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Impact of Situational Leadership on the Work Performance of Secondary School Teachers

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of situational leadership and school environment on the work performance of female secondary school teachers residing in the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Using a quantitative descriptive research design, data were obtained using a structured questionnaire from 270 teachers selected using a stratified sampling method. The results, described in terms of descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and regression analysis, showed the significant and positive relationship between directive and supportive styles of leadership, school environment and teacher performance. What the study surmises is that the twin elements of adaptive leadership and a positive school environment are important enhancers of teacher effectiveness. It recommends specific leadership training for school heads and systematic improvements to the school infrastructure and psychosocial climate in order to maximise educational outcomes in the region.

Keywords: *Situational Leadership, School Environment, Teacher performance, Secondary Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Directive Leadership, Supportive Leadership, Female Teachers.*

Introduction

The quality of education is inextricably linked to the performance of teachers who act as the first and main architects of student learning and development (Darling-Hammond, 2017). In Pakistan, especially the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), secondary education is faced with multifaceted problems that affect the efficacy of teachers and by extension, achievement among students (Aslam, 2013). While there are a variety of factors that affect teacher performance, leadership in schools and the prevailing environmental conditions are consistently identified as determinative (Hallinger & Heck, 2011).

Situational Leadership Theory (SLT), initiated by Hersey and Blanchard (1969), suggests that there is no "best" leadership style. Instead, effective leadership is a function of the maturity, competence, and commitment of followers and calls for leaders to be tactical in adapting their leadership style - which can vary between directive and supportive to delegative - to the specific context and needs of their team (Northouse, 2018). In the complex ecosystem of a school, such flexibility is important. School heads who are adept at balancing between giving novices clear

direction and giving experienced staff autonomy and support are likely to build a more motivated and effective teaching workforce (Leithwood et al., 2008).

Concurrently, the school environment - including the physical infrastructure, the psychosocial climate, the resources, and the administrative culture - is the bedrock upon which teaching and learning take place (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). A supportive, safe and resource-rich environment can empower teachers, whereas a negative or restrictive environment will destroy innovation and cause teacher burnout (Collie et al., 2012).

Despite the fact that these factors are established globally, a huge research gap exists in relation to the Pakistani context, especially in terms of the unique socio-cultural landscape in KP (Ali, 2013). Existing studies have neglected female teachers, targeted narrowly on one of the two dimensions (either leadership or environment) in isolation, and left out the specific realities of southern KP districts, such as Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Lakki Marwat, and Bannu (Nawab and Shafi, 2017). These regions come with unique challenges such as socio-economic constraints, cultural norms, and infrastructural stress, which can be to the extent that leadership and environment will influence teachers (Shah, 2019).

This research, therefore, aims at filling this gap by carrying out an integrated investigation into the impact of situational leadership (specifically directive and supportive styles of leadership) and school environment on the work performance of teachers in the secondary schools in these four southern districts of KP (Female). Through the adoption of a quantitative approach, it is meant to present empirical evidence to support educational policymakers and administrators in formulating context-specific policies to improve the quality of the teaching profession and, ultimately, the quality of education.

Problem Statement

Teachers in secondary schools play a pivotal role in shaping student futures, yet their work performance is frequently suboptimal due to various contextual and systemic constraints (Kyriacou, 2001). While situational leadership and school environment are theorised as key determinants of teacher performance, a significant gap exists in the empirical literature regarding the nature and magnitude of their relationships with, and impact on, the work performance of teachers in Pakistani secondary schools, especially in the culturally distinct southern region of KP. Consequently, there is a pressing need to investigate how the adaptive behaviours of school leaders, combined with the tangible and intangible aspects of the school setting, jointly influence teaching effectiveness. This study, therefore, aims to systematically investigate the impact of situational leadership and school environment on the work performance of female secondary school teachers in southern KP, to identify actionable strategies for improvement.

Research Questions

The present research is guided by the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between the situational leadership style of school heads and the work performance of their teachers?
2. To what extent does a relationship exist between the school environment and the work performance of secondary school teachers?

3. Is there a relationship between the combined variable of situational leadership style of heads and school environment with the work performance of teachers at the secondary level?
4. What is the impact of situational leadership and school environment on the work performance of secondary school teachers?
5.

Research Objectives

The study was designed to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the relationship between the situational leadership style of school heads and the work performance of their teachers.
2. To examine the relationship between the school environment and the work performance of secondary school teachers.
3. To investigate the relationship between the combined variable of situational leadership style of heads and school environment with the work performance of teachers at the secondary level.
4. To measure the impact of situational leadership and school environment on the work performance of secondary school teachers.
5.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- **Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between the situational leadership style of school heads and the work performance of their teachers.
- **Ho2:** There is no significant relationship between the school environment and the work performance of secondary school teachers.
- **Ho3:** There is no significant relationship between the situational leadership style of heads and the school environment with the work performance of teachers at the secondary level.
- **Ho4:** There is no significant impact of situational leadership and school environment on the work performance of secondary school teachers.

Significance of the Study

This study holds substantial theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the body of knowledge by testing and applying Situational Leadership Theory within the unique socio-cultural context of southern KP, Pakistan, thereby addressing a clear gap in localised educational leadership research (Nawab & Shafi, 2017). Practically, the findings are expected to yield several benefits:

- **For Educational Leaders and Policymakers:** The study will provide evidence-based insights into how adaptive leadership and environmental improvements can be leveraged to enhance teacher performance. This can inform the design of targeted professional development programs for school heads and guide resource allocation policies for school infrastructure and climate initiatives (Leithwood et al., 2008).
- **For School Administration:** Principals and headteachers can utilise the findings to engage in self-reflection regarding their leadership adaptability and to implement deliberate strategies for fostering a more supportive and enabling school environment for their staff (Hallinger, 2003).

- **For Teachers:** By highlighting the environmental and leadership factors that empower them, the study indirectly advocates for conditions that improve job satisfaction, reduce burnout, and enhance professional efficacy (Collie et al., 2012).
- **For Future Research:** This study sets a precedent for integrated research on leadership and environment in Pakistan and offers a methodological framework and validated instrument for replication in other regions or with different demographic groups.
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Delimitations of the Study

To ensure focus and feasibility, the scope of this study was deliberately bounded by the following delimitations:

1. The study was confined to female secondary school teachers only.
2. It was geographically delimited to four southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, Lakki Marwat, and Bannu.
3. The investigation of leadership was limited to the Directive and Supportive styles as outlined in the Situational Leadership approach, excluding other leadership theories or the full range of situational styles (e.g., delegating).
4. The research employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, relying on self-reported perceptions at a single point in time.

Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Framework: Situational Leadership Theory

Situational Leadership Theory is the framework used to centre this study. The model of Hersey and Blanchard (1969) classifies leadership behaviours into two dimensions: Directive (task-oriented, providing clear instructions and close supervision) and Supportive (relationship-oriented, providing socio-emotional support and facilitating participation). The model proposed four leadership styles such as Telling (high directive, low supportive), which includes high directive and low supportive; Selling (high directive, high supportive), which includes high directive and high supportive; Participating (low directive, high supportive), which includes low directive and high supportive; and Delegating (low directive, low supportive), which includes low directive and low supportive, to be applied depending on the "readiness" level of followers (Northouse, 2018).

In educational settings, teacher preparedness differs due to varieties of experiences, levels of confidence, and task complexity (Hallinger, 2003). A newly appointed teacher may need a "Telling" style of classroom management, and a veteran teacher in a curriculum committee setting may do best with a "Delegating" style. Research by Northouse (2018) and further educational research confirms that leadership that is flexible, able to adapt, correlates to greater job satisfaction by teachers and their greater commitment and perceived effectiveness (Leithwood et al., 2008).

2.2. School Environment as a Mediation Factor

The school environment is a multidimensional concept. Hoy and Miskel (2013) define its components as:

- **Physical Environment:** Infrastructure, facilities of classrooms, availability of teaching aids, and safety.

- **Psychosocial Environment:** Collegial relationships, teacher morale, student - teacher relationships, emotional safety.
- **Cultural/Administrative Environment:** Norms, values, decision-making processes and overall environment or climate of the organisation.

A positive school environment is a catalyst for teacher performance. However, studies conducted by Collie et al. (2012) show that a supportive school climate has been shown to alleviate stress and build teacher self-efficacy. In relation to southern KP, environmental resources such as a lack of resources, geographical remoteness and traditional conservative social structures (Nawab & Shafi, 2017) create layers of complexity which can compound the need for supportive leadership and resurrected school culture.

2.3. Teacher Work Performance

Teacher work performance is a mixture of teaching effectiveness (lesson delivery, student engagement, assessment), professional development, administrative role and collaboration (Kyriacou, 2001). It is the dependent variable of this research. For effective performance, it is not simply the resulting effort but is strongly shaped by external factors that help it (Shah, 2019). Danielson's (2007) framework for teaching focuses on the idea that professional practice is influenced by the conditions and leadership in the school.

2.4. The Research Gap in Context

As highlighted in the problem statement, previous studies in Pakistan (e.g. Ali, 2013; Khan et al., 2015) have established a foundation, but they are fragmented. The overemphasis on male teachers (Ali, 2013), the dichotomisation of leadership and environment, and the disregard of the unique context of southern KP (Nawab & Shafi, 2017) throw out a sound rationale for this study. The integration of this research, combining these variables within a specific, understudied geographical and demographic setting, is used to produce locally generated knowledge, which responds to the plea for more nuanced explorations of the interaction between leadership and environment (Bush & Glover, 2014).

Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive-correlational research design. A descriptive design aims to accurately portray characteristics of a phenomenon without manipulating variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The correlational aspect allowed for the examination of relationships between the independent variables (situational leadership styles and school environment) and the dependent variable (teacher work performance) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The mono-method survey approach was chosen to maintain focus and ensure consistency in measurement across a large sample (Saunders et al., 2019).

3.2. Population and Sampling

The target population comprised all 867 female secondary school teachers from public schools across the four southern districts of KP: D.I. Khan, Tank, Bannu, and Lakki Marwat (Source: District Education Authorities, EMIS).

Table 3.1: Population Distribution of Female Secondary School Teachers

District	Number of Female Schools	Number of Female SSTs	Population Percentage (%)
D.I. Khan	62	328	37.83
Tank	18	65	7.50
Bannu	65	310	35.76
Lakki Marwat	30	164	18.92
Total	**175**	**867**	**100.00**

A sample of 270 teachers was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for a population of 867, ensuring a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation from each district stratum, thereby enhancing the sample's representativeness and reducing sampling bias (Bryman, 2016).

Table 3.2: Sample Distribution (Stratified Random Sampling)

District	Population (N)	Sample Proportion (%)	Sample Size (n)
D.I. Khan	328	37.83	102
Tank	65	7.50	20
Bannu	310	35.76	97
Lakki Marwat	164	18.92	51
Total	**867**	**100.00**	**270**

3.3. Research Instrument

Data were collected using a self-administered, closed-ended questionnaire. The instrument was developed based on an extensive literature review and comprised four sections. All items used a five-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree), a reliable method for measuring attitudes in social science research (Taherdoost, 2022).

Table 3.3: Structure of the Research Questionnaire

Section	Construct Measured	Sub-Dimensions (No. of Items)	Source of Adaptation	Total Items
A	Demographics	Age, Qualification, Experience, District (4 items)	N/A	4
B	Situational Leadership	Directive Style (14 items), Supportive Style (13 items)	Northouse (2018); Hersey & Blanchard (1969)	27
C	School Environment	Physical (12), Psychosocial (8), Cultural (10)	Hoy & Miskel (2013); OCDQ (Hoy & Clover, 1986)	30
D	Teacher Work Performance	Teaching Effectiveness (9), Professional Development (10)	Danielson (2007); Kyriacou (2001)	19
Total				**80**

3.4. Validity and Reliability

Validity: Five education specialists established content validity through expert judgment. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated, with items scoring ≥0.80 retained (Polit & Beck, 2006).

Table 3.4: Content Validity Index (CVI) Analysis

Construct	Sub-Dimension	Initial Items	Items Retained (I-CVI ≥ 0.80)	Items Modified/Discarded	S-CVI/Ave
Situational Leadership	Directive Style	14	14	0	0.94
	Supportive Style	13	12	1	0.91
School Environment	Physical Environment	12	11	1	0.92
	Psychosocial Env.	8	7	1	0.89
	Cultural Environment	10	10	0	0.96
Work Performance	Teaching Effectiveness	9	9	0	0.93
	Professional Development	10	10	0	0.95
Overall Instrument		**76**	**73**	**3**	**0.93**

Reliability: A pilot study (n=87) was conducted, and reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha.

Table 3.5: Reliability Statistics (Pilot Study, n=87)

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	No. of Items	Interpretation
Situational Leadership	0.89	26	Excellent Reliability
School Environment	0.91	28	Excellent Reliability
Work Performance	0.92	19	Excellent Reliability
Overall Instrument	**0.93**	**73**	**Excellent Reliability**

3.5. Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected over two months using a mixed-mode approach while adhering to ethical protocols (Cohen et al., 2007). Data analysis employed both descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS v.28.

Table 3.6: Statistical Tests and Their Application

Statistical Test	Purpose	Application in This Study
Mean & Standard Deviation	Describe central tendency and variability.	Summarise perceptions of leadership, environment, and performance.
Pearson Correlation (r)	Measure strength/direction of linear relationships between two variables.	Test H1, H2, H3 (bivariate relationships).

Multiple Linear Regression	Predict the impact of multiple independent variables on a dependent variable.	Test H4 (combined impact of leadership & environment).
Cross-tabulation (Chi-square)	Analyse relationships between categorical variables.	Explore district-wise or experience-based differences in responses.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n=270)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	21-30 years	85	31.5
	31-40 years	112	41.5
	41-50 years	60	22.2
	Above 50 years	13	4.8
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	78	28.9
	6-10 years	95	35.2
	11-15 years	62	23.0
	Above 15 years	35	13.0
Academic Qualification	Bachelor's	145	53.7
	Master's	125	46.3

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics of Key Study Variables

Variable	No. of Items	Possible Range	Actual Range	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
Situational Leadership	26	1-5	1.92-4.65	3.45	0.78	Moderate Perception
School Environment	28	1-5	1.75-4.50	3.30	0.82	Moderate Perception
Work Performance	19	1-5	2.85-4.95	3.80	0.69	High Self-Rating

4.2. Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (Ho1): There is no significant relationship between the situational leadership style of school heads and the work performance of their teachers.

Table 4.3: Correlation between Situational Leadership and Work Performance

Variables Correlated	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	N	Decision on Ho1
Situational Leadership & Work Performance	0.67	0.000	270	**Rejected**
Note: *p < .01*				

A significant positive correlation was found (**r = 0.67, p < 0.01**). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This aligns with the findings of Leithwood et al. (2008), confirming that adaptive leadership behaviours are strongly associated with enhanced teacher performance.

Hypothesis 2 (Ho2): There is no significant relationship between the school environment and the work performance of secondary school teachers.

Table 4.4: Correlation between School Environment and Work Performance

Variables Correlated	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	N	Decision on Ho2
School Environment & Work Performance	0.71	0.000	270	**Rejected**

A significant positive correlation was found (**r = 0.71, p < 0.01**). The null hypothesis was rejected. This result supports the work of Hoy and Miskel (2013), underscoring that a conducive environment is a fundamental enabler of effective teaching.

Hypothesis 3 (Ho3): There is no significant relationship between the situational leadership style of heads and the school environment with the work performance of teachers.

Table 4.5: Correlation between Combined Variable (Leadership Environment) and Performance

Variables Correlated	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	N	Decision on Ho3
(Situational Leadership + School Environment) & Work Performance	0.74	0.000	270	**Rejected**

A significant positive correlation was found (**r = 0.74, p < 0.01**). The null hypothesis was rejected. This finding emphasises the synergistic relationship between leadership and context (Bush & Glover, 2014).

Hypothesis 4 (Ho4): There is no significant impact of situational leadership and school environment on the work performance of secondary school teachers.

Table 4.6: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (Dependent Variable: Work Performance)

Model Summary			
R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.763	0.582	0.578	0.419

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	65.432	2	32.716	185.32	.000
Residual	46.988	267	0.176		
Total	112.420	269			

Coefficients

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardised Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.845		3.112	.002
Situational Leadership	0.298	0.42	6.874	.000
School Environment	0.361	0.51	8.345	.000

Multiple regression analysis revealed that both situational leadership ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < .001$) and school environment ($\beta = 0.51$, $p < .001$) were significant positive predictors of teacher work performance. The model was significant ($F(2, 267) = 185.32$, $p < .001$) and explained 58.2% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.582$) in work performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho4) was rejected**.**

Discussion of Key Findings

The strong positive correlations and significant predictive power of both variables validate the core premise of this research. The regression model (Table 4.6) indicates that while both factors are crucial, the school environment (Beta = 0.51) has a slightly stronger standardised impact on performance than situational leadership (Beta = 0.42). This may reflect the specific contextual challenges of southern KP, where infrastructural and resource deficiencies (Nawab & Shafi, 2017) can pose a fundamental barrier that even effective leadership must work to mitigate.

The high explanatory power of the integrated model ($R^2 = 0.582$) strongly argues against studying leadership or environment in isolation. It suggests that a school head's adaptive leadership is most effective when exercised within a consciously cultivated, supportive environment. This finding addresses the identified research gap and provides a holistic understanding of performance determinants in the region.

Conclusions

Based on the comprehensive analysis of data, this study conclusively answers its research questions and achieves its stated objectives. The following definitive conclusions are drawn:

1. **Situational Leadership is a Critical Performance Driver:** The directive and supportive behaviours of school heads, when applied adaptively based on teacher competence and task requirements, are directly and positively associated with higher levels of teacher work performance. This validates the application of Hersey and Blanchard's (1969) Situational Leadership Theory in the context of Pakistani secondary schools.
2. **School Environment is a Foundational Enabler:** The quality of the school's physical infrastructure, the strength of its psychosocial support systems, and the health of its organisational culture are not just background factors but are active, powerful determinants of how well teachers perform their duties. In the resource-constrained and culturally distinct context of southern KP, the environment emerged as the slightly more potent factor.
3. **An Integrated Approach is Essential:** The most significant conclusion is that leadership and environment function most effectively in tandem. Attempts to improve teacher performance through leadership training alone, without concurrent attention to improving school facilities, resources, and collegial climate, are likely to yield suboptimal results. Conversely, investing in infrastructure without developing the adaptive capacity of school leaders will also limit potential gains.
4. **Addressing the Research Gap:** This study successfully addressed the identified gaps in the literature. It focused specifically on female teachers, integrated the study of leadership and environment, and provided empirical data from the under-researched southern districts of KP, thereby generating context-specific knowledge that is directly applicable to policy and practice in this region (Nawab & Shafi, 2017; Shah, 2019).

Recommendations

The findings of this study lead to actionable recommendations for different stakeholders in the education sector.

A. For Educational Policymakers (Provincial and District Education Authorities):

1. **Institutionalise Situational Leadership Training:** The Elementary & Secondary Education Department (E&SED) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should design and mandate a compulsory certification course on Situational Leadership for all current and aspiring school heads. This training should move beyond theoretical knowledge to include practical workshops on diagnosing teacher readiness and practising flexible leadership behaviours.

2. **Launch a Targeted School Environment Improvement Fund:** Create a dedicated fund for schools in the southern districts to address critical gaps in physical infrastructure (e.g., science labs, libraries, clean water, and secure boundary walls) and to foster psychosocial well-being (e.g., establishing functional staff rooms and funding low-cost collegial activities).
3. **Develop and Disseminate a "School Climate Toolkit":** Produce and distribute a practical guide for school heads on how to assess and improve the psychosocial and cultural dimensions of their school environment, including strategies for building trust, promoting collaborative decision-making, and recognising teacher achievements.

B. For School Heads and Administrators:

1. **Conduct a Diagnostic Self-Assessment:** School heads should periodically assess their own leadership style using simple tools and seek feedback from teachers on whether the level of direction and support provided matches their needs for specific tasks (e.g., implementing a new digital reporting system versus mentoring a new teacher).
2. **Champion "Environmental Leadership":** Principals must consciously act as champions for a positive environment. This includes actively advocating with district offices for resources, but also modelling respectful communication, publicly appreciating teacher efforts, and facilitating regular opportunities for professional dialogue and peer support among staff.
3. **Delegate Strategically to Empower Teachers:** Identify competent and willing senior teachers and delegate meaningful responsibilities (e.g., leading curriculum review committees, organising professional development sessions) using a supportive or delegating leadership style. This builds leadership capacity within the staff and fosters a sense of ownership.

C. For Teacher Training Institutions (Universities, Colleges of Education):

1. **Revise Educational Leadership Curricula:** Integrate modules on Situational Leadership Theory and school climate management into Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Master of Education (M.Ed.) programs to prepare future school leaders with a modern, adaptive skillset.
2. **Offer In-Service Short Courses:** Provide continuing professional development (CPD) short courses for serving teachers on "Thriving in Your School Environment," offering strategies for self-efficacy, peer collaboration, and constructive engagement with school leadership.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this research carry important implications for theory, policy, and practice.

Theoretical Implications:

1. The study validates and extends Situational Leadership Theory by demonstrating its applicability and predictive power in a non-Western, resource-constrained educational setting. It confirms that the core tenets of adaptive leadership are cross-culturally relevant (Northouse, 2018).
2. It strengthens the ecological perspective on teacher effectiveness by providing quantitative evidence that teacher performance is an outcome of a dynamic interaction between personal agency and organisational structures (leadership and environment), rather than a function of individual effort alone (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Practical and Policy Implications:

1. **Shift from Command to Adaptive Leadership:** The findings necessitate a paradigm shift in how school leadership is conceptualised and evaluated in KP. Performance evaluations of school heads should include criteria related to their flexibility, diagnostic ability, and

success in fostering a positive school climate, moving beyond mere administrative compliance.

2. **Holistic Investment Strategy:** For donor agencies and government development projects aimed at improving education quality (e.g., World Bank or UNICEF-funded programs), the results argue for integrated project designs. Projects must combine leadership capacity-building with concurrent, substantial investments in school infrastructure and community engagement to create sustainable improvements in teacher performance.
3. **Gender-Responsive Policy Formulation:** The focus on female teachers highlights specific needs. Policies should ensure gender-sensitive infrastructure (e.g., adequate female washrooms, safe transportation arrangements) and promote women into leadership roles to provide relatable role models and empathetic leadership for female staff (Shah, 2019).

5.5. Limitations of the Study

While rigorous in its design, this study acknowledges certain limitations:

1. **Cross-Sectional Design:** The data represent a snapshot in time, limiting the ability to establish definitive causal relationships. Longitudinal studies would be needed to confirm if changes in leadership or environment cause changes in performance over time.
2. **Self-Reported Data:** The reliance on teacher self-reports for all variables may introduce common method bias or social desirability bias, where respondents might over-report positive perceptions of their leaders, environment, or their own performance.
3. **Context-Specific Focus:** The delimitation to female teachers in four southern districts of KP enhances the depth of context-specific understanding but limits the generalizability of the findings to male teachers, other regions of Pakistan, or other provinces.
4. **Limited Leadership Styles:** The study focused only on the directive and supportive dimensions of situational leadership. Future research could explore the full range of styles, including delegating behaviours.

5.6. Suggestions for Future Research

To build upon this study, future research should consider:

1. **Mixed-Methods Designs:** Employ qualitative methods (interviews, focus groups, observations) alongside surveys to gain richer, more nuanced insights into *how* teachers experience different leadership behaviours and *which* specific environmental factors are most debilitating or empowering.
2. **Longitudinal and Experimental Studies:** Conduct studies that track schools over time or implement intervention programs (e.g., leadership training for heads) to measure causal impacts on school environment and teacher performance.
3. **Expanded Comparative Studies:** Replicate this study with male teachers in the same region for a gender-comparative analysis, or in other provinces of Pakistan (e.g., Sindh, Punjab) to identify national patterns and regional variations.
4. **Incorporating Student Outcomes:** Future models could incorporate student achievement data as an ultimate dependent variable, creating a more comprehensive chain of analysis from leadership and environment to teacher performance and, finally, to student learning.

5.7. Final Concluding Remarks

This research demonstrates conclusively that the work performance of female secondary school teachers in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is not an isolated phenomenon but is profoundly shaped by the adaptive quality of their school leaders and the enabling nature of their school environment. The path to enhancing educational quality in this region, and by extension in similar contexts, lies in rejecting piecemeal reforms. It requires a committed, dual-focused strategy that simultaneously cultivates situational intelligence in school heads and intentionally builds schools that are not just buildings, but supportive professional communities. By investing in both adaptive leadership and conducive environments, education stakeholders can unlock the full potential of teachers, thereby creating a lasting positive impact on the futures of students and the broader society.

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