

IMPACT OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of school leadership on the academic performance of secondary school students. Effective leadership is increasingly recognized as a critical factor in enhancing educational outcomes. This quantitative study investigates the impact of school leadership on the academic performance of secondary school students. A sample of 150 teachers from 15 public secondary schools was selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires focusing on goal setting, teacher motivation, instructional support, and academic performance indicators. Statistical analysis, including correlation and regression techniques, was used to examine the relationship between leadership styles and student performance. The results reveal a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership practices and improved academic outcomes. The study concludes that effective school leadership—characterized by goal setting, instructional support, and teacher motivation—plays a critical role in enhancing student performance at the secondary level. The findings highlight the need for leadership development programs to strengthen academic success in schools.

Keywords: School leadership, Academic performance, Transformational leadership, School climate

Introduction

There has been growing interest among researchers and policymakers as well as educators in the world about the role played by school leadership in defining the academic outcome of students. In a bid to enhance the learning outcomes in the education systems, the role of school leadership in enhancing school effectiveness as well as academic achievement has gained increased attention as a core element (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Good school leaders have an impact on the school, the way teaching is conducted, as well as the performance of the students in general. Within the framework of secondary school, where the students are at the threshold of increased academic and professional demands placed on them, leadership assumes even a greater role in providing the environment in which academic achievements become possible. School leadership entails the formulation of objectives, administration of resources, mentoring of teachers as well as creating an atmosphere, which promotes learning and success.

Transformational leadership is one of the most effective leadership styles that have exhibited its impact in education environment in the past few years (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders are the ones who inspire and motivate personnel using a common

vision, promote creativity, support staff individually, and develop an effective school culture, in which collaboration and constant betterment are appreciated. This kind of leadership is very topical in schools where the resources might be scarce and where the motivation and the morale are the important factors of the effective teaching and the learning of the students. The quality of leadership in the public secondary schools is a dominant factor in the determination of the student outcomes in nations such as Pakistan. As it is observed, even despite numerous educational reforms and initiatives, the academic performance in many public schools is lower than expected (UNESCO, 2021).

Among the reasons attributed to this are; scarcity of financial resources, lack of training of the teachers, lack of accountability as well as lack of leadership capacity. In several cases, school principals are chosen using seniority principle instead of leadership qualities and this actually hinders their capacity to control the instructional process and to inspire teachers (Rashid & Mukhtar, 2012). Consequently, the learners in such schools might not get quality education to do well in school or even compete in the higher levels of learning. The studies carried out in developed and developing nations have helped to realize that effective school leadership is only preceded by classroom teaching in its effects on student learning (Day et al., 2016). Leaders ensuring that there are clear academic objectives, instructional assistance, professional growth of the teaching staff as well as involving the school community can considerably raise the performance of the school. They are also associated with the creation of favorable school climate which, in its turn, is proved to increase student engagement rates, decrease disciplinary problems and create more substantial learning commitment (Hallinger, 2011).

Conversely, bad leadership might result in lack of teacher morale, provoke poor instructional processes, and students who are not engaged and eventually bring about poor academic achievement. Transformational leadership specifically has shown association with better student outcomes in a number of international settings. This leadership theory extends the classical management roles and focuses on vision, change and empowers others. Transformational leaders increase the chances of student success by allowing the teachers to own their jobs, facilitating innovation in the teaching process, and rewarding individual initiatives (Nguni, Slegers, & Denessen, 2006).

Teachers that serve under this kind of leadership are more encouraged, cooperative and determined to enhance their teaching methodology which has direct impact on the learning process. Although the significance of leadership has been established, there is paucity of empirical studies in Pakistan that have attempted to find out the nature of relationship that exists between school leadership practices and the academic performance of students. Although there are studies done regarding the general problems of school administration or the effectiveness of teachers, there are a little number of studies that specifically identify the effects that leadership styles, especially those of transformational leadership in secondary schools academic performance. This knowledge gap in the literature is an indication of the necessity of more dedicated inquiries which can be used in policy and practice.

Identification of the relationship between leadership and academic attainment can assist school and education departments to develop specific interventions that can be narrowed to enhancing the quality of leadership and subsequently, the performance of students. Secondary education presents an important phase in the education of a student. Such performance not only determines the chances of gaining admission into an institution of higher learning but also it carves out the future professional life of the students. Consequently, strengthening of the factors that facilitate academic achievement in this phase is quite imperative. One of such factors is leadership which exerts its influence on the whole school community.

Effective leadership in schools is able to raise high expectations, track progress, help underperforming pupils, and celebrate achievements hence the culture of achievement and accountability. The problems of the public secondary schools are complex in Pakistan. These are large classes, archaic curriculum, poor facilities as well as socio-economic difference in the students. Under these conditions, the role of school leader is rather important to find a way out of the limitations and provide the effective learning environment. With principals and head teachers having good leadership skills, they stand at a better position to counter these challenges through team cohesion building, efficient use of available resources, and developing partnership with the parents and the community. They are also capable of spearheading professional development initiatives that assist teachers in enhancement of their teaching methods and keep up with evolving education needs (Saeed & Wain, 2011).

Due to the growing concern in education quality and student performance, a rapid improvement in the leadership capability of school heads is eminent. This should be done systematically and should involve leadership training programs; performance-based selection criteria and frequent assessment on the effectiveness of leadership. It also entails a change in the understanding of the role of the leadership- as an administrative position to a strategic, instructive and visionary position that directly influences the learning of students. Educational authorities can also make a ripple effect on the teaching and learning in the whole system by providing the skills and knowledge school leaders require in leading their schools. The proposed study aims at providing knowledge concerning the role of school leadership in academic achievements of students in publicly funded secondary schools. It aims at determining kinds of leadership exerted in these schools, evaluating the connection involving leadership behaviors and student performance, and pointing the instruments through which leadership behaviors affect student performance.

The particular focus of the study is the transformational leadership because it can result in sustainable change and establishment of positive and achievement-oriented school culture. By conducting quantitative research design with the help of collecting data among teachers and students, the study will offer evidence-based information, which could be used in the development of leadership programs. It also provides suggestions to educational policy makers, school administrators and training institutions concerning what they can do to reinforce the leadership practice to promote academic excellence. The research is meant to contribute to the larger agenda of improvement of education and achievement of students within the Pakistani secondary education system by paying attention to the important interrelatedness between leadership and learning.

Problem Statement

Nevertheless, even with all the educational reforms and focus on enhancing the performance of schools in Pakistan, the learning outcome of students in the secondary government schools is systematically poor according to national and international standards. Whereas much research has been done in relation to factors like the design of the curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning resources availability, significantly less empirical focus has been given to the aspects of school leadership, and more specifically the type and quality of leadership in the local contexture. Most of the leadership positions in most of the publicly funded secondary schools are determined by the seniority at the administrative level as opposed to leadership skills and as such most have produced ineffective leadership in giving instructions, low motivation of the teacher, and poor academic performance. The urgent necessity to investigate the impact of various leadership styles, in particular, transformational leadership on the academic achievements of students via such mechanisms as school climate, teacher involvement, and support of instruction is announced. This research is aimed at closing this

gap by examining how school leadership affects the academic performance of students in secondary level of education in publicly funded schools.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between school leadership styles and students' academic performance in public secondary schools.
2. To identify the role of transformational leadership in shaping a positive school climate that supports student achievement.
3. To assess how school leadership practices influence teacher motivation and instructional effectiveness, contributing to academic outcomes.

Research Questions

- What is the relationship between different school leadership styles and the academic performance of secondary school students?
- How does transformational leadership contribute to the development of a positive school climate that enhances student performance?
- In what ways do school leadership practices affect teacher motivation and instructional practices, and how do these factors impact student achievement?

Literature Review

The Role of Leadership in Shaping Academic Achievement

It is not a secret that school leadership has been discussed as one of the most important foundations of successful educational establishments. As pointed out by Leithwood and others (2008), school leadership ranks second (only after classroom instruction) in the levels of impact on student learning. Good school leaders are the ones that develop visions, direction and strategies that foster academic excellence. They develop school culture, teacher capacity and also pave the way to implementation of curriculum reforms (Hallinger, 2011). Instructional leadership that tends to focus on curriculum coordination, classroom monitoring, and support of teaching has closely been associated with the enhanced academic achievement. Researchers Yasmeeen and Tobawal (2023) in the public schools of Balochistan discovered that the instructional leadership did affect in a significant way the student performance, especially in the science disciplines.

In the same regard, according to Khan et al. (2022), school heads concentrate on instructional strategies, which yielded a quantifiable outcome on the academic achievement of pupils in Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The role of leadership in Pakistan is even greater since this country faces the problems of resource deficit, political interference, and absence of responsibility. However, a good leadership could eliminate such barriers via sharing a vision, teamwork and performance oriented culture (Rashid & Mukhtar, 2012). Through such practices leaders affect the quality of teaching, student conduct and eventually, academic performance.

Transformational and Democratic Leadership Styles in Schools

Transformational and democratic leadership are among the different leadership styles which have attracted a lot of press notice in the recent years. Transformational leaders motivate teachers and students and encourage a common vision and innovation and self-efficacy. In a study by Nguni, Slegers and Denessen (2006) in Tanzanian schools, transformational leadership was proved to bring about increase in motivation and commitment of the teachers, that indirectly led to student outcome. These consistent results were also documented by Kaleem et al. (2023) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, stating that transformational leadership had a considerable effect on school climate and student achievement.

The democratic leadership which involves participative style of decision-making and open communication has also portrayed positive impact. The researchers noted that the heads of secondary schools in Punjab engaged in democratic leadership, which positively affected student academic performance (Iqbal, Saira, and Shamim 2023). Naz et al. (2024) established

in Mardan that democratic heads had established inclusive conditions that helped to foster the performance of teachers and students. On the contrary, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles have been mostly associated with poor educational outcomes. The authors of the research discovered that these styles discourage teachers and decrease their performance that subsequently influences the academic achievements of the learners (Abbasi et al., 2025). Democratic and transformational leaders, on the contrary, enable personnel, establish potent learning cultures, and coordinate efforts to achieve common academic purposes.

Mediating Factors: School Climate, Teacher Motivation, and Innovation

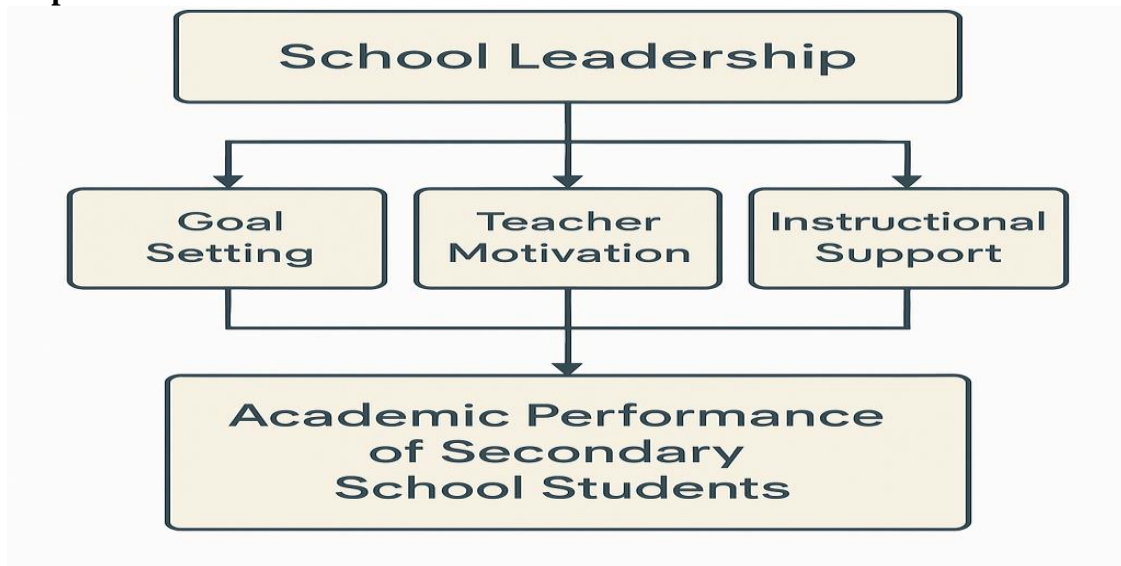
School climate can be described as a missing component which connects leadership and student performance. A good climate comprises of mutual respect, high expectation, student-focused policies and emotionally supportive climate (Hallinger, 2011). Leaders that develop these environments are likely to impact non-academic and academic results. In Researching schools in Balochistan, Jamali and Almani (2023) discovered that leadership was a great enhancer of school climate and consequently academic performance. Another mediating factor is the teacher motivation. Transformational leadership tends to raise work satisfaction and lower the turnover rates, as well as raise professional devotion (Nguni et al., 2006).

According to Kaleem et al. (2023), school teachers under supportive leadership had higher ratings on instructional quality, classroom management, and academic planning, which are the leading factors in poor student outcomes. New leadership forms, such as digital leadership and shared leadership are also taking a hold. Saeed and Kang (2024) demonstrated that in secondary schools of Karachi digital leadership enhanced the performance of teachers through facilitating the use of ICT and innovative pedagogical practices. Collaboration and constant improvement fostered by shared leadership where responsibilities are spread among the staff members in a school contribute to student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the majority of the empirical research conducted in Pakistan is based on the perceptions of teachers or the qualitative measures of leadership without the statistical association of leadership styles and student academic results. Hence, the study of direct and indirect impacts of leadership practices on student outcomes at public secondary schools has a considerable research gap since it has to be evaluated quantitatively.

Theoretical Framework

The research is also based upon Transformational Leadership Theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985) that states the importance of visionary and motivational leadership in its effect on the success of organizations. With regard to education, transformational leaders motivate teachers, foster a favorable climate in school, and improve the quality of teaching and learning activities, which are associated with better student academic performance. Also, the research will involve Instructional Leadership Theory (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) where the leader is emphasized in relation to establishing the academic mission of the school, administration of the instructional program, and ensuring an ideal learning environment. The concept of instructional leadership is directly related to teaching practices (and consequently student achievement). All these theories help to form the framework of analyzing the effect of leadership behaviors especially in goal setting, motivation of teachers and providing instructional support on the academic outcomes of students in the secondary schools.

Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of school leadership on the academic performance of secondary school students, as perceived by teachers. A survey method was utilized to gather data through a structured questionnaire consisting of 20 closed-ended items. These items were grouped under four major constructs: goal setting, teacher motivation, instructional support, and academic performance. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), allowing for the statistical analysis of teachers' perceptions.

The target population comprised teachers working in public secondary schools. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure adequate representation across different schools and teaching disciplines. A total of 150 teachers were selected from 15 public secondary schools, with 10 teachers from each school. The stratification ensured diversity in terms of subject specialization, years of experience, and school location. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize the responses, and inferential statistics—specifically Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis—to examine the relationship between school leadership practices and students' academic performance as perceived by teachers. The reliability of the instrument was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha, indicating acceptable internal consistency of the scale. The methodology enabled the researcher to quantify the influence of leadership behaviors on academic performance from the teachers' perspective, providing valuable insights for leadership development in secondary education settings.

Results and Findings

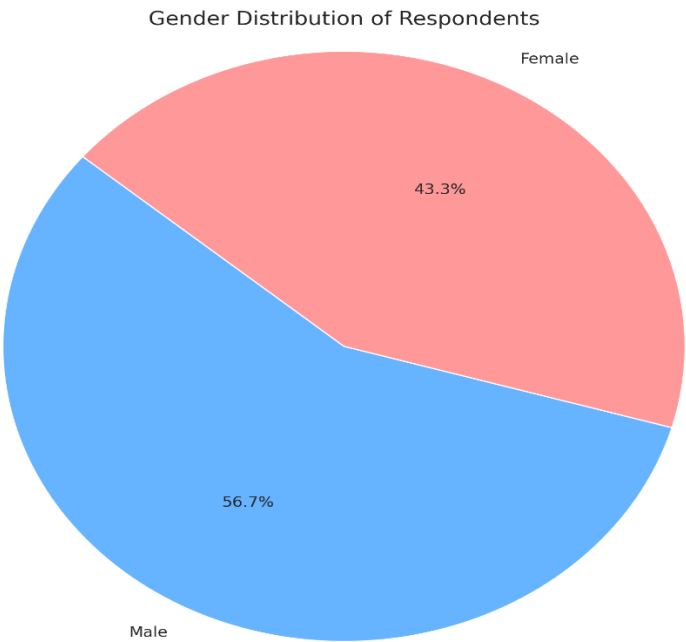


Figure 1
Pie Chart – Shows the Gender Distribution of the respondents.

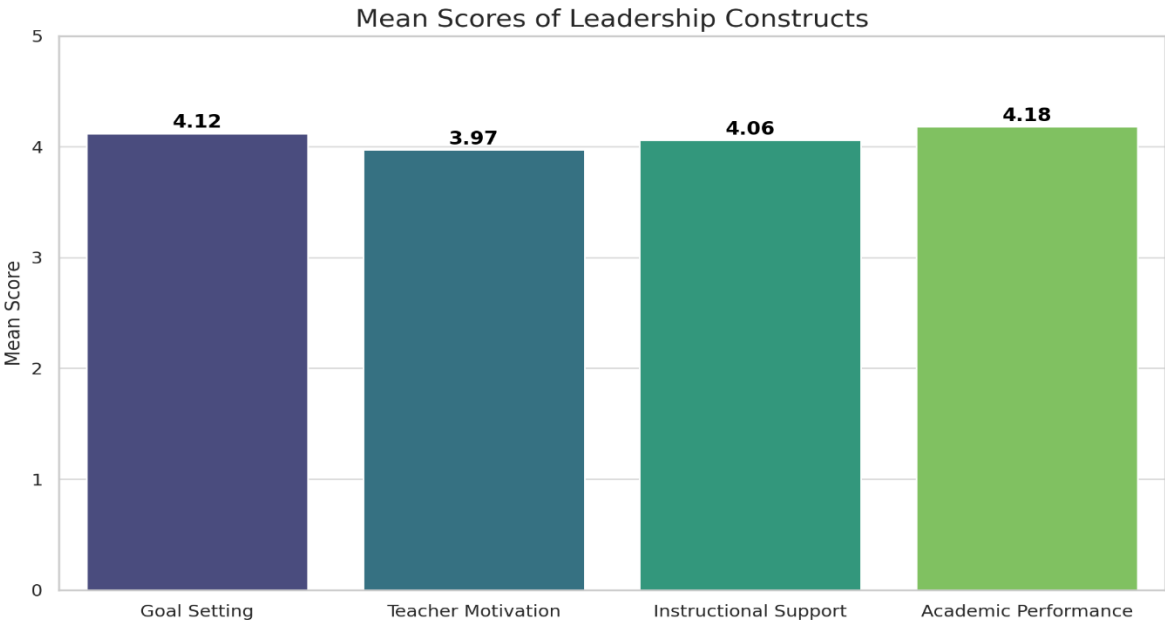


Figure 2
Bar Chart – Displays the Mean Scores of Leadership Constructs based on teacher responses.

Table 1

Demographic Information of Respondents (n = 150)			
Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	85	56.7%
	Female	65	43.3%

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teaching Experience	1–5 years	40	26.7%
	6–10 years	55	36.7%
	11 years and above	55	36.7%
Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	38	25.3%
	Master's Degree	92	61.3%
	M.Phil/PhD	20	13.3%

The demographical indicator reveals a comparatively equal gender proportions of the respondents, whereby 56.7 percent of the teachers are male, whereas 43.3 percent are female. The wide variety of the teaching experience is presented: 26.7% of teachers have 1 5 years of experience, 36.7% have 6 10 years, and 36.7% have more than 11 years of experience. This means that both new and experienced teachers have given their contribution in the study making the results more reliable. With regards to academic qualification, most of the respondents (61.3 percent) are holding a Masters degree, 25.3 percent have a Bachelors degree and 13.3 percent have an M.Phil or PHD. The diversification of the qualifications implies the well-educated and trained sample, which is appropriate to measure the dynamics of leadership and academic performance.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Key Constructs

Construct	No. of Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Goal Setting	5	4.12	0.61
Teacher Motivation	5	3.97	0.67
Instructional Support	5	4.06	0.58
Academic Performance	5	4.18	0.55

All construct mean scores are within the range of 3.97-4.18 on a 5-point Likert scale, which can be generally defined as the high level of agreement among teachers where the positive presence of leadership practices is concerned. The highest means were received by Academic Performance ($M = 4.18$) and Goal Setting ($M = 4.12$), which implies that school leaders are performing properly in terms of setting goals and producing a positive effect on academic performance of students. Teacher Motivation ($M = 3.97$) and Instructional Support ($M = 4.06$) had also high mean scores which means that the majority of the respondents are motivated and supported by the school leaders. All the standard deviations are less than 0.7 which indicates that there is minor variability in responses and the teachers had a unified perception.

Table 3

Reliability Statistics (Cronbach's Alpha)

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Goal Setting	0.82
Teacher Motivation	0.85
Instructional Support	0.79
Academic Performance	0.88

Cronbach Alpha values of all the four constructs exceed 0.78 with the reliability being highest in the Academic Performance scale (alpha = 0.88). It is a great internal consistency of all the items loading each construct. Goal Setting (alpha = 0.82), Teacher Motivation (alpha = 0.85), and Instructional Support (alpha = 0.79) have values higher than the usually acknowledged coefficient of 0.70, which proves the appropriateness and trustworthiness of the questionnaire. These values indicate that the instrument of measurement is reliable and stable to be used in the targeted analysis.

Table 4

Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Goal Setting	1			
2. Teacher Motivation	0.61**	1		
3. Instructional Support	0.65**	0.58**	1	
4. Academic Performance	0.70**	0.66**	0.68**	1

Note: ** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed)

The correlation analysis shows that there are strong positive associations amid the independent variables (leadership practices) and the dependent variable (academic performance). Academic Performance is significantly correlated with Goal Setting ($r = 0.70$, $p < 0.01$), Teacher Motivation ($r = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$) and Instructional Support ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$). All these findings point towards the fact that any positive changes in each of the leadership dimensions would most likely lead to positive changes in the academic performance of students. Moreover, the correlation values between the independent variables are also high (with the values between 0.58 and 0.65), thus indicating that these leadership behaviors tend to co-occur in successful school settings.

Table 5

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.76	0.58	0.57	0.36

The regression analysis indicates that the model fits very well, as the values of R and R² are 0.76 and 0.58 respectively. What this means is that the three leadership dimensions incorporated in the model, namely; goal setting, teacher motivation, and instructional support explain 58 per cent of the variance in how teachers perceive the academic performance of the students. The value of adjusted R² (0.57) proves that the model is still strong when number of predictors is controlled. Standard error of the estimate is small (0.36) which means that the prediction of academic performance on the basis of leadership practices is very accurate.

Table 6

<i>ANOVA for Regression Model</i>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	45.38	3	15.13	115.76	0.000
Residual	33.12	146	0.23		
Total	78.50	149			

As ANOVA table shows, the regression model is significant ($F = 115.76$, $p = 0.000$), which means that the independent variables collectively affect the dependent variable significantly. The significant value of F-statistic and significance level of less than 0.01 indicates that the leadership variables significantly contribute or predict the academic outcome of students. The huge value of squares of the regression model relative to the residual value affirms that the variance in academic performance is explained to a great extent by the leadership practices.

Discussion

The results of this research are quite effective to support the theoretical framework which places school leadership, especially goal setting, teacher motivation, and instructional support as the key factors of academic performance. Correlation coefficients among all leadership constructs and academic achievement are high, which proves that in case teachers believe that school leaders are effective in terms of articulating clear goals, staff recognition, and providing instructional resources and feedback, they also report improved student learning outcomes. These findings are similar to those of Leithwood and others (2008) who summed up that effective school leadership ranks just behind classroom teaching in its influence on student achievement. Considering the current research, the leadership interventions explained 58 percent of the variance in the perceived academic performance, which is a significant number by all means.

The concept of goal setting turned out to be one of the most influential ones. Leadership activities adjoining academic goal clarity, communication of expectations, and common

vision were rated high by teachers, with an average of 4.12 in a scale of 5. A positive correlation between goal setting and academic performance ($r = 0.70$) is also consistent with the framework of Leithwood et al. who have placed a strategic direction as one of the principal leadership tasks. When the teachers in schools feel that leadership has high but clear expectations of them and their students this appears to develop a powerful culture of success. The results correspond with the existing studies in Pakistan and other countries, in which the schools with the attributes of shared vision and strong academic expectations show constant improvements in performance (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood et al., 2020).

The same positive response was given to teacher motivation with the mean of 3.97 and the correlation of 0.66 with the academic outcomes. That is why it is important to refer to emotionally intelligent leadership that values the efforts of the staff and contributes to their professional development. These findings are in tune with Nguni, Slegers, and Denessen (2006) who established correlations amid transformational leadership and job satisfaction and teacher retention, which are the key elements of long-term student learning. Abbasi et al. (2025) also found, in Larkana, that democratic and transformational leadership styles have a significant positive effect on teacher effectiveness an effect that is being grown as a fundamental channel through which leadership can influence the students. It was also found that instructional support had a close correlation with perceived academic achievement ($r = 0.68$).

Teachers reported high ratings in regards to their access to monitoring, feedback, sufficient resources, innovation promotion and professional development resources (mean = 4.06). This result confirms the validity of the instructional leadership theory according to which, the role of the principal in aiding in the implementation of the curricular and facilitating effective teaching is the core factor in the process of school betterment (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). When leaders actively facilitate instruction by classroom observation, joint planning and feedback to teachers, there is improvement in the quality of teaching and learning which benefits the teachers.

In addition to the individual constructs, the notable inter-correlations amid the leadership dimensions imply that outstanding leadership is diverse and self-strengthening. As an example, goal transparency could be motivating to teachers and instructed teachers could be more sensitive to instructional assistance. Regression analysis affirms that, these combined leadership behaviors are significant predictors of academic outcomes, which indicate holistic nature of school leadership. The findings bring forth the ever-increasing literature of the Pakistani books on leadership and student performance. According to Jamali and Almani (2023), leadership positively affects school climate and academic performance; Chachar, Ullah, and Jalil (2023) establish that in Sindh, leadership practices have a positive impact on school excellence (beta 0.797, p Sindh; and Asad, Rind, and Abdulmuhsin (2022) determine that there is a moderate but significant correlation between transformational leadership and school culture (r 0.624).

These results, in line with the present study, altogether imply that leadership training should be one of the priorities of the policymakers in their intention to improve the performance of secondary schools in Pakistan. The research results also contribute to the general discussions of the leadership styles. Transformational and democratic styles seem especially productive in the environment of the Pakistani secondary schools. Emphasis on goal setting, motivating teachers and supporting instructions are some of the major practices relative to these leadership orientations. It replicates the results of Iqbal, Saira, and Shamim (2023), who state that school heads in Punjab prefer democratic leadership to enhance academic performance; the qualitative data provided by Iqbal et al. showed the belief in collaborative decision-making and leadership. Abbasi et al. (2025) emphasize an optimistic impact of

transformational and democratic style on teacher motivation. On the contrary, autocratic or laissez-faire styles are generally related to negative commitment of staff and school climate. Mediated framework also appears to be applicable: the practise of effective leadership improves school climate and motivation of teachers, which subsequently leads to the improvement of academic performance. Although the current study was not tested through a mediation lens, it is consistent with newly found evidence.

Hallinger (2011) points out school climate as one of the routes via which leadership impacts on student learning, whereas the research on shared leadership illustrates the empowerment of teachers and their unity as mediators (Leithwood & Mascal, 2008). Hussain and Hayat (2022) in the Pakistani context provide the correlation between the democratic leadership and strong school culture. Likewise, Abbasi et al. (2025) state that the connection between leadership and student outcomes is mediated by the teacher effectiveness which is closely related to climate and motivation. Contextual difficulties stick around. Pakistan school leaders work under the bureaucratic systems characterized by poor financing, centralization, and a lack of infrastructures (Mehr et al., 2022). Illustratively, headteachers in Sindh have no autonomy and deal with the problem of insufficiency of resources, but they still exercise leadership in academia at the cost of their own benefit - a fact that is reported elsewhere (Asad et al., 2022). Structural constraints therefore further increase the pressure on effectiveness of leadership.

However, favorable responses by teachers in this sample suggest that, notwithstanding these obstacles, some aspects of leadership that were viewed as assistance-seeking and goal-focused are nevertheless taking place in a lot of schools. A number of limitations and suggestions of future research arise. This research is based on the perceptions of the teachers as opposed to the independently measured student outcomes. Although perception is a good thing, it would be best in future to relate leadership practices with examination scores or standardized test scores. Also the cross-sectional nature only points at correlations; causation would need to be demonstrated by longitudinal or experimental studies. Lastly, more subtle studies can be conducted to investigate the leadership effectiveness in relation to the demographic factors like the size of the school, rural or urban location, and tenure of teachers. Nevertheless, the study is able to fill one of the main gaps, namely the quantitative correlation of teacher-reported leadership practices and academic performance in secondary public schools in Pakistan, which was only implicitly presented in the much older literature.

The high reliability and validity coefficients endorse the usage of the instrument in the other studies of the kind in the future. What does the research mean in practice? In practice, the research implies that there is a necessity of leadership development programs that centre on strategy-setting, teacher empowerment, and instructional guidance. Provincial education departments ought to make training principals in these areas of competence and bring about performance based incentives whereby academic growth and school climate show signs of improvement. Also, decentralizing the leadership authority, namely the bureaucratic system in Pakistan, would enable principals to have greater freedom to make reforms, which is also promoted by headteachers themselves (Muhammad & Farooqi, 2022). Also, resource-limited schools can be improved with peer-learning networks or mentoring programs, which is also consistent with effective transformational leadership models (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study provides robust empirical evidence for the role of transformational and instructional leadership in enhancing academic performance in Pakistani secondary schools. Teachers' perceptions confirm that when leaders set clear goals, motivate staff, and support instruction, student learning benefits significantly. This reinforces the global

leadership literature (Leithwood et al., 2008; Hallinger, 2011), local research in Pakistan (Jamali & Almani, 2023; Asad et al., 2022), and suggests practical pathways for policy, practice, and further research aimed at educational improvement.

Recommendations

1. Implement leadership training programs focused on transformational and instructional leadership practices for school heads.
2. Encourage goal setting and shared vision strategies to align teachers and students toward academic targets.
3. Provide regular professional development opportunities to enhance teacher motivation and instructional quality.
4. Establish feedback systems where school leaders offer constructive support to teachers.
5. Increase autonomy for school leaders to make decisions that directly impact teaching and learning outcomes.

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Questionnaire
IMPACT OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ON SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Gender: _____

Teaching experience: _____

Qualification: _____

Sr. No	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Goal Setting					
1	My school leadership sets clear academic goals for students.					
2	Teachers are aware of the school's academic targets.					
3	The school head regularly communicates expectations for student performance.					
4	There is a shared vision for academic success at my school.					
5	Students are encouraged to set personal academic goals aligned with school objectives.					
	Teacher Motivation					
6	The school leadership recognizes and appreciates teachers' efforts.					
7	Teachers are provided with opportunities for professional growth.					
8	My principal motivates teachers to improve their teaching practices.					
9	Teachers feel valued and supported in their work.					
10	There is a reward system for high-performing teachers.					
	Instructional Support					
11	School leadership regularly monitors teaching and learning activities.					
12	Teachers receive timely feedback from the school head.					

13	Resources and materials are provided to improve classroom instruction.					
14	The school head supports innovative teaching methods.					
15	Leadership ensures professional development is relevant to teaching needs.					
	Academic Performance					
16	Students' academic performance has improved over the past year.					
17	Leadership initiatives have contributed to better exam results.					
18	The school encourages academic excellence among students.					
19	There is a positive link between leadership and student academic progress.					
20	Teachers and students are held accountable for academic achievement.					