

Work Environment as Mediator between Academic Leaders Leadership Skills and Teachers Job Performance in Public Sector Universities of Khyber PakhtunkhwaMehnaz Fazal¹, Iqbal Amin Khan²¹ Lecturer, Department of Education Women Sub Campus, Batkhela, University of Malakand Pakistan² Lecturer, Department of Education University of Malakand, Pakistan.**Abstract**

This study examined the mediating role of work environment on the relationship between academic leaders' leadership skills and job performance by using a quantitative survey approach. The present study's data came from a doctoral dissertation from 9 public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, 306 teachers and 92 Heads of teaching Departments were randomly chosen. An adapted questionnaire based on five-point Likert scale was used to gather data. The questionnaire's reliability score was 0.92. The mediation effects were examined using Amos software, following the guiding principles of Baron and Kenny (1986). The results of the value of $p < 0.05$ and the value of indirect effect revealed that the work environment partially mediates the relationship between job performance of teachers and leadership skills of HODs, providing crucial new insights into the underlying mechanisms of this relationship.

Keywords: Academic Leaders, Leadership Skills, Job Performance, Work Environment

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1. Introduction

The changing and rising patterns of the technology-driven 21st century have made people rethink what makes a good leader and what makes a good work performance, changing the perception of leadership from a personal trait to a great talent (Hanjunkar, 2019). Of course, strong leaders make organizations work better, listen carefully to what their subordinates need, and work hard all the time to attain their goals (Yukl, 2000). According to Cheung and Wong (2011), good leaders inspire their people to do better at their occupations by finding better methods to do them. So, good leadership is the most important thing for enhancing employee work performance in different types of organizations (Yukl, 2010; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Research has shown that good leadership can have an impact on how well teachers do their jobs and how happy they are with their jobs (Bogler, 2001; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Having a friendly and supportive workplace is important for job satisfaction (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). Many things about the workplace can have an effect on a person's mental and physical health (Rathi, 2009). A nice workstation is important for employees to keep focused on their jobs and do them well. A good workplace has fair pay, a solid relationship between management and employees, fairness for everyone, and a suitable amount of work with goals that are challenging but possible to reach. When you put all of these things together, you have the best working environment for employees, where they are happy and do their jobs well (Bakotic & Babic, 2013). According to Leshabari (2008), supportive workplaces help employees do their daily activities more quickly and effectively by using their skills, expertise, and resources to provide high-quality services (Agbozo et al., 2017).

Sedarmayanti (2001) says that there are two basic types of work environments: physical and non-physical. The physical work environment is made up of all the physical circumstances that potentially have an effect on how well employees do their jobs, either directly or indirectly. All the things that happen in the non-physical workplace, whether they involve bosses, coworkers, or subordinates, affect relationships at work. A good work environment is necessary for workers to be more productive (Saidi et al., 2019; Westerman & Simmons, 2007). Effective leadership is a key factor in employee productivity, job happiness, and the overall success of the organization (Yukl, 2010). Recent research has shown how important leadership is for creating a good work environment, motivating employees, and improving the performance of a teachers (Avolio et al., 2009; Hannah et al., 2014). The work environment is very important for the link between leadership skills and job performance. A positive work environment has supportive relationships, clear communication, and enough resources, which all help employees stay engaged, motivated, and do their best work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti & Bakker, 2018). Additionally, leaders that put the health and happiness of their employees first, create a pleasant work environment, and encourage a healthy work-life balance can make employees happier, less likely to leave, and more productive (Kelloway et al., 2017; Laschinger et al., 2019). This study examines the work environment as a mediator to get insights into the attributes that influence the efficacy of leadership skills in enhancing job performance at public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtun Khwa, Pakistan.

Problem Statement

Although the value of leadership skills in motivating staff members is well known, however, there are many things that affect the relationship between HODs leadership skills and teachers job performance in public sector universities. The work environment is one important thing that might have a big effect on this relationship. Even good leadership is

important for improving teacher performance, not enough research has been done on how the work environment might help or hurt this relationship. A good work environment can boost teacher motivation, job happiness, and dedication, accounting for better job performance. On the other hand, a bad work atmosphere can cancel out the good benefits of leadership qualities, which can lead to teachers not doing their best work. The previous research studies have mostly focused on the direct impact of leadership skills on employee's performance, ignoring the potential mediating effects of work environment. This study seeks to examine the mediating role of work environment in the relationship between HODs leadership skills and teacher's job performance in public sector universities, of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan, with a view to providing insights that can update strategies for improving teacher performance and overall educational outcomes. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on leadership, work environment, and teacher performance, and provide practical recommendations for policymakers and educational administrators.

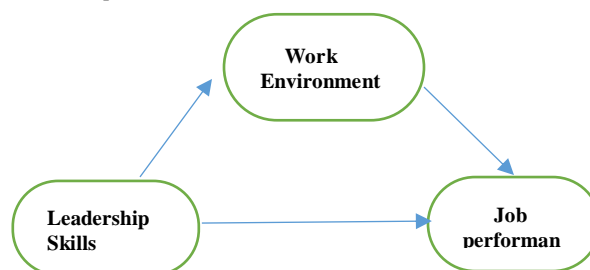
The objective of the study is to investigate the effects of academic leaders' leadership skills on the work environment in public sector universities. Firstly, the research examines how leadership skills influence the work environment. Secondly, it addresses the research question: what are the effects of academic leaders' leadership skills on the work environment in public sector universities? Moreover, the study explores the mediating role of the work environment between academic leaders' leadership skills and teachers' job performance, proposing that the work environment mediates the relationship between academic leaders' leadership skills and teachers' job performance in public sector universities.

2. Method

This study used a quantitative and cross-sectional research strategy. The study examined Public sector universities in KP and split them into three regions: the Northern, Central, and Southern regions. We selected nine universities at random from each group. The teachers and heads of departments were split into three groups: Arts and Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. There are 1444 participants in total, with 184 of them being department heads and 1260 of them being teachers. We used the Krejcie and Morgan table to select a sample of 398 participants for the study. This group included 306 teachers and 92 department heads, and we employed a non-stratified random sampling method.

We got primary data and information by using an adapted questionnaires. The five-point Likert scale, which ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). We used Amos software using Baron and Kenny's (1986) criteria to evaluate mediation analysis. We also screened the data to get rid of flaws such missing values and outlier data. The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) used to organize and analyze the data.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework



3. Results

Using Bootstrapping Method to test Hypothesis H0:

We conducted a mediation analysis to examine the mediating effect of the work environment (WE) on the connection of the leadership skills (LS) and the job performance of the teachers. Table 1 illustrates the results, which demonstrate a remarkable indirect effect of leadership skills (LS) on Job Performance (JP) through WE (Ho: $\beta = 0.089$, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect is significant, as it is evident that there is no

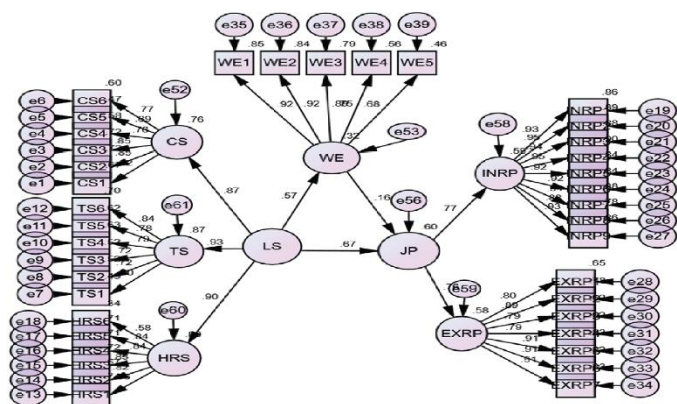
Table 1

Mediation Analysis (Bootstrapping by Amos) summary

Total Effect LS->JP		Direct Effect (LS-JP)		Hypothesis	Indirect Effect (LS-JP)		Confidence Interval		Conclusion
β - Value	p-Value	β - Value	p-Value	Ho:LS->WE->JP	β - Value	p-Value	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Partial Mediation
0.762	0.004	0.67	0.004		0.089	0.043	0.077	0.236	

Reason: The work environment (WE) partially mediates the effect of LS on JP, as both the direct and indirect effects are statistically significant, according to the bootstrap procedure.

Figure 2 WE contribute as mediator within LS and JP



Major Findings

Leadership skills play an important role in all organizational structures including education. Skillful leader is essential for creating a productive learning environment and attaining institutional success, as well as shaping the next generation leaders. In this way, an effective leader inspires and motivates teachers, students and other staff members to perform jobs in the way organization's demands. Several studies have discovered a strong correlation between leadership skills, and job performance (Judge et al., 2001; Mihalcea, 2014; Chang, 2017).

The findings of the study revealed the mediating effect of the work environment (WE) on the association between leadership skills of the HODs (LS) and the teacher's job performance. The result demonstrated remarkable indirect effect of Leadership Skills (LS) on the Job Performance (JP) through WE (Ho: $B = 0.089$, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect was significant in this case and it is evident for the data analysis that there is no zero between the upper and lower bounds. LS had a statistically significant cumulative effect on JP ($B = 0.762$, $p < 0.001$). In the presence of mediator, the direct effect of LS on JP is also significant ($B = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$) and implies that Work Environment serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between LS and JP.

zero between the upper and lower bounds. LS had a statistically significant, total effect of LS on JP ($\beta = 0.762$, $p < 0.001$). In the presence of mediator, the direct effect of LS on JP is also significant ($B = 0.67$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that the work environment serves as a partial mediator in the relationship between LS and JP. Consequently, we reject null hypotheses and accepted alternative hypotheses.

4. Discussion

This study's findings underscore the significance of leadership skills and work environment in enhancing teacher job performance in public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Head of the department with effective leadership skills increases teachers' job satisfaction, retention, create a positive work environment and increase morale of teachers as well as achievement of students in the selected universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, leading to improved job satisfaction, increased productivity and promotes quality of work. The head teacher's leadership skills directly affect the teachers by creating a supportive work atmosphere, recognizing teachers' contributions, and giving them chances to grow professionally.

The researcher contextualizes the findings within an educational framework that work environment is crucial to make teachers more productive. Because teachers who are happy with their jobs are more likely to feel obligated, interested, and committed to their jobs and this is possible by skillful HODs. It also has a direct impact on the academic achievement and overall personality of the students (Jameel, & Ahmad, 2020).

Conclusions

The results of this study show how important leadership skills and the work environment are for improving teacher performance in public sector universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The fact that the work environment only partially mediates the relationship between leadership and teacher performance shows that good leadership can have a direct and indirect effect on teacher performance by making the work environment better. University leaders should focus on teaching their staff how to be leaders who create a supportive work environment, give them the tools they need, and encourage a positive organizational culture. This will make teachers happier, more committed, and more productive, which will improve the quality of education in Pakistan's public sector universities. If you want to improve teacher performance and educational outcomes in Pakistan's higher education sector, these findings are important for policy-makers, administrators, and educators.

Additionally, the government should allocate funds to leadership development programs that can enhance the performance of public sector employees. In particular, universities can equip students with the necessary leadership skills to navigate the challenges they will encounter in the future workforce. Teachers and parents should focus on the children from their early childhood to inculcate leadership skills in their personalities. So they become more confident, resilient, and acquire the skill to resolve issues, form relationships, achieve their objectives and manage their future affairs. Scholars have the opportunity to investigate the specific aspects of leadership skills and

other factors as mediators to determine whether they affect the job performance of teachers.

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