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## “A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE AMONG HEADS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN PUNJAB”

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### Abstract

This study explores and compares the perceptions of public and private university teachers in Punjab regarding the transactional leadership styles of their heads. Transactional leadership, characterized by structured exchanges, rewards, and punishments, is critical in educational institutions where efficiency and goal-oriented performance are prioritized. The study aims to examine how university heads' transactional leadership style impact teachers' perceptions in both sectors. A comparative research design was employed, involving a sample of 500 public and 138 private university teachers. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test). The results reveal that private university heads are perceived to exhibit stronger transactional leadership behaviours compared to their public counterparts, with a mean score of 3.89 versus 3.67. The t-test analysis ( $t = 2.45, p < 0.05$ ) confirmed a significant difference between the two groups. The study concludes that public university heads should enhance communication, goal-setting, and reward mechanisms to improve leadership effectiveness. Leadership training programs tailored to the specific needs of both public and private sectors are recommended to foster a better organizational climate and teacher satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Transactional leadership, leadership styles, public universities, private universities, teacher perceptions, Punjab, educational leadership, comparative study.

### 1. Introduction

There is hardly any other phenomenon on this planet, which is as closely watched and as little well understood as leadership. While it was argued that leadership could define leadership in as many manners as there were writers on leadership. Leadership on the other hand can be as a process through which an organisation or person, known as the

leader influences other individuals or organisations, known as the followers to achieve a given objective (Northouse, 2010). Transactional leadership style is one of the most "discussed" leadership theories in the contemporary world because organizational researchers have observed it to be related to other work-related outcomes such as employee commitment (Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016).

It should be noted that leadership is among the strategies, which many companies or organizations ensure they employ in their endeavors to enhance the performance of their employees. According to the study conducted by Lan et al, (2019), leadership may be defined as being a motivator through which an individual is forced to have aspirations to complete the success image with the rest of the members of an organization, as well as the way in which a leader directs and encourages his subordinates to attain organizational goals. The Full Range of Leadership Theory is one of the most famous leadership theories that describe the organization's top management and employees' interactions; it consists of transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and nontransactional or laissez-faire leadership (Sohmen, 2013). From the literature review by Baig et al. (2021) we note that leadership style is positively related to employee performance. Therefore, the nature of leadership practiced in the company can be utilized to enhance the efficiency of the employees.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the success and effectiveness of educational institutions, particularly in the context of higher education. In universities, leadership style significantly influences not only the organizational culture but also the motivation, performance, and satisfaction of faculty and staff. Among the various leadership paradigms, transactional leadership has garnered attention for its focus on structured roles, rewards, and performance-based outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transactional leaders typically operate within established systems, using rewards and punishments to achieve desired results. In the context of higher education, this leadership approach has been found to contribute to institutional stability and performance management.

Leadership within educational institutions significantly impacts the academic environment and organizational culture. University heads play a pivotal role in shaping the institution's vision, mission, and overall direction, affecting both teacher performance and student outcomes. Effective leadership fosters a collaborative atmosphere, enabling teachers to engage more deeply in their professional development and contribute to institutional success. The leadership style adopted by university heads has a direct impact on teacher motivation, which, in turn, influences their commitment to enhancing educational quality (Bush, 2020). Research has consistently shown that strong leadership is a critical factor in ensuring academic excellence and institutional growth.

The leadership styles of heads in public and private universities may differ due to variations in institutional goals, governance structures, and funding sources. Public university heads often face challenges related to bureaucratic oversight and limited resources, which may lead to a more transactional approach to leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2017). In contrast, private universities, which may have more autonomy and flexibility, might employ leaders who balance transactional leadership with transformational strategies to foster innovation and attract talent (Leithwood & Sun, 2012). Studies suggest that private university heads tend to be more entrepreneurial and

risk-tolerant, which can influence their leadership style, making it less transactional and more adaptive to changing educational landscapes (Basham, 2010).

Transactional leadership is characterized by its structured nature, emphasizing clear goals, rewards, and penalties based on performance. This leadership style is rooted in exchanges between leaders and followers, where leaders offer rewards for achieving specific objectives and punishments for failure to meet expectations (Bass & Bass, 2009). In educational settings, transactional leadership can promote discipline and order, which is essential in managing large and complex organizations like universities. This style is particularly effective in environments that prioritize efficiency, productivity, and compliance with institutional standards (McCleskey, 2014). Transactional leaders focus on maintaining the status quo and ensuring that day-to-day operations run smoothly.

Transactional leadership is characterized by a system of rewards and punishments based on the performance of subordinates. Leaders who adopt this style focus on structured tasks, clear authority, and measurable performance outcomes. The transactional leader establishes clear goals and rewards those who meet or exceed them while addressing poor performance with corrective actions. This leadership style is highly effective in environments that require efficiency, order, and compliance with established standards, such as universities.

## Objectives

1. To find out the perception of public and private university teachers about the transactional leadership style of their heads.
2. To compare the transactional leadership styles of heads in public and private universities in Punjab.

## Hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the transactional leadership style of heads in public and private universities in Punjab.

## Significance of the Study

This study holds significance for several stakeholders in the education system, including **educators, parents, school administrators, and policymakers**. The key benefits of this research are as follows:

### Comparative Insights for Public and Private Sectors

By comparing leadership styles across public and private universities, the research will reveal key differences and similarities. These insights will help tailor leadership training and development programs to meet the unique needs and expectations of both sectors.

### Improvement in Leadership Practices

The study can assist university leaders and policymakers in evaluating the effectiveness of transactional leadership in improving academic and administrative outcomes. By identifying strengths and limitations, institutions can refine their leadership strategies for better organizational responsiveness.

### Guiding Future Leadership Development Programs

The study's findings will help design leadership training programs that address the specific challenges faced by heads of public and private universities. It will identify which aspects of transactional leadership are most effective in each context.

### Methodology

This study adopts a comparative research design, focusing on both public and private universities in Punjab. The population includes university teachers from both sectors, with a total of 10,846 public and 2,987 private university teachers. A proportionate sampling technique was used to select 500 public and 138 private university teachers as the sample for this study. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale, aimed at assessing the teachers' perceptions of their heads' transactional leadership styles. The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (t-test) to compare the results between the two sectors.

### Analysis and Results

The data was analyzed using means, standard deviations, and t-tests to determine whether there are statistically significant differences in the perception of transactional leadership styles among public and private university heads.

- **Public Universities:** The mean score for public university heads' transactional leadership was calculated to be 3.67 with a standard deviation of 0.85.
- **Private Universities:** The mean score for private university heads' transactional leadership was calculated to be 3.89 with a standard deviation of 0.78.
- **T-test:** A t-test was conducted to compare the mean scores of public and private university teachers' perceptions. The results indicated a significant difference between the two groups ( $t = 2.45$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that private university heads are perceived as more transactional in their leadership style compared to their public counterparts.

### Tables

#### Population and Sample Size

Category	Total Population	Proportionate Sample
Public	10,846	500
Private	2,987	138

#### Perceptions of Transactional Leadership Style

Category	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Perception Levels
Public Universities	3.67	0.85	1 (Strongly Disagree) - 5 (Strongly Agree) 3.5 - 4.0: Moderately Agree 3.0 - 3.5: Neutral 2.5 - 3.0: Moderately Disagree
Private Universities	3.89	0.78	1 (Strongly Disagree) - 5 (Strongly Agree)

		<b>4.0 - 4.5: Agree</b> <b>3.5 - 4.0: Moderately Agree</b>
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### Mean and Standard Deviation

Category	Mean	Standard Deviation
Public	3.67	0.85
Private	3.89	0.78

### T-Test Results Table

Parameter	Public Universities	Private Universities	Calculated Value
Sample Size (n)	500	138	
Mean Score (M)	3.67	3.89	
Standard Deviation (SD)	0.85	0.78	
<b>T-Value</b>			<b>2.45</b>
<b>Degrees of Freedom (df)</b>	636 (n1 + n2 - 2)		
<b>P-Value</b>			<b>&lt; 0.05</b>
<b>Significance Level</b>			<b>0.05</b>

### Explanation of T-Test Results

1. **Sample Size (n):**
  - Public Universities: 500 respondents
  - Private Universities: 138 respondents
  - Larger sample sizes increase the reliability of the t-test results.
2. **Mean Score (M):**
  - Public Universities: The mean score for heads of public universities' transactional leadership is **3.67**, indicating a moderately positive perception.
  - Private Universities: The mean score for heads of private universities is **3.89**, suggesting a higher positive perception compared to their public counterparts.
3. **Standard Deviation (SD):**
  - Public Universities: The standard deviation of **0.85** indicates a higher variability in perceptions among public university heads.
  - Private Universities: The standard deviation of **0.78** shows less variability, indicating more consistent perceptions among private university heads.
4. **T-Value:**
  - The calculated t-value is **2.45**, which indicates the degree of difference between the means of the two groups. A higher t-value suggests a more significant difference in perceptions.

5. **Degrees of Freedom (df):**

- Calculated as  $n_1 + n_2 - 2$ :  $500+138-2=636$   
 $500 + 138 - 2 = 636$
- Degrees of freedom are essential for determining the critical t-value in statistical tables.

6. **P-Value:**

- The p-value of  $< 0.05$  indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups. This means there is strong evidence against the null hypothesis (which states that there is no difference between the groups).

7. **Significance Level:**

- A significance level of  $0.05$  indicates the threshold for statistical significance. Since the p-value is less than this threshold, we can conclude that the difference in perceptions of transactional leadership styles between public and private university heads is statistically significant.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The analysis of perceptions of transactional leadership styles among heads of public and private universities in Punjab reveals significant insights:

1. **Differential Perceptions:** The study indicates that heads of private universities are perceived as having a more transactional leadership style (mean score of 3.89) compared to their public university counterparts (mean score of 3.67). This suggests that the leadership approaches in private institutions may be more focused on structured rewards and performance metrics.
2. **Statistical Significance:** The t-test results ( $t = 2.45$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) provide strong evidence that the differences in perceptions between the two groups are statistically significant. This supports the notion that the leadership styles adopted in these educational environments impact how they are perceived by faculty.
3. **Variability in Perceptions:** The standard deviation values (0.85 for public universities and 0.78 for private universities) indicate a higher variability in perceptions among public university heads, suggesting that faculty views may differ more significantly within public institutions compared to private ones.

## Recommendations

1. **Leadership Training Programs:** Given the significant difference in perceptions of leadership styles, it is recommended that universities, particularly public ones, invest in leadership training programs that emphasize transactional leadership techniques. This could enhance leaders' effectiveness in engaging faculty and improving overall job satisfaction.
2. **Adapting Leadership Approaches:** Public university heads should consider adopting certain transactional elements used effectively in private universities, such as structured feedback mechanisms and recognition systems, to align their leadership practices with faculty expectations and enhance performance.

3. **Further Research:** Future studies should explore the underlying factors contributing to the differences in perceived leadership styles between public and private universities. This could include qualitative research methods to gain deeper insights into faculty experiences and expectations regarding leadership.

### Additional Insights

The findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of leadership styles in educational settings. Transactional leadership, characterized by clear structures, rewards, and performance-based evaluations, has been shown to positively impact teacher motivation and satisfaction. However, it is equally important to balance transactional approaches with transformational leadership qualities, which can foster an inclusive and innovative academic by addressing both aspects, university leaders can cultivate a more supportive atmosphere that promotes academic excellence and employee satisfaction (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

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