

Leadership Styles and Faculty Performance in Sustainable Higher Education: Examining the Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Muhammad Waseem¹, Shehla¹, Javeria Tariq Malik², and Muhammad Hamza Akhtar³

¹Queens College for Girls, Kamoke, Punjab, Pakistan

²Faculty of International Hospitality Management, College of Business and Tourism, Madinah, Saudi Arabia

³University of Education - Lahore

Abstract

The aim of the current study is to examine the influence of leadership styles (i.e. transactional, laissez-faire, and transformational) of principals on faculty performance of higher education institutions. Higher education institutions are increasingly seeking for leadership practices that enhance faculty satisfaction, performance and long-term institutional effectiveness. Within the context of sustainable higher education, knowing the effects of leadership styles on faculty performance is of greater interest. Additionally, the study objective was also to test the job satisfaction as a mediator. Through convenient sampling, data were obtained from the teaching staff of private colleges. For the analysis, 369 responses were used. Data were subjected to SPSS for preliminary analysis and AMOS for hypotheses testing. Results revealed that transformational and transactional leadership positively influence both satisfaction and performance of faculty members. Whereas laissez-faire was not significant with job satisfaction found to reducing factor for faculty performance. Transformational leadership is highly influential on faculty performance via mediating role of job satisfaction. Results as well revealed that job satisfaction also mediates the transactional leadership style and faculty performance. However, faculty satisfaction did not mediate the link between laissez-faire and faculty performance. Finally, the study purposed to the principals about the performance-oriented style of leadership and suggestions to the researcher for further studies.

Keywords: Leadership styles, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Job Satisfaction, Faculty Performance, Higher Education Institutions

Introduction

A leadership style is how a leader engages his followers by directing, supporting, motivating, stimulating, and synergizing to achieve desired goals or outcomes (Northouse & P. G., 2010). There are various approaches to leadership styles, whereas more recent studies encompass the multidimensional nature of leadership which also involves different types of styles, one of the most famous approaches to assessing leadership styles is that there are three distinct styles of leaders, transactional, transformational and laissez-faire (Bass, 1985, 1996). Higher education institutions have a growing role to play in sustainable development via quality education, institutional effectiveness and responsible leadership. In this context, educational leadership has become a key mechanism for translating institutional vision into institutional practices that enable the long-term development of education and institutional sustainability, (Singh, 2023). The principal of an educational institution is in a unique position of manager and leader who creates a supportive learning environment for teachers and students as well. Recent research on education for sustainable development also highlights that good leadership in education can enhance collaboration, engagement of stakeholders and commitment of organisations which in turn provide institutional conditions conducive to education for sustainable development. (Yusup et al., 2024, Grunwald, G., Kara, A., & Shrivastava, P., 2026).

Teachers are the main resource of the educational setup and they are the driving force to achieve the desired results of students as well as for the institution. Results of many studies provide evidence that employee satisfaction is impacted by leadership style. Different Leadership styles can generate different effects and stimulate different behaviors. Effective Leadership style can enhance the job satisfaction of employees (Saima & Oino, 2020) and contribute in high performance (Pawirosumarto, Sarjana, & Muchtar, 2017; Krisnanda, P. H., & Surya, 2019). An empirical study revealed a significant positive influence of leadership support on job satisfaction, which, in turn, was found to contribute to a notable enhancement in faculty performance, underscoring the pivotal role that supportive leadership plays in fostering a motivated and contented workforce capable of achieving improved levels of faculty performance in the organizational context. (Alsakarneh, Fraihat, Otoom, Bani Mustafa, Nawasra, & Eneizan, 2022). Although research on sustainability in higher education has recently turned its focus toward students' perspectives on sustainability and institutional efforts towards improving sustainability performance, there has been comparatively little attention to leadership as an organisational mechanism for enhancing faculty satisfaction and performance, (Bask et al., 2020).

This paper aims to explore the effects of leadership styles on faculty performance through the satisfaction of faculty in Pakistan. According to Pakistan Education Statistics (2023-24), there were total 11300 higher secondary schools (HSC)/inter-colleges (IC) in the education system out of which 7,458 (66%) are working in the private sector. There are two basic reasons for the selection of the private sector, first one, is because of the major share at this level and the second and more important is to measure the effect of leadership style on job satisfaction and performance in the true sense. Moreover, colleges stand as significant educational institutions, and their administrative bodies hold a tremendous responsibility to adapt to the remarkable scientific revolution in order to keep pace with its advancements (Al Tounsi, Gadallah, & Dalati, 2022). In

the public sector job security, government policies and some other factors other than leadership style are influencing in job satisfaction.

Numerous research studies have been devoted to exploring the interplay between leadership styles, faculty performance, and job satisfaction. The primary aim of this investigation is to examine how principals' apparent leadership styles impact teachers' faculty performance through their job satisfaction. It is postulated that teachers' job satisfaction may act as a mediating factor in the association between leadership styles and faculty performance, with the strength of this mediation varying based on the specific leadership style employed. Consequently, the main focus of this article is to delve into how different leadership styles influence both teacher satisfaction and performance. It is important to note the dearth of research focusing on the link between a principal's leadership style and teacher faculty performance, with job satisfaction as the mediating factor, particularly within the private educational sector at the private sector of higher education in Pakistan. To address this research gap, the study relies on primary data collected from 500 questionnaires distributed to faculty members of private colleges in Punjab, Pakistan. The research seeks to establish a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationships between leadership styles, job satisfaction, and faculty performance for strategic growth of higher education institutions.

The study's intent is to offer valuable insights to academic institute heads concerning leadership styles that foster enhanced satisfaction, performance, and faculty retention. The research findings can provide valuable guidance to educational leaders in adopting effective leadership practices that promote sustainable higher education and elevate teachers' overall satisfaction and performance. Additionally, the study may stimulate future research in this area, encouraging further exploration of the multifaceted dynamics between leadership styles, job satisfaction, and faculty performance in private colleges.

Literature Review

2.1. Leadership

The combination of a leader's attitude and behavior constitutes their unique leadership style, which significantly impacts their interactions with subordinates in distinct manners. Ghimire, Dahal, Rai, & Upadhyay, (2023). Leadership is a process of interaction, where the leader influences the followers to achieve desired goals (Northhouse, 2010). Leadership is a great human quality and every great and successful organization besides other factors owes its credit to the leader who led it to glory. Leadership is one of the interesting and studied subjects of organizational behavior that affects the personnel interaction with the organization. Extensive research on the topic of leadership in the past has identified various kinds of leadership styles exhibited by leaders in organizational setups (Hirtz, Murray, & Riordam, 2007; Spears & Lawrence, 2003). Leadership is too complex a phenomenon to be explained exactly. Many theorists describe its traits, behaviors, skill, and styles in different ways. Burns' (1978) transactional and transformational leadership styles are most prominent found in literature, which is most commonly used because these encompass the multidimensional nature of leadership. Laissez-Faire leadership occurs when leaders abdicate leadership altogether, making no decisions at all (Bass, 1990).

According to Bass leadership model, seven fundamental factors are comprised of three prominent styles of leadership as, first one is a transactional leadership style which consists of two dimensions; “contingent reward” and “management by exception”, the second is a transformational leadership style which is composed of four components; “idealized influence”, “inspirational motivation”, “intellectual stimulation”, “individualized consideration” and last one is laissez-faire style of leadership.

2.1.1. Transactional Leadership

Transactional leaders concentrate on the normal flow of operations and routine tasks. They use disciplinary authority and motivate subordinates by exchanging rewards for performance. The element of creativity and will for extraordinary achievement is lacking in this type of style. They do not look strategically to the future of the organization in the market, these leaders focus on making sure everything going smoothly. The perception of transactional leaders about subordinates are not self-motivated, and need instructions and supervision to perform their jobs (Aga, D. A., 2016). Workers perform their duties for some exchange, such as pay. According to Bass (1990), the transactional leadership style consists of two factors. Contingent reward is concerned with the trade-off between leaders and followers in which the performance of followers is exchanged with specific rewards (Brahim, A.B., Ridic, O., & Jukic, T., 2015).

Management by exception (active/passive) is classified into two forms i.e. active and passive management. Management by exception is active, in which the leader takes corrective action when the actions of followers deviate from expected performance. Management by exception is passive, in which the leader intervenes only when the performance of followers deviates from the standards or problems have arisen (Brahim et al., 2015).

2.1.2. Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders influence and motivate followers with their charismatic personality, trust, honesty, and other qualities to perform more for the community and themselves. This approach of leadership enhances the level of morality because this approach is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, high achievements, and strategic goals (Northouse, 2010). These leaders develop in followers’ sense of self and organizational identity, ownership of their work, and estimating the capabilities and incompetence, so followers make themselves optimize their performance. Systematic evidence over the last few years also reveals that transformative leadership is one of the most influential leadership styles for promoting sustainable higher education through institutional commitment, faculty development and organisational support, (Sedkaoui et al., 2026).

2.1.2.1. Idealized Influence:

Transformational leaders influence followers through their activities. Leaders win trust and respect by prioritizing followers or mutual interest over self-interest (Howell and Avolio, 1992; Humphreys & Einstein, 2003; Robbins & Coulter 2005;). They excite their followers to ponder analytically and find novel methods to approach their job, which brings about intellectual

stimulation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Leaders provide a sense of pride in followers for being associated with them (Humphreys et al., 2003).

2.1.2.2. Inspirational Motivation:

Transformational leaders inspire to achieve organizational outcomes and motivate to set high self-standard for their performance (Bass, 1995; Humphreys et al., 2003). Inspirational motivation is generated by sharing high expectations; using symbols to enhance efforts, giving clear meaning with challenge, and by talking optimistically about the future.

2.1.2.3. Intellectual Stimulation:

Another factor of transformational leadership is “intellectual stimulation” which is characterized by encouraging creative thinking and new ways of solving problems (Bass, 1985). Leaders promote intelligence, logical thinking, rational behavior, and careful issues handling intention (Bass, 1985; Humphreys et al., 2003). Leaders generate problem-solving skills in followers according to their perspectives (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

2.1.2.4. Individualized Consideration:

The last aspect of transformational leadership is “individualized consideration” which is concerned with improving followers by giving them personal attention and providing proper guidance for the achievement of individual as well as mutual success, a leader often acts as a mentor for his followers (Bass, 1985; Bass et al., 1990; Humphreys et al., 2003).

2.1.3. Laissez faire Leadership

Laissez-faire is a less active or inactive way of leadership. (Bass, B.M. and Avolio, 1997). The leader delegates the authority of decision-making to followers related to their job tasks. The leader has avoidant behavior about accepting responsibilities; assisting the followers and suggesting possible solutions to important issues. (Bass et al., 1997)

2.3. Faculty performance

Faculty performance is the result of activities done for the attainment of job goals. It represents the output that states the worth and value of a job. Faculty performance is the achievement of organizational policies, standards, or requirements of a professional role (Campbell, 1990). The word “performance” enlightens the notions of “attainment,” “accomplishment,” and the “execution of task”. Moreover, faculty performance is an employee’s productivity with effectiveness and efficiency (Tsao, Huang, Huang, Chang, & Wang, 1997). The performance of teachers is a pertinent part of educational institutional services and in an organizational setting, many factors affect the performance of individuals, teams, and organizations. For the attainment of organizational success, individuals’ high performance is needed. Therefore leader’s role is one of the crucial contributors to institutional growth (Wall et al., 2004). Leaders’ style is one of the major influential factors on employee performance.

2.4. Leadership Style and Faculty performance

Leadership style enhances the motivation level of followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes. (Lee & Chang, 2006, p.218). Leadership is among the noticeable topics of literature in the field of organizational behavior. Past studies elucidate that the outstanding leader encourages followers to boost their efficiency and also fulfills the required standards for attaining institutional goals. Leaders influence the faculty performance of employees by leading them toward the achievement of organizational goals. The importance of effective leadership in the improvement of faculty performance in public universities has been recently revealed by empirical evidence that shows that the leadership style of higher education administrators is also a determining factor for improving academic staff performance in higher education institutions, (Omori et al., 2025). Many studies suggested a positive relationship between transactional leadership style on faculty performance (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009). Transformational leadership positively and significantly influences faculty performance (Chi, Yeh, & Yu, 2008; Pradeep & Prabhu, 2011).

According to Bass (1990) “transformational leaders” exhibits the four attributes of leadership are as follows: Individual consideration considers every individual’s needs uniquely for achievement and develops followers by mentoring. Intellectual stimulation encourages the followers to find out creative solutions to problems and issues. Inspirational motivation provides a vision, by using appropriate symbols and images, helping followers to focus on their job tasks and realize the significance of their work. Idealized influence being a role model he admires and inspires the followers, and gains trust and respect from the followers. Therefore, transformational leadership is more attractive to followers and positively impacts employee performance. In contrast, transactional leadership requires followers to reach desired outcomes, which were communicated before, and offer rewards in return for performance. Transactional leaders clearly describe what the followers need to do for a reward. Bass (1985) identifies the two factors related to “transactional leadership style” one is “management by exception” and the other is “contingent reward”. Transactional leaders reward their followers with recognition, praise promotion, increments, and bonuses (Bass, 1985). Such behavior of transactional leaders will also contribute to the better faculty performance of the followers.

H1: Transformational leadership style is positively associated with faculty performance.

H2: Transactional leadership style is positively associated with faculty performance.

H3: Laissez-faire leadership is negatively associated with faculty performance.

2.5. Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction

Many empirical studies proposed that leadership is one of the important elements that affect both job satisfaction (Nielsen, Randall, Yarker & Brenner, 2008) The academic staff are strongly influenced by their job satisfaction, organizational commitment and this influence is significantly affected by leadership style, this underlines the need for supportive leadership in higher education. (Mwesigwa et al., 2020). Transformational and transactional leadership styles are positively associated with Job satisfaction (Bass, 1985; Ibrahim, Nurzahit & Turker 2010; Charles & Katherine, 2007). Therefore it is hypothesized that: H4: Transformational leadership style is positively associated with job satisfaction.

H5: Transactional leadership style is positively associated with job satisfaction.

H6: Laissez-faire leadership is negatively associated with job satisfaction.

2.6. Job Satisfaction and Faculty performance

Job satisfaction has been shown to have multiple relations with employee faculty performance (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton 2001). A heightened feeling of satisfaction among employees is strongly associated with a corresponding enhancement in their overall faculty performance. (Syaifuddin, Ananda, Lubis, 2022). In their study conducted in 2009, Zhang Jin and Zheng Wei established a noteworthy positive correlation between faculty performance and job satisfaction. Comprising a sample of 195 employees study conducted by Alsakarneh et. Al (2022), revealed that personal job satisfaction exerted a significant influence on employee performance. Previous studies have shown that in the academic sector, job satisfaction has been shown to be related to better work performance, highlighting the importance of having a satisfied faculty workforce for the purposes of the strategic management, (Yee, 2018)

H7: Job Satisfaction is positively associated with faculty performance.

2.7. Job Satisfaction as a Mediator

The more satisfied teachers adopted the advanced and modern methods of teaching and their students also obtained high grades in final assessments (Demirtas, 2010), which indicated that highly satisfied teachers are beneficial for education overall. The effect of leadership style on job satisfaction and faculty performance has been well established (Nemanich & Keller, 2007). Leadership has a significant positive and direct impact on work satisfaction and can affect faculty performance through job satisfaction (Chung & Chen, 2009). Job satisfaction continues to be an important organizational response that affects the effectiveness and development of academics so that it is important to be considered by higher education institutions as a strategic consideration, (Mgaiwa, 2023).

H8: Teachers' job satisfaction mediates positively the association between transformational leadership and faculty performance.

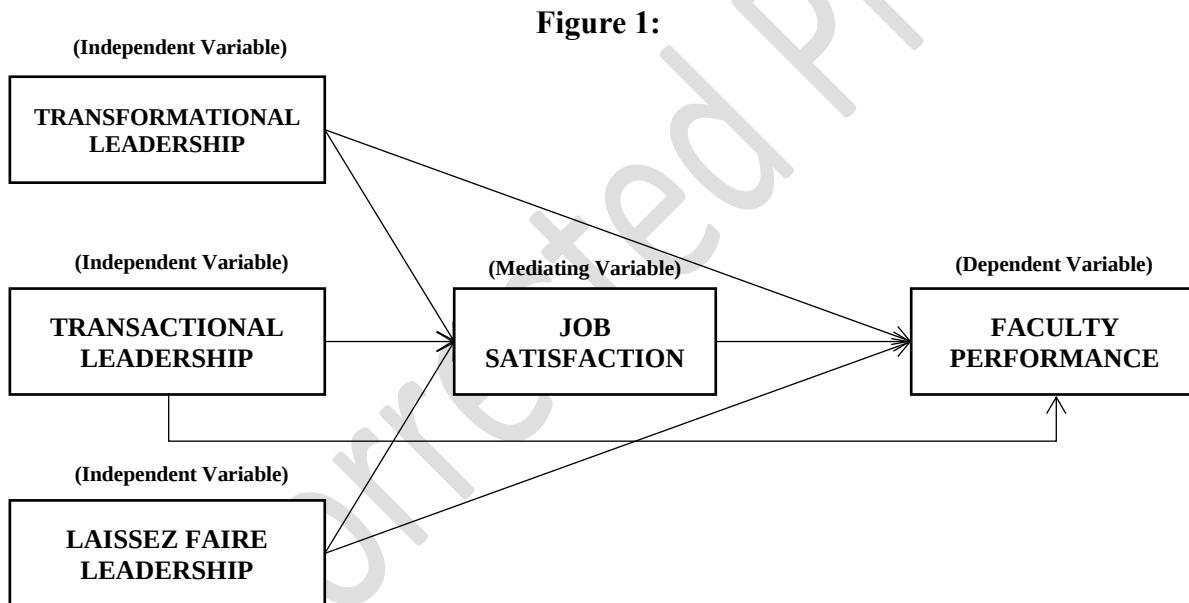
H9: Follower job satisfaction mediates positively the association between transactional leadership and faculty performance.

H10: Follower job satisfaction mediates positively the association between laissez-faire leadership and faculty performance.

While leadership studies have been mainly focused on employee attitudes and performance, the recent debates on sustainable Higher Education have shifted the attention to leadership as a strategic tool for fostering institutional relationships, stakeholders satisfaction and long-term organizational sustainability. This overall view is not sufficiently explored in the research on private higher education institutions, Grunwald, G., Kara, A., & Shrivastava, P. (2026).

2.8. Conceptual Framework Based on Research Hypothesis

A conceptual framework was created from the theoretical bases and literature findings. The aspects of leadership styles, job satisfaction and faculty performance in higher education institutions are graphically represented in the figure 1. The framework follows the Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfall, 1989), which suggests that leadership style has a direct and indirect impact on faculty performance through job satisfaction. Supportive leadership offers psychological and organisational resources such as guidance, recognition and job support that strengthen faculty job satisfaction and performance. However, poor leadership can deplete these resources, leading to less satisfaction with the job and less productivity from faculty members. Therefore, the proposed framework serves as a theoretical foundation to explore the relationships assumed and emphasises the importance of effective leadership in sustaining the effectiveness of higher education institutions over time.



Methodology

3.1. Research Model

This research will be quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational, exploratory, and primary. As the conceptual framework indicates, leadership styles are independent variables and faculty performance is the dependent variable, measuring the mediating role of job satisfaction, in this case.

3.2. Data collection and sampling

For this research study, we opted for the purposive sampling technique due to the impracticality of testing the entire large population of private college lecturers from Punjab, Pakistan. The

method allowed us to handpick participants who met specific criteria relevant to our research objectives. By deliberately selecting individuals with the necessary qualifications and characteristics, we ensured that the focus of our study remained targeted and aligned. The adoption of purposive sampling offered several advantages. Firstly, given the considerable size of the population, testing every member was infeasible, making purposive sampling a more manageable and economical approach. Additionally, it provided ease of access to subjects, allowing us to swiftly collect responses from readily available respondents, which contributed to prompt data gathering. The targeted population for our study comprised private college lecturers in Punjab, Pakistan. To collect the required data, we designed a questionnaire consisting of 42 items. We distributed the questionnaire to 500 targeted teachers, and upon completion, we received 382 responses. After careful analysis and screening for completeness and appropriateness, we utilized 369 responses for our final data analysis, dropping the remaining responses with incomplete or improper information.

3.3. Measures

For this survey-based study, a modified form of MLQ 6x (Northouse, 2001) was employed, originally this questionnaire is self-rating by the leader. This questionnaire was modified from self-rating to followers rating. MLQ was developed by Bass and Avolio (1992). The current leadership measurement tool is considered the most widely used and validated instrument found in the literature (Tejeda, 2001) and is implicated in a variety of organizational and distinct social setups (Bass, 1998). MLQ-6S consists of 21 items, and three scales related to seven factors. The transformational leadership measure is based on the following four factors: idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation while the transactional leadership measure comprises contingent reward and management-by-exception (active and passive). Laissez-faire leadership is based on the one-factor scale. Job satisfaction should be measured by the employees, calibration of the degree, and how they are satisfied with their jobs. Twelve items, five points Likert scale is used, 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree), scale is taken from “The Work Environment Survey Report 2009”, published by the Human Resource Policy & Planning Division, Canada. Faculty performance was measured using a nine-item, five points self-rating scale, which was developed and used by the researchers Rodwell, Kienzle, and Shadur (1998) in a research study.

Results

The results of statistical procedures are described in three sections. The first part includes the descriptive numerals of the data. The second section shows the reliability and validity of the instrument by using Cronbach's alpha, confirmatory factor analysis, and inter-construct correlation. The third portion deals with path analysis (direct and indirect). The first part consists of a descriptive analysis of the Gender diversity of teachers (respondents), Teacher's age description, and Leader's age description which are shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3 respectively.

Table 1. Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Genders	Male	265	71.8	71.8
	Female	104	28.2	100.0
	Total	369	100.0	

Table 2. Teacher's Age

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age Groups	20-29	228	61.8	61.8
	30-39	107	29.0	90.8
	40-49	31	8.4	99.2
	50-59	3	.8	100.0
	Total	369	100.0	

Table 3. Leader's Age

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age Groups	20-29	9	2.4	2.4
	30-39	103	27.9	30.4
	40-49	174	47.2	77.5
	50-59	43	11.7	89.2
	60&above	40	10.8	100.0
	Total	369	100.0	

Table 4 shows the measure of location (mean), standard deviation (SD), and reliability and correlation matrix of the variables. Cronbach's alpha values are .91 for transformational, .88 for transactional, .80 for laissez-faire (leadership), .86 for job satisfaction, and .88 for faculty performance. All the values are more than .70 which is an acceptable range (Nunnally, 1978; & Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). These values provide the basis for further proceeds. The correlation matrix demonstrates that transformational leadership is significantly and positively correlated with job satisfaction ($r=.73$, $p < 0.5$) and faculty performance ($r=.55$, $p < 0.5$); transactional leadership is significantly and positively correlated with job satisfaction ($r=.59$, $p < 0.5$) and faculty performance ($r=.57$, $p < 0.5$), whereas correlation with laissez-faire leadership was found not significant but significant and negatively correlated with faculty performance ($r= -.11$, $p < 0.5$).

Table 4. Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), Reliability and Correlation Matrix (N=369)

		Mean	SD	TRM	TRS	LF	JS	JP
I	Transformational Leadership Style (Trm)	2.95	.61	(.91)				
II	Transactional Leadership Style (Trs)	2.67	.50	.610**	(.88)			
III	Laissez Faire Leadership Style (LF)	2.04	.78	-.097	-.111*	(.80)		
IV	Job Satisfaction (JS)	3.77	.67	.733**	.593**	-.077	(.86)	
V	Faculty performance (JP)	3.66	.53	.547**	.568**	-.114*	.636**	(.88)

Note. The values in parenthesis represent Cronbach's alpha values of respected variables.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

4.1 Analysis of Structural Equation Modeling

For the analysis of proposed model SEM technique is employed. Due to the critiques raised on Baron and Kenny (1986) “four step mediation model”, “path analysis technique” with bootstrapping as suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2008) to investigate mediation. Thus, Structural Equation Modeling has widely used statistical application in academic research (Hayes, 2009). There are two stages of modeling process: (1) an assessment of the construct validity by using CFA, and (2) an assessment of SEM.

4.1.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

CFA is a powerful statistical technique widely used by the researcher to test the observed variables and their underlying factors. A CFA was conducted through AMOS 21. For the measurement model validity and for the construct validity assessment, it is necessary to find evidence about the acceptable levels of fitness for the measurement model. The acceptable range of values that describe the good model fitness for chi-square/degree of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF) is less than 3 is good and less than 5 is permissible. Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) less than 0.08 acceptable and below 0.05 shows good fit. Moreover Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Normed Fit Index (NFI) are greater than 0.90 indicates good fit (Hair et al., 2006). Table 5, shows values of proposed model, which are CMIN/DF = 1.54, RMSEA = 0.036, GFI = 0.92, AGFI = 0.902, CFI = 0.957 and NFI = 0.901, this proposed a good fit of tested model.

Table 5:

CMIN/DF	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	RAMSEA	PCLOSE
1.54	0.901	0.957	0.92	0.902	0.036	0.000

Table 6: Direct, Indirect, Total effect and confidence interval

Path	Standardized Direct effect (with mediator, statistically controlled)	Indirect effect	Total effect	Ratio of Indirect effects / Total effects (%)	Bias Corrected Confidence interval	
					Lower confidence level	Upper confidence level
TRM → JS → JP	0.07	0.25	0.317	78.8	.195	.319
TRS → JS → JP	0.273	0.098	0.371	26.4	.139	.066
LF → JS → JP	-0.05	0.003	-0.047	-15.6	-.022	.028

In research model, employee's job satisfaction is mediating variable between leadership styles and employees faculty performance. Path analysis shows that transformational leadership has a significant and positive direct effect on faculty performance with a coefficient 0.07; $p < 0.05$, therefore H1 is supported. Transactional leadership style also has a positive effect on faculty

performance with a coefficient 0.27; $p > 0.05$, hence H2 is supported. Laissez faire leadership style has negative relation with faculty performance with a coefficient -0.05; $p < 0.05$, so, H3 accepted. Transformational leadership has a positive direct effect on job satisfaction with a coefficient 0.59; $p < 0.05$, therefore H4 is supported. Transactional leadership style also has a positive effect on job satisfaction with a coefficient 0.23; $p < 0.05$, hence H5 is supported. Laissez faire leadership style has not significant relation with job satisfaction with a coefficient -0.05, thus H6 is not supported. Job satisfaction has a positive effect on faculty performance with a coefficient 0.42; $p < 0.05$, hence, H7 is supported. For the testing of postulated hypothesis, indirect effects are keen to be observed for mediational model. Transformational leadership has indirect effect on faculty performance through job satisfaction is having a path coefficient 0.25; $p < 0.05$, therefore; Hypothesis 8 is supported. Transactional leadership has indirect effect on faculty performance through job satisfaction is having a path coefficient 0.098; $p < 0.05$; Hypothesis 9 is supported. Laissez faire leadership has indirect effect on faculty performance through job satisfaction is having a path coefficient 0.003 and insignificant hence H10 is not supported.

Discussion

The results of this study, about 369 teaching staff of private colleges in Pakistan, revealed that the correlation of Transformational and transactional style with job satisfaction and faculty performance have significant and positive but the strength of impact varies. Two of the leadership styles, transformational and transactional have a correlation among them and a positively significant direct on job satisfaction and performance and a positively significant indirect effect the faculty performance through job satisfaction. Whereas, laissez-faire style is not significantly associated with job satisfaction and is negatively associated with faculty performance. Findings of previous studies suggest that leadership styles have a greater influence on important job-related behaviors such as job satisfaction and faculty performance (Bass, 1990; Islam, Khan, Shafiq, & Ahmad, 2012).

As reported by researchers, transformational leadership style is positively correlated with job satisfaction (Walumbwa, Wang, Lawler, and Shi, 2004) and considered a pertinent variable for high faculty performance as well (Paracha, Qamar, Mirza, Hassan, Waqas, 2012; Biswas, 2009; Abdul Aziz, Mahmood, & Abdullah, 2013; Cavazotte, Moreno, & Bernardo, 2013; Babalola, 2016). Thus factors of transformational leadership, individualized consideration gives feelings of special attention, inspirational motivation generates optimistic enthusiasm, idealized influence promotes the common interest and minimizes the contradictory approach of personal interest, and intellectual stimulation promotes the sense of personal perspectives' acceptance. As an integral aspect of transformational leadership, innovative behavior plays a crucial role in prioritizing the well-being of faculty and administrators and improving teaching and administrative practices (Al-Hyari, H. S. A., 2023). These characteristics of transformational leadership styles make it the most important variable for predicting high performance (Paracha et al., 2012; Biswas, 2009). Effective principals exhibit the characteristics of the transformational leadership style (Savvidou, Konteos, Giannakopoulos, & Giannakopoulos, 2023). The positive effect of transformational leadership that is found in this study aligns with recent findings that indicate transformational leadership is

positively related to sustainable practices in higher education through its influence on organisational commitment and long-term institutional development. (Tapsir et al., 2026).

The impact of the transactional leadership style was found positively correlated with employee job satisfaction. A transactional leadership style composed of contingent rewards demands performance from the followers against rewards. And second component is management with the objective to drive attention to performance correction. These components try to pull the faculty performance of employees. Both transformational and transactional styles were strongly correlated with job satisfaction and performance (Hamidifar, 2009; Liang, Chan, Lin, & Huang, 2011). The present findings are also in line with recent evidence which suggests that leadership styles have positive effects on the work performance of academic staff in higher education institutions. (Omori et al., 2025). Whereas researchers consistently described the laissez-faire style as one of the least effective and satisfying (Bass, 1990) and some reported negative affect on job satisfaction (Hamidifar, 2009), and faculty performance (Frischer, 2006).

Past studies' results show that job satisfaction has a great influence on faculty performance (Babalola, 2016). The findings of this study proposed that the transformational leadership style is much more (positive and) indirect effects the faculty performance through the job satisfaction of teaching staff than other styles. As past studies supported such as, Liang et al., (2011), among different leadership styles transformational leadership is the most important variable for job satisfaction and in turn high faculty performance. Whereas transactional leadership style has a much more direct impact on faculty performance, job satisfaction is not considerably influenced. In this study, the total effect of the transactional leadership style was found more than others.

Avoidant behavior makes the laissez-faire style as least effective and sometimes insignificant or negative. Due to unattractive behavior, laissez-faire leadership lost trust and positive influence. In the scenario of the educational sector, the Principal of the institution as a leader is responsible for providing better educational services and results, which can be delivered through satisfied teaching staff. And this approach provides the basis of the proposed hypothesis in this study. As stated objectives of this study, it is found that transformational and transactional (leadership styles) contribute to job satisfaction and faculty performance, but job satisfaction and performance are more highly and positively affected by the transformational leadership style than other styles as suggested by Paracha et al., 2012.

Attributes of transformational Principals inspire, motivate, encourage and personalized consideration makes teaching staff satisfied with their jobs and that attitude stimulates the behavior to continue high performance. In the case of transactional leadership, the approach of performance-based rewards is followed so staff makes an effort for decided outcomes whether they are satisfied or not with their jobs. In educational sectors, the major part of organizational reputation is based on instructional standard (teaching) and their interaction with the students. Not satisfied staff members may put their efforts for reward individually and temporarily but the promotion of overall performance is lacking. In educational institutions, leadership plays a pivotal role in the organization's success, as it significantly influences both employee performance and job satisfaction. Effective feedback from employees is indicative of their level of interest and appreciation, reflecting the impact of organizational support on their overall happiness and job

satisfaction (Margan, Eid, al Zilaa, & Dalati, 2023). Principals having transformational leadership styles are more successful in developing an appropriate educational environment by affecting teaching staff. Above stated findings are supported by results of preceding studies conducted in the educational sector. The results are consistent with the evidence that effective leadership positively influences higher education staff satisfaction levels, leading to positive organisational outcomes. (Mwesigwa et al., 2020). Transformational leadership style is suitable in a dynamic and rapidly changing environment or a combination of both leadership styles may be utilized according to circumstances for yielding better results in terms of job satisfaction, faculty performance, and other keen organizational attitudes.

Conclusion

Utilization of human resources, converting their activities into valuable performance, and giving direction to individual's efforts towards achievement for organizational success, all can be attained through appropriate leadership style. To gain a competitive advantage motivated, creative, visionary, trustworthy, committed, satisfied, and competent staff is required. Academic leaders can provide quality services only with their satisfied and efficient staff. Principals having transformational leadership styles are more successful in developing an appropriate educational environment by affecting teaching staff. The findings of this study purposed that transformational principals are effective to enhance performance levels through satisfying their staff members. In reality, no one is having explicitly one style of leadership only, but leaders are practicing many styles at the same time. Transactional leadership style directly affects the performance of the employees and appeals to the followers to some extent also. Results of the study suggest that the laissez-faire style is not suitable for leaders in the educational sector especially. In the Pakistani education system, student exam results are considered a major part of teachers' performance, so quality teaching is mainly concerned with the satisfaction level of staff. Based on findings, for the private sector especially, academic leaders need to develop liaison with staff that is supportive to create a performance-based environment. Although sustainability was not directly examined in the present study, the findings suggest that leadership practices which enhance faculty satisfaction and performance contribute to organisational capabilities that support long-term institutional sustainability, consistent with recent evidence from higher education research.

Limitations

The research paper investigates how leadership styles, job satisfaction, and performance are interconnected in private colleges in Pakistan. While the study provides valuable insights, it is crucial to acknowledge its limitations. Firstly, the findings may not directly apply to other educational sectors or diverse cultural contexts, given the study's exclusive focus on private colleges in Pakistan. Moreover, the study relies on self-reported data collected through questionnaires, which might introduce biases and affect result accuracy. Furthermore, the study primarily centers on three leadership styles: transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire. However, other leadership styles may also affect job satisfaction and performance. Expanding the scope to include a broader range of leadership styles could yield a more comprehensive understanding.

Future Implications

To address these limitations, future research could explore comparative studies between private and public educational sectors to uncover differences in leadership style effects. Longitudinal studies that track changes over time could provide valuable insights into the stability of leadership impacts on teachers. To enhance future research, diverse data collection methods, such as qualitative interviews, could offer deeper insights into how teachers perceive leadership styles. Additionally, implementing leadership development interventions based on research findings could help establish causal relationships between leadership styles, job satisfaction, and performance, thereby offering practical implications for sustainable transformation of higher education institutions.. In conclusion, the research paper significantly contributes to our comprehension of leadership styles and their effects on private colleges in Pakistan. The findings must be interpreted with caution since the variables may have bidirectional relationships. Since, the study did not test for the cause and effect relationship or reciprocal relationship so it is suggested that future studies may consider studying the leadership and employees outcomes reciprocal relationships. Nevertheless, it is essential to recognize its limitations and consider future research directions to achieve a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of this intricate relationship.

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