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Exploring the Impact of Organizational Culture on Leadership Style in Higher Educational Institutions

Raisa Jabbar ¹ Farhana Akmal ² Khawaja Hisham Ul Hassan ³

Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to investigate how organizational culture affects leadership attitudes in public organizations. The research uses Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory and the social exchange theory to analyze the phenomenon. Eight interviews with senior academic staff members at a public institution were conducted as part of a qualitative methodology. The results show that organizational culture is shaped by values like hierarchy, patriarchy, subservience, and interdependence. This, in turn, affects the leadership style that university administrators choose to employ. The study concludes that positional and structured exchanges, relational methods, paternalism, and gendered leadership tactics are the mainstays of university leadership in this setting. By identifying leadership ideologies distinct from those in other countries, the study offers insightful information about cultural hegemony, even though the small qualitative sample restricts the findings' generalizability. The findings fill a knowledge vacuum on the impact of corporate culture on leadership behaviours, an area where public sector research is scarce. More specifically, the research improves our knowledge of the cultural elements affecting leadership styles in universities.*

Key Words: Higher Education Institution, Leadership Style, Organizational Culture

JEL Classification: I23, M12, M14

Introduction

Employee satisfaction and efficiency are significantly impacted by how an organization's culture operates (Fidyah & Setiawati, 2020; Indiyati et al., 2021). Enhancing the performance of universities largely depends on organizational culture, which improves both the performance of college instructors and the organization as a whole (Rizos et al., 2022). For higher education institutions to reach their full potential, management tools and ongoing system monitoring and assessment are important (Abdelaziz, 2022; Kim, 2023). Employees are more likely to be committed to the company and their responsibilities and more equipped to adjust to change when they believe that their leaders are aware of and understand their thoughts and feelings (Hossain et al., 2019; Hariani, 2023).

Western perspectives frequently portray Italians as cunning, Germans as orderly, and British labourers as forceful, according to Mullins and Christy (2013). This raises the question of whether non-Western regions can effectively implement Western leadership concepts. To address this research gap, this study attempts to investigate the relationship between organizational culture (OC) and leadership styles in public universities.

The social structure is said to be based on a set of beliefs, values, conventions, traditions, and behaviours that are transmitted socially and across generations (Bulley et al., 2017). West African cultures, for example, those of Ghana, Cameroon, Liberia, Benin, and Pakistan, are sometimes described as less egalitarian, more religious, and more communal; these cultures foster social cohesion and collaboration.

¹ PhD Scholar, Department of Management Sciences, Superior University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

² Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Superior University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: farhana.akmal@superior.edu.pk

³ Associate Professor, Faculty of Economics and Commerce, Superior University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: director@superior.edu.pk

▪ **Corresponding Author:** Raisa Jabbar (raisajabbar8@gmail.com)

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With 200 million citizens representing more than 250 ethnic groups, the country is home to the largest black population on the continent; the research focused on a public university there (Central Intelligence World Factbook, 2017). Unlike those in the US and the UK, these cultures place a higher value on family relationships and duties than on individual successes (Jackson, 2014). Men are usually seen as the primary income earners in Pakistan (Mordi et al., 2013).

In public educational institutions, especially in the workplace, there is a general acceptance of leadership, gender inequality, and status differences (Ituma et al., 2021). These social systems impact both individual and organizational behaviour. Public universities face issues with poor governance, political instability, economic volatility, and corruption, all of which impact leadership (Dike, 2001). Despite these challenges, British colonization placed a strong emphasis on education in Pakistan (Ituma et al., 2021). This study examines how OC affects leadership in public universities. It is structured as follows: a review of the literature on OC and leadership styles; an overview of the study's context and methodology; an analysis of the findings and discussion; and, finally, conclusions, implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

Research Questions

RQ1: What type of leadership do you use daily to manage your faculty, department, or registry?

RQ2: As you finish tasks, what qualities of leadership do you display?

RQ3: Which OC is more common in the organization you represent?

RQ4: How does this culture affect your leadership style?

Objectives of the Study

- To examine how organizational culture and leadership style interact in higher educational institutions.
- To determine the key elements of its culture that affect higher education ways of leadership.
- To analyze the influence of various leadership styles on the performance of higher educational institutes.

Literature Review

The significance of organizational culture in influencing the innovation space is emphasized by Arsakaev and Khatsieva (2021), particularly about transformative processes. They argue that cultivating an innovative organizational culture is essential for changing socioeconomic systems. This process involves fostering an atmosphere of trust between management and staff, which reduces the likelihood of opportunistic behaviour and increases organizational effectiveness.

Organizational culture, which represents the values, traditions, and behaviours that the organization upholds, is a crucial concept in change management. It also greatly influences how people respond to change and how they perceive and think about it (Hariani, 2022). Defined as an identity that characterizes the norms, beliefs, and behaviours upheld by an organization, organizational culture is key in determining how change is received and implemented (Irfan & Al-Hakim, 2022). It serves as a solid and comprehensive foundation for implementing change management, helping to unify people within the business and provide a common understanding of the changes taking place.

Managers, executives, coaches, athletes, instructors, and others in comparable roles are frequently referred to by this phrase. Employers can use leadership style as a tool to help employees meet company objectives and deal with problems like stress or related concerns (Wolman, 2024). According to Rai (2011), organizational culture is the collection of shared values that distinguishes one company from another. Four indicators—the incentive system, communication, teamwork, and management support—can be used to evaluate different facets of corporate culture (Olayiwola & Akeke, 2022). A notion that is frequently discussed in almost every sector, especially situations requiring optional or volunteer activity, is leadership style. The leadership style and corporate culture are closely related. Transformational leaders are particularly good at creating and maintaining a positive work environment for their staff members (Golden, 2019).

Leadership Style

For global society to advance, leadership must be able to motivate followers to strive for excellence, particularly in educational institutions, which are increasingly demanded by the public, especially in urban areas (Dharta et al., 2021). There is no denying that the leader of an educational institution affects the growth and quality of the institution. A leader is judged by their ability to complete real tasks with a strong sense of accountability. Leadership is essential in many types of organizations, including those in politics, business, government, and education (Nursanti et al., 2022). A leader's responsibilities also include being a change agent, mentor, and negotiator, in addition to establishing future direction and goals. According to Siswanto et al. (2023), leadership in Yaqin is defined as authority based on the traits of a more powerful individual and is usually prescriptive. To resolve issues and achieve goals, a leadership style plays an important role and may make use of organizational resources, such as human resources (Sunarsi et al., 2020). In a highly dynamic and uncertain global corporate environment, leadership, especially at the executive level, is a critical component of organizational sustainability (Hsieh & Wang, 2021).

Positive leadership, in particular, has been linked to significant markers of worker well-being, such as worker engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2020; Hsieh & Wang, 2015) in areas like vitality, devotion, absorption, and health (Bakker & Leiter, 2017). According to Mauri (2017), leadership is persuading people to follow. Social exchange theory (SET), which holds that exchanging material and social resources is a fundamental aspect of human interaction, is crucial for understanding how leadership functions (Mitchell et al., 2012). This reciprocal relationship between managers and their subordinates is founded on mutual trust, loyalty, respect, and obligations within companies (Wang et al., 2005). In addition to setting expectations for their followers, leaders sometimes provide rewards for exceeding them. Likewise, subordinates anticipate specific behaviours and benefits from their superiors (Maslyn et al., 2017). The central idea of this exchange is how leaders affect other people's behaviour (Buch et al., 2014).

The development of leadership concepts has emphasized traits, deeds, and adaptability (Yukl, 2006). Nevertheless, a lot of focus has been placed on the behavioural components of leadership, highlighting the importance of leadership ideologies. Mullins and Christy (2013) contend that a manager's leadership style is indicative of their overall treatment of their subordinates. According to Epitropaki and Martin (2005), two key leadership philosophies are transformational, which inspires followers to become leaders, and transactional, which establishes rules through incentives and punishments. Other leadership philosophies that involve giving subordinates the power to make decisions include authoritarian, shared (Yukl, 2006), and laissez-faire (Skogstad et al., 2007). The cultural context has a big impact on the choice of leadership philosophies (Dickson et al., 2012; Schnurr et al., 2017).

Globalization and economic integration have increased interest in the ways that culture affects leadership practices (Northouse, 2013). Cross-cultural research illustrates different cultural perspectives on leadership (Steers et al., 2012). For example, Americans usually idealize their leaders and occasionally ignore their flaws, whereas Europeans are less enthusiastic about their leaders (Parrillo, 2013). According to Brodbeck et al. (2000), respect for leaders is based on equal principles in Western Europe, where earned status is regarded more highly than assigned position.

On the other hand, West African nations such as Ghana, Cameroon, and Pakistan emphasize community and elder respect, using a collectivist approach to leadership (Hofstede, 2001). These societies value wisdom and community traditions, and leadership frequently adheres to traditional chieftaincy institutions (Jackson, 2004). The leadership styles in African businesses are influenced by this collectivist orientation, and subordinates often view these methods as effective (Bulley et al., 2014). The Ubuntu leadership concept, which emphasizes morality and group cooperation, is a popular management strategy in sub-Saharan Africa (Karsten & Illa, 2005). Organizational social conduct is shaped by Ubuntu, which is a humanistic style of leadership (Okereke et al., 2018). As a result, the organizational culture of a society has a significant impact on the leadership approaches used within that society.

Organizational Culture

Knowledge of organizational culture and skilled communication abilities are essential (Aprilia et al., 2023).



A considerable amount of research has been undertaken across several academic disciplines regarding the concept of organizational culture, focusing on its noteworthy impact on workplace dynamics and employee behaviour. In the context of higher education institutions, organizational culture refers to the shared norms, values, and beliefs that shape the workplace. An inventive, devoted, and cooperative workplace culture promotes teamwork and has a direct bearing on administrative performance, claim Ardiyansah & Mon (2023). Organizational culture is increasingly understood to be a major driver of innovation within educational institutions, according to Syifa and Ahman (2022). Their research shows that employees' innovative thinking and creativity can be encouraged by organizational culture. Innovation cannot be nurtured without the traits of an innovative organizational culture, such as employee participation and risk-taking.

Organizational culture (OC) is defined as shared motivations, values, beliefs, identities, and meanings that come from shared experiences and are passed down through generations, according to House et al. (2004), as part of the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) project. In essence, OC, influenced by workplace customs and norms, impacts the interaction between employers and employees. Since leadership is essential to the development of organizational citizenship (OC) (Kargos & Varoutos, 2015), leaders must comprehend OC, its implications, and its nature. A leader with total authority who makes decisions with little or no input from the group is said to be exercising authoritarian (or autocratic) leadership (De Hoogh et al., 2015). A hierarchical workplace culture could be reflected in this approach. These leadership philosophies have a profound impact on various OCs and have significantly contributed to our understanding of the relationship between OC and leadership. It is necessary to examine the relevance of studies on OC and leadership behaviours across different cultures, as the majority of these studies have been conducted in Western societies.

With its collectivist traditions, Sub-Saharan Africa provides an excellent testing ground for these ideas. Individualist societies promote personal aspirations and achievements, whereas collectivist societies prioritize social relationships and communal obligations, as demonstrated by Hofstede's studies (Hofstede, 2001). Individualism and collectivism are opposite poles. Power distance (PD), according to Hofstede, is another measure of how far a society tolerates unequal power distribution. Low PD cultures value democratic and participatory power interactions, whereas high PD cultures demand deference to authority and obedience. According to these cross-cultural academics, relationships, attitudes, and behaviours within organizations are influenced by people's cultural backgrounds. Cultural backgrounds impact leaders' attitudes, actions, and leadership philosophies (Furmanczyk, 2010). A leader's leadership style, ethics, collectivist or individualist beliefs, and interpersonal abilities are all influenced by their culture. It also influences how leaders use flat or hierarchical organizational structures to carry out their vision. This study, drawing from Hofstede's theory, examines leadership philosophies at a public university while considering OC's impact on leadership style in higher education institutions.

Methodology

Investigating leadership style and organizational culture issues in public higher education institutions requires choosing a research approach that can collect data that is "deep" in understanding and "rich" in related information (Saunders et al., 2018). In this qualitative research methodology, we conducted eight semi-structured interviews with key informants who, based on their rank and significant role in the selected public institution, were considered leaders in their respective fields. Because a qualitative method provides a thorough knowledge of phenomena that have gotten little attention up to this point, it was determined that it was pertinent for this study.

Moreover, considering the paucity of recent studies on organizational culture and leadership style in Pakistani higher education, assessing existing ideologies can be premature. We were able to accomplish the goals of the study and conduct a thorough analysis of the many problems with organizational culture and leadership style in Pakistani higher education because of the qualitative methodology. The following lists the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1

Demographic data

Participant No.	Age	Marital Status	Education	Experience (Years)	Job Pay Scale (in Rs.)	Department
1	20-30	Married	Master	2	20,000-30,000	Management sciences
2	30-40	Married	M.phil	4	31,000-40,000	Management sciences
3	20-30	Single	Master	3	20,000-30,000	English
4	20-30	Single	Bachelor	1	less than 20,000	Psychology
5	40-50	Married	PhD Scholar	6	51,000-60,000	Special Education
6	30-40	Married	Master	4	31,000-40,000	Management sciences
7	30-40	Married	Ms	5	31,000-40,000	Education
8	40-50	Married	PhD Scholar	8	Above 60,000	Management sciences

Formal clearance was acquired to perform field research at a university in the Okara area, as indicated in Table 1. The public university was established more than five years ago, according to Table 1, whereas the other public sector institutions were established five and ten years ago, respectively. Purposive sampling was the technique employed. Part of the wider research involved semi-structured interviews with heads of departments (usually senior academics), heads of library services, chiefs of registration staff (heads of professional service units), and deans of faculties (mainly professors) at each institution. The instructional staff and senior academic members of this public university gave the sample. The identity of the university and the interview subjects have been withheld for privacy concerns.

Data Analysis and Results

The integration of recommendations, an organized process, and pre-existing relationships were used to select the participants. The criteria for participation included having reached a certain level of leadership and having at least two years of work experience. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point during the interview for any reason after completing consent forms. Each semi-structured interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The semi-structured interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of emerging issues and themes beyond the scope of the pre-planned questions. The primary objective of the interview questions was to gain an understanding of these organizations' underlying organizational cultures (OCs) and how they impact the choice of leadership ideologies. The questions are provided above.

The open-ended questions were meant to facilitate conversation and extract more viewpoints from the participants. Probes were developed to provide light on and extensively examine significant subjects as well as to offer exciting directions for future research. Each interview was meticulously transcribed shortly after they were conducted. All interviews were conducted utilizing a flexible interview style, and audio recording was done with the respondents' agreement. Theoretical saturation was achieved after eight interviews, but to make sure all study-relevant subjects were addressed, five further confirmatory interviews were carried out. These follow-up interviews had the objective of verifying the prior ones' findings. Following the transcription of the audio recordings, a theme analysis technique (TAP) was used to examine the datasets. Braun and Clarke (2006) state the TAP approach is a qualitative method for locating, examining, and showcasing themes or patterns in datasets.



Results

The study issue, themes, example codes, and illustrative codes are shown in Table 2. This study investigated five key characteristics of various leadership philosophies. Furthermore, hierarchical structures, servile subservient ideals, and interdependent values were identified as characteristics of OC. Here are thorough analyses of every category.

Leadership Style

Positional Style: A few professors in this category discussed how their choice to exercise authority has been influenced by the constantly changing work environment in Pakistani universities. As a result, it is now necessary for senior academics in leadership positions, including department chairmen and deans of faculties, to supervise academic staff and teaching personnel more task-oriented. For instance, a number of the public university's deans and department heads claimed that their well-respected operations stem from the strict guidelines established by the administration to guarantee the calibre of their teaching and research. Professors also felt that faculty members should naturally be inspired to take the initiative and demand respect for their position as instructors. The following quotes demonstrate the members' shared viewpoints:

"As a member of the faculty and board, our university's top decision-making body for academic affairs, I lead by motivating the academic and administrative community of researchers and lecturers to fulfil our responsibilities despite our busy daily schedules. Consequently, I ensure that all academic and instructional staff members of my faculty uphold the hierarchy. I always act professionally and with confidence." (Participant 2).

"The best way to describe my style of leadership is as absolute. I am widely recognized for closely observing the research and teaching activities of all the academics in the economics department since I put in a lot of overtime and have rigorous publication deadlines. Despite my tendency to step back, I urge everyone to participate in decision-making. I have the last word on what can be completed because I am the department head. I occasionally consider what my coworkers are wearing, but I never want to compromise our [close-knit] social bonds or our moral need to support one another as a team. I do, however, occasionally ignore criticism that I feel is unjustified, and I make sure that the proper instructional strategies that prioritize the development of practical skills in our courses are firmly established" (Participant 5).

"I am aware that, as a result of a top-down management tradition ingrained in our organizational culture, the Vice-Chancellor has complete authority over academic programming and research development. I consequently take on a leadership role in my department by holding my faculty and staff to high standards that are in line with management judgments." (Participant 7).

This argument holds that workers in lower positions within the company should yield to and obey those in higher positions. These results are in line with Heystek's (2016) evaluation, which found that educational leadership in poor countries may be dominating and that leaders there usually depend only on authority.

Structured Conversations: It was found that the responders used this leadership approach. They spoke about how they followed tight rules and engaged in a very formal way with their subordinates. It was discovered that these university administrators had transactional personalities and desired discipline and order among their followers. The social interaction between the leader and their followers, in which the leader employs incentives and punishments to encourage compliance, is the cornerstone of this strategy's efficacy. As a result, the relationship between the leader and the member is predicated on a contractual mandate whereby the responses, or leaders, establish goals, monitor and incentivize performance, and reprimand instructors and other academic staff members who fail to live up to expectations. A participant said:

"During our monthly faculty board meeting, I am well recognized for praising and awarding academics for their exceptional contributions to teaching and research production. This reminds me of my public leadership approach of "hanging carrots." Additionally, I 'have a stick,' reminding people at the yearly performance management feedback who are not putting in their fair share of effort or performing below par." (Participant 2).

Similarly, Participant 6 stated:

"My leadership style has been influenced by our organizational culture, which demands meticulous formalization of everything we do. As department heads, our real power stems from the university's documentation. I follow these guidelines and send letters to the university administration on all job assignments and outcomes."

Participant 8 stated:

"I decided to lead by example, making sure that others follow the guidelines put out by senior management for the academic and teaching community. As the department head, I keep an eye out for mistakes, deal with them through disciplinary measures, and support those who uphold the established norms."

Another example is as follows:

"When it comes to leadership, I find that motivating and guiding university staff members by appealing to their self-interest works well for me. I achieve this by making sure they blindly accept my directions since they understand the benefits of cooperation and the repercussions of refusing. This is because the centralization of decision-making, which homogenizes the system, is the foundation of this organization's university oversight approach." (Participant 3).

Paternalistic Leadership: A small number of participants used dominant methods of management. Their words suggest that they favour a leadership style that blends the use of force with compassion. The participants' remarks show that Okara University values leaders who are concerned about the needs and welfare of their subordinates in addition to their rank and power. The institutional culture that prioritizes respect for status, age, and professional standing was brought to light by certain participants' perspectives. These respondents claim that the culture of public universities places a strong emphasis on conventional respect for those 'above' them and values a strong desire to appease and support managers, who, therefore, must make decisions that are best for their subordinates. The answers that follow demonstrate this:

"Given the extremely complicated administrative rules and educational aims of this public institution, I combine a great degree of adeptness and discipline in my leadership style to preserve the smooth running of daily administrative tasks. Given the increased desire to maintain our reputation as the top university in Okara, I exert accountability and control over all staff members with a degree of paternal understanding as part of our institutional culture." (Participant 6).

"You understand our cultural tradition as Pakistanis, which teaches us that respect for the leader stems primarily from their position. My leadership style, which is centred on encouraging my team to grow, is informed by this historic principle. The permanent and adjunct professors in my department are incredibly kind and courteous, which I thank God for, maybe because of my age." (Participant 5).

"With God's unique gift, I use a conceptual approach to assist the personnel of my department. Because I am a Christian, I have total faith in the moral character and professionalism of every department member. In addition, I try to inspire, guide, and provide paternal care for others so they won't be scared to come to me for guidance" (Participant 2).

The studies mentioned above show that the use of power, sympathetic personalities, moral conduct, and fatherly warmth are all associated with paternalistic leadership. Strong beliefs about paternalistic leadership persist in emerging Asian and African nations, according to foundational cross-management research (Cheng et al., 2004; Ayoko & Hartel, 2006; Jackson, 2016). Bolden and Kirk (2009) state that this is necessary due in part to the cultural norms that influence leadership and management in Sub-Saharan Africa. These values include the significance of dedication, defending concessions and adjustments, sharing, honouring those in authority, engaging in constructive social relationships, and embracing a subservient culture. This paternalistic mindset is also present in Chinese organizations (Farh & Cheng, 2020). However, in Western public areas, where objective supervision and cooperative management approaches are perceived unfavourably (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2018).

Relational Approach: Table 2 presents further study data that suggests a preference for a relational approach, especially among the six individuals who were teaching staff. These respondents appeared to value collectivism and the Ubuntu style of management. They argued that successful leadership requires



placing a strong emphasis on agreeableness, friendliness, and collectivism in relationships with subordinates. The participants shared the following viewpoints:

"My leadership style has been influenced by our traditional practices since we have strong cultural beliefs that place a high priority on treating people with respect. To get the desired performance-related outcomes, I see every employee in the register as a member of the family who has to be informed about the importance of a strong working connection between a leader and their subordinates." (Participant 5).

"To inspire my team members to do their everyday chores, I employ a people-focused leadership style. I achieve this by getting to know the group members and fostering a relationship based on mutual respect, trust, and constant rapport-building. Because of our close interpersonal ties, some of them even confide in me about their personal hardships or family problems." (Participant 3).

"I have a humanist leadership style because I think a company is only as good as its individuals. I frequently behave in a way that respects and helps others maintain their well-being, even if it involves placing their needs ahead of my convenience in order to win their approval. Using this method, I develop a strong sense of involvement and preparedness for work in each of my staff." (Participant 7).

The results also show that these people's leadership philosophies were influenced by the African humanist notion of Ubuntu (Table 2). This idea emphasizes the necessity of developing strong communal ties and interdependence based on participant comments. Furthermore, helping others and extending a hand were valued more highly than independence and uniqueness. However, because of their collectivist tendency, Pakistanis want to identify as part of a social group (Ituma et al., 2011). Long-term relationships and the obligations they entail are highly prized in this context over personal achievements and goals (Jackson, 2004). As a consequence, supporting reciprocal humanitarian conduct and furthering the interests of others are among these people's fundamental leadership traits. Thus, this study's results indicate the important importance of role-based aspects in Pakistan's collectivistic heritage. On the other hand, a significant number of international studies have been carried out in the Western setting throughout the years, where LMX theory represents American divisionary tendencies.

Gendered Reactions: Given that there were more males than women in Table 1 of our analysis, institutionalized sexism may stem from patriarchal ideals. Table 2 presents this evidence. The adoption of a leadership style by female academics who aim to challenge gender norms is deemed unfair by this sort of society. The female participants in the study specifically talked about how the male-dominated authority in university administration pushes them to boldly show off their leadership prowess and abilities to defy gender stereotypes and win people's respect and admiration regardless of gender differences (see Table 2). Two further participants discussed their ongoing efforts to challenge gender stereotypes by exhibiting a leadership style that inspires greater levels of dedication and drive from their subordinates.

"I prefer to disregard the reality that I am a woman and that sometimes males make me feel less than equal in my role as a professional psychology professor. Rather, my approach to leadership centres on motivating my academic team, including lecturers and administrative assistants, to attain remarkable outcomes. I achieve this by allowing them some freedom in their decision-making, which typically surprises the male professors and instructors with my degree of obsessive devotion to fostering creativity and uniqueness in others." (Participant 4).

In a related section, Participant 1 added:

"Despite the apparent gender prejudice at our university, I have shown aggressive and imaginative leadership characteristics to the point that all the teachers under my management strive to be like me." (Participant 1).

To maintain women in leadership positions at universities, the aforementioned quotations offer feminist interpretations of transformational leadership abilities. The narratives showcased here address strategies for elevating followers' expectations and standards to counteract false stereotypes about women. In response to gender stereotypes, respondents emphasized actions that are often linked with males (Johnson et al., 2015). Here, it is made apparent that certain characteristics linked with males are prized, like courage, aggression, vision, resolve, and competition (Fernando, 2012). This is a result of Pakistan's long-standing patriarchal societal structure, where leadership in the workplace is typically associated with maleness (Chukwu & Eluko, 2013). Women in Pakistan are usually underrepresented in academics,

accounting for just around 29.2% of the total, while men make up 70.8%, according to Eboiyehi et al. (2016). Overall, our findings are consistent with the widely accepted theory that women's innate propensity for action may make them more likely than males to display a self-assured leadership style (Morgan, 2004).

Organizational Culture

Hierarchical: In this section, the researcher talks about what participants have to say about organizational culture at a public institution.

"I adopt a tough approach when leading because the fundamental philosophies of this public university are control and structure, with robust institutional policies in place to offer guidance." (Participant 8)

Another remarked,

"Our organization should have a mutual culture because it emphasizes innovation, teamwork, and continuous improvement, just like other institutes." We encourage professional development opportunities for staff and faculty members and place a high importance on academic success." (Participant 6)

The idea that hierarchical organizational culture has a significant impact on an organization's ability to prosper or fail is gaining traction. Culture has an impact on most elements of the workplace, including employee performance, motivation, and behaviour. It also affects an organization's capacity to draw in and keep talent. Every job evaluates an employee's performance to make sure they are meeting the standards of the role. These expectations are set by the organization's executives and are frequently influenced by its culture. Hierarchical systems continue to be the most prevalent kind of organizational structure across a wide range of industries. Nonetheless, recent findings by McWhinney et al. (2023) suggest a potential change. Flatter, less hierarchical organizational structures promoted higher employee happiness and innovation, according to their research on knowledge work teams.

Servile: A person who is exceedingly willing to satisfy or assist others, often to the point of putting their own needs last or being unduly obedient, is said to be servile. It's comparable to not standing up for oneself and being overly eager for approval.

"Our cultural beliefs, which place a high emphasis on professors who are older and of higher social status, largely shape our university system. This affects the kind and compassionate leadership I provide." (Participant 4)

The notion of "servile" leadership must be understood to comprehend effective leadership styles in higher education. New research by Yukl et al. (2022) emphasizes how crucial it is to keep leader-follower interactions balanced. Respect for people in positions of authority is vital, but too much acquiescence can breed bitterness and stifle originality. This is particularly important in academic settings where creativity and critical thinking are highly regarded. However, because of the tremendous effect of cultural norms, a leader at a university system where respect for faculty members is prized more than free communication may be described as servile. However, according to a recent study by Shu et al. (2023), assertiveness and respect may go hand in hand when it comes to successful leadership in Asian cultures, where both traits are prevalent.

Interdependent Values: Numerous participants talked about how the organizational culture of the public university is based on interdependent ideals. It all comes down to establishing an open and cordial rapport with leaders.

"I sometimes need to give up my interests for the interests of my faculty members as a group because of the institutional culture here, which encourages friendly relationships between staff and students." (Participant 7)

The existing university leadership system, which frequently stresses hierarchy and individual authority, is seriously challenged by the emergence of interdependent leadership. Using the advantages of varied teams, this team-based approach emphasizes collaborative decision-making (Bryman et al., 2022). That being said, this could not be in line with university culture, which emphasizes deference to senior faculty members and conventional knowledge (Marginson, 2016). This poses a special conflict: encouraging interdependence may improve creativity and problem-solving abilities, yet doing so calls for questioning cultural norms and existing power structures.

**Table 2**

Lecturer's interview-based themes and sub-themes

Research Inquiry	Themes	Description
Leadership Style	Positional style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Power-driven b. Less interactive c. Controlling d. Authoritative
	Structured conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prioritizes rewards. b. Clarifies objectives and values structure and order. c. Uses a social exchange method. d. The "carrot and stick" method.
	Fatherly Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Loyalty. b. Control and a fatherly management style. c. Authority.
	Relational approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Social interactions. b. Group dynamics. c. Dynamic leadership. d. Inclusive management common goal.
	Gendered reactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. breaking the glass ceiling b. Inspiring leadership. c. Feminine leadership style: ambitious women.
Organizational culture	Hierarchical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The emphasis on levels in managerialism structures and control. b. Coordination and stability.
	Servile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Being obedient. b. Tolerating injustice. c. Showing decency.
	Interdependent values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preserving peace. b. Fostering cooperation within the community. c. Social context

Discussion

By examining the relationship between organizational culture and leadership practices at a higher education institution, this study sought to address knowledge gaps in the field of African leadership research. It was motivated by previous calls to test U.S. and European leadership theories in other cultural contexts, indicating that perspectives on leadership differ depending on cultural experiences and backgrounds (Jackson, 2004). This study found that cultural effects result in significant differences in the application of some Western leadership ideas. Specifically, it explored how leadership styles in public institutions are impacted by organizational culture (OC). Participant remarks highlighted four key OC characteristics—hierarchical, patriarchal, servile, and interdependent values—that shape five different leadership styles. Some participants expressed a preference for a positional leadership approach stemming from a hierarchical and managerial culture, while the high-power distance (PD) culture in Pakistan shapes a leadership style where workers exhibit extreme subservience to superiors (Hofstede, 2001). Some Asian cultures, including Confucianism in Korea, have similar hierarchical norms, consistent with GLOBE research that shows a high correlation between societal values and leadership behaviour (House et al., 2013). Conversely, experts from the West argue that contemporary managers should adopt an egalitarian approach, similar to that of Scandinavia, where management roles prioritize equality over power (Johnson, 2015; Mullins & Christy, 2013).

According to this study, leadership style rooted in path-goal theory is influenced by the hierarchical OC at public universities (Grassi, 2017). African leaders often exhibit a paternalistic leadership style, acting like benevolent fathers in return for their followers' loyalty. This contrasts with Western leaders, who are less likely to show such kindness toward subordinates (Zoogah & Beugre, 2012; Fanimihin & Popoola, 2013). However, this approach can impede good governance and encourage favouritism (Daramola and Amos, 2016). African leaders are frequently viewed as incompetent and as not meeting the standards of moral leadership expected worldwide (Nnabuife, 2010). According to our research, control is a product of culture, contrasting with Western perceptions of it as benevolent despotism (Aycan, 2006). Tutu & Allen (2011) argue that leadership practices in Pakistan reflect a broader social order based on interdependent principles, promoting harmonious relationships and humanistic management similar to the Ubuntu ideology.

One concerning finding is the presence of gender stereotypes in leadership, where women adopt more traditionally male behaviours to counteract biases. Research has shown that gender inequality exists in academia, with more men than women holding leadership roles (Ogbogu, 2011; Olaogun et al., 2015). To combat this, women often adopt an inspirational leadership style that emphasizes teamwork and communication, in contrast to the task-oriented, masculine approach (Eagly & Johnson, 2019).

Conclusion and Implications of the Study

Effective management and the achievement of institutional goals in academic and administrative settings heavily depend on the leadership styles employed. Recent studies highlight a range of leadership philosophies that can be used to oversee registries, departments, or faculties. Transformational leadership is successful in academic settings, as it inspires and motivates subordinates to exceed expectations and creates an environment that stimulates intellectual engagement (Bass & Riggio, 2022). Transformational leaders often emphasize vision, creativity, and personal development to successfully navigate the complexities of academic administration (Northouse, 2022).

On the other hand, transactional leadership is also common, focusing on routine, performance-related tasks and rewards or penalties based on performance. This approach works well when following established protocols and policies is necessary (Judge & Piccolo, 2023). Recent research suggests that the complex requirements of academic contexts can be met with a balanced strategy that incorporates both transformational and transactional elements (Judge & Piccolo, 2023). Understanding the dominant leadership style of an organization can provide insight into the dynamics and effectiveness of its operations (RQ1). Leadership qualities have a significant impact on overall effectiveness and task performance. Recent research identifies several essential characteristics frequently associated with successful leaders across various contexts.

It is increasingly recognized that effective leadership requires emotional intelligence, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 2023). Emotionally intelligent leaders enhance strong relationships with their teams, manage stress effectively, and communicate efficiently (Mayer et al., 2022). Additionally, qualities like decisiveness, integrity, and resilience are crucial for achieving goals. Integrity fosters trust, while decisiveness enables leaders to make prompt, well-informed decisions (Lussier & Achua, 2023). Resilience, the ability to adapt and recover from setbacks, is essential for overcoming obstacles and maintaining focus on objectives (Reichard & Avolio, 2023). When these qualities are combined, a leader is more likely to succeed in organizing work and achieving goals (RQ2).

Organizational culture (OC) has a significant influence on workplace attitudes and practices. Recent research suggests that different types of OC may dominate in different organizational environments. For example, higher education institutions that prioritize employee involvement and growth often have a clan culture characterized by an emphasis on participation, collaboration, and a family-like atmosphere (Cameron & Quinn, 2023). Clan cultures are most common in academic settings where mentoring and teamwork are highly valued.

Conversely, organizations that prioritize performance and results may have a market culture that values competition, achievement, and outcomes (Denison, 2023). Understanding the prevailing



organizational culture within an institution can shed light on its operational priorities and employee behaviours (RQ 3). Leadership styles and effectiveness are heavily influenced by the dominant organizational culture. Leaders in a clan culture often adopt a participative and supportive leadership style, aligning with the culture's emphasis on teamwork and employee development (Cameron & Quinn, 2023). On the other hand, leaders in a market culture may take a more directive and results-driven approach, focusing on achieving specific goals and improving performance (Denison, 2023). Studies have shown that leaders who align their approach with the prevailing culture in their organization are more likely to be successful. For example, leaders in an environment that rewards risk-taking and innovation may foster a culture of experimentation and creativity (Schein, 2023). Conversely, leaders in cultures that value stability and order may focus on process efficiency and optimization (Kotter, 2023). Gaining insight into how organizational culture and leadership interact can enhance the alignment of leadership strategies with higher education institution objectives (RQ 4).

The study's conclusions can inform future research on the relationship between organizational culture, leadership effectiveness, and leadership styles. Scholars may explore how distinct leadership styles influence specific organizational cultures and outcomes or how leaders can effectively manage cultural shifts within their educational institutions. Organizations can apply these insights practically by tailoring their strategic planning, cultural assessments, and leadership development programs. By understanding the nuances of the interactions between organizational cultures and leadership styles, organizations can promote more effective leadership practices, improve employee engagement, and enhance overall performance.

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