

Original Article

# Perceptions of Teachers about Leadership Styles Require for Effective Educational Environment at Secondary Level

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**JOURNAL OF  
SOCIAL HORIZONS**

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**How to cite:**

Zafar, K., Ghori, U. K., & Alam, J. (2025). Perceptions of Teachers about Leadership Styles Require for Effective Educational Environment at Secondary Level. *Journal of Social Horizons*, 2(1), 01-10.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15101211>

## Abstract

The present study explores the viewpoints of teachers regarding various leadership philosophies that facilitate the establishment of good learning environments in secondary schools, with a particular focus on the Federal Government (FG) school system in Wah Cantt. Leadership has a big impact on school climate, teacher effectiveness, and student success. The study analyses the connections between various leadership philosophies (transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire) and teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and student involvement. Data for the qualitative study design were gathered using semi-structured interviews and subjected to theme analysis. The population comprises 600-650 instructors of secondary schools in the FG system. To provide in-depth analysis, a sample of 26 teachers 9 male and 17 females were selected. Using phenomenological method, purposive study was applied to collect and analyze the data, then transcript was coded to identify major themes. The study findings highlight that teachers' performance is directly linked to the administrative leadership. Teachers claim that they need professional trainings to properly promote better education. Enhanced learning outcomes, engaged students, and improved teaching practices can result from educational initiatives that are specifically designed to support the leadership styles that are most beneficial to a school's atmosphere. The study also identifies preferences for leadership based on gender and suggests that male and female educators use different strategies to promote inclusive management. The study suggests that future researchers might explore the role of instructional technology at the secondary level.

**Keywords:** Teacher's perception, Leadership styles, Effective educational Environment, Teacher performance, Professional development

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A nation's progress is significantly influenced by its education system, which shapes highly qualified human resources. Perceptions of teachers must be understood in order to appreciate the critical role that leadership styles play in creating a successful learning environment at the secondary level. Teachers, as frontline educators, possess valuable perspectives on how leadership influences classroom dynamics, student outcomes, and overall school culture. Teacher performance, a critical indicator of educational achievement, directly impacts the quality of resources produced (Tuhuteru, Pratiwi, Suryowidiyanti, Mahendika, & Abdullah, 2023). Schools, as formal education institutions, bear the responsibility of ensuring the caliber of instruction provided by every educator. At the heart of any school are its teachers, professionals who lead by example, guiding and instructing students through daily learning activities. Principals, as supervisors of teachers, play a crucial role in encouraging, supporting, evaluating, and overseeing instructors to continuously improve their pedagogical, social, professional, and personal competencies.

## Professional Development

Professional learning (PL). differs significantly from traditional professional development (PD). approaches, as highlighted by (Durksen, Klassen, & Daniels, 2017). PL places the emphasis on the teacher, recognizing their evolving needs as central to the learning process. Unlike PD, which tends to be more system-focused and aims to align teachers with predetermined educational policies and protocols, PL is more individualized and responsive to the specific needs and contexts of teachers.

## Workload for Principals and Teachers

The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). between 2013 and 2018 offers insights into the workload of teachers globally. According to (Balestra & Ciani, 2022). Findings, teachers across the globe experienced a reduction in total hours spent on general administrative work from 2013 to 2018. However, this trend did not hold true in Australia, where teachers dedicated above-average amounts of time to administrative tasks, and this allocation remained relatively constant during the same period (Thomson & Hillman, 2019).

## Leadership Styles

### Autocratic leadership

Authoritarian leaders, or autocrats, are known for their penchant for rigid organizational structures, little interaction with staff, and a propensity to give orders that subordinates are expected to carry out without question. In general, authoritarian leaders don't value their followers' opinions and don't seem to care about their welfare. (Dunklee, 2000). Limited involvement and personal control over each group member's behavior characterize this leadership style. In order to maintain complete and authoritarian group control, autocratic leaders usually make decisions based on their beliefs and ideas rather than considering the advice of their followers. (Cabual, 2021). These leaders want their followers to carry out their orders (Al Khajeh, 2018). Autocratic leadership can be useful in emergency situations involving a uniform workforce when the leader is intelligent, just, and has a firm command of their followers. (Armstrong, 2012).

### Democratic leadership

Using this strategy, the director consults with subordinates before making choices, but they still have the final say over how things are decided. Before making choices, the director may also consult with mentors and try to reach a consensus (by agreement). In (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018). It has expressed worries that the many meetings associated with the participative leadership style can be time-consuming and that it could also lead to uncertainty and unclear direction. On the other hand, it might not be appropriate in emergency scenarios where quick choices are needed. (Oyetunyi, 2006). Democratic leadership entails group members participating more actively in the decision-making process. It is also known as participatory or collaborative leadership. (Cabual, 2021). In a democratic system, there is decentralized decision-making and rewards for performance. (Puni, Anlesinya, & Korsorku, 2018).

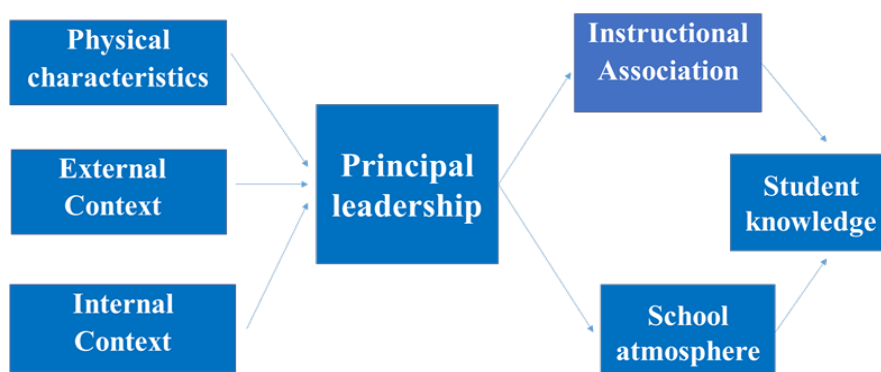
### Laissez Faire Leadership Style:

According to (Cabual, 2021). laissez-faire leadership involves leaders assisting one another and letting group members make decisions. Furthermore, a leader who lacks confidence in his ability to oversee others and without specific goals for the group to work toward makes it difficult for the group to make decisions, which places an excessive amount of responsibility on subordinates. This type of leadership is ineffective in non-governmental organizations and the financial sector, where choices are made collaboratively between the boss and subordinates, and tasks are executed to ensure the organization's victory.

According to (bin Abdul Rahman & Hamzah, 2022). the principal's position as an educational leader can be understood through three dimensions and ten functions (see Figure 1). The first dimension involves outlining the school's mission, which directs efforts towards enhancing student learning. It is the

principal's responsibility to articulate and communicate a clear vision, providing guidance and support in its implementation. Establishing a unified vision and mission is foundational in initiating school improvement efforts (Foti, Hansbrough, Epitropaki, & Coyle, 2017).

The second dimension, overseeing educational initiatives, focuses on the principal's role in managing the technical core of the institution (Rodríguez, Pérez, Cueva, & Torres, 2017). This includes planning, designing, and overseeing the quality of education through activities such as teacher supervision, curriculum development, and monitoring student progress. These efforts are instrumental in enhancing the overall process of teaching and learning, ensuring that educational practices are aligned with desired outcomes.



**Fig 1.** *Instructional management model*

## Developing a positive learning environment in schools

Principals are pivotal in shaping a positive learning environment by creating frameworks that foster engagement and collaboration among educators and students. By developing structures that encourage interaction and cooperation between teachers and students, principals play a critical role in establishing a pleasant learning environment. Preserving instructional time is a top priority for effective principals, which entails reducing disturbances and organizing the school calendar to optimize classroom activities.

By ensuring that teaching and learning continue unhindered, principals who proactively seek to protect instructional time, according to (Wallace & Rosales, 2019), considerably boost academic outcomes. To free up instructors to concentrate on providing high-quality instruction, this strategy involves efficient planning and managing administrative duties.

Providing professional development opportunities is another critical aspect of developing a positive learning environment. Research highlights that ongoing professional growth for teachers is essential for enhancing their instructional practices and maintaining their motivation. Darling-(Darling-Hammond, 2020), emphasize that principals who support and invest in professional development create an environment where teachers feel valued and are better equipped to address the needs of their students. By offering relevant and sustained training, principals help teachers stay current with educational practices and improve their effectiveness in the classroom.

## Importance of leadership in Educational Institution

The success and efficacy of educational institutions are significantly shaped by the leadership inside those institutions. Setting up specific objectives and objectives for their schools is an essential function of effective school leaders, as it facilitates the alignment of staff and teachers' efforts to achieve those goals. Strong leadership has a favorable impact on student outcomes by building a collaborative and supportive environment that inspires educators to perform to the best of their abilities, according to a recent study by (Shengnan Liu & Hallinger, 2024).

## Research Gap

The relationship between principal instructional supervision and teachers' performance in working schools is an important area of research. The research gap on the influence of principal's leadership styles on teachers' performance was identified by assessing whether the study adequately addresses certain aspects. For instance, most of the articles might lack a detailed exploration of the specific leadership

behaviors employed by principals or may not sufficiently develop into the contextual factors shaping these interactions. Assessing the methodological approach and potential biases within the study may also reveal areas where further research is needed for a better understanding. Different articles have been studied in which The effect of Principles Leadership styles and Teacher Job Satisfaction on teachers Performance by (Yuniarti, Ahmad, & Fitriani, 2023) and (Teacher Perceptions of Student motivation and engagement longitudinal associations with student outcomes by (Brandmiller, Schnitzler, & Dumont, 2024) have been discussed in different years at different locations. Although some research has been conducted in this field, there still exists a research gap that needs to be addressed. For instance, examining the effectiveness of techniques such as formal classroom observations, providing constructive feedback, collaborative planning, and professional development opportunities can shed light on their impact on teachers' performance.

## Objectives of the Study

- To determine the teacher's perception of leadership styles in promoting a conducive learning atmosphere at secondary level.
- To investigate the relationship between leadership styles and teacher's performance in order to improve the educational environment of schools at secondary level.

## Research Methodology

In this study, the phenomenological method was used to conduct a detailed investigation into the educational challenges faced by secondary school teachers in diverse classrooms.

## Research design

It was qualitative method research of F.G schools Wah Cantt. The semi structured interview was used to collect the data from the teachers of F.G schools. The interview contained ten structured questions which further consist of 37 questions to collect information.

## Population of the study

The study was conducted in FG schools of Wah Cantt. About 600-650 teachers of FG schools in Wah Cantt were providing their services to the students, (<https://fgei9.pitb.gov.pk/wah>). The population of the study was 26 teachers (male and female) teaching to secondary level. There were 09 males and 17 female teachers selected as population of the study.

## Data Collection

The study employed a qualitative research design to gather data and insights regarding teachers' perspectives of leadership styles. The data from the qualitative interviews aims to document individuals' unique viewpoints and experiences. After gathering data and reviewing every instance, read the teacher interviews that took place.

## Data Analysis

The data collected via interviews was analyzed to find the major themes according to the research questions. After the data was gathered through interviews, narrative analysis was employed for analysis.

After collecting the sample data, written transcripts were created from the audio recordings. Following this, a thorough cross-check was conducted to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts against the original audio recordings.

# 2.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## Data analysis

The qualitative type of study was used to collect data and information about teacher perceptions of leadership styles. The qualitative interviews data seeks to capture people personal perspectives and



experiences. After data collection reviewed all cases read the interviews of the participating school teachers.

**Objective 1: To determine the teacher's perception of leadership styles in promoting a conducive learning atmosphere at secondary level.**

### **Positive Learning Environments through Leadership Behaviors**

Positive learning environments through leadership behaviors refer to the creation and maintenance of educational settings like seminars, workshops, teachers training etc. Where learners, educators, and stakeholders thrive and excel. Most of the teachers 22 out of 26 teachers indicated that such leadership behavior enhances positive learning environment.

#### **Participant:3**

*"Effective supervision can lead to improved classroom management skills, lesson planning and student assessment skills, as well as the ability to meet diverse learner needs."*

In educational contexts, the development of professional growth and the enhancement of teaching abilities are contingent upon the regular and meaningful interaction between instructional supervisors and teachers.

### **Leadership behaviors of learning**

The responses from 24 out of 26 teachers highlighted that leadership behaviors contribute to development a positive learning environment.

#### **Participant:12**

*"Supportive leadership has been identified as a critical attribute of successful leaders in numerous leadership theories. Our thorough literature analysis led us to the conclusion that supportive leadership benefits work teams in different ways."*

Leaders that place a high priority on staff professional development and continuous improvement help to improve teaching methods and student learning experiences throughout time. Emotional intelligence allows effective leaders to recognize, comprehend, and address the needs and feelings of others.

### **Administrative styles of leaders ensure a favorable school climate for academic outcome**

The majority of teachers (21 out of 26). noted that administrative leadership styles contribute to development a positive school climate that enhances academic outcomes.

An efficient administrative team is essential to determining how a school's students learn. It has a significant impact on students' intellectual and personal development in addition to their daily operations, which eventually contributes to their total success. The environment and circumstances at the school are greatly influenced by the administrators' management style.

### **The Impact of Leadership Styles on Creating Positive Learning Environments**

#### **Opportunities for higher professional education.**

Positive feedback indicates that opportunities and support are available for teachers to pursue higher professional education, ensuring their continuous growth and development according to the responses of about 19 out of 26 respondents. Seven respondents expressed a neutral stance regarding the same statement.

#### **Participant:7**

*"These resources not only help teachers enhance their skills and knowledge but also improve their teaching effectiveness and job satisfaction."*

Teachers can increase their subject-specific knowledge, skill set, and level of expertise by providing chances for higher professional education. Their professional development is enhanced by this ongoing learning, which improves their effectiveness as teachers.

#### **Adequate work load helps to maintaining the school environment conducive.**

Many teachers mentioned that manageable workloads enable educators to effectively focus on creating

a positive learning environment, fostering student engagement, and maintaining teacher well-being. 20 out of 26 teachers suggested to maintain the school environment by adequate work load.

**Participant:18**

*“When educators are not overwhelmed by excessive workloads, they can devote more time and energy to planning engaging lessons, providing individualized attention to students, and creating a positive classroom atmosphere.”*

Keeping teachers' workloads manageable is vital to creating a positive learning environment. In addition to promoting professional development, raising standards of instruction, improving school atmosphere, and supporting teacher well-being, it also helps students succeed and achieve more overall. A sufficient workload indicates that educators are not overburdened with assignments. This enables individuals to prevent burnout, have a healthy work-life balance, and efficiently manage their time.

## **Challenges in Implementing Effective Leadership Styles in the classroom**

### **Challenges faced by teachers about leadership styles:**

Some participants have discussed the challenges of implementing effective leadership styles in the classroom, aiming to enhance educational practices through these leadership approaches. About 23 out of 26 teachers discussed about effective leadership styles in the classroom.

**Participant:7**

*“Different challenges are not completed at a time, but at different times, different tasks are completed in a very smaller way, not all of them.”*

When it comes to exhibiting leadership styles in educational environments, teachers have a variety of difficulties. A notable obstacle that they may encounter is the absence of official power customarily linked with administrative positions, which may impede their capacity to execute adjustments or programs they feel would be advantageous for their pupils.

### **Leadership requires staying out of the way of teachers as they do their work:**

Most of the teachers 21 out of 26 hold the view that when leadership assigns additional tasks outside of their regular duties, some individuals may attempt to complete them, while many others may decline.

**Participant:19**

*“Without guidance, teachers might lack the necessary resources, feedback, and strategic alignment needed to achieve educational goals.”*

In this situation, effective leadership is establishing a nurturing atmosphere that gives educators the freedom and tools they require to succeed. This method acknowledges that educators are experts in their field who have the greatest understanding of the requirements of their students.

Objective:2 To investigate the relationship between leadership styles and teacher's performance in order to improve the educational environment of schools at secondary level.

## **The Role of Leadership in Advancing the Learning Environment**

### **Leadership contributes to the advancement of the learning environment.**

There is a consensus that effective leadership strives to enhance the learning environment as expressed by 23 teachers out of 26.

**Participant:17**

*“Effective leaders provide vision, direction, and support that adoptive a positive and productive educational environment.”*

Proficient leaders in the field of education motivate and enable both educators and learners, creating an environment that is favorable to advancement and progress. They establish precise expectations and goals, guaranteeing that they are in line with learning goals and giving the school community a feeling of direction. Furthermore, innovative and creative cultures of cooperation and ongoing development are fostered by effective educational leaders.

## **Empowering Leadership Practices for Teacher Participation and Skill Enhancement**

### **Techniques for leadership in decision-making process**

Most of the teachers 22 out of 26 teachers supported that specific leadership methods or techniques significantly encourage teachers to engage in decision-making often hold similar views based on observed successes and theoretical principles.

#### **Participant:3**

*"Such approaches can create a more inclusive and collaborative environment. Techniques like distributed leadership, where decision-making responsibilities are shared among staff, and participative leadership, which actively seeks and values input from teachers, can empower educators and make them feel valued and respected."*

A teacher's willingness to participate in decision-making in an educational setting can be significantly impacted by specific leadership approaches or strategies. School administrators that embrace inclusive and participatory methods give instructors more authority by appreciating their knowledge and perspectives.

### **Instructional supervisor enhances the teaching skills**

All 26 teachers included in this study, supported the statement that instructional supervisor enhances the teaching skills. They have expressed that effective teaching skills contribute significantly to improved learning outcomes.

#### **Participant:12**

*"Their feedback and guidance can provide valuable insights into areas where a teacher can improve, helping them refine their instructional techniques and adapt to diverse learning needs."*

They enable teachers to improve their teaching methods and approaches by offering them opportunities for professional development, constructive criticism, and focused assistance. Supervisors monitor lessons in the classroom, provide one-on-one coaching, and lead targeted improvement workshops.

### **Job satisfaction**

Some teachers 16 out of 26 teachers, hold the belief that decision-making can have a substantial impact on teacher job satisfaction.

#### **Participant:7**

*"Decision-making significantly impacts teacher job satisfaction as it directly correlates with feelings of empowerment, autonomy, and professional fulfillment. When teachers have a voice in decision-making processes, whether regarding curriculum design, classroom management strategies, or professional development opportunities, they feel valued and respected for their expertise."*

Teacher morale and job satisfaction tend to rise when they are actively involved in decision-making, particularly when it comes to issues that directly impact their classroom environment. Teachers that are involved feel more empowered and have their voices heard since their opinions are appreciated.

## **Conflict Resolution Strategies for Administrators**

### **Professional development of employees.**

Professional development opportunities are not universally effective as narrated by 23 out of 26 teachers. They point out instances where training programs lack relevance or do not result in tangible career advancement.

#### **Participant:7**

*"Such opportunities often enable employees to enhance their skills and knowledge, making them more competent and versatile in their roles. This not only boosts their confidence but also increases their job satisfaction and motivation to perform better."*

Its efficacy can also be greatly impacted by the institutional support and resources that are made available for professional growth. Enough time to put new tactics into practice, access to continuing

assistance, and peer-collaboration opportunities are essential for converting professional learning into better teaching practices.

## Challenges with guidance system

### Subjects and topics covered in extra classes.

Some teachers 20 out of 26, support the idea of additional classes because they believe these classes provide students with opportunities to develop into subjects that are relevant to their future aspirations or personal interests.

#### Participant:2

*“These extra classes are beneficial because they provide opportunities for deeper exploration and understanding beyond the standard curriculum.”*

Additional classes are a great way to support a wide range of student interests and goals while also supplementing the core curriculum. They enhance students' overall educational experience by giving them the tools they need to explore, succeed, and become ready for their future academic and professional endeavors.

## 3.FINDING & DISCUSSION

### Positive Learning Environments through Leadership Behaviors.

Several teachers suggested that leadership behaviors contribute to fostering a positive learning environment. This environment fostered through leadership behaviors that prioritize encouragement, empathy, and collaboration. Leaders who exhibit these qualities inspire trust and create a safe space where learners feel valued and supported. By demonstrating a commitment to fairness and inclusivity, leaders promote a sense of belonging and encourage open communication. As stated by the Participant 3 that Effective supervisions can lead to improved classroom

management skills, lesson planning and student assessment skills, as well as the ability to meet diverse learner needs (Ibrahim Mohamed, 2023). also claimed by emphasizes the impact of effective supervision on lesson planning, leading to more focused and effective instruction.

### The Impact of Leadership Styles on Creating Positive Learning Environments.

The study found that positive feedback impacts the opportunities and support which are available for teachers to pursue higher professional education, ensuring their continuous growth and development. Secondly, manageable workloads enable educators to effectively focus on creating a positive learning environment, fostering student engagement, and maintaining teacher well-being. Some participants believe that promoting creativity, innovation, and personalized approaches to teaching is beneficial. As mentioned by participant:4 that trusting teachers with autonomy fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to their professional practice, encouraging creativity, innovation, and personalized learning experiences. (Guskey, 2021). had also declared about high-quality professional development opportunities enhance teachers' skills and knowledge. Similarly, (Wisniewski, Zierer, & Hattie, 2020). stated that access to resources and support improves teaching effectiveness, leading to better student outcomes.

### Teacher Engagement in Decision-Making Processes:

Some participants hold the view that when leadership assigns additional tasks outside of their regular duties, some individuals may attempt to complete them, while many others may decline. The respondent teacher explained that Without guidance, teachers might lack the necessary resources, feedback, and strategic alignment needed to achieve educational goals. According to participant:19 it is noted that without guidance, teachers might lack the necessary resources, feedback, and strategic alignment needed to achieve educational goals. (Zada, Khan, Saeed, & Zada, 2024). stated that principled negotiation and problem-solving approaches can help resolve conflicts in a way that benefits all parties.



## Empowering Leadership Practices for Teacher Participation and Skill Enhancement

Most of the teachers supported that specific leadership methods or techniques significantly encourage teachers to engage in decision-making. As mentioned by participant:10 that a combination of methods tailored to the specific environment and needs of the teachers is more realistic and effective than relying solely on particular techniques. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024). advocated for a tailored approach to teacher professional development, acknowledging that a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective. (Lentz et al., 2024). argued that effective professional development requires a tailored approach that addresses the specific needs and goals of teachers.

Another Participant:18 said that if leadership is effective, parents, teachers, and students can also lead better learning. ((Leithwood, Sun, Zhang, & Hua, 2024). claimed that effective leadership can foster a positive school culture, leading to improved teacher motivation, student engagement, and parental involvement.

## Balancing Workload for a Conducive School Environment

Some teachers have expressed that complex rules and procedures can hinder productivity and innovation within organizations. According to participant:17, overly bureaucratic systems can stifle creativity and productivity. When rules are too rigid or numerous, employees may feel constrained in their ability to make decisions or take initiative, which can hinder their performance. (Haider, Ahmad, & Ali, 2024). stated that overly bureaucratic organizations can stifle innovation and creativity by prioritizing rule-following over flexibility and adaptability (Ntoumanis et al., 2021). expressed that excessive rules and regulations can undermine employee autonomy, leading to decreased motivation and performance.

## 4. CONCLUSION

These styles of leadership to foster a collaborative culture, improve teaching practices, and empower teachers, ultimately enhances teacher's motivation and job satisfaction. Moreover, student-centered and culturally responsive leadership approaches create a supportive and inclusive environment which have positive impact on student learning outcomes. By adopting these effective leadership styles, school administrators have the power to foster effective education is equally an educational environment that is both beneficial and productive for both teachers and students which leads ultimately to improve academic achievement and personal growth.

The presence of different leadership styles in a school has a profound impact on the educational environment. Effective school leaders must navigate these dynamics, balancing different styles to create a cohesive vision, promote professional growth, and ultimately enhance student learning outcomes. By acknowledging and addressing the strengths and weaknesses of various leadership styles, schools can harness the benefits of diverse approaches to create a positive and productive educational environment. These insights can also influence in enhancing academic results by the help of strong leadership.

### Competing Interests

The authors did not declare any competing interest.

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