

Impact of Transformational Leadership Style of School Heads on Altruistic Citizenship Behaviour of Teachers: Evidence from Pakistani Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Transformational leadership has been established as a key to organizational effectiveness improvement among school communities. Little has been researched about its direct impact on educators' altruistic citizenship behaviour, especially in countries such as Pakistan. It is a study about how high school heads' transformational leadership behaviour impacts teachers' altruistic citizenship behaviour in the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Multi-staged stratified sampling method was applied to administer a quantitative survey. There were 30 school heads and 390 teachers who were participants from 40 secondary schools from four districts of the nation. Survey data collection employed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5X) and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Scale (OCBS). Statistical procedures applied were descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and regression analysis. It emerged that 55.8% of educators felt their heads to be displaying high degrees of transformational leadership. But 74.4% did not share the subsequent altruistic behaviour, and 25.6% remained neutral. Regression analysis indicated that transformational leadership had the most positive coefficient value ($\beta = 0.616$) to account for teachers' altruistic behaviour, reflecting a considerable but complex relationship. The current study signals the possibility to promote transformational leadership to support teachers' pro-social behaviour, but with problems related to implementation. Policymakers for education should strive to promote school heads' skills to be transformational leaders to introduce positive organizational behaviour.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, Altruistic behaviour, Organizational citizenship behaviour, School Heads, Teachers, Pakistan

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Introduction

Schools across different contexts now operate under growing accountability pressures and increasingly complex organizational demands, which place school leadership at the center of efforts to enhance effectiveness. Recent empirical work shows that transformational leadership by school principals positively predicts school effectiveness and performance, mainly through mechanisms such as improved teacher motivation, collaborative culture, and commitment, as well as a more supportive school climate (Sultana, 2024).

The core elements of transformational leadership i.e. idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration have been scientifically linked to positive organizational outcomes, including increased trustworthiness, increased organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB), and improved employee performance across a range of industries. Recent research indicates that transformational leadership has a positive effect on employees' perceptions of trust in leaders and the resulting organizational citizenship behaviours (Asif et al., 2024). School administrators may create a positive and encouraging learning atmosphere where instructors feel valued and motivated to give their best work by employing transformational leadership. When teachers feel valued and empowered, they are more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs), which are voluntary efforts outside of their formal work tasks (Setyaningsih, 2023). Recent study indicates that by sharing a clear vision, providing individualized assistance, and promoting staff cooperation, administrators may inspire teachers to go above and beyond for the benefit of students, colleagues, and the greater school community. The term "organizational citizenship behaviour" (OCB) describes voluntary and discretionary employee behaviours that go above and beyond the obligations of their jobs to help others and improve the overall organizational environment. According to Iqbal et al. (2023), the altruistic feature of this concept encompasses behaviours in which workers willingly assist coworkers with tasks or issues linked to their jobs without anticipating formal compensation, hence improving teamwork and collaboration.

In school contexts, organizational citizenship behaviour among teachers manifests as volunteer assistance to others, mentoring new recruits, and collaborative problem troubleshooting—behaviours vital to school effectiveness but not explicitly outlined in work tasks. Despite an enormous amount of work on transformational leadership and OCB among Western samples, hardly any have examined their interrelationship among developing countries with a particular emphasis on education.

Education is a hierarchy with scarce resources available in Pakistan, presenting a challenge unlike others. The south districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with unique sociocultural contexts, are a good setting to explore interrelationships. It bridges a significant gap in available literature by examining a school head's transformational leadership and its effects on Pakistani school teachers' altruistic citizenship behaviour. It is crucial to grasp their relationship because it is a pathway to enhancing school effectiveness with better school leadership.

Research Objectives

The overall objective of this study was to investigate the impact of the practice of transformational leadership among high school heads on their teachers' altruistic citizenship behaviour. Specific objectives are:

1. To establish how much innovation schools adopt to increase morale among their kids.
2. To investigate the level of altruistic citizenship behaviour among secondary school teachers.
3. To determine what connects transformational leadership with citizenship behaviour that is altruistic.
4. To suggest strategies to enhance school leadership effectiveness.

Significance of Study

This research contributes to both theoretical and practical understanding of leadership effectiveness in educational contexts. Theoretically, it extends the application of transformational leadership theory to the Pakistani education sector, providing cross-cultural validation for existing frameworks. Practically, the findings inform leadership development programs for school heads and contribute to policy formulation aimed at improving educational outcomes through enhanced leadership.

Research Gap and Hypothesis

Despite extensive research on transformational leadership and OCB, limited research has examined their interlinkages in Pakistani learning settings. Extant research primarily draws from the Western context and thus might be limited to developing countries with diverse cultural and organizational profiles. Filling the gap, the current research examines the specific link between transformational leadership and the prosocial citizenship behaviour of middle-school teachers in Pakistan. Based on the theoretical foundation and empirical literature, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁: The Transformational leadership style of heads of school has a large and significantly positive impact on teachers' altruistic citizenship behaviour.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership Theory

The transformational theory of leadership, originally advanced by Burns (1978) and later extended by Bass (1985), is a departure from traditional leadership. Burns drew a dichotomy between transactional leadership, based upon exchange relationships, and transformational leadership, where leaders and followers are elevated to higher levels of morality and motivation. Bass (1985) framed transformational leadership along four primary dimensions: idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence is leaders as role models and gaining the trust and respect of followers. Inspirational motivation is giving voice to a desirable image that motivates the followers. Intellectual stimulation enables innovation and creativity, and individualized consideration addresses followers' individual needs and growth. It is becoming more widely acknowledged that school principals' transformative leadership is a major factor in improving student results, teacher job satisfaction, and school atmosphere. According to recent study, for instance, transformational leadership is favourably correlated with increased levels of teacher cooperation, creativity, student engagement, and academic achievement, and it greatly increases inclusive and collaborative educational settings (Sultana et al., 2024).

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

The term "organizational citizenship behaviour" (OCB) describes voluntary, non-formally mandated behaviours taken by employees that enhance the efficacy of the organization. Altruism (assisting coworkers), conscientiousness (exceeding performance expectations), sportsmanship (tolerating less-than-ideal conditions without complaining), courtesy (avoiding work-related issues), and civic virtue (actively participating in organizational life) are all essential components of OCB in contemporary workplaces, according to current research (Tran, 2025).

Altruism, the focus of the present research, is helping behaviour towards specific individuals with work-related problems. Teachers' altruistic behaviour in schools is mentoring of colleague teachers, material sharing, and provision of voluntary assistance under challenging situations. Such behaviour is crucial for

the effectiveness of schools through collaboration-building, conflict-reducing, and climate-improvement effects.

Transformational Leadership and Altruistic Behaviour

The theoretical connection of altruistic behaviour and transformational leadership rests upon the leader's ability to motivate followers to extend beyond self-interest for the group's common interest. The idealized influence allows the transformational leaders to exhibit altruistic behaviour themselves and to motivate followers to exhibit that behaviour as well. Inspirational motivation creates a common goal and commitment, and individualized consideration shows concern for others that can generate matching altruistic reactions.

Leadership in Pakistani Educational Context

The legacy of centralised governance, which limits significant autonomy and flexibility at local school sites by concentrating decision-making authority at higher administrative levels, is still evident in Pakistan's educational system. While more decentralised models, like those found in public-private partnership (PPP) schools, give school leaders more freedom to respond to contextual needs and implement adaptive strategies, recent studies show that government schools in Pakistan frequently operate within strict, top-down structures that restrict leadership agency and obstruct localised decision-making (Rind, 2024). In many of the nation's conventional public education environments, this continuous centralisation has been shown to be a barrier to innovative school administration.

School heads tend to be administrators, not educational leaders, for whom compliance is often the first consideration, rather than innovation. That creates definite problems for employing transformational leadership methods.

In Pakistan, cultural factors still have a big impact on how effective leaders are. Social norms like hierarchy, patriarchy, servility, and dependency affect how leaders engage with followers and make choices. According to a recent study conducted in the context of higher education in Pakistan, these cultural values had an impact on leadership approaches. Specifically, the leadership styles that university administrators adopted were influenced by relational and hierarchical cultural norms, which also shaped the practical implementation of transformational and other leadership behaviours (Tariq et al., 2024). Understanding these contextual forces is important for effective leadership development in Pakistani schools.

Methodology

Research Design

It employed a quantitative survey design and correlational research design to examine the relationship between altruistic citizenship behaviour and transformational leadership. Cross-sectional research design was employed to enable economic data collection while permitting insights into prevailing leadership practices and their implications.

Population and Sample

The target population was all heads of secondary schools and teachers at the government sector schools of four southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, i.e., Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Lakki Marwat, and Bannu. The total population was 333 heads of the schools and 4,908 teachers in the sample.

By applying Gay's (2003) formula for sample size, 440 respondents (40 heads and 400 teachers) were first chosen, covering 8% of the total population. Multistage stratified sampling was used to make the sample representative at the district and gender levels. The total sample was 420 respondents (30 heads and 390 teachers) after controlling nonresponse.

Instrumentation

Two validated instruments were used for data collection.

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5X)

Bass and Avolio's (1995) short MLQ5X was used to measure transformational leadership. It is a 36-item questionnaire that measures nine dimensions of leadership, of which 20 of the items directly test the dimensions of transformational leadership. Reliability analysis revealed 0.764 and 0.825 to be Cronbach's alpha for heads' self-rating and teachers' perceptions of heads' leadership, respectively.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour Scale (OCBS)

Podsakoff et al. (1990) OCBS was used to evaluate altruistic citizenship behaviour. The scale consists of 24 questions measuring five dimensions of OCB, of which five directly test altruistic behaviour. Reliability for the altruism subscale was 0.647, acceptable for research.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were gathered during two phases of data collection in February

2025. Firstly, 20 schools were contacted, of whom 12 responded. The second stage included the remainder of 20 schools, of whom 18 heads and 190 teachers returned the questionnaires. Strict consideration of ethical aspects was maintained by informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by applying SPSS version 20 IBM Corp. (Armonk, NY). Descriptive statistics provided portrayed the variables, and inferential statistics, including ANOVA, t-tests, and regression analysis, examined relationships of variables. Specifically, multiple linear regression was used to test the effect of transformational leadership on altruistic citizenship behaviour.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Transformational Leadership

Perceptions of teachers were examined and revealed that 55.8% of them perceived heads of their schools to demonstrate high levels of transformational leadership, 23.8% perceived low levels, and 20.3% perceived moderate levels. The mean score for transformational leadership was 3.93 (SD = 0.837), indicating above-average practices of transformational leadership.

In the dimensions of transformational leadership, individualized consideration had the largest mean value (3.59) and was followed by idealized influence-behaviour (3.55). Inspirational motivation had the lowest mean score (1.47), suggesting that this dimension requires greater attention in leadership development programs.

Altruistic Citizenship Behaviour

The questionnaire of altruistic civic behaviour revealed alarming findings. That is, 74.4% of the teachers disagreed with the following altruistic behaviour, and 25.6% of them maintained neutrality. No teachers agreed or strongly agreed to always perform altruistic behaviours. It implies that severe issues in developing helping behaviour are present among teachers of the sampled schools.

Inferential Statistics

District-wise Variations

One-way ANOVA revealed significantly different teachers' perceptions

of transformational leadership between districts ($F = 32.809$, $p < 0.001$). The highest mean score was for D.I. Khan district (1.49) and the lowest for Tank district (2.0). These distinctions suggest that contextual forces contribute to leadership success in different geographical sites.

Also, significant differences were observed in the altruistic behaviour among the districts ($F = 46.528$, $p < 0.001$). Altruistic behaviour was primarily observed by Tank district teachers (mean = 2.6) and was lowest by D.I. Khan teachers (mean = 1.44).

Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was utilized to test the effects of transformational leadership on altruistic citizenship behaviour. The results indicated that transformational leadership emerged with the largest positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.616$) for predicting altruistic behaviour, followed by transactional leadership ($\beta = 0.494$) and laissez-faire leadership ($\beta = 0.035$).

R-squared was 0.19, indicating that the leadership model explained 19% of altruistic behaviour variability. Although that is an important correlation, the relatively low R-squared suggests that other variables exert important influences upon teachers' altruistic behaviour.

Hypothesis Testing

The research hypothesis (H1) was thus supported by the regression analysis. The transformational leadership approach of the school heads revealed a significantly positive impact upon the altruistic citizenship behaviour of the teachers ($\beta = 0.616$, $p < 0.05$). It is in line with the theoretical predictions and the latest empirical evidence from non-Greek countries.

However, the comparatively low rates of altruistic behaviour for teachers (74.4% disagreeing with altruistic behaviour) reflect that while altruism is encouraged by transformational leadership, there are serious constraints to the practice of such behaviour within the realm of teaching.

Discussion

Key Findings and Theoretical Implications

The findings of the present study give important insights into relationships between Pakistani secondary-school teachers' transformative leadership and altruistic citizenship behaviour. The large and significantly positive effects of transformative leadership on altruistic behaviour ($\beta = 0.616$) validate theoretical suppositions related to the capacity of transformative leaders to inspire followers in attending to the common good as opposed to personal interests.

Since altruistic behaviour was significantly predicted by transformational leadership relative to other forms of leadership, it endorsed Bass's (1985) idea that transformational leaders increase followers' moral judgment and motivation. Through idealized influence, leaders demonstrate altruistic behaviour and transmit expectations to followers. The individualized consideration dimension, scoring the highest of all dimensions of transformational leadership, is presumably responsible for this correlation by making apparent leaders' concern for individual followers and thus possibly inducing helping tendencies.

But the seemingly contradictory finding that 74.4% of teachers disagreed that they possess altruistic behaviours despite favorable leadership effects suggests complicated organizational processes. It is suggested by the paradox that while transformational leadership creates favorable conditions for altruistic behaviour, altruistic expression is suppressed by additional contextual forces.

Practical Implications

Leadership Development

The positive relationship between transformational leadership and altruistic behaviour has serious implications for professional development at Pakistani schools. Education authorities should prioritize professional development programs that enhance heads of schools' transformational leadership abilities. Professional development programs specifically should focus on developing inspirational motivation abilities, as it obtained the lowest ranking in the current investigation.

Leadership programs should be geared towards the display of prosocial action by headmasters, given that followers often emulate leaders. Education programs can be integrated with modules for ethical leadership, collective decision-making, and the creation of positive organizational cultures that encourage helping.

Organizational Culture Enhancement

Low levels of altruistic behaviour suggest that organizational culture needs to change systemically. Schools must implement recognition systems that reward helpful and cooperative teacher behaviour. Creating formal mentoring programs, peer helping networks, and collective problem-solving mechanisms can institutionalize altruistic behaviour.

Also, reduction of excessive bureaucratic constraints that inhibit teacher autonomy may enable more discretionary helping behaviour. If teachers are empowered and motivated, they are more likely to take voluntary actions that benefit their associates and the institution.

Contextual Factors and Cultural Considerations

District-level variations in findings suggest that local contextual factors have significant impacts upon the leadership-altruism relationship. Cultural beliefs, resource availability, and support structures of organizations may moderate the influence of transformational leadership upon citizenship behaviour.

Pakistan's hierarchy-oriented educational system based upon the colonial model of administration may prove to be an impediment to practicing transformational leadership techniques. Autocratic leadership traditions may be contrary to the region's value of empowerment-oriented transformational leadership. Leadership preparation needs to consider such cultural dimensions to be effective in the region.

Also, Pakistani society's collectivistic culture could promote elements of transformational leadership while restricting others. While collective orientation could favor inspirational motivation and collective vision, high power distance could constrain intellectual stimulation and active decision-making.

Comparison with Existing Literature

The findings of the present study are consistent with those of previous studies revealing positive relationships between organizational citizenship behaviour and transformational leadership (Podsakoff et al., 1990; Koh et al., 1995). The 0.616 coefficient of the impact of transformational leadership on altruism is comparable to the effect sizes revealed in Western cultures, revealing cross-cultural validity for the relationship.

However, the poor helping behaviour baseline levels observed in this work are inconsistent with those of Western developed countries, in which higher levels of citizenship behaviour are typically found. It is possible that resource scarcity, job insecurity, or societal forces that discourage voluntary effort beyond the call of duty are to blame.

Limitations and Future Research

It had several limitations that should be kept in mind while interpreting the research. Cross-sectional design limits causal inference of the leadership-altruism association. Longitudinal studies could provide stronger causal evidence and examine how citizenship behaviour is influenced by leadership development programs over time. The comparatively low R-squared value (0.19) suggests that transformational leadership is responsible for only limited variability in altruistic behaviour. Future research must examine additional forces that may be operating for

citizenship behaviours, like organizational culture, availability of resources, job satisfaction, and personality traits of individuals.

The study's focus on public sector secondary schools presents certain limitations regarding the generalizability of its findings to private schools or other educational levels. Conducting comparative research across diverse educational settings would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing leadership effectiveness.

Moreover, the exclusive use of self-report measures to assess both leadership and citizenship behaviours may introduce common method bias, potentially affecting the reliability of the results. Future research could benefit from incorporating objective indicators of citizenship behaviours or utilizing multi-source evaluations to strengthen the validity of these assessments.

Finally, cultural influences deserve more thorough exploration in subsequent studies. Investigating how cultural values shape the dynamics between transformational leadership and citizenship behaviour across different regions or countries would provide valuable insights. This line of research could contribute to the design of leadership models that are culturally sensitive and better suited to varied educational environments.

Conclusion

This study explored how the transformational leadership style of secondary school principals influences the altruistic citizenship behaviour of teachers in Pakistani schools. The results reveal a significant positive relationship between these factors, highlighting transformational leadership as the most powerful predictor of teachers' altruistic behaviour.

Summary of Key Findings

1. **Transformational Leadership Prevalence:** Over half (55.8%) of the teachers perceived their school heads as demonstrating high levels of transformational leadership, indicating the reasonable adoption of transformational practices in Pakistani secondary schools.
2. **Altruistic Behaviour Challenges:** Despite positive leadership influences, 74.4% of teachers disagreed about engaging in altruistic behaviours, suggesting significant implementation challenges.
3. **Leadership Impact:** Transformational leadership showed the highest positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.616$) for predicting altruistic behaviour, supporting theoretical propositions regarding transformational leaders' ability to inspire prosocial behaviours.

4. **Contextual Variations:** Significant variations across districts indicate that local factors moderate the leadership-altruism relationship, highlighting the importance of contextual considerations in leadership development.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the field by applying transformational leadership theory within the Pakistani educational context, thereby offering cross-cultural validation of its role in promoting positive organizational behaviours. The findings align with Bass's (1985) assertion that transformational leaders can inspire followers to transcend their self-interest, while also acknowledging the influence of contextual factors that may moderate these effects.

Furthermore, this research enriches the literature on organizational citizenship behaviour by focusing on altruistic actions in a developing country setting. The results indicate that although the core principles of OCB hold true across cultures, the way these behaviours are expressed, and their frequency can vary considerably depending on the specific contextual environment.

Practical Implications

For educational policymakers and administrators, this study provides evidence supporting investment in the transformational leadership development of school heads. Specific recommendations include the following:

1. **Leadership Training Programs:** Develop comprehensive training programs focusing on transformational leadership competencies, particularly inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation.
2. **Organizational Culture Initiatives:** Implement systematic efforts to create school cultures that support and reward altruistic behaviours among teachers.
3. **Support Systems:** Establish mentoring programs, peer support networks, and collaborative problem-solving mechanisms to institutionalize helping behaviours.
4. **Recognition Systems:** Create formal recognition programs that acknowledge and reward teachers for demonstrating altruistic citizenship behaviours.

Future Research Directions

Several avenues for future research emerge from this study.

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Conduct longitudinal research to establish causal relationships and examine the long-term effects of leadership-development interventions.
2. **Mediating Variables:** Investigate potential mediating variables, such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, and trust, that might explain the leadership-altruism relationship.
3. **Comparative research:** Comparative studies should be conducted across different educational contexts, regions, and countries to examine the cultural moderators of the relationship.
4. **Intervention Studies:** Implement and evaluate leadership development interventions to test their effectiveness in enhancing both transformational leadership and citizenship behaviour.

Final Thoughts

This study illustrates that transformational leadership can have a positive impact on teachers' altruistic citizenship behaviour, even in settings marked by resource limitations and rigid hierarchical structures. However, the relatively low levels of altruistic behaviour observed indicate that leadership alone is not enough; broader organizational and cultural reforms are essential to foster an environment where such helping behaviours can truly thrive.

Educational leaders and policymakers should view the development of transformational leadership as one important part of a wider organizational change process. By integrating strong leadership practices with supportive organizational frameworks and cultural initiatives, schools can cultivate environments that motivate teachers to go beyond their formal duties and contribute to collective success through altruistic actions.

Advancing educational effectiveness through strengthened leadership and citizenship behaviours demands ongoing dedication and systematic effort. This study provides encouraging evidence that these efforts can lead to meaningful improvements, offering optimism for educational progress in developing countries facing similar challenges.

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