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Work Sanctity as a Primary Predictor of Students' Academic Achievement: A Comparative Study of Novice and Experienced Head Teachers

Farah Saeed

Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

Email: farah.saeed.2501329@students.um.ac.id

Sulistiyowati

Universitas Negeri Malang, Indonesia

Email: sulistiyowati.2501329@students.um.ac.id

Sara Saeed*

Southwest University of political science and law, China

Email Correspondence: sarasaeed5h7@gmail.com

Abstract

This study looked into what impact novice and experienced head teachers' work ethics had on the academic success of students in Pakistan's Okara District. The goals were to look at the link between work sanctity and academic performance, compare new and experienced head teachers in terms of work sanctity and students' academic results, and find out what effect work sanctity has on academic performance overall. Using a quantitative descriptive survey approach, information was gathered from 32 schools (22 high schools and 10 middle schools) with a total of 270 teachers and 32 head teachers chosen through cluster sampling. Work sanctity ($t = -3.004$, $p = .006$) and students' academic progress ($t = -4.573$, $p < .001$) were found to be significantly different between new and experienced head teachers. Head teachers with more experience did better on tests of leadership, guiding, training, and making decisions. A strong link was found between keeping work sacred and doing well in school ($r = .682$, $p < .001$). Leadership, training, and managing time were strong indicators of how well students would do in school. The study shows how important professional ethics and leadership experience are. It suggests training and growth programs to help new head teachers do their jobs better and keep schools getting better. These results give education officials useful information for making professional development plans for new head teachers. This will help leaders keep growing and students do better.

Keywords: Head teachers, Work sanctity, Educational management, Academic achievement, School leadership

Introduction

Headteachers assume a complex role in educational institutions, involving leadership, management, instructional oversight, and community involvement. Responsibilities typically encompass both academic and administrative tasks, with a tendency in certain contexts for administrative duties to surpass direct instructional leadership. This intricate equilibrium underscores the dynamic nature of school leadership, necessitating that head teachers adjust to shifting educational requirements and contextual obstacles to maintain effective school operations (Shah, Gurr, & Drysdale, 2024). Head teachers play the vibrant role in enhancing the academic achievement through the supervision of teachers, management of curriculum implementation, and cultivation of a positive school climate. They serve as counselors, providing support to both teachers and students to improve instructional skills, the behavior, and whole performance. Head teachers serve a crucial function in supporting teachers' professional development and assisting students in addressing academic or behavioral issues, which enhances overall school performance (Warsi, Qureshi, & Firdous, 2025).

Novice head teachers entering school leadership encounter a multifaceted transition characterized by elevated expectations, challenging learning curves, and considerable pressures. Early experiences are influenced by the necessity to establish authority, cultivate relationships, and address both instructional and administrative responsibilities, frequently with minimal formal preparation. New head teachers frequently encounter challenges during the transition from teaching to leadership, including navigating established school cultures and achieving acceptance from staff and the broader school community. They may encounter resistance, legacy issues from prior leadership, and ambiguous role boundaries, rendering the initial period notably stressful and challenging. The challenges underscore the intricate nature of head teacher socialization and the necessity for organized support systems to facilitate the transition into leadership positions (Cottrell & James, 2016).

This study conceptualizes work sanctity as the ethical professionalism and moral integrity exhibited by head teachers in the execution of their leadership duties. The statement indicates a commitment to moral duty and accountability in the execution of professional responsibilities, emphasizing honesty, fairness, and dedication to educational excellence. Work sanctity emphasizes ethical leadership, responsible decision-making, conscientious time management, and a commitment to the growth of both teachers and students, rather than indicating spiritual devotion. This conceptualization is consistent with previous studies that associate ethical professionalism, teacher commitment, and leadership integrity with enhanced school performance and student achievement (Aboagye & Assumpta, 2024; Jalapang & Raman, 2020; Kim & Seo, 2018). In this study, work sanctity denotes the ethical and professional commitment that supports effective school leadership and academic achievement.

Teacher efficacy, professional qualities, and strong work ethics are essential factors that significantly influence student success. Studies indicate that educators who exhibit confidence in their teaching skills, uphold high professional standards, and demonstrate ethical commitment foster more effective learning environments, thereby improving student performance. Kim and Seo (2018) performed the meta analysis revealing a positive association amid the teacher efficacy and the students' academic achievement, thereby affirming the substantial impact of teachers' self-belief and professionalism on educational outcomes. The relationship is

frequently influenced by the organizational climate and the quality of interactions between the teachers and the students inside the school. The leadership style of head teachers is significant, with democratic and transactional approaches promoting a positive learning environment, enhancing teacher motivation, and improving educational outcomes. Kirmi and Lhassan (2022) found that teacher commitment significantly positively influences students' academic achievement, highlighting the critical role of leadership and professional dedication in fostering school success.

Effective school management is essential for improving students' academic performance. A crucial element of this management is the establishment of school rules and the uniform enforcement of discipline by head teachers. Clear communication of rules, equitable application, and alignment with educational objectives by school leaders are associated with enhanced student behavior, increased focus, and improved academic performance. Idris (2023) identified a significant correlation between the effective implementation of school rules by head teachers and enhanced student achievement in secondary schools, highlighting the critical roles of strong administrative leadership and discipline management in fostering academic success. Novice educators can positively impact student attendance; however, research indicates that their influence on academic achievement is not consistently observed (Gottfried, Little, & Ansari, 2024). This indicates that the experience, discipline, and professional commitment of head teachers may have a more consistent and significant impact on sustaining student engagement and performance.

Research demonstrates that leadership positions, whether occupied by students, teachers, or principals, can positively impact students' academic performance, although the magnitude and characteristics of this influence differ. Deng, Li, Wu, and Xu (2020) demonstrated that student leadership experience, especially in primary school positions like class monitor, positively influences academic performance in both the short and long term by promoting increased learning autonomy, despite a reduction in study time. At the school level, principal and teacher leadership are consistently linked to enhanced student achievement. Meta-analyses and systematic reviews indicate that principal leadership, especially distributed and instructional leadership styles, significantly enhances student outcomes. The effect size is generally moderate, and the most effective leadership models are still unclear (Wu & Shen, 2021).

The leadership style significantly impacts educational outcomes. Head teachers employing democratic or transactional leadership styles generally promote greater teacher commitment, improve motivation, and cultivate a more collaborative school environment. These favorable conditions enhance student performance. Laissez-faire leadership styles tend to result in diminished teacher engagement and lower organizational effectiveness, which ultimately impedes academic achievement. Kim and Seo (2018) found that teacher efficacy, closely linked to leadership and school environment has a substantial constructive relationship by students' academic achievement. This underscores the importance of effective leadership in influencing both teacher performance and student success.

Research suggests a correlation between teacher experience and increased student achievement, especially in the initial years of a teaching career; however, the quality of professional practice is also critically significant. Experienced educators typically exhibit enhanced classroom management, greater subject expertise, and

advanced pedagogical techniques, which lead to improved student performance. Research specifies that the novice teachers may be linked to reduced student absenteeism, though the mechanisms driving this association are not well understood. Early-career teachers may contribute renewed enthusiasm, innovative teaching methods, and stronger connections with students, which can positively affect attendance patterns. Gottfried, Little, and Ansari (2024) identified a correlation between novice teachers in early elementary schools and decreased student absenteeism, underscoring a potentially advantageous yet intricate facet of early-career teaching dynamics.

The association amongst the head teacher experience and the pupil academic performance has been a primary topic in educational research, since school leaders are crucial in creating conducive learning environments and impacting educational results. Many studies have found that both teacher and head teacher experience are linked to higher student achievement. This is because experienced teachers tend to be better at leading instruction, making decisions, and running schools (Dhuey & Smith, 2014; Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2015). Podolsky, Kini, and Darling-Hammond (2019) discovered that teaching involvement has a crucial role in teacher effectiveness and student accomplishment, highlighting that the accumulation of professional knowledge and the refinement of pedagogical abilities improve overall student success.

In addition to years of service, the quality of leadership, which includes management skills, instructional supervision, and teacher effectiveness, is also important in deciding how well students do. Good head teachers not only run the school well, but they also motivate teachers to improve their teaching and create a great school environment. Effective head teachers use their professional expertise to promote communication, boost teacher motivation, and improve monitoring techniques, all of which are linked to better student performance. School leaders can make schools where instructors and students can do their best by having strong management and people abilities. Munir, Quraishi, and Shokat (2020) discovered that the managerial abilities of the head teachers have significantly impact pupils' academic performance at school level, highlighting the essential importance of effective leadership in attaining educational excellence.

Research indicates that the efficacy of school leadership, particularly in instructional leadership, management, and the cultivation of a pleasant school atmosphere, has both direct and indirect effects on student academic performance. Head teachers who create a pleasant school environment and actively encourage teacher effectiveness have a big impact on how well students do. A supportive and collaborative atmosphere boosts teachers' enthusiasm and the quality of their lessons, which in turn helps kids do better in school. Research reveals that teacher effectiveness frequently mediates the link between school leadership and student accomplishment, so enhancing the principal's total influence.

The pupil's academic performance is strongly linked to the work sanctity of head teachers. The work ethics of head teachers affects not just how well pupils do in school, but also how well the whole school works and how successful it is. In school level, the principle and the teacher have been consistently correlated with enhanced student results. Empirical research and meta-analyses demonstrate that principal leadership, especially distributed and instructional leadership styles, exerts the statistically important positive impact on student

achievement. However, the magnitude of this effect is typically moderate, and the most effective leadership models are still being debated (Gu & Sammons, 2016).

Daniel and Lei (2019) concluded in their systematic study that principals' distributed leadership strategies improve students' academic achievement by fostering collaboration, shared decision-making, and a collective sense of accountability among educators. To understand the reality, we must explore the intricacies of the issue "Impact of novice and experienced head teachers on work integrity and subsequent student academic performance." This study aims to compare the work sanctity of experienced and novice head teachers. In what ways do the work sanctity of novice and seasoned head teachers affect students' academic performance? What is the correlation between the work sanctity of novice and seasoned head teachers and students' academic achievement? What is the impact of the work sanctity of novice and seasoned head teachers on students' academic performance?

Method

This research utilized a quantitative descriptive survey methodology to investigate the impact of novice and experienced head teachers' work sanctity on students' academic performance in District Okara, Pakistan. Cluster sampling was employed to choose the participating schools, with each school serving as a distinct cluster. For the sample picked 32 schools (22 high schools and 10 middle schools) and one head teacher and ten teachers selected from each school. This gave us a total of 32 head teachers and 270 instructors. In this study, rookie head teachers were characterized as those possessing fewer than three years of administrative experience, whereas experienced head teachers were identified as those with over three years of leadership experience. A researcher-created questionnaire and rating scale were used to gather information about time management, leadership roles, guidance and counseling, teacher training, resource management, and students' academic success.

Results and discussion

The conclusions of the study were derived from a thorough analysis of the data. The study encompassed a total of 32 head teachers, representing 10.6% of the sample, alongside 270 school teachers, who constituted 89.4% of the participants. Sixteen head instructors were inexperienced, while sixteen had considerable expertise. A notable disparity in Leadership Role, Guidance and Counseling, Training, and Decision-Making was observed between novice and seasoned head teachers ($p < 0.05$). The average scores of novice teachers were lower than those of experienced head teachers in the areas of Leadership Role, Guidance and Counseling, Training, and Decision Making. No statistically significant difference was noted in Time Management ($p > .05$).

Tabel 1. Pearson coefficient of correlation between Students' Academic Achievement and Head Teachers' Work Sanctity

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Novice and Experienced (0.1)								
2. Academic achievement	.229**	-						
3. Leadership Role	.102	.606**	-					
4. Guidance and counselling management of teachers	.130*	.545**	.680**	-				
5. Training	.158**	.604**	.646**	.695**	-			
6. Time Management	.120*	.593**	.662**	.698**	.654**	-		
7. Decision making	.218**	.538**	.568**	.611**	.582**	.671**	-	
8. Work sanctity	.173**	.682**	.843**	.868**	.843**	.866**	.814**	-

Table 1. displays the Pearson correlation relationship between kids' academic performance and the work sanctity of the head teachers. A statistically significant positive link existed between work integrity and academic success ($r = .682$, $p < .001$). There was also a high positive link between Academic success and Leadership Role ($r = .606$, $p < .001$).

Table 2. Summary Multiple regression: Effect of Novice and Experienced Head Teachers Work Sanctity on Students' Academic Achievement

Variables	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)	.727	.172		4.240	.000
Novice and Experienced (0.1)	.183	.065	.120	2.814	.005
Leadership Role	.233	.055	.265	4.221	<.001
Guidance and counseling management of teachers	-.008	.064	-.009	-.129	.898
Training	.225	.059	.241	3.786	<.001
Time Management	.177	.066	.181	2.670	.008
Decision making	.093	.053	.105	1.755	.080

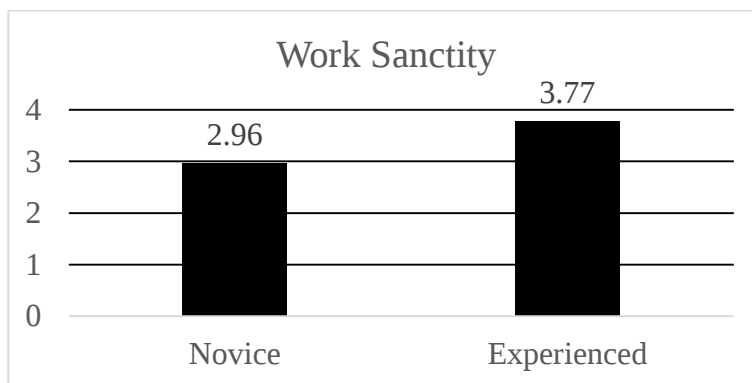
Note, $R^2 = .493$, $F = 47.762$, $p < .001$

Table 2. displays a summary of several regressions. The influence of rookie and experienced head teachers' work sanctity on academic performance. The impact of The difference in academic success between novice and seasoned head teachers was statistically significant ($B = .183$, $p = .005$). Leadership roles, training, and time management significantly impacted academic success ($B = .233$, $p < .001$).

Table 3. Comparison of Novice and Experienced Head-teachers on Work Sanctity

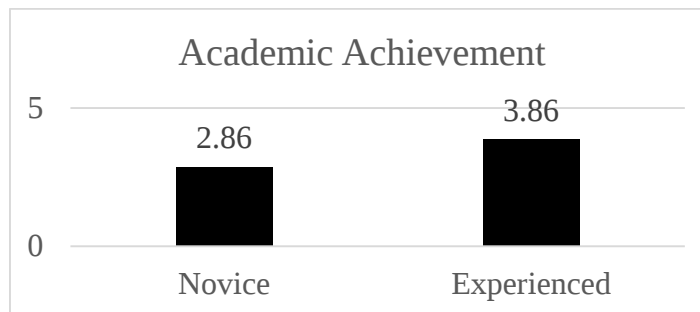
	Novice		Experienced		Independent samples t-test	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t-test	p-value
Work Sanctity	2.96	0.87	3.77	0.66	-3.004	0.006

Table 3 compares the views of new and experienced head teachers on Work Sanctity. Independent samples were utilized to compare beginner and experienced head instructors about Work Sanctity. A statistically significant disparity was seen in Work Sanctity. Novice and the experienced head instructors ($t=-3.004$, $p=.006$). The mean score for novice teachers ($M=2.96$, $SD=0.84$) was inferior to that of the experienced head teachers ($M=3.77$, $SD=0.66$) regarding Work Sanctity.

Figure 1. Mean scores of Novice and Experienced head teachers on Work Sanctity**Table 4. Comparison of Novice and Experienced Head-teachers on Academic Achievement of Students**

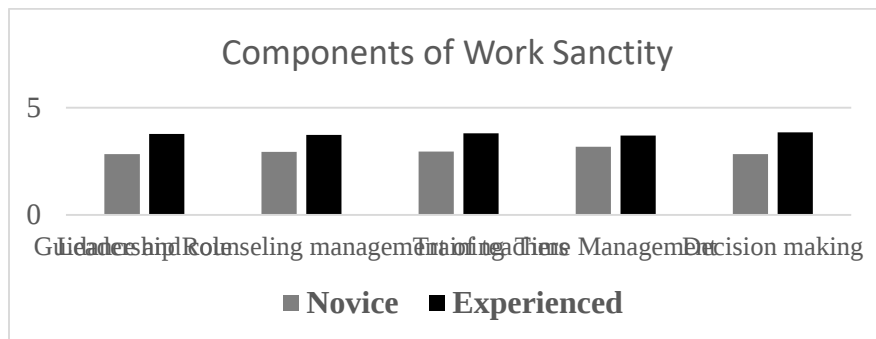
	Novice		Experiences		Independent samples t-test	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t-test	p-value
Academic Achievement	2.86	0.70	3.86	0.53	-4.573	<.001

Table 4 presents a comparison between rookie and experienced head teachers on academic achievement. Independent samples were utilized to compare rookie and experienced head instructors about Academic Achievement. A statistically significant difference in Academic Achievement was seen between rookie and experienced head teachers ($t=-4.573$, $p<0.001$). The average scores of novice teachers ($M=2.86$, $SD=0.70$) were lower than those of experienced head teachers ($M=3.86$, $SD=0.53$) regarding Academic Achievement.

Figure 2. Mean scores of Novice and Experienced Head Teachers on Students' Academic Achievement**Table 5.** Comparison of Novice and Experienced Head-teachers on Components of Work Sanctity

	Novice		Experienced		Independent samples t-test	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t-test	p-value
Leadership Role	2.84	1.09	3.78	0.65	-2.954	0.006
Guidance and counseling management of teachers	2.95	0.94	3.73	0.93	-2.342	0.026
Training	2.96	0.91	3.81	0.61	-3.092	0.004
Time Management	3.19	0.90	3.70	0.78	-1.726	0.095
Decision making	2.84	0.96	3.85	0.80	-3.230	0.003

Table 5 delineates a comparison between novice and the experienced head instructors about their leadership positions. Independent samples were employed to compare novice and seasoned head teachers regarding facets of Work Sanctity. A statistically significant difference was observed in Leadership Role, Guidance and Counseling, Training, and Decision Making between rookie and experienced head teachers ($p < 0.05$). The average scores of novice teachers were worse to those of experienced head teachers in Leadership Role, Guidance and Counseling, Training, and Decision Making. No statistically significant difference was observed in Time Management ($p > .05$).

Figure 3. Mean scores of Novice and Experienced Head Teachers on Students' Academic Achievement

This study report reveals that data concerning the professional integrity of head teachers was analyzed. An independent samples t-test was performed for each statement in the questionnaire, as well as for the subscale and the overall scale. A statistically significant difference in labor sanctity was observed between beginner and veteran head instructors. Individuals with substantial teaching experience exhibit higher job satisfaction compared to their less experienced peers (Akhtar, 2000; Sari, 2004). A statistically significant difference was observed in the work sanctity between novice and experienced head teachers, with novice head teachers exhibiting a lower mean score ($M=2.96$, $SD=0.84$) compared to experienced head teachers ($M=3.77$, $SD=0.66$) in relation to academic accomplishment. The study demonstrated a statistically significant difference in Leadership Role, Guidance and Counseling, Training, and Decision Making between rookie and experienced head teachers. The average scores of novice teachers were worse to those of experienced head teachers in Leadership Role, Guidance and Counseling, Training, and Decision Making. This contrasts with the findings of Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, et al. (2000), which demonstrated that leaders can be developed through challenging job assignments, mentorship, and pertinent practical experience in addressing distinctive and unconventional issues. The author asserts that professional expertise can augment a leader's personal qualities. Nevertheless, the new analysis demonstrates a more complex scenario. Zhang and Lee (2024) conducted a comparison study that revealed no significant variations in professional commitment measures between beginner and experienced instructors, with the exception of training involvement, where experienced teachers exhibited higher evaluations. The OECD TALIS 2024 study indicated that seasoned educators demonstrate greater autonomy and confidence in decision-making, while novice teachers show comparable levels of commitment in several leadership dimensions (OECD, 2024).

This research article examines data related to the job integrity of head teachers. To attain the objective. An independent samples t-test was conducted for each statement of the questionnaire, subscale, and the overall scale. We employ a rating scale as a study tool to collect data from the head instructors. The results demonstrate a statistically significant difference in Academic Achievement between novice and seasoned head teachers ($t=-4.573$, $p<0.001$). The mean score for novice teachers ($M=2.86$, $SD=0.70$) was inferior to that of seasoned head

teachers ($M=3.86$, $SD=0.53$) regarding Academic Achievement. The results of this study suggest that students' academic advancement will improve if the head teacher's job integrity is substantial. The average score of seasoned head teachers exceeded that of novice head teachers in leadership, mentorship, and dedication to improving student quality. Musungu (2009) discovered that principals utilized teamwork to enhance quality and ensured that instructors were acknowledged as organizational assets influencing pupils' academic achievement. The head teacher's responsibilities include monitoring the performance of students and teachers, ensuring adherence to regulations, and preventing academic dishonesty during examinations. The ReSSLe Project (2023) said that, over time, experiential learning and leadership practice significantly enhance a head teacher's capacity to facilitate school development. All of these research corroborate the current findings, indicating that the expertise and professional integrity of head teachers positively influence students' academic achievement and the overall efficacy of the school.

The work sanctity of head teachers was analyzed in accordance with the research objectives. To attain the objective. We utilized the Pearson correlation coefficient to determine the relationship between the work ethics of rookie and experienced head teachers and students' academic performance. A strong positive correlation existed between Academic Achievement and Leadership Role ($r=.606$, $p<.001$). Experienced educators focus pupils' academic performance more than their less experienced peers. The professional integrity of head teachers considerably impacted students' academic advancement. The current research demonstrates a strong positive correlation between students' academic advancement and the head teacher's professional integrity, in accordance with previously mentioned findings. These results, however, contradict Oduro's (2008) conclusions, which link subpar student achievement to insufficient management by school officials. He also underscores that the supervisory responsibilities of the heads are to ensure the successful implementation of the curriculum, hence facilitating high-achieving students' success in both internal and external assessments. The discovery revealed that a seasoned head teacher aids educators by providing workplace assistance. Principals can motivate educators through strong interpersonal relationships and clear job descriptions (Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki, 2016).

The findings suggest that the professional ethics of head teachers impacted students' academic performance. This study evaluates the influence of novice and experienced head teachers' work sanctity on students' academic performance, demonstrating a statistically significant effect of both groups on academic achievement ($B=.183$, $p=.005$) through multiple regression analysis. The comparison of head teachers with 1 to 3, 4 to 6, and 7 to 10 years of experience against those with over 10 years of experience reveals that the mean scores of novice teachers ($M=2.86$, $SD=0.70$) were inferior to the mean scores of seasoned head teachers ($M=3.86$, $SD=0.53$) in terms of Academic Achievement. Achievement. Veteran educators asserted that their students outperformed those taught by novice instructors. Guarino et al. (2006). Gottfried, Little, and Ansari (2024) found that experienced educators enhance student attendance and consistency, hence indirectly elevating academic achievement.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the influence of the work ethics of rookie and experienced head teachers on students' academic performance in the Okara region. The findings indicated a statistically significant disparity between novice and seasoned head teachers across various dimensions of work integrity, including leadership roles, advisory and counseling functions, training, and decision-making processes. Veteran head teachers demonstrated higher levels of work integrity than their novice colleagues, reflecting greater commitment, more effective leadership techniques, and a better capacity to promote teaching and learning processes.

Additionally, the study identified a substantial positive association between the sanctity of head teachers' work and pupils' academic performance. Schools with experienced head teachers had students who did better in school, which suggests that the moral and professional commitment of school leaders is very important for encouraging academic success. Regression analysis indicated that leadership role, training, and time management were important predictors of students' accomplishment, demonstrating that effective leadership and organizational discipline contribute greatly to higher educational results.

These findings are consistent with other research indicating that seasoned and ethically principled school leaders elevate teacher motivation, enhance the school climate, and foster increased student achievement (Musungu, 2009; Jalapang & Raman, 2020). The findings underscore that leadership experience and work integrity are interconnected elements affecting overall school effectiveness. Conversely, insufficient expertise and diminished leadership commitment in inexperienced head teachers may impede optimal student achievement. In conclusion, it is very important to improve head teachers' professional ethics, leadership skills, and management skills in order to keep academic achievement going. Educational authorities ought to promote mentoring and professional development initiatives for novice head teachers to foster work integrity, effective leadership, and accountability, so ensuring that all children benefit from enhanced educational outcomes. Future research may investigate qualitative findings regarding the influence of ethical leadership practices on instructors' motivation and students' academic performance.

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