



Exploring Teachers' Perspectives on Effective Leadership Styles at Secondary Level in Karachi, Pakistan

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Abstract

This research explored the teachers' perspective on the effective leadership style of public secondary school head-teachers of District Korangi Karachi. Leadership is important in every aspect of life, including in schools. This was a simple descriptive survey research. The target population consists of all District Korangi, Karachi, Pakistan secondary school teachers. The quantitative method was used in this study to collect data from teachers. A leadership-style questionnaire for teachers was used to collect data. The responses of teachers were quantified as Strongly Agree =5, Agree=4, Have no opinion=3, Disagree=2 and strongly disagree=1. Using stratified random sampling, 140 secondary school teachers were selected, including 77 male and 63 female teachers from public sector secondary schools. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage, independent sample t-test, and one-way ANOVA in SPSS version 22. According to the results, the teachers showed that the democratic leadership style was the most effective style of leadership, which enhanced the motivation of teachers' motivation, suggested that more attention should be focused on enhancing awareness about different leadership styles to enhance their motivation and student performance at the secondary level.

Keywords: Autocratic, Democratic, Situational, Facilitative leadership style



Introduction

Leadership is defined as the capacity to guide a group of individuals toward achieving a common objective that would not have been achieved in the absence of the presence of a leader. For a long time, the study of leadership has been a major and essential component of the management and organizational behavior literature. A company's leadership position has received more attention than any other. From the time of Plato and Caesar to the present, the concept of leadership has been studied (Bass & Bass, 2009; Ahmad. Ali, & Sewani, 2021). Numerous studies and data sets have been developed over time by researchers, adding to the body of knowledge on leadership study. Leadership is frequently used in discourse and is characterized by adjectives such as good, influenced, effective, poor, and bad in the individual personality (Graham, 1997; Ahamd, Sewani & Ali, 2021).

Constructing a successful organization requires developing effective leadership that significantly impacts the company. Leadership is widely discussed in today's complex and rapidly changing world, yet no universally accepted definition has emerged. According to Andersen (2016), leaders inspire, motivate, and recognize their colleagues, enabling them to complete tasks and achieve desired outcomes. Leaders employ various leadership styles to excite and energize their workforce. Although there are multiple interpretations of leadership, none can be considered universal. A leader usually choose a style of leadership that best fits their personality, the demands of the job, and the opinions of others in the business (Bass & Bass, 2009).

A thorough explanation of leadership combines all the essential components of the idea, saying that leadership is an influence relationship between a leader and their followers who are committed to the same goal (Clinebell et al., 2013; Andersen, 2016; Torlak et al., 2021). The selection of a leadership style might change based on the situation or develop within a certain setting. Understanding the kind of guidance needed in a particular circumstance and having the adaptability and skills to change course are prerequisites (Einola & Alvesson, 2021; Lorinkova et al., 2013; Mroz et al., 2018).

The act of exercising social influence to persuade subordinates to participate in order to accomplish corporate goals voluntarily is known as leadership. Organizations now need talented leaders who understand the nuances of the rapidly shifting global environment. Employee effectiveness is likely high when activities are well-structured, and the leader maintains excellent relationships with the workforce (Ahmad et al., 2020; Imran et al., 2022). The study focuses on



explore different leadership styles from the teacher perspective and how they feel that their school head is using which particular leadership style at secondary level.

Objectives of the Research

- To analyze the school heads leadership style at secondary level in Karachi Pakistan.
- To examine the school head leadership styles from teacher perceptive in term of their demographics.

Research Questions

- What leadership style teachers preferred which is used by school heads at secondary level in Karachi Pakistan?
- What are the perceptions of teachers regarding school head leadership styles from teacher perceptive in term of their demographics?

Literature Review

In Northouse's (2013) definition, leadership is portrayed as a process in which one person exerts influence over a group to attain a mutual objective. This description underscores the fundamental components of leadership: the act of guiding a group and the pursuit of a shared goal. Leaders distinguish themselves through their unwavering dedication to their team and relentless drive to enhance the group's overall performance. They foster a positive environment and provide direction to inspire others to achieve a specific goal. Therefore, leadership encompasses an individual's capacity to influence and steer a collaborative endeavor to accomplish a common goal (Ahamd, Sewani & Ali, 2021).

Many believe that knowledge translates to power, assuming those with greater intelligence and information will excel as leaders (Mumford et al., 2000). However, this assumption does not always hold. Even though scientists and doctors may possess exceptional cognitive abilities, they might lack the necessary leadership skills, which can hinder their effectiveness as leaders. True leadership's essence lies in inspiring individuals or groups to perform at their best, creating a cohesive and successful team. Leadership styles encompass the various approaches taken by different leaders. In this study, leadership styles are defined according to the United States Army Handbook, which identifies three primary leadership styles: authoritarian (autocratic), participative (democratic), and declarative (free reign) leadership styles. Additionally, the study incorporates the behavioral approach, which suggests that leadership can be developed through learned behaviors (Stoner & Stoner, 2013; Shahbal et al., 2022).



The achievement of every organization hinges on the leadership approach employed by its leaders, which is seen as essential in accomplishing the institution's goals (Mullins & Linehan, 2006). Numerous countries across the globe have made concerted efforts to underscore and advance effective leadership methods, including Democratic, Autocratic, situational, and facilitative approaches, within their daily organizational activities, initiatives, and performance evaluations (Val & Kemp, 2012). The leadership style of head teachers is widely recognized as a vital element that accounts for the variations in how successful schools are in advancing students' learning (Ruloff, & Petko, 2022).

Autocratic Leadership

The autocratic leader, the authoritarian leader, is characterized by a preference for clear-cut organizational structures, minimal communication with employees, and a tendency to issue commands that followers are expected to obey without question. Authoritarian leaders generally do not welcome input from their followers and show little concern for their well-being. This leadership style was more prevalent in historical leadership contexts, resulting in followers who were dependent and submissive, tending to be more productive in the leader's presence but less so when the leader was absent. However, the autocratic leadership approach is no longer the preferred style in modern times. It doesn't prioritize social dynamics and the responsibilities of building relationships.

Nonetheless, there are situations and organizations where practicing this leadership style remains necessary to achieve positive outcomes (Ahmad, Ali, & Sewani, 2021). The autocratic leadership style is characterized by the presence of a manager who exercises the majority of the authority and makes choices with the primary objective of ensuring that the staff follows through with the subsequent implementation. In this approach, the manager doesn't concern themselves with the staff's attitudes toward the decisions; instead, they prioritize completing tasks. They instruct the staff on what to do and how to do it, assert them, and set an example for the team. This style is typically seen as task-oriented (Dubrin, 2022).

There is a close relationship between autocratic leaders and their subordinates to ensure compliance and timely completion of duties. Even when faced with difficult circumstances, this type of leadership is believed to be effective in driving organizations toward their goals. Head instructors frequently utilize this strategy since it forces subordinates to operate under strict time



constraints to achieve deadlines. However, it is important to emphasize that head teachers who rely on authority tend to be unduly formal (Storey, 2016).

Democratic leadership

In this approach, the director seeks input from subordinates before making decisions but ultimately retains the ultimate authority to form conclusions. Additionally, the director may engage in discussions and seek consensus with mentors before making decisions (through agreement). There is also room for the director to allow subordinates to vote on certain matters before reaching a decision (in a democratic manner). Furthermore, the director provides coaching to subordinates and negotiates their demands. It is widely acknowledged that this pattern of leadership is an essential element in cultivating commitment, cooperation, and collaboration. When those who are going to be affected by an organization's decisions are actively involved in the decision-making process, it has been noted that the organization functions more successfully. On the other hand, Dubrin (1998) has voiced concerns that the participative leadership style can be time-consuming due to the frequent meetings that are held and that it may also result in confusion and a lack of clear direction. Conversely, it may not be suitable for emergency situations requiring immediate decisions (Oyetunyi, 2006).

The Democratic leaders adopted a genuinely relaxed yet firmly in-control approach to guiding the group. They were often characterized as Participative leaders who frequently sought input from the group when addressing issues and considered their suggestions. However, it is important to note that these leaders ultimately made the final decisions regarding the specific course of action. Many group members exhibited this leadership style by gathering input from other members to reach a collective agreement when tackling problems or issues. Additionally, these leaders engaged in discussions to reach a consensus on the group's actions (Ahmad & Hamid, 2021).

Democratic leadership style, also known as participative leadership, is a situation where the leader and followers contribute equally to the work. This style involves the leader actively involving followers in decision-making, promoting their interests, and emphasizing social equality. Participative leadership is a term often used to describe this approach, which can benefit various organizations, including businesses and educational institutions. This approach underscores the importance of all group members participating in decision-making (Ahmad et al., 2021).



Situational leadership

Following the development of the trait-based leadership model, the situational leadership model emerged as a response to the trait-based movement. During that period, social scientists believed that any individual or leader is formed as a consequence of the intervention of time. To put it another way, psychologists assume that a leader has no ideal profile and that no leader is born with the same traits as other leaders. Because of this, each situation should be dealt with in different ways because each situation has its unique characteristics (Ahmad et al., 2020).

Situational leadership is a theory of leadership that combines both directive and supportive dimensions. The theory emphasizes the need to correctly apply each of these dimensions in situations specific to the scenario at hand. Leaders who operate according to situational leadership must evaluate their staff by attempting to determine the degree to which they are committed to completing a certain assignment. The concept of situational leadership refers to the fact that leaders are required to adjust the degree of supportiveness and directness they exhibit towards their employees based on the circumstances of their subordinates and the degree of motivation they possess. According to Hutagaluh, Aslan, and Mulyono (2020), this leadership style requires leaders to modify their behavior and leadership style according to the level of commitment exhibited by their subordinate organizations.

Task behavior, worker commitment, and relational behavior are all components that make up situational leadership strategies. Studies have shown that the success of the situational leadership style is tied to the combination of these three components that must occur. This leadership style provides for openness between leaders and members, and it also ensures that employees can make decisions independently and competently. According to Farmer (2012), a situational leader makes an effort to learn about the qualities of the people they are leading to choose the most appropriate leadership style to employ with that individual.

As an additional point of interest, situational leaders are recognized for providing their subordinates with the right direction and task support in order to complete the goals that have been planned successfully. It is also necessary for this kind of leader to be able to manage challenges in an inventive and prompt manner in order to overcome them. According to studies, this positively correlates with enhancing the workforce's productivity. Situational leadership is a theory of leadership that combines both directive and supportive dimensions. The theory emphasizes the need to correctly apply each of these dimensions in situations specific to the



scenario at hand. Leaders who operate according to situational leadership must evaluate their staff by attempting to determine the degree to which they are committed to completing a certain assignment. Situational leadership originated as a response to the rise of trait-based leadership, which had previously been prevalent. Psychologists, however, operated under the assumption that there was no universally applicable profile for leaders and that every leader held distinctive qualities that set them apart.

As a consequence, it was realized that it was essential to deal with various circumstances in various ways, given that every circumstance possessed its own unique characteristics. According to Thompson and Vecchio's (2009) descriptive model of leadership climate, three distinct leadership styles have been established. These styles are based on the research that was initiated by academics.

Facilitative leadership

Originally, Transformational Leadership was perceived as an individual attribute, denoting the capacity to motivate workers to transcend self-interest and prioritize the organization's objectives. Over time, this concept has evolved, and it is now often regarded as a comprehensive strategy referred to as "facilitative leadership," characterized by actions that enhance a school's collective capacity to adapt, address challenges, and enhance performance. The crucial element here is the collective aspect, as facilitative leaders foster employee engagement across all organizational levels. In contrast to the conventional perspective of power as top-down domination stemming from formal authority and concentrated decision-making in a select few, facilitative power operates on mutual collaboration principles and flows in multiple directions. The organizational hierarchy remains intact, but leaders employ their authority to encourage professional exchange and cooperation (Dunlap & Goldman, 1990).

According to Huxham and Vangen (2000), the function of a formal leader is to influence or alter followers individuals within a group or organization- to achieve particular goals. In conventional narratives, leaders are portrayed as powerful, authoritative figures who set the agenda, create hierarchies and guarantee results. The fundamental premise is that people who are followers are incapable of autonomously resolving problems. As previously said, dealing with disputes, value differences, and mutual interdependence requires a different strategy than the traditional concept of leaders exercising formal political control over others. Facilitative leadership, on the other



hand, arises from the collaborative effort of working with others to achieve outcomes that everyone can endorse (Svara, 2008).

In situations where there is little motivation to participate, an uneven distribution of power and resources, and existing conflicts are prominent, the role of leadership becomes increasingly significant (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Consequently, participatory and cooperative processes often depend on specific individuals who play a pivotal role as catalysts. Identifying these local leaders, understanding their origins, and recognizing their actions can be crucial to the overall success of the process (Luke, 1998; Ansell & Gash, 2007).

Research Methodology

This section addresses research design, population, sampling size, sample procedure, instrumentation processes, information collection, and data processing methods. This study employed a quantitative research methodology, gathering data using a survey that collected responses from public secondary school teachers in Korangi, Karachi about different leadership styles of their school heads. The survey questionnaire was a leadership-style questionnaire and self-developed with 16 items. The researcher used a survey sample based on descriptive method questions to get the answers regarding the subject under study. Researcher found the knowledge of the public secondary school teachers' perceptions about their school heads' leadership style. The survey encompassed the entire population of male and female secondary school teachers in the Korangi district of Karachi, Pakistan. Two hundred questionnaires were distributed among teachers, with instructions to carefully read the statements provided and choose the proper response using a 5-point Likert scale, where one represents strongly disagree. 2 denotes disagree, three is neutral, 4 is agree, and five is strongly agree by using stratified random sampling technique. The research questionnaire had two sections. Teachers' gender and other demographic data were to be gathered in the first part, while their knowledge about their school head's leadership style is obtained in the second part. 140 male and female secondary school teachers from the Korangi district completed and returned the research questionnaire and other refused to participate in the study through simple random sampling technique. The response rate was 70 percent. The scale was pilot-tested before collecting data and found reliable at 0.690 Cronbach's Alpha. The overall reliability of the scale is given table_1:

Table 1
Cronbach's Alpha



Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.760	16

Data Analysis Techniques

Collected data was entered in SPSS version 22 for screening purposes and for frequency and percentage distribution. Analyses of the data included descriptive statistics, frequency and percentage distributions, the independent sample t-test, and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were also used.

Data Analysis and Results

In this study, teachers' perceptions regarding their school heads' leadership style were examined from their demographics perspective of study, which plays an important role. Gender, age, experience and qualification-wise perception showed the exact leadership style of their school head at the secondary level in Karachi, Pakistan. To compare teachers' perceptions by gender, an independent sample t-test was used, and for age, experience and qualification, one-way ANOVA was utilized in the current study.

Demographics

Table 2 provides demographic details of the participants in the study. The table indicates that 55 percent of males and 45 percent female teachers participated in this study, reasonable percentage of teachers (48%) having the age of 31_40 years, 77% participants holding 1_10 years teaching experience and there is majority of them (49.3%) holding graduation degree.

Table 2
Demographic Information

Demographics	Frequency.	Percent.	
Gender	Male	77	55%
	Female	63	45%
	Total	140	100%
Age	20_30 Yrs	32	23%
	31_40 Yrs	67	48%
	More than 40 Yrs	41	29%
	Total	140	100%
Experience	1-10 yrs	77	55%
	11-20 yrs	46	33%



	21 yrs and above	17	12%
	Total	140	100%
Academic Qualification	Graduation	69	49.3%
	Masters	54	38.6%
	M Phil.	17	12.1%
	Total	140	100%

Table 3
Comparison of teacher's gender on their School Head Leadership Style

Gender	N	Mean	S. D	df	t	P
Male	77	4.062	0.458	138	0.345	0.731
Female	63	4.089	0.455			

$p > 0.05$

A t-test was carried out using the instructions provided in table 3 to ascertain whether or not there was a discernible distinction between the viewpoints of male and female educators regarding the leadership positions held by their respective school heads. Based on the findings of the test, it was discovered that there was no statistically significant difference between male and female instructors in terms of their school heads at the secondary level $t(138) = 0.345$, $p = (0.731)$. On the other hand, the perception of female professors ($M=4.089$, $SD=0.455$) was significantly different from the view of male teachers ($M=4.062$, $SD=0.458$). There were no discernible differences between the viewpoints of teachers and those of their school heads about the leadership styles of their respective schools.

Table 4
Comparison of teacher's age on their School Heads leadership Style

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.302	2	0.151	0.723	0.487
Within Groups	28.588	137	0.209		
Total	28.890	139			

$p > 0.05$

The outcomes of teachers regarding their school heads' leadership style from their age are presented in Table 4. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to investigate



educators' perspectives in public secondary institutions regarding their school heads' leadership styles from their age. Based on the outcomes of an analysis of variance, it was determined that educators' perspectives concerning their school heads' leadership styles did not differ significantly by age, $F(2, 137) = 0.723$ $p(0.487)$. The research outcomes specified no statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions of their school heads' leadership styles in secondary schools based on age.

Table 5
 Comparison of teachers by their qualification on their School Heads Leadership Style

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.287	2	0.143	0.687	0.505
Within Groups	28.603	137	0.209		
Total	28.890	139			

$p > 0.05$

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare teachers' perceptions regarding their school heads' leadership style at public secondary schools from their qualifications. A variance analysis determined that teachers' perspectives about their school heads' leadership styles based on their qualifications were the same. The consequences showed no significant difference in their opinion of their school head leadership style, $F(2, 137) = 0.687$, $p(0.505)$. The study's results indicated no statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions regarding their qualifications about their school heads' leadership style at the secondary level.

Table 6
 Comparison of teachers by teaching experience on their School Heads Leadership

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.431	2	0.315	0.876	0.517
Within Groups	27.459	137	0.200		
Total	28.890	139			

$p > 0.05$

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare teachers' perceptions regarding their school heads' leadership style in public secondary schools according to their teaching experience. An analysis of variance revealed that teachers' perspectives on their school heads' leadership were the same at the secondary level from their teaching experience, $F(2, 137) = 0.876$, $p(0.517)$. The



study's results indicated no statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions regarding their school heads leadership styles from teaching experience at the secondary level.

Table 7
Facilitative Leadership Style

S. No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	FL_1	140	4.171	0.889
2.	FL_2	140	3.942	1.210
3.	FL_3	140	4.057	1.110
4.	FL_4	140	4.028	1.024
Facilitative Leadership Overall		140	4.050	0.763

Table 7 indicates the perceptions of teachers about the facilitative leadership style of secondary school heads at public secondary schools, 'FL1 is placed at the highest level by the respondents with a mean of 4.171, followed by FL3 (4.057), 'FL4 (4.028), and 'FL2 (3.942), respectively.

The overall mean score of the respondents on facilitative leadership was 4.050.

Table 8
Situational Leadership Style

S. No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	SL1	140	3.807	0.748
2.	SL2	140	4.064	0.953
3.	SL3	140	3.964	0.876
4.	SL4	140	4.092	0.912
Overall Situational Leadership		140	3.982	0.617

Table 8 describes the perceptions of teachers about the situational leadership style of secondary school heads at public secondary schools, 'SL4 is placed at the highest level by the respondents with a mean 4.092, followed by SL2 (4.064), SL3 (3.964), and 'SL1 (3.807), respectively. The overall mean score of the participants on situational leadership style was 3.982.

Table 9
Autocratic Leadership Style

S. No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	AL-1	140	3.885	1.046
2.	AL-2	140	3.878	0.977
3.	AL-3	140	3.886	1.175
4.	AL-4	140	3.921	1.046
Autocratic Leadership Style Overall		140	3.892	0.747



Table 9 reveals teachers' perceptions about the autocratic leadership style of secondary school heads at the secondary level. The item, namely AL4, is placed at the highest level by the respondents with a mean of 3.921, followed by AL3 (3.886), AL1 (3.885), and AL2 (3.878), respectively. The overall mean score of the respondents on autocratic leadership style was 3.892.

Table 10
 Democratic Leadership Style

S. No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	DL1	140	4.435	0.779
2.	DL2	140	4.242	0.943
3.	DL3	140	4.385	0.774
4.	DL4	140	4.428	0.750
Overall Democratic Leadership Style		140	4.373	0.676

Table 10 tells teachers' perceptions about the democratic leadership style of secondary school heads at the secondary school level; DL1 is placed at the highest level by the respondents with a mean score of 4.435, followed by DL4 (4.428), DL3 (4.385), and DL2 (4.242), respectively. The overall mean score of the respondents on democratic leadership style was 4.373.



Table 11
Factor wise Leadership Styles

S. No	Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Facilitative Leadership Style(FLS)	140	4.050	0.763
2.	Situational Leadership Style(SLS)	140	3.982	0.617
3.	Autocratic Leadership Style(ALS)	140	3.892	0.747
4.	Democratic Leadership Style(DLS)	140	4.373	0.676
5.	Overall Leadership	140	4.074	0.455

Table 11 indicates the factors of school heads' leadership styles they are adopting at the public secondary school level; the democratic leadership style was placed at the highest level by the respondents with a mean score of 4.373, followed by facilitative leadership style (4.050), situational leadership style (3.982) and teachers show less privilege to autocratic leadership style (3.892) respectively. The overall perception of teachers on the leadership of their school heads was 4.074.

Conclusion and Discussion

All of the arguments that were made based on the study's findings can be seen in the context of the respondents' demographics, who were primarily secondary teachers who were female (55%), 50% having the age of 31-40 years, graduate degrees (49.3%) and had 1-10 years of teaching experience (55%). This study addressed the first research question: "What are teachers' perceptions about their school heads' leadership styles at the secondary level in Karachi? The study's findings revealed that secondary school teachers demonstrated the highest level of teacher perception about their school head's democratic leadership style (4.373). The work of (Ahmad et al., 2020; Ahmad & Hamid, 2021; Ahmad, Ali, & Sewani, 2021; Ahmad, Sewani, & Ali, 2021) supports this relationship between teachers' perceptions about their school heads leadership styles. Facilitative leadership is the second-highest category (4.050). The environment is ripe for secondary teachers to develop a facilitative leadership style, as evidenced by studies (Ahmad et al., 2023; Biggerstaff, 2012). Situational leadership was third, with a mean score (of 3.982), reflecting that they can handle the situation in secondary schools (Ahmad et al., 2023). Secondary school teachers showed less perception of autocratic leadership style, with a mean score of (3.892). Hence, the first research question is answered.

The study's second research question was: What are teachers' perceptions regarding school head leadership styles from a teacher's perspective regarding their demographics? According to the



results of the gender analysis, female and male teachers have demonstrated the same level of perception of secondary school teachers regarding their school heads' leadership styles when examined using an independent sample t-test (Ahmad et al., 2020). However, the perception of teachers about their school heads' leadership style does not significantly differ from their age, qualifications and teaching experience by using one-way ANOVA. It indicates that secondary school teachers with master's degrees and graduation degrees have voiced their agreement regarding their school heads' leadership styles as secondary school teachers with the same experience and age group (Ahmad et al., 2021).

Recommendations

1. Based on the conclusions of the study, it is recommended that.
2. School administrators ought to embrace democratic leadership approaches, which involve engaging teachers in decision-making and promoting active involvement in school activities, which will enhance school performance and cultivate a sense of ownership among teachers.
3. Leadership training programs should be developed to enhance the leadership skills of head teachers. These programs should emphasize the significance of democratic leadership styles and offer practical guidance on their effective implementation.
4. School leaders should invest in their leadership development. This investment will enhance their capacity to lead effectively and create a positive school environment that supports student learning and achievement.
5. Policymakers should prioritize the development of policies that encourage the adoption of democratic leadership styles. This can be achieved by funding leadership training programs, offering incentives to schools that exhibit effective leadership practices, and establishing guidelines for evaluating school leaders based on their effectiveness.

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