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### INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE: A STUDY AT THE SECONDARY

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## ABSTRACT

This research aimed to identify the impact of instructional leadership styles on academic performance of students at secondary level, District Swabi. A quantitative research design was employed and data were collected from 156 principals and teachers using a closed-ended questionnaire. The study results established that instructional leadership styles positively affect students' academic achievement. The study has contributed to identifying a key area in secondary education, namely instructional leadership, which seems to enhance students' educational outcomes. For effective instructional leadership, since it can develop a context that facilitates improvements in academic performance of students, effective school leadership is needed by policymakers and educators. The study suggests that principals who would like to be effective in with tradition notions of instructional leadership may improve the process of improving students' academic performance by creating a supportive learning environment, engaging teachers in developing professional learning community, and improving students' academic performance. The contribution of the study is relevant to the advancement of educational policy and practice. This research establishes that principals in their role for school improvement to focus on developing their instructional leadership practices and students' academic performance provide the basis for any new policy direction. In addition, the results also highlight the importance of principals engaged in leadership development programs and other initiatives that provide support for instructional leadership at secondary level.

**Keywords:** Instructional Leadership, Student Academic Performance, Secondary Education, Leadership Styles, Teacher Professional Growth

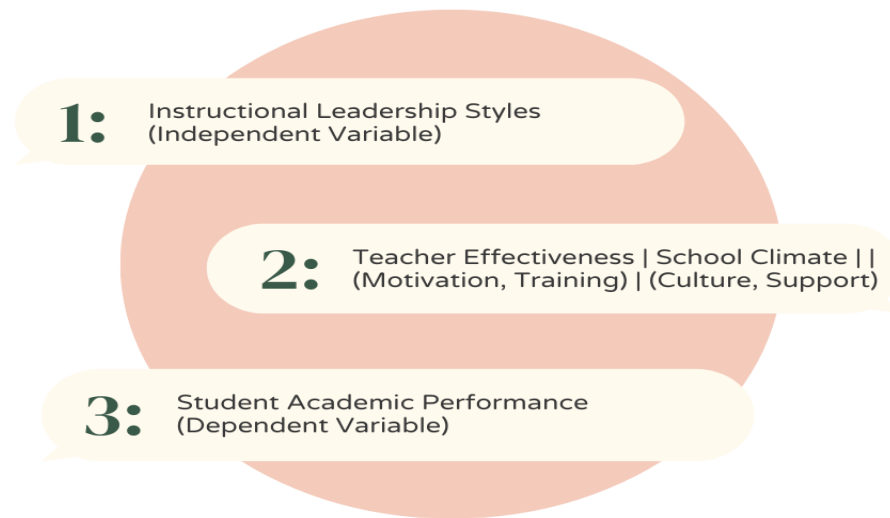
## INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a way to raise others to utilize the capabilities they have and achieve their goals. A leader is a person who deals with a different group of people **such** that these people willingly and efficiently achieve the objective and overall goal of the organization. The leader is involved in the organization's strategic planning, which encourages workers to accomplish the organization's mission and objectives (Staub, 2002). The leader can transform the vision of an organization into reality. Leadership also provides a way to the efforts of others for the achievement of goals and objectives of an organization; Leadership is not about power, authority or dominance. It is to maximize the efforts to achieve organizational goals efficiently (Duse, 2020). Instructional leadership plays a vital role in order to direct the curriculum and instructional programs in schools. Being the instructional leader the responsibilities of teachers are to facilitate learning, provide creative environment, handle school's administration, share their skills, empower their team members (Bellibaş, Polatcan, & Kılınç, 2020). Different roles at a time are played by instructional leaders. They operate not only as educators but also as managers, curricularists, teacher and administrators (Sosibo, Astrove, Reeves, Crawford, & Solimeo, 2017).

## Conceptual framework

This conceptual framework graphically depicts the interrelationship between instructional leadership styles and student academic achievement, with mediating variables of teacher effectiveness and school climate. Instructional leadership affects motivation of teacher, instructional quality and professional development, which influences student learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2011; Saima, Idris, & Minaz, 2025). Likewise, a positive school climate promotes collaboration, discipline, and

student engagement, which also leads to academic achievement. This model emphasizes the essential function of leadership in influencing learning environments and enhancing student performance at the secondary level (Gul, Minaz, & Idris, 2025). Let discuss each factor separately.



### **Statement of the problem**

The relationship between instructional leadership styles and student academic performance remains inconclusive, with existing literature highlighting the need for further exploration. In Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there is a scarcity of research on this topic at the secondary level, creating a significant gap in understanding the impact of instructional leadership on student outcomes (Gul, Minaz, & Idris, 2025). While Western studies have extensively examined this relationship, Pakistani contexts and secondary school settings remain underexplored. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the impact of various instructional leadership styles on student academic performance at the secondary level in Pakistan, identifying the most effective practices that enhance student learning outcomes

### **Objective of the Study**

To investigate the impact of instructional leadership styles on student academic performance at secondary level.

### **Research Questions**

What is impact of instructional leadership styles on student academic performance at secondary level?

### **Delimitation of the Study**

According to social constraints this study is limited to female secondary school in district Swabi.

### **Significance of the Study**

Secondary education is considered the foundation of education for students going upwards in the educational process. The role and leadership styles of the head of the institution play a key role in enhancing the academic performance of the students.

This study will provide insight to the researchers into the key instructional leadership styles and their impact on the academic performance of students at the secondary level of education. Furthermore, this study will help the policymakers to decide which leadership style should be encouraged and which should not be. This will further let them know how the students react to certain leadership styles thus enabling them to train the head of the schools to adopt those leadership styles which have positive influences on the academic performance of students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Instructional leadership**

Instructional leadership is called by numerous other names like pedagogical leadership, learning-centered leadership, leadership for learning, and student-centered leadership. Instructional leadership is special because above all else, it is focused on improving student learning outcomes. International research meta-analyses have provided compelling evidence that instructional leadership positively relates to its influence upon student accomplishment. Principal instructional leadership influences the student success by way of strategies that influence what happens within the classroom. A significant amount of the variation in student accomplishment can be attributed to chief instructional leadership. The results of Meta analysis showed instructional leadership as the most effective across school contexts and their different levels in improving student learning outcomes (Hood, 2015).

Weber's model basically synthesizes research on shared leadership, empowerment of informal leaders, and setting up a school culture that prioritizes student achievement. (Munna, 2022) A commitment to equity and inclusion among the testing ground means that each of the students will flourish. Instructional leaders are guiding equity by opening opportunities for the success of every learner. Instructional leaders have to remain flexible, solving problems innovatively but staying focused on the outcomes of the students. (Simmons, January 8, 2025)

There are some benefits to student learning arising from professional development activities and the promotion of risk-taking on behalf of teachers with respect to innovation in their instruction (du Plessis, 2013). Instructional leader encourages and supports teachers to enhance teaching practices, hence boosting student's achievements. The instructional leaders coach and mentor the teachers in their locality: those teachers involved in coaching will use new skills more frequently and incorporate them into activities with their students (Carraway & Young, 2014; Shah & Irshadullah, 2018).

Principals, who are instructional leaders, direct teaching for effective learning and students in mundane work towards educational excellence. Instructional leadership primarily acts to ensure enhancing teaching practices through collaborative support and guidance and interactively directing them ((Day et al., 2016; Robinson et al., 2008; Hallinger, 2011). The main thrust of the principals, acting as instructional leaders is to direct teaching towards successful learning and support teachers (Shava & Heystek 2018) as well as the students on their path to academic success. (George NERVIOUS Shava, April 2021)

Instructional leadership serves a very good purpose in the improvement of learning of the students. There should be formal ways and informal ways for teachers so that they can in turn teach their students. The instructional leadership framework ultimately is intended to enhance student's learning. For student learning to be

effective, instructional leadership style principals possesses a clear and inspiring vision for school excellence and articulates that vision with the school staff (McEwan, 2003; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Founding a vision and setting goals will enable the school to benefit from the direction to promote greater academic success (Ahmad et al., 2024).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative research approach to investigate impact of instructional leadership styles on academic performance students at the secondary level with data collection analyzing the statistical data, and generalize it on the basis of statistical number on the comprehensive and large population. This study was quantitative in nature, focusing on descriptive statistics to analyze the data.

### Population

This research involved a population of principals and teachers from 4 districts, with a specific focus on District Swabi. According to the Office of the District Education (Female) Swabi, there are 49 girls' secondary schools in the district.

### Instrument

Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire which is self-developed. Validity was ensured through the Pilot testing and expert's opinion.

**Table1**

Relationship between Student academic achievement Instructional leadership style

Variables	S	P-value	<i>P</i> -value
Student academic achievement	120	.635**	.000
Instructional leadership style	120	.635**	.000

The Pearson Correlation test shows a very strong positive correlation between Instructional Leadership Style and Student Academic Achievement ( $r = 0.635$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The co relational analysis found that there is a strong relationship between instructional leadership and the academic achievement. Due to instructional leadership learners enhance abilities of problem solving and learning.

### Conclusion

The Instructional Leadership Style and Student Academic Achievement: Instructional leadership style has a positive relationship with student academic achievement. The positive correlation coefficient suggests effective instructional leadership style practices affect student outcomes.

### Recommendation

The findings of this study suggest that adopting instructional leadership styles supports innovation, reflective practice, and ultimately enhances student academic achievement. Instructional leadership has been shown to positively influence teacher effectiveness, professional growth, and school climate, all of which are critical for improving student learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2011; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Therefore, it is recommended that school principals devote more time and effort to

adopting leadership approaches that promote continuous professional growth and development among teachers. Initiatives such as mentoring, professional learning communities, and reflective practices should be prioritized to sustain instructional quality and improve student performance at the secondary level.

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