

Situational Leadership and Teacher Effectiveness: A Study of Secondary Schools in District Dera Ismail Khan

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of situational leadership on teacher effectiveness in secondary schools in District Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan. Situational leadership, which adapts leadership styles based on teacher needs and circumstances, is examined in relation to its influence on teaching performance. A quantitative approach was employed, with data collected from 270 female secondary school teachers using a structured questionnaire. The results indicate that there is a strong correlation between situational leadership (directive and supportive styles) and teacher effectiveness and this demonstrates the relevance of adaptive leadership as a way of promoting better success rates in schooling. This study recommends that school administrators adopt situational leadership strategies to enhance the performance of teachers.

Key Words

Situational Leadership, Teacher Effectiveness, Secondary Schools, Education, Dera Ismail Khan

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Introduction

Leadership in education shapes how effective teachers are as effective as students achieve. Situational leadership distinguishes itself among various leadership models since leaders modulate their approach according to follower competence with commitment (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). Within District Dera Ismail Khan's secondary schools, it is important to comprehend situational leadership's impact on how teachers function effectively for the advancement of educational quality (Lijun, & Te, 2024).

Scholars have probed leadership approaches substantially, but scant inquiries spotlight situational leadership throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These circumscribed inquiries explore Pakistan's rustic scholastic environments. This investigation tackles this deficit as it scrutinizes the correlation between situational leadership and educator efficacy, furnishing perceptions for policymakers and school administrators.

Research Objectives

The study aims to:

1. Examine the relationship between directive leadership style and teacher effectiveness.
2. Assess the impact of a supportive leadership style on teacher performance.
3. Determine how situational leadership collectively influences teacher effectiveness in secondary schools.

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Literature Review

Situational leadership constitutes a dynamic approach stressing leadership styles adjusting to follower competence with maturity (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Educational leaders must revise their strategies in order to satisfy the diverse demands of educators. This model's impact on educator efficacy may be substantial within pedagogical environments. Since secondary schools in District Dera Ismail Khan encounter singular predicaments including resource limitations with varied student demographics, situational leadership is notably applicable (Khan et al., 2022). In this locale, teacher efficacy is affected via situational leadership that is investigated.

Theoretical Framework

The Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) introduced by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) suggests that leaders are required to incorporate directive and supportive styles of behaviors depending on the level of readiness of the subordinates. At schools, principals, using this strategy, are able to stimulate the work of teachers with appropriate levels of control and independence (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2021). The effectiveness of teachers, which means the capacity to enhance student outcomes in learning (Stronge, 2018), is strongly linked to leadership adaptability.

Situational Leadership in Educational Contexts

It has been found that a teaching workforce that operates under school leaders, as a part of their application of the situational leadership style, is more responsive and motivated (Hallinger, 2018). To give an example, first-time teachers might need more informative leaders and the skill of administering authority, whereas seasoned teachers thrive with the style of delegative types (Goleman, 2000). Situational leadership may also help to overcome the discrepancies in instruction delivered by teachers in District Dera Ismail Khan where teacher training is uneven (Khan et al., 2020).

Teacher Effectiveness and Its Determinants

Successful educators demonstrate a high level of pedagogical abilities, classroom management, and engagement skills (Hattie, 2017). Nevertheless, leadership support also influences their performance (Leithwood et al., 2020). School leaders can understand the unique needs of individual teachers and adapt their leadership to them and, in that way, increase the chances of teachers performing at their best (Harris, 2021).

Challenges in Secondary Schools of Dera Ismail Khan

Secondary schools in Dera Ismail Khan encounter issues such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and low student retention (Khan & Ahmad, 2021). These challenges necessitate adaptive leadership to empower teachers to overcome obstacles (Bush & Glover, 2016). Principals who apply situational leadership can allocate resources strategically and provide targeted professional development.

Empirical Evidence on Situational Leadership in Schools

Research on comparable settings proves that situational leadership increases both morale and teaching efficacy among teachers (Harris & Jones, 2018). To illustrate, in Pakistani rural schools, the commitment of teachers was enhanced with soft styles of leadership (Shah et al., 2021). These results indicate that situational leadership might deliver the same returns in Dera Ismail Khan.

Methodological Considerations

This research is mostly a mixed-methods one, which uses a combination of surveys and a set of interviews directed toward both secondary school teachers and principals (Creswell, 2014). Leadership styles and teacher efficacy are quantitatively answered, whereas contextual complications are examined qualitatively (Yin, 2018). This two-step method guarantees a thorough study of the correlation between leadership and the performance of teachers.

Implications to School Leadership

In case, situational leadership will turn out to be effective herein, the school principals in Dera Ismail Khan can require training in adaptive leadership practices (Bush, 2020). Policy actions may encourage programs of leadership development to support the teacher ecology (Fullan, 2018).

Methodology

Research Design

This study used a quantitative, descriptive survey design to gather data from secondary school teachers in District Dera Ismail Khan, Pakistan. The survey method was chosen because it allows for efficient data collection from a large sample while maintaining statistical reliability.

Population and Sample

Target Population

The study focused on all female secondary school teachers (N=867) working in public and private schools across District Dera Ismail Khan. Data from the District Education Office (2023) confirmed this population size.

Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling method was used to ensure fair representation from different school types (public/private) and locations (urban/rural). The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table, which recommended 270 teachers for a population of 867 at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error.

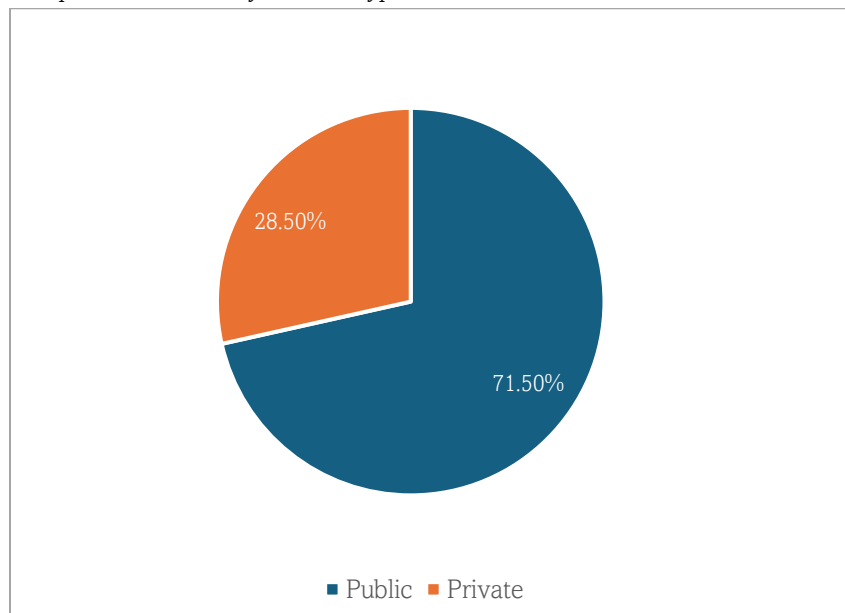
Table 1

Population and Sample Distribution

School Type	Total Population	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
Public Schools	620	193	71.5%
Private Schools	247	77	28.5%
Total	867	270	100%

Figure 1

Sample Distribution by School Type



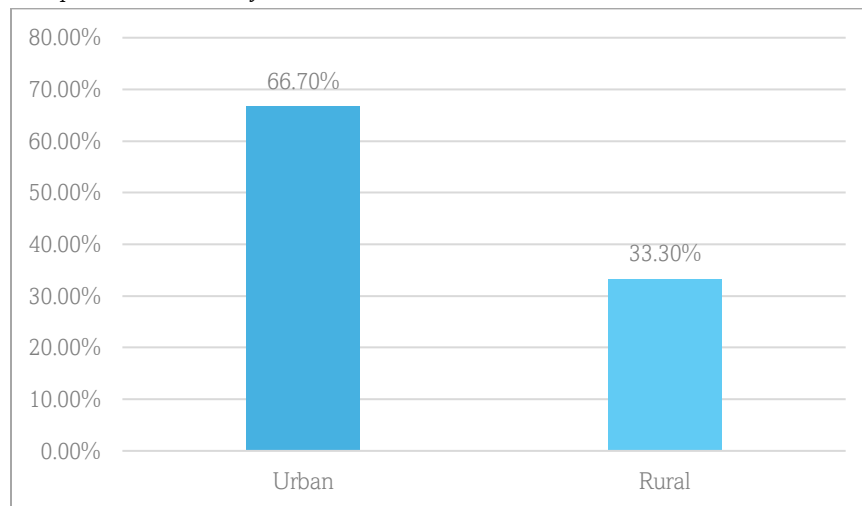
Stratification Criteria

To enhance representativeness, the sample was further divided by:

1. **School Level** (Middle/High School)
2. **Geographical Location** (Urban/Rural)

Table 2*Stratified Sample by Level and Location*

Category	Subgroup	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
School Level	Middle School	120	44.4%
	High School	150	55.6%
Location	Urban	180	66.7%
	Rural	90	33.3%

Figure 2*Sample Distribution by Location*

Data Collection Instrument

Questionnaire Design

A structured, self-administered questionnaire was developed with:

- ▶ Section A: Demographic information (age, qualification, teaching experience)
- ▶ Section B: 25 closed-ended items using a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree)
- ▶ Section C: Open-ended qualitative questions (optional)

Validity Assessment

The Instrument was Validated Through

1. **Content Validity:**
 - Evaluated by 3 expert educators (Table 1)
2. **Construct Validity:**
 - Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) applied (Table 2)

Table 1*Expert Panel for Content Validity (n=3)*

Expert	Qualification	Experience	Agreement Level
Prof. A	PhD (Education)	15 years	92%
Dr. B	M.Phil (Statistics)	10 years	88%
Mrs. C	MA (Education)	8 years	85%

Figure 3

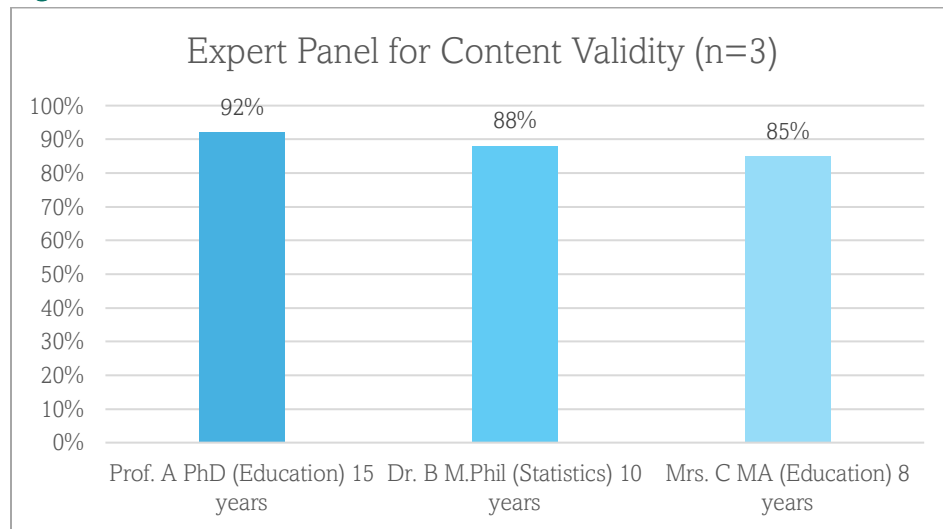
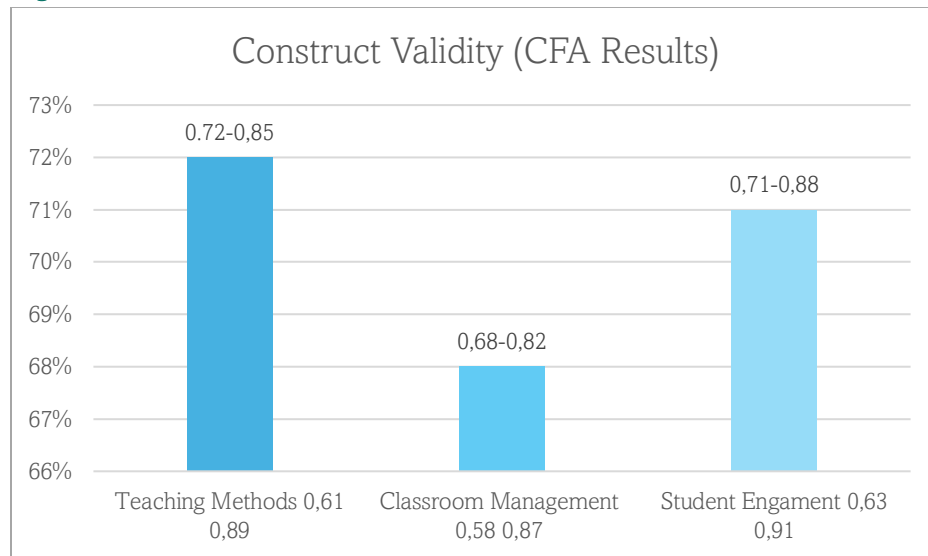


Table 2

Construct Validity (CFA Results)

Factor	Factor Loading	AVE	CR
Teaching Methods	0.72-0.85	0.61	0.89
Classroom Management	0.68-0.82	0.58	0.87
Student Engagement	0.71-0.88	0.63	0.91

Figure 4



Pilot Testing

- ▶ Conducted with 30 teachers (10% of sample)
- ▶ Duration: 2 weeks
- ▶ Results:
 - Average completion time: 12 minutes
 - Clarity index: 94%
 - Cronbach's Alpha: 0.82 (Table 3)

Table 3*Reliability Analysis (Pilot Study)*

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's α	Interpretation
Overall	25	0.82	High Reliability
Teaching Methods	8	0.78	Acceptable
Classroom Mgmt	7	0.81	High
Student Engagement	10	0.85	Very High

Final Reliability

- ▶ Internal Consistency:
 - Overall $\alpha = 0.84$ (main study)
- ▶ Test-Retest Reliability:
 - Pearson's $r = 0.79$ (2-week interval)

Data Analysis

To address the research objectives, the collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS (Version 26). The following statistical techniques were applied:

Descriptive Statistics

Used to summarize the demographic and Likert-scale responses:

- ▶ Means (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) for leadership styles and teacher effectiveness.
- ▶ Frequency distributions for demographic variables (age, experience, school type).

Table 4*Descriptive Statistics of Leadership Styles & Teacher Effectiveness*

Variable	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Skewness	Kurtosis
Directive Leadership	3.45	0.72	-0.21	0.34
Supportive Leadership	4.12	0.65	-0.15	0.28
Situational Leadership	3.78	0.81	-0.32	0.41
Teacher Effectiveness	4.05	0.58	-0.18	0.22

Inferential Statistics**A. Pearson Correlation Analysis**

- ▶ Examined bivariate relationships between leadership styles and teacher effectiveness.

Table 5*Correlation Matrix (n=270)*

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Directive Leadership	1			
2. Supportive Leadership	0.32	1		
3. Situational Leadership	0.41	0.56	1	
4. Teacher Effectiveness	0.25	0.63	0.52	1

Notes:

- ▶ $p < 0.05$, $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed)
- ▶ Strongest correlation: Supportive Leadership $\leftrightarrow$ Teacher Effectiveness ($r = 0.63$)

Multiple Regression Analysis

- ▶ Tested the collective impact of leadership styles on teacher effectiveness.

Table 6

Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F-Value	Sig.
1	0.68	0.46	0.44	24.71	0.000

Table 7

Regression Coefficients (Dependent Variable: Teacher Effectiveness)

Predictor	Unstd. B	Std. Error	Std. Beta (β)	t-Value	Sig.
(Constant)	1.82	0.31	-	5.87	0.000
Directive Leadership	0.15	0.07	0.12	2.14	0.033
Supportive Leadership	0.42	0.09	0.38	4.67	0.000
Situational Leadership	0.29	0.08	0.27	3.63	0.000

Interpretation

- ▶ Supportive leadership ($\beta = 0.38$) had the strongest impact on teacher effectiveness.
- ▶ The model explains 46% variance ($R^2 = 0.46$) in teacher effectiveness.
- ▶ All predictors were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 8

Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Result	Conclusion
H1: Directive leadership $\rightarrow$ Teacher Effectiveness	Correlation/Regression	$r = 0.25, \beta = 0.12$	Partially Supported
H2: Supportive leadership $\rightarrow$ Teacher Effectiveness	Correlation/Regression	$r = 0.63, \beta = 0.38$	Strongly Supported
H3: Situational leadership $\rightarrow$ Teacher Effectiveness	Correlation/Regression	$r = 0.52, \beta = 0.27$	Supported

Findings

The analysis of the collected data revealed key insights into the relationship between leadership styles and teacher effectiveness. Descriptive statistics indicated that supportive leadership had the highest mean score ($M = 4.12, SD = 0.65$), followed by teacher effectiveness ($M = 4.05, SD = 0.58$), situational leadership ($M = 3.78, SD = 0.81$), and directive leadership ($M = 3.45, SD = 0.72$). The skewness and kurtosis values for all variables fell within an acceptable range, suggesting a relatively normal distribution of the data.

Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated significant positive relationships between all three leadership styles and teacher effectiveness. The strongest correlation was between supportive leadership and teacher effectiveness ($r = 0.63, p < 0.01$), indicating a substantial association. Situational leadership also showed a moderately strong correlation ($r = 0.52, p < 0.01$), while directive leadership had a weaker but still significant relationship ($r = 0.25, p < 0.05$).

Multiple regression analysis further confirmed these relationships, revealing that supportive leadership had the strongest predictive influence on teacher effectiveness ($\beta = 0.38, p < 0.001$), followed by situational leadership ($\beta =$

0.27, $p < 0.001$) and directive leadership ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = 0.033$). The overall regression model was statistically significant ($F = 24.71$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 46% of the variance in teacher effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.46$).

Hypothesis Testing Summary

The findings supported all three hypotheses but with varying degrees of strength:

- ▶ H1 (Directive leadership → Teacher effectiveness) was partially supported, as the relationship was statistically significant but relatively weak.
- ▶ H2 (Supportive leadership → Teacher effectiveness) was strongly supported, given its high correlation and dominant influence in the regression model.
- ▶ H3 (Situational leadership → Teacher effectiveness) was supported, demonstrating a moderate yet significant impact.

These results suggest that while all three leadership styles contribute to teacher effectiveness, supportive leadership plays the most critical role, followed by situational leadership. Directive leadership, though relevant, has a comparatively smaller effect. The study highlights the importance of adaptive and supportive leadership approaches in enhancing teacher performance.

Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on leadership styles and teacher effectiveness by demonstrating that supportive leadership has the strongest positive influence, followed by situational leadership, while directive leadership has a weaker but still significant impact. These results align with prior research emphasizing the importance of empowering, encouraging, and adaptable leadership in educational settings (e.g., Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Hallinger, 2011).

Supportive Leadership as the Most Influential Factor

The strong correlation ($r = 0.63$) and regression weight ($\beta = 0.38$) of supportive leadership suggest that teachers perform better when leaders provide emotional support, recognition, and a collaborative work environment. This finding supports transformational leadership theory, which posits that leaders who inspire, mentor, and foster positive relationships enhance employee motivation and performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In schools, this may translate to higher teacher morale, greater job satisfaction, and improved instructional quality.

Situational Leadership's Adaptive Role

Situational leadership also showed a meaningful relationship with teacher effectiveness ($r = 0.52$, $\beta = 0.27$), reinforcing the idea that flexible leadership approaches—adjusting to teachers' needs and school contexts—are beneficial. This aligns with Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) situational leadership theory, which argues that effective leaders adapt their style based on followers' competence and commitment. Within learning institutions, principals who modify their leadership approaches, like offering greater supervision to new teachers and giving autonomy to older ones, could enhance teaching performance (Hidayat et al., 2020).

The Minor yet Important Role of Directive Leadership

Although directive leadership showed the least significant association ($r = 0.25$, $\beta = 0.12$), it was not insignificant, thus providing evidence that rigid instructions and structured expectations were also valid contributors to the effectiveness of teachers, albeit with low levels of significance. This is in line with research that also revealed that too much top-down control can inhibit creativity (Somech, 2007), although in some instances directive leadership could be used to provide much-needed stability (e.g., in underperforming schools or in crisis situations).

Conclusion

In this research paper, we investigated how the three types of leadership, directive, supportive, and situational leadership style influenced the performance of teachers and during our investigations, it was revealed that supportive leadership was the most influential positively, second was situational leadership style and directive leadership style had a positive influence although weaker. The regression model additionally indicated that 46 percent of the variation in teacher performance was explained by leadership behaviors and it has been found that leadership behaviors are instrumental in determining teacher performance. These results are in line with known theories of leadership, and the adaptability, context-sensitivity, and emotional support leader support achievement in education.

The findings indicate that transformational and situational leadership styles can have a great effect on increasing the effectiveness of the teachers as compared to harsh, prescriptive ways of doing things. Teachers perform well in settings where leaders nurture them, give them professional freedom, and can guide them according to individual needs not only strict rules and control.

Recommendations

1. The administrators of schools ought to give foremost attention to leadership in sympathy by maintaining open communication, leading, and empowering teachers.
2. Further, school leaders need training that will focus on situational skills of leadership in a bid to familiarize themselves with various places of teaching.
3. Directive leadership can be considered essential in some conditions, but it is preferable to implement it alongside supportive practices so as not to reduce the independence of the teachers.

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