

## The Relationship Between Managerial Leadership Styles and Teacher Productivity in Kabul's Private High Schools

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- Managerial leadership
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- Servant leadership
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- Transformational leadership

**Abstract:** Leadership is widely recognized as a fundamental factor influencing teacher productivity and the overall quality of educational outcomes. Although several studies have examined leadership within educational settings, few investigations in Afghanistan have examined transformational and servant leadership simultaneously, particularly through the use of structured productivity frameworks such as the ACHIEVE model. Therefore, the present study sought to examine the relationship between school principals' leadership styles and teacher productivity in private high schools located in District 13 of Kabul, aiming to address the existing gap in integrated analyses that combine leadership behavior with systematic productivity measurement. A descriptive–correlational research design was employed for this purpose. Data were gathered using two well-established standardized instruments: the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995) and the Human Resource Productivity Questionnaire (ACHIEVE) designed by Hersey and Goldsmith (1980). The research population consisted of 1,711 teachers and 95 school principals. Based on random sampling procedures guided by Morgan's table, 313 teachers and 76 principals were selected, from which 270 teacher responses and 75 principal responses were deemed suitable for final analysis. Regression analysis was employed to test the proposed relationships between variables. The findings demonstrated a statistically significant positive relationship between both leadership styles and teacher productivity. Servant leadership explained 47.6% of the variance in productivity. In contrast, transformational leadership accounted for 59%, indicating that ethical conduct, staff empowerment, and vision-driven leadership practices play a substantial role in strengthening teacher performance and effectiveness.

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## INTRODUCTION

Leadership styles refer to the distinctive approaches and behavioral patterns that organizational leaders utilize to fulfill their responsibilities, and achieve predetermined goals. Over time, scholars have suggested several leadership frameworks to explain how leaders impact followers and organizational processes (Nadeem et al., 2026). Modern education

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systems focus on effective management to improve teaching and learning outcomes, mainly through innovation and the use of strategies (Berkat, Setinawati, & Basrowi, 2025). This indicates that management and leadership styles have a fundamental role in enhancing teacher productivity and performance. Therefore, educational leaders are expected to ensure that organizational activities are carried out properly so that employees are neither overloaded nor subjected to unnecessary operational costs (Wang & Villanueva, 2024). Modern organizations progressively recognize the central importance of human resources and subsequently emphasize strengthening the interaction between staff members and leaders. When constructive leader-employee relationships are established, employees tend to exhibit greater motivation, engagement, and commitment to their duties, which ultimately improve productivity, and facilitate the attainment of organizational objectives (Goudarzi et al., 2016).

The adoption of effective leadership practices in educational institutions plays a significant role in enabling positive societal and organizational change. Empirical evidence indicates that suitable leadership theories and managerial approaches foster innovation, creativity, and professional growth within educational organizations. As a result, they create an environment that supports excellence and appropriate development (Sarwari et al., 2015).

Productivity refers to the efficient and effective use of available resources. It is an essential requirement for organizational success (Ruego, 2024). The productivity level of any organization basically relies on the quality of its leadership and managerial practices. Achieving productivity is not a constant outcome, but an ongoing and dynamic process that requires clearly articulated goals, effective planning, and optimal resource allocation. In this process, motivation and encouragement play an essential role in making decisions, contributing novel ideas, and collaborating within teams effectively. Such outcomes are achievable only when organizations create a strong and successful culture that values productivity and continuous improvement. Therefore, efforts should be made to strengthen human resource productivity, enhance employee motivation and creativity, improve both psychological and physical working environments, and develop an active and innovative workforce. The potential to improve educational quality and strengthen human resource development increases substantially when productivity-oriented goals and practices are systematically implemented in schools and aligned with national educational strategies.

In the long term, such improvements can help deliver higher-quality educational services to society. Therefore, conducting rigorous and practice-oriented research in the field of educational leadership remains of considerable importance. A considerable number of studies have inspected the association between leadership styles and organizational outcomes across different sectors, including education. Leadership practices directly shape employee motivation, engagement, and productivity. These factors are essential for achieving organizational objectives (Sehat & Akhlaqi, 2011; Goudarzi et al., 2016).

Transformational leadership, distinguished by inspirational vision, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and the encouragement of innovation, has

repeatedly been associated with favorable organizational outcomes. For example, Shirazi and Hosseini (2013) demonstrated that transformational leadership significantly reduces job burnout and improves employee performance. Likewise, Banaee (2019) reported that transformational leadership facilitates cultural transformation and organizational innovation, resulting in meaningful institutional change. In contrast, transactional leadership is mainly ground in clear, structured tasks, reward systems, and corrective measures. Even though this approach can produce short-term compliance and operational stability, it does not necessarily improve creativity or long-term innovation (Masoula, 2016; Jafari & Najafi, 2003). Research findings suggest that transformational leadership is prone to be connected with exploratory innovation, whereas transactional leadership is more likely to be associated with exploitative innovation. However, both forms of innovation contribute to overall organizational performance (Masoula, 2016). Taktem (2018) further emphasized that transformational leadership can indirectly influence organizational outcomes by effectively implementing human resource strategies, underscoring the mediating role of management practices in enhancing employee productivity. Recently, servant leadership, defined as ethical conduct, service orientation, and a strong commitment to the growth and well-being of employees, has also attracted considerable scholarly attention within educational research. Golzar and Miri (2020) observed that servant leadership positively influences student experiences and teacher motivation. However, certain dimensions, such as commitment to the growth of others, may demonstrate varying levels of influence depending on contextual conditions. Similarly, the positive impact of servant leadership on employee was confirmed in a study conducted by Sultani (2021), indicating the effectiveness of service-oriented leadership approaches in strengthening organizational outcomes.

Despite growing interest in these leadership approaches, the integrated examination of transformational and servant leadership in educational environments has remained relatively limited, particularly in developing countries such as Afghanistan, where educational systems face distinctive challenges related to infrastructure, human resources, and socio-cultural conditions. Earlier studies indicate that effective leadership not only improves immediate employee productivity but also fosters an organizational climate that supports creativity, innovation, and long-term sustainability (Priyanka & Al, 2024; Fatima et al., 2023; Faizi, 2017). In addition, the ACHIEVE productivity model proposed by Hersey and Goldsmith (1980), which incorporates Ability, Clarity, Help, Incentive, Evaluation, Validity, and Environment, provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating human resource productivity by simultaneously considering motivational and organizational support dimensions.

Overall, the existing literature demonstrates a strong theoretical and empirical association between leadership styles and organizational productivity. However, educational contexts in Afghanistan face significant gaps in the concurrent investigation of transformational and servant leadership using a structured productivity framework, such as the ACHIEVE model. Addressing this gap can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how leadership behaviors shape teacher effectiveness, engagement, and long-term

professional performance. Therefore, based on the findings from previous research and the contextual conditions of Afghan schools, the present study proposes the following hypotheses:

*H1:* There will be no significant relationship between transformational leadership style and teachers' productivity.

*H2:* There will be no significant relationship between servant leadership style and teachers' productivity.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In this study, descriptive-correlational research was designed to examine the connection between principals' leadership styles and teacher productivity in private high schools located in District 13 of Kabul. This research design is primarily appropriate for identifying the presence, direction, and strength of relationships among variables without experimental manipulation (Creswell, 2014). Data were collected during the 2023 academic year using standardized questionnaires and distributed to both teachers and school principals.

### ***Population and Sampling***

The study's statistical population included all teachers and principals working in private high schools within the 13th Educational District of Kabul. Based on official records obtained from the district's Educational Supervision Department, the district comprises 95 private high schools employing a total of 1,711 teachers, of whom 765 are male and 946 are female, along with 95 principals. The participants in this study were selected based on Morgan's sampling table (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Random sampling techniques were used, and a sample of 76 principals and 313 teachers were selected to represent the population adequately. From the distributed questionnaires, 75 principal responses and 270 teacher responses were returned and deemed valid for statistical analysis. Teachers and principals were treated as independent groups to enhance representativeness and minimize potential selection bias.

### ***Sampling Procedure***

A random sampling approach was used to ensure that research participants had an equal opportunity to participate in the study (Levy, 2002). Teachers and principals were treated as separate strata, and proportional random selection was employed to maintain diversity in demographic characteristics like age, gender, educational background, and years of professional experience.

### ***Data Collection Procedure***

The instruments used in this study were two standardized questionnaires. Teachers completed the 'Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire' (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995) to assess principals' 'transformational' and servant 'leadership behaviors'. Principals, in turn, completed the ACHIEVE Human Resource Productivity Questionnaire designed by Hersey and Blanchard Goldsmith (1980), which evaluates teacher productivity across seven

dimensions: 'Ability', 'Clarity', 'Help', 'Incentive', 'Evaluation', 'Validity', and 'Environment'. The study's objectives were shared with participants before data collection began. Their participation was voluntary and confidentiality was ensured. Participants provided a written consent form. Trained research assistants were available to address any questions or clarifications. Completed questionnaires were gathered systematically and prepared for subsequent analysis.

### ***Research Instruments***

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) measures transformational, transactional, and servant leadership styles using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 'strongly disagree' to 5 'strongly agree'. In the current study, the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) for the MLQ was 0.704.

The ACHIEVE Human Resource Productivity Questionnaire assesses employee productivity across seven dimensions using a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating greater productivity. The reliability analysis for this instrument yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.880, indicating high internal consistency.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data were analyzed using SPSS (version 24). Both descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, and inferential statistical techniques, such as 'correlation and regression' analyses, were employed in accordance with the objectives of the study and the analytical procedures used in the original research design.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

This study followed the ethical principles. Participant identities were kept confidential, participation was entirely voluntary, and all collected data were anonymized. The research procedures were reviewed and approved by relevant school authorities, ensuring compliance with institutional and national ethical standards.

## **FINDINGS**

According to Mehri (2013), the content validity of research instruments can be ensured through careful evaluation by academic supervisors and subject matter experts. In the present study, the content validity of the questionnaires was rigorously assessed and confirmed through expert review, ensuring that the instruments accurately measured the intended constructs. Furthermore, Danyali-Dah Hooz et al. (2013) reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.881 for similar instruments used in related studies, indicating high internal consistency and reliability.

Reliability analysis carried out in the current study indicated that the Leadership Styles Questionnaire achieved a 'Cronbach's alpha coefficient' of 0.704. At the same time, the Human Resource Productivity (ACHIEVE) Questionnaire demonstrated a higher reliability level with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.880. These results reflect satisfactory to high reliability and

confirm that the instruments were appropriate for accurately capturing participants' perceptions and responses. Establishing both validity and reliability enhances the credibility of the collected data and strengthens the robustness and generalizability of the study findings.

### ***Descriptive Statistics***

The data obtained from the administered questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 24. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics including correlation and regression to examine the relationships among leadership styles and teacher productivity variables in line with the research objectives.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Category	Principals (N=75)	%	Teachers (N=270)	%
Gender	Male	74	98.7%	201	74.4%
	Female	1	1.3%	69	25.6%
Age	20-25 years	4	5.3%	106	39.3%
	26-30 years	22	29.3%	106	39.3%
	31-35 years	28	37.3%	47	17.4%
	Above 35 years	21	28.0%	11	4.1%
Education	High school	1	1.3%	16	5.9%
	College(14 <sup>th</sup> grade)	7	9.3%	63	23.3%
	Bachelor's Degree	55	73.3%	185	68.5%
	Master's & above	12	16.0%	6	2.2%
Years of service	≤ 5 years	10	13.3%	137	50.7%
	6-10 years	27	36.0%	90	33.3%
	11-15 years	28	37.3%	36	13.3%
	> 15 years	10	13.3%	7	2.6%

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 75 principals and 270 teachers who participated in the present study. Among the principals, 98.7% were male and only 1.3% were female. In comparison, the teacher sample consisted of 74.4% male and 25.6% female participants.

Regarding age distribution, the largest proportion of principals (37.3%) was in the 31–35 age group. Teachers, however, were generally younger, with 78.6% reported to be under 30.

In terms of educational attainment, the majority of principals (73.3%) held a bachelor's degree, while a smaller proportion (16%) possessed a master's degree or higher qualifications. A comparable pattern was observed among teachers, with 68.5% holding a bachelor's degree.

Regarding professional experience, 37.3% of principals reported having 11-15 years of service. In contrast, approximately half of the teachers (50.7%) had 5 years or less of teaching experience, indicating that the teaching workforce in the sampled schools is relatively young and early in their careers.

### ***Inferential Statistics***

In this study, 'simple linear regression' was employed to test the following research hypotheses. The results of this test are presented in Tables 2 and 3 below.

*H1:* There will be no significant relationship between transformational leadership style and teacher productivity.

**Table 2.** *Teachers' Productivity Based on Transformational Leadership Style*

Parameters	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized coefficient		t	sig
	B	Standard error	beta		
Intercept	27.79	3.50	-	7.93	0.0001
Transformational leadership style	2.14	0.20	0.774	10.43	0.0001
	R=0.774	R <sup>2</sup> =0.599	Adjusted R= 0.593		

Table 2 presents the regression coefficient analysis for teachers' productivity based on Transformational Leadership Style. The standardized beta coefficient for the transformational leadership style is 0.774, which is statistically significant ( $T = 10.43$ ,  $p = 0.0001$ ). The Adjusted R value is 0.593, which means that the transformational leadership style alone predicts 59.3% of the variance (changes) in teachers' productivity ( $f = 108.93$ ,  $df = (73,1)$ ,  $P = 0.0001$ ).

*H2:* There will be no significant relationship between servant leadership style and teacher productivity.

**Table 3.** *Examining Teacher Productivity Based on Servant Leadership Style*

Parameters	Unstandardized coefficient	Standardized coefficient		t	sig
	B	Standard error	beta		
intercept	29.54	4.21	-	7.00	0.0001
Servant leadership style	1.96	0.238	0.695	8.25	0.0001
	R=0.695	R <sup>2</sup> =0.483	Adjusted R= 0.476		

As depicted in Table 3, the 'standardized beta coefficient' for the servant leadership style is 0.695, which is statistically significant ( $t = 8.25$ ,  $p = 0.0001$ ). The Adjusted R value is 0.476, meaning that the servant leadership style alone predicts 47.6% of the variance (changes) in teacher productivity ( $f = 68.09$ ,  $df = 73.1$ ,  $P = 0.0001$ ).

In summary, based on the results of the present study, there is a positive and significant relationship between the study variables.

## **DISCUSSION**

The present study examined the association between transformational and servant leadership styles, conceptualized within the framework proposed by Bass and Avolio, and teacher productivity, as assessed through the ACHIEVE model developed by Hersey and

Goldsmith. The results showed a statistically significant and positive association between leadership styles and teacher productivity. This indicates that leadership behaviors are rooted in inspiration, empowerment, ethical values, and service orientation. This has a fundamental role in improving teachers' effectiveness and overall job performance. Transformational and servant leadership theories, and their fundamental assumptions were supported by the results of the current study. Both emphasize motivation, individualized consideration, a code of conduct, and the development of human capacity as important mechanisms for improving performance. Thus, this leadership style seems impactful in the educational environment, where productivity is closely associated with motivation, professional commitment, and engagement (Nadeem et al., 2026). School leaders with a clear vision can promote trust-based relationships and clarify a priority for professional development and teachers' well-being. This can contribute to creating an organizational climate to assist sustained productivity and high-quality educational outcomes (Ruego, 2024).

Although earlier studies have investigated leadership styles and performance-related variables, few have concurrently examined transformational and servant leadership, using the ACHIEVE model as a comprehensive framework for assessing productivity. This integrated approach represents a key contribution of the present study, enabling a more holistic understanding of teacher productivity by encompassing critical dimensions such as ability, clarity of roles, motivation, organizational support, evaluation mechanisms, and the working environment. Previous empirical studies can support these findings. For example, Golzar and Miri (2020) reported that servant leadership had a positive effect on productivity-related outcomes, whereas Sherazi and Hosseini (2013) found that transformational leadership significantly reduced job burnout, an outcome closely correlated with improved productivity. Similarly, Masoula (2016) reported the positive role of transformational leadership in promoting exploratory innovation, which is important for organizational adaptability and long-term development. The findings of studies carried out by Jafari et al. (2003), Taktam (2019), and Barzaki and Mohammadi (2015) further confirmed the significant impact of transformational leadership on performance and human resource productivity, both directly and indirectly through mediating factors namely human resource strategies and organizational entrepreneurship. The convergence of these findings with the results of the present study strengthens the credibility and generalizability of the research outcomes.

From a practical point of view, the results of this study can help policymakers and educational administrators focus on leadership development programs to cultivate transformational and servant leadership competencies. Training should be provided to teachers on effective communication, empowerment, ethical leadership, participatory decision-making, and continuous professional development to enhance teacher productivity substantially. Moreover, leadership practices need to be aligned with the ACHIEVE model and provide school leaders with a systematic framework for identifying, diagnosing, and improving the factors that influence teacher performance.

Regardless of the study's contributions, the study acknowledges some limitations. First, self-reported data may introduce common bias and social desirability effects. Second, the 'cross sectional' design limits the capability to establish causal relationships between leadership styles and teacher productivity. Third, the research was conducted within a specific educational and cultural context, which may limit to generalize the findings to other regions or educational systems. In addition, the study did not include other potentially influential variables, such as organizational culture, teachers' individual characteristics, or broader educational policy factors.

Future research is therefore recommended to employ different research design namely longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to capture causal dynamics and contextual influences better. Expanding the scope of investigation to include different educational levels, geographic regions, and additional mediating or moderating variables could provide deeper insights into how leadership styles shape teacher productivity. Comparative studies examining alternative leadership models may also assist, and contribute to the further enhancement of leadership theory and educational practice.

Overall, the findings indicate that leadership styles have significant direct and indirect relationships with human resource productivity. The consistency between previous studies and the present research further confirms the validity, relevance, and practical significance of the results.

## CONCLUSION

The current study examined the association between managerial leadership styles—specifically transformational and servant leadership—and teacher productivity in private high schools located in the 13th Educational District of Kabul. A descriptive- correlation design was used, and the instruments were the 'Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire' (Bass & Avolio, 1995) and the ACHIEVE productivity model (Hersey & Goldsmith, 1980). The study provides empirical evidence on how leadership practices influence teacher productivity within an underexplored educational context.

The findings confirmed that both transformational and servant leadership styles are positively and statistically significantly related to teacher productivity. Transformational leadership had a stronger predictive effect, explaining a larger proportion of variance in productivity. Similarly, servant leadership was found to have a meaningful and considerable influence.

These results suggest that leadership behaviors distinguished by vision, inspiration, ethical conduct, consideration, and service orientation have a fundamental role in improving teachers' motivation, commitment, and professional performance. In terms of theoretical perspective, the study can add to the current literature by synthesizing two significant leadership theories with a multidimensional productivity framework. The application of the ACHIEVE model enabled a comprehensive assessment of teacher productivity, encompassing dimensions such as ability, clarity, motivation, organizational support, evaluation, and work environment. This integrative approach enhances the explanatory power of leadership

theories in educational settings and extends their applicability to private secondary schools in developing and post-conflict contexts. From a practical perspective, the study can add some fundamental implications for educational leadership and policy. School principals and educational administrators are recommended to adopt transformational and servant leadership practices as strategic tools for improving teacher productivity. Leadership development programs that emphasize empowerment, ethical leadership, participatory decision-making, and continuous professional support can contribute to sustainable improvements in teaching effectiveness. From a policy perspective, consolidating leadership competency frameworks consistent with these styles into the selection, training, and evaluation of school leaders may strengthen institutional performance and enhance educational quality.

However, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the results. The use of self-reported data may offer bias, and cross-sectional design cannot provide causal inference. Furthermore, the focus on private high schools within a single educational district limits the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts, including public schools and different regions. The absence of mediating or moderating variables, such as organizational culture or individual teacher characteristics, also represents an area for further investigation.

Future studies are recommended to employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs to better understand causal associations and contextual dynamics. Expanding the research to include public schools, multiple districts, or cross-cultural comparisons would enhance external validity. Furthermore, examining mediating and moderating mechanisms such as job satisfaction, organizational climate, and professional development opportunities could provide deeper insights into how leadership styles influence teacher productivity.

In conclusion, the current study highlights the pivotal role of effective managerial leadership in enhancing teacher productivity in private high schools. By demonstrating the positive influence of transformational and servant leadership styles, the study underscores leadership as a key driver of human resource productivity and sustainable educational development. The current study provides valuable guidance for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to strengthen leadership effectiveness and improve educational outcomes in similar contexts.

#### **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION**

Mohammad Ali Fetrat designed the research and wrote the methodology, findings, and discussion. Mohammad Basir Bakhtyari edited and improved the paper. Mohammad Nasim Sokhandan and Ebrahim Tanin wrote the study background and developed the questionnaires.

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This study received no funding.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The corresponding author can share the data upon request.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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