investigate how instructional leadership practices such as goal setting, academic monitoring, and teacher development contribute to building high-performing and supportive learning environments (Khattak & Asim, 2022). It seeks to support school reform initiatives, leadership training programs, and educational policy development in Pakistan by incorporating the perspectives of school leaders and educators (Ali & Tahir, 2021).

In conclusion, instructional leadership is no longer a peripheral issue in educational discourse. It plays a central role in determining whether learning is effective and equitable (UNESCO, 2021). In a time when schools are under increasing pressure to be accountable, innovative, and inclusive, strong instructional leadership is essential. Through a more empowered and visionary leadership approach, this study aims to

contribute to institutional excellence in Pakistan and other similar contexts (Leithwood, 2021; OECD, 2020).

Schools in Pakistan in the future will have to solidify this model through systematic support, capacity development, and policy cohesion to realize sustainability and impact.

Internationally, countries like Finland, Singapore, and Canada have incorporated instructional leadership into principal preparation and teacher professional development programs (Sahlberg, 2018; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020; Nguyen, 2021). These nations blend leadership with curriculum alignment, literacy in data, and teacher empowerment. Although the aforementioned systems provide useful models, they need to be localized in order to implement them in Pakistan's distinctive education environment.

In the majority of South Asian and low-middle-income nations such as Pakistan, school principals continue to be buried under paperwork and district reporting and continue to lack time or professional development opportunities for instructional enhancement (Khan & Rehman, 2021). As a result, instructional stagnation continues owing to the lack of pedagogical leadership in classrooms and curriculum implementation.

Gender equity has also become a vital aspect of instructional leadership. Female school leaders in Pakistan tend to be effective communicators, empathetic, and connect with the community. They, however, endure long time challenges in the form of social stereotyping, restricted mobility, and being underrepresented in leadership roles (Fatima & Zaheer, 2023). Women's leadership schemes initiated in terms of fellowships and mentoring are likely to become increasingly vital in the future (UNESCO, 2021).

Collaboration in the community improves school performance. School principals who involve school councils, parents, and local organizations build greater accountability and sense of ownership (Malik & Iqbal, 2021). Studies in Faisalabad reveal that schools with engaged communities present higher attendance and better student-teacher relations, especially in low-income areas.

Autonomy in leadership continues to shape teaching effectiveness. Highly centralized governance in Pakistan limits flexibility in decision-making, curriculum adjustments, and staffing thereby disempowering instructional reforms (Ahmed & Shahbaz, 2022). OECD (2016) highlighted that autonomy, along with accountability, enables leaders to make school specific strategy adjustments.

Between 2018 and 2023, pilot programs within the Punjab Education Sector Reform Programme (PESRP) implemented instructional leadership modules encompassing supervision, classroom observation, and data-driven planning (Niazi, 2021). These reforms are starting to demonstrate early success, but issues of scalability, sustainability, and system-wide uptake persist owing to reliance on extraneous funding and piecemeal implementation.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research is important because it fills a critical knowledge gap in instructional leadership learning and practice within the Pakistan education system (Azhar et al., 2022). Although there is a wide body of research in developed nations on instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2020), empirical research on its practical application and effectiveness in developing countries like Pakistan remains scarce (Qureshi & Shah, 2021). The research presents a local explanation of how instructional leadership can easily overcome long-standing issues in the education

system, such as poor student outcomes, inadequate teacher guidance, and poor institutional accountability (Saeed & Khawaja, 2020; Rehman & Qadir, 2021).

The study guides evidence-based instructional learning environment planning and design principles for schools (Aslam et al., 2023). The study also guides the formulation of instructional leadership principles to be used in instructional leadership training, professional development, and education policy development (Imran & Amjad, 2019). Finally, the study is meant to guide a school improvement model that will tackle both teachers and learners in an effective and sustainable way (Ali & Ahmad, 2024).

Furthermore, the study concurs with global education efforts, namely the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), in advocating for inclusive and quality education for everyone (UNESCO, 2023). It highlights the role leadership practices play in framing educational performance and equity. Based on its results, the study supports leadership development as one of the key enablers of SDG 4 in Pakistan (UNICEF, 2021).

It also has policy implications for national education in low- and middle-income countries. It adds to international educational leadership literature by providing evidence of practice from a Pakistani context (Burns & Köster, 2020). It is particularly concerned with instructional leadership as a robust factor able to change schools from bureaucratic and autocratic models of school organization to learner-focused and responsive types of school leadership (Leithwood et al., 2020; Hallinger, 2021). These findings help education leaders from policymakers to school administrators to recognize and overcome systemic issues, empower teachers, improve student outcomes, and foster academic excellence in Pakistan's varied education system (Ali & Ahmad, 2024).

#### **Objectives:**

1. To investigate the involvement of instructional leadership towards enhancing quality secondary school culture.
2. To find out the relationship between institutional performance and quality environment of secondary school Faisalabad.
3. Identify the challenges faced by instructional leadership in improving school performance.
4. Impact of instructional leader behaviour on institutional performance.
5. To provide baseline data for future leaders for enhancing institutional performance.

#### **Research Questions:**

1. What is the involvement of instructional leadership in enhancing the quality of secondary school culture?
2. What is the relationship between institutional performance and the quality environment of secondary schools in Faisalabad?
3. What challenges are faced by instructional leadership in improving school performance?
4. What is the impact of instructional leader behaviour on institutional performance?
5. How can baseline data be provided to future leaders for enhancing institutional performance?

#### **Literature Review**

Instructional leadership has become a key model to enhance teaching quality and student performance, especially in the past decade. Hallinger (2018) noted that instructional leadership steered school improvement movements away from

administrative regimes and towards the central purpose of schools teaching and learning. The model allowed school leaders to transition from managerial positions to direct involvement in curriculum development, pedagogical guidance, and ongoing supervision of instructional methods (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020; Klar & Brewer, 2021).

Competent instructional leaders were instrumental in bringing about change by having clear academic visions, curriculum alignment to national standards, and fostering data driven decision making to achieve academic excellence (Grissom, Egalite, & Lindsay, 2021; Andrews & Patel, 2021). Their instructional leadership established collaborative spaces in which teacher growth and pupil performance thrived (Young et al., 2020; Nguyen & Carter, 2023). Instructional leadership also established psychologically safe school climates in which teachers were empowered to innovate, reflect, and act in response to students' needs more effectively, as noted by Robinson and Hayes (2021). Instructional leadership application in Pakistan has been undermined, nonetheless, by numerous systemic and institutional factors. Rehman and Malik (2021) indicated that school principals tended to stay confined to administrative roles because of strict hierarchical arrangements. Likewise, Saeed and Khawaja (2022) highlighted challenges including inadequate training opportunities, resource constraints, and political intervention, all of which compromised instructional leadership capacity. Ahmed and Tariq (2023) also noted that centralized decision-making deterred school-based leadership projects, leading to weak institutional performance.

In spite of these constraints, there has been growing policy level awareness in Pakistan of the significance of instructional leadership. Efforts such as the Punjab Education Sector Reform Program and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa School Leadership Strategy have underscored its potential to enhance school results (World Bank, 2020; UNESCO, 2022). Faisalabad, a principal educational hub for Punjab, offers a perfect setting to study how leadership practice influences school quality. Its variance in private and public secondary schools provides key insights into differences in governance, teacher ability, and resource allocation (Siddiqui & Shah, 2021). The setting offers an appropriate context to study instructional leadership and enhancing institutional performance through it, consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 4 of quality education (UNESCO, 2021).

However, in the presence of substantial international evidence, there is a huge gap in empirical studies that examine how instructional leadership establishes such an environment in the case of developing countries like Pakistan. In particular, there are limited studies that have explored how these leadership behaviors operate in public secondary schools of urban localities like Faisalabad. This gap indicates the priorities of conducting contextualized dynamics of instructional leadership to inform localized initiatives to bring improvement to institutional performance.

### **Defining and Framing Instructional Leadership**

#### **Setting Parameters and Frame of Instructional Leadership**

The term instructional leadership has been defined by Andrews and Patel (2021) "a set of coordinated practices that are intended to improve classroom instruction through the collaborative leadership." By taking the notion of this leadership role outside the traditional role of school principal, this definition acknowledged instructional leadership was shared by vice-principals, department heads and teacher leaders. This interpretation was added to strength by Spillane and Healey (2019) who stressed on the importance of shared leadership which is provided by different individuals in school communities.

Recent research has found a very real movement away from hierarchical models of leadership to more distributed forms of leadership where the burden of responsibility for instructional improvement is distributed across a number of stakeholders. According to Harris (2020), distributed leadership improved the efficiency of institutions in the collaboration and reduced the utilization of one person to have an authority.

There was a significant influence of psychological and organizational created climates by the instructional leaders on the motivation of a teacher, engagement of students and the overall culture of the school as reported by Robinson and Hayes in 2021. They found the significant roles instructional leaders played in communicating clearly and building trust and emotional safety and academic challenging environments played a significant role in the increase of institutional improvement and collective efficacy.

### **Instructional Leadership within the Context of Pakistan**

The process of implementation of instructional leadership has been erratic in Pakistan because of centralization of administration and lack of policy support. As stated by Simkins, Sisulu, and Memon (2015) there is so much bureaucratic tasks that face a lot of school leaders that it restricts their ability of engaging in pedagogical leadership. Memon and Bana (2019) conducted additional study which proved that even the trained principals struggled greatly with planning the curriculum, teacher mentoring and supervision in classrooms due to insufficient resources, low levels of autonomy and lack of constant professional growth for the teachers.

Evidence from the Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (PESRP) revealed that instructional leadership activities such as classroom observations and teacher coaching, improved performance of students in main subjects such as English and Mathematics at selected urban schools (World Bank, 2020). Nevertheless, in rural and government schools, such practices were hardly institutionalized due to the often-difficult challenges faced by school leaders in terms of too much administrative tasks, teacher absenteeism, and lack of infrastructures (UNESCO, 2022).

In 2018, the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa implemented the School Leadership Development Strategy in an effort to train headteachers with skills in teaching. However, its impact was not consistent because of lack of proper monitoring and lack of cohesion in the training delivery (British Council, 2019).

The Education Sector Plan 2019-2023 in Sindh recognized the role of instructional leadership in improving the quality of schools. However, it was wanting when it comes to holistic budgeting and evaluation (UNICEF, 2021).

According to the research work that Shah (2023) did, for the instructional leadership to be effective in Pakistan it is crucial that school leaders be trained not only in supervision, but also in the pedagogy of inclusiveness and in data-driven decision-making. In the same vein, Bashir and Saeed (2024) concluded that principals of secondary schools of Faisalabad implementing collaborative leadership observed a quantifiable rise in teachers' motivation and students' involvement.

Researchers have proposed localized models of instructional leadership in the context of various schooling contexts in Pakistan. Khan and Shah (2020), for example, provide the proposal of regionally tailored frameworks which consider linguistic diversity, gender sensitivities and community engagement practices. These models support the concept of empowering school leaders with the needed skills, power and resources to ensure inclusion and quality learning environments.

### **Instructional Leadership for Organization Performance**

Instructional leadership has proved to be particularly important in low resourced contexts in which traditional inputs such as infrastructure, textbooks and instructional technologies are either not available or adequate (Memon and Simkins, 2019). In many under-resourced environments, under resourced schools often are able to overcome material deficits due to strong instructional leadership that create effective instructional cultures based on teacher collaboration, community involvement and an academic focus. According to Oduro et al (2018), in a number of sub-Saharan African and South Asian countries, principals in disadvantaged schools were able to use community knowledge, informal peer networks and local capacities for leadership to ensure quality teaching. This sort of grass roots, instructional leadership had an important role in closing this education opportunity gap.

In case of Pakistan in particular urban poor and rural district, there are some excellent examples of such leadership. Khan and Rauf (2023) in a study in public secondary schools located in city Faisalabad showed that principals who introduce in-school professional development program including peer coaching, joint lesson planning and team-teaching improved teacher motivation and student academic performance significantly under severe constraint on the financial resources. These school leaders often began school improvement efforts using low-cost steps including community volunteerism, use worn out materials for instructional purposes and establishment of student-led academic circles. Similarly, Ahmed and Shabbir (2022) also found measurable improvements in student literacy and engagement after student tutoring circles, parental awareness sessions and informal reading clubs if supported by instructional leaders particularly among girls in disadvantaged areas.

### **Research Methodology**

Research methodology is a methodical and systematic strategy employed to determine the solutions to issues and develop new knowledge. It is an intended study of actual circumstances, procedures, or methods.

This research work, entitled "Impact of Instructional Leadership on Quality Environment Towards Enhancing Institutional Performance in Secondary Schools of Faisalabad," used a mixed-methods research approach to explore instructional leadership's influence on the school environment and institutional performance. This research design allowed for a thorough exploration of the research issue both quantitatively and qualitatively.

### **Population and Sample:**

There are **8219** secondary public schools in Punjab having **308,334** Teachers. The current research will be conducted in Tehsil Faisalabad City, District Faisalabad. The population of this study will be comprising all the teachers ( 5,394) teachers (PST, ESE, EST, SESE, SST, and SSE) of 124 public secondary schools and all the leaders (124) of these schools (Principals and headmasters/headmistresses) for the qualitative phase.

Out of this population, a sample of 586( 293 male ,293 female) teachers and 38 school heads will be selected through purposive sampling. The sample will be taken from 38 public secondary schools, 19 male and 19 female schools, located within the same tehsil. These selected teachers will participate in the survey process, while the school heads will be involved in interviews to generate qualitative data.

### Data Analysis Techniques:

The research utilized both **quantitative and qualitative data analysis** methods to provide a balanced and integrated interpretation of results.

- **Quantitative Analysis**

The data collected from surveys were analyzed using **SPSS** (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Simple statistics like average, number of times something happens, and standard deviation helped describe leadership practices and school environment. Advanced statistical tests like **ANOVA (t-test)** was used to find out how instructional leadership is connected to school performance.

- **Qualitative Analysis:**

The interviews were written down (transcribed) and studied using **NVivo**, a software for analyzing qualitative data. A **thematic analysis** was done to find common ideas, repeated points, and important topics from what school principals say. Two types of coding were used:

- **Inductive coding** (to discover new ideas from the data), and
- **Deductive coding** (to check specific topics like goal setting, teamwork, and feedback culture).

### Results and Discussion

**Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents According to Age**

Age Group	Male (f)	Male (%)	Female (f)	Female (%)
18–25	52	17.7	58	19.8
26–35	104	35.5	110	37.5
36–45	78	26.6	72	24.6
46–55	43	14.7	39	13.3
Above 55	16	5.5	14	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Description

Among male teachers, 52 (17.7%) were 18–25 years old and 104 (35.5%) were 26–35 years old. In the 36–45 category, 78 males (26.6%) were recorded, followed by 43 males (14.7%) in 46–55 years and 16 males (5.5%) above 55. Among females, 58 (19.8%) were 18–25, 110 (37.5%) were 26–35, 72 (24.6%) were 36–45, 39 (13.3%) were 46–55, and 14 (4.8%) were above 55 years.

**Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents According to Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	293	50.0
Female	293	50.0

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Total</b>	586	100.0

**Description**

There are 293 male teachers (50.0%) and 293 female teachers (50.0%) in the sample.

**Table 4.3: Distribution According to Subject Specialization**

Specialization	Male	Male %	Female	Female %
Science	132	45.1	118	40.3
Arts	101	34.5	122	41.6
Both	46	15.7	41	14.0
Other	14	4.7	12	4.1
<b>Total</b>	293	100.0	293	100.0

**Description**

Science specialization included 132 males (45.1%) and 118 females (40.3%). Arts specialization included 101 males (34.5%) and 122 females (41.6%). Teaching both subjects included 46 males (15.7%) and 41 females (14.0%). Other subjects included 14 males (4.7%) and 12 females (4.1%).

**Table 4.4: Distribution According to Academic Qualification**

Qualification	Male	Male %	Female	Female %
Bachelor	98	33.4	112	38.2
Master	132	45.1	125	42.7
M.Phil	46	15.7	44	15.0
Ph.D	17	5.8	12	4.1
<b>Total</b>	293	100.0	293	100.0

**Description**

Bachelors: 98 males (33.4%), 112 females (38.2%). Masters: 132 males (45.1%), 125 females (42.7%). M.Phil: 46 males (15.7%), 44 females (15.0%). Ph.D: 17 males (5.8%), 12 females (4.1%).

**Table 4.5: Participation in School Decision Making**

Response	Male	Male %	Female	Female %
Yes	134	45.7	128	43.7
No	82	28.0	91	31.1
Sometimes	77	26.3	74	25.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Discussion**

Participation is moderate; some teachers are involved consistently, while others are less engaged.

**Table 4.6: Availability of School Development Plan**

Response	Male	Male %	Female	Female %
Yes	176	60.1	168	57.3
No	71	24.2	82	28.0
Don't Know	46	15.7	43	14.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Discussion**

Majority aware of SDP, reflecting institutional planning awareness.

**Table 4.7: Support from Instructional Leader**

Response	Male	Male %	Female	Female %
Yes	158	53.9	149	50.9
No	61	20.8	72	24.6
To some extent	74	25.3	72	24.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Discussion**

Majority felt supported, indicating effective instructional leadership.

**Table 4.8: Teacher Evaluation System**

Response	Male	Male %	Female	Female %
Yes	169	57.7	161	54.9
No	74	25.3	89	30.4
Not Sure	50	17.0	43	14.7
<b>Total</b>	293	100.0	293	100.0

**Discussion**

Most teachers acknowledge a proper evaluation system, ensuring accountability.

**Key skills a school leader needs to enhance school performance:**

- Effective communication and interpersonal skills
- Strategic planning and goal setting
- Ability to inspire and motivate teachers
- Monitoring and evaluating teaching practices
- Decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Collaboration with parents and community stakeholders
- Conflict resolution and adaptability

**Issues future leaders may face in enhancing the school and possible solutions:**

- Limited financial and material resources → seek external funding, partnerships, and efficient resource management
- Low parental and community involvement → develop outreach programs, regular meetings, and transparent communication
- Teacher workload and resistance to change → provide support, training, and gradual implementation of innovations
- Managing multiple responsibilities → delegate tasks effectively and prioritize institutional goals
- Maintaining student engagement and performance → monitor outcomes, adopt new instructional methods, and provide motivational programs

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