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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<p>Leadership Styles, Organizational Culture, Teachers' Performance, Higher Education</p>	<p>The leadership, culture and performance are indispensable in determining development and success of organizations. However, due to its significant role in socio-economic evolution, this assessment requires further attention in context of higher education institutions (HEIs). Current research aimed to examine the effects of heads of departments (HODs) leadership styles (transactional &amp; transformational) on teachers' performance. Moreover, this study sought to evaluate mediating effect of organizational culture in bridging the gap between leadership styles and teachers' performance in HEIs hailing from the southern region, KP province Pakistan. Thus, primary data was collected over dyad questionnaires from heads of departments, and teachers from selected institutions. The data were evaluated using a variety of statistical tools that are correlation (to determine association), and mediation (role of organizational culture). Findings indicate positive correlation, and partial mediation. The findings of this study, consequently, advocate that the policymakers and researchers might opt for leadership styles that are best-suited and vital for the culture and performance of the institutions.</p>
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## INTRODUCTION

The success of organizations, particularly, the higher education institutions is an amalgamation of various determining factors including facilities, infrastructure, personnel, and leadership that are responsible for bridging the gap between survival and ultimate development (Khan, Gerald, Islam & Saif, 2023). In the developing countries, higher education institutions have resource constraints as whatsoever resources are available, they are reportedly underused due to the lack of effective management and efficient leadership (Haider & Sultan, 2008). In this scenario, the leadership in HEIs might be unable to perform adequately, as research revealed that they are victims of varied

cultural grouping that have fostered nepotism, favoritism, and hence inequality within institutions (Ahmad, 2012; Irfan, Idris & Amin, 2021). These are most critical and detrimental factors that not only effects the performance management but also institutional legitimacy. In this connection, the workforces' efficiency, diligence and unflinching efforts towards defined objectives under effective leadership serve as a simulation towards various problems (Graham & Antony, 2017). As per the available literature (Khan & Nawaz, 2016; Amin, Tatlah & Islam, 2018; Khan, Idris & Amin, 2021), many leadership styles are effective where prominent most are transformational and transactional leadership styles.

The leadership in higher education is the sole proprietor of entire socio-academic phenomena and is accountable for enhancing institutional performance leading to ultimate credibility and success. Not only do HEIs groom their personnel, but they also serve as a source of providing leadership to a variety of sectors (Marshall, Adams & Cameron, 2003; Khan, Saqib & Idris, 2020). On other hand, these institutions require effective leadership (transformational or transactional), well-equipped in all respects to perform different tasks wholeheartedly. The strong leadership not only bolsters HEIs but also providing the instrumentations in delivering the high-quality education which can have a significant impression upon the socio-economic format of social networking in emerging countries (Martin, Prosser & Ramsden, 2005). Since its inception, the education sector has been marginalized consistently in Pakistan in terms of financial investment, structural improvement, reviewing long-term/short-term policies, reforming statutory bodies, political will, favoritism, and demographics' priorities (Haider & Sultan, 2008). The research revealed that all these factors have the diverse impacts on educational prosperity, institutional standing, workforces' performance and ultimately the students' success.

In this scenario, the ultimate responsibility falls upon the shoulders of those who are at the helm of affairs namely, the leadership. Although, these issues are persistent for an extended period, but can still be addressed and diagnosed through the competent and committed leadership (Khan, Saqib & Idris, 2020). In HEIs, leadership is viewed as a source of confidence, planning, strategy, commitment, inspiration, performance, and administrative authority for the workforces, students and ultimately, for the academic wellbeing (Bodla & Nawaz, 2010). In this perspective, academic leaders need to be socially varied and academically accomplished. The entire phenomenon begins from the top leadership and continues down to the bottom (workforces), and culminates at academic institutions' overall performance and success (Elham, Silong, Ismail & Othman, 2011). Therefore, the academia's legitimacy is contingent upon the effectiveness of both its leadership and personnel. In other words, the same process operates similarly to a cycle, with leader and employee at opposite ends (Zuraina & Chun, 2013). The entire phenomenon mutually reinforces at both ends and desired outcomes are proportionate with efforts, potential, commitment and performance of both leadership & employees in diverse situations.

A dynamic leader promotes prospective insights and uses them to enhance workforces' capabilities and the institutional environment by doing everything possible to maximize available resources. As mentioned earlier, this phenomenon can be handled and sustained over the institutional leaders and workforces beneath (Hassan, Kiani & Mohammad, 2015). Effective inspiration from leadership

has a significant impact on the institutional culture overwhelmed at high-performance practices and positivity of workforces (Ahmed & Mostafa, 2017). The leaders' main mission is thus, to produce strong culture wherein institutional norms and values are respected along with the motivation and inspiration of the workforces/teachers towards desired culture and performance (Khan, Shoukat & Waheed, 2019). The just culture is based entirely upon organizational fairness, which the concerned leadership must uphold when exercising their authority to motivate personnel at HEIs towards the desired performance (Khan, Farhat & Saqib, 2021). As a result, the strong culture and conducive environment act as dynamic forces in the institutions that pivot around the linkages between the leadership and personnel/teachers in diverse situations through effective performance aiming at the desired outcome.

### Problem Statement

The teachers' performance is contingent upon interdependence of numerous determining factors, such as leadership and culture, that are interlinked rather interdependent. The problem addressed in present research pivots around the role of organizational culture (mediator) in linking leadership styles and teachers' performance, intending to what extent, the culture strengthens or weakens the connections between predicting leadership styles (transactional & transformational) and criterion variable (teachers' performance). Thus, current study aims to shed light on the reality of these issues in the context of HEIs in KP Province, Pakistan. In this vein, current study examines the leadership styles of the department heads and their effect on teachers' performance in the context of higher education institutions in Pakistan and aims at highlighting the effective leaderships dimensions and coming up with valuable recommendation for the uplift of higher education. In this regard, the present study is based upon examination of certain hypothesized relationships and thus following hypotheses are developed:

### Objectives & Hypotheses

1. To examine association between independent, dependent, and mediating variables over correlation procedure (H1).
2. To examine organizational culture as mediator in relationships between transformational leadership and teachers' performance over mediation procedure (H2).
3. To examine organizational culture as mediator in linking the transactional leadership and teachers' performance over mediation procedure (H3).

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The changes in socio-economic environments have increased the demands for highly competent skilled, cultured, and, most importantly, highly devoted workforce who are capable of completing high-value tasks through outstanding performances (Haider & Sultan, 2008). These abilities are direly needed in HEIs, particularly those in developing nations, who are confronted with diverse issues. In this connection, role of both transformational and transactional leadership increasingly becomes critical in all sectors of the economy, wherein HEIs are at the forefront (Bodla & Nawaz, 2010). For bringing HEIs up to global standards, effective leadership has now achieved a significant place in re-building the fundamental structure along with improving their working format (Khan & Nawaz, 2016). For this purpose, the responsible leaders need to hold a strong hold grip upon the

difficulties confronting the institutions among which, the most important are teachers' performance since it promises the institution's credibility and success (Khan, Farhat & Saqib, 2021). Similarly, the robust institutional culture is crucial in establishing institutional norms and values, reinforced by fair leadership decisions towards employees, assisting concerned institutions in retaining devoted and competent workforces.

The leadership styles enable the leaders to find solutions to various problems in different situations through different techniques. To be effective, the leaders need to adapt their styles in the different situations aligned with the culture for leadership development (Vito, 2018). To attain the desired outcomes, leaders must demonstrate a higher level of commitment, a willingness to take risks, and the commitment to working out diligently, motivating others, and exhibiting ultimate integrity (Amin, Tatlah & Islam, 2018). There are diverse styles of leadership and each style has certain advantages and disadvantages based on the situations, wherein final choice about leadership style is a robust bracket comprising the characteristics such as corporate demands and goals, employee comprehension, and certain phenomenal constraints (Hopkins & Meyer, 2019). The authoritarian, democratic, paternalistic, charismatic, ethical, laissez-faire, transactional, and transformational leadership styles that were all extensively examined in diverse contexts (Khan, Saqib & Idris, 2020). Thus, numerous studies revealed that transformational and transactional leadership styles are most suitable in context of higher education (Khan, Idris & Amin, 2021). These styles are widely explored in various situations, including the educational settings, with varying outcomes depending on the circumstances and situations.

### **Transformational Leadership**

In contemporary era, possessing the decisive characteristics of instilling fairness in subordinates' attitudes while maintaining positive behavior, transformational leadership gained persistently the scholars' attention. The prominent experts in leadership literature solely evaluated transformative leadership and revealed that it is linked with creativity and productivity (Avolio & Bass, 1999). The transformational leadership is the process of inspiring and encouraging workforces to go above and beyond expectations to realize desired objectives (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). The transformative leadership is predicated as leaders' values and character that is used as inspirational tool to inspire the followers towards the predicted outcomes (Bass & Bass, 2008). Thus, integrity and fairness are the main pillars that help in building the transformative leadership behavior (Ojokuku, Odetayo & Sajuyigbe, 2012). These leaders exercise dominance over blend of solid conviction, authority, trust, and self-confidence (Khan & Nawaz, 2016). Transformational leaders possess various features, including intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, idealized influence & inspirational motivation (Khan, Saqib & Idris, 2020). In this drive, when inspiring employees to strive for success, transformational leadership is highly desirable (Khan & Hamid, 2021) due to which teachers show unrelenting efforts and persistent commitment to attain desired objectives to ensure institutional standards and principles.

### **Transactional Leadership**

Transactional leaders' primary concerns are the group's organization, direction, and performance. Transactional leadership, often known as the management leadership, prioritizes the subordinates'

compliance over rewards and punishment (Avolio & Bass, 1999). As role models, these leaders are good at assessing their followers' work, identifying flaws, and resolving problems. These leaders are concerned with hierarchy and meeting the basic requirements of their followers (Bono & Judge, 2004). Transactional leaders explore the phenomenon of rewarding individuals who performs well while punishing those who perform poorly (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008). They are concerned with the lower-level requirements of their subordinates while also emphasizing task performance and success (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2012). Similarly, these leaders possess the ability to segment work into manageable components to execute them efficiently (Zakeer, Nawaz & Irfan, 2016). Not only do transactional leaders focus upon ideas, but they also place a premium on the processes and behaviors needed to materialize them (Kalsoom, Khan & Zubair, 2018). By utilizing transactional behavior, leaders effectively manage the tasks and provide sufficient direction to attain the desired outcomes (Khan, Idris & Amin, 2021). Different motivating packages are available to employees based on their efforts, potentials, and performance in completing given tasks and responsibilities in diverse leading cultures.

### **Organizational Culture**

The organizational culture has long been recognized as crucial research area and a critical factor affecting organization's success. Enhancing institutional effectiveness is made possible by a robust corporate culture that shapes how individuals understand, manage, and make decisions in the light of institutional demands (Danison, 1997). Having potential of detrimental consequences for the institutional efficacy and performance, culture is vital for institutions to reserve leadership roles (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Given that no single culture has been demonstrated to be superior, it is reasonable to assume that cultures of many types can perform better on many scales (Hartnell, Ou & Kinicki, 2011). As a result, developing novel ways to increase job efficiency and focus upon the institutional goals like continuous quality improvement, new technology, uniform application of values, and adherence to norms and rules becomes vital in the workplaces (Jennifer, Chatmana, Charles & Reillyb, 2016). Thus, the researchers have used these concepts in the organizations and concentrated upon concerned individuals as managers and leaders (Maamari & Saheb, 2018). The research on leadership and organization culture indicate that it pays towards higher performances in diverse situations (Khan, Shoukat & Waheed, 2019). As a result, leadership and culture are effective in resolving the issues through established institutional norms and values (Khan, Idris & Mehmud, 2021), and necessary for organizations to attain competitive advantages and enhance the desired performances.

### **Teachers' Performance**

While competing in today's global world scenario, HEIs need to focus on every part of academic and development management that contributes toward improvement in overall performance of their employees and hence the institutions. The teachers' productivity is a measure of how much each teacher contributes towards overall achievement of the academic institution. In an attempt to boost employee productivity, researchers consider various determining factors (Bowles & Cooper, 2009). In the contemporary era, leaders and employees have improved institution performance thereby considering it as one of their primary goals (Armstrong & Baron, 2005). Leadership is one of the phenomena that is responsible for teacher motivation and performance in institutions. Others

have to do with working with coworkers or in a particular environment (Chaudhry & Usman, 2011). The teachers need guarantee for job security, promotions and recognition while ensuring efficiency, efficacy, and originality at workplace, culminates at responsiveness and communication (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2015). There is no denying the fact that refining institution performance by embracing approaches for recovery lost productivity is essential to enacting change (Maamari & Saheb, 2018). When it comes to long-term survival, growth, and outcomes of effective leadership abilities in HEIs, no other factor matters more than success in today's market towards teachers' performance (Khan, Farhat & Saqib, 2021).

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study is developed in compliance with the current research issues under investigation. In general, it includes both primary (questionnaire) and secondary (literature) data collection and analysis processes (statistical procedures), including study approach (cross-sectional survey), population, and samples along with questionnaire design to conduct the research and find answers to hypotheses.

#### Population, Sampling & Data Collection

When conducting research, population is described as collection of elements where researchers are interested and perceive the potential responses about issues under study (Boyd, Westfall & Stasch, 1977). The researchers are interested in an attempt to select a population by examining all relevant elements (Levin, 1984). In this study, department heads and teaching faculties of KP-based HEIs were studied. From 1740 (total population), 328 (sample) was selected using sample-size formula (Yamane, 1967). Thus, 328 questionnaires were distributed among HODs and teachers, wherein 290 were collected with 88% response rate and thus 290 responses were used for the data analysis to reach conclusion.

#### Questionnaire Design

The measurement, which contains both closed and open questions, is vital part of research studies. The participants must select one of two possible responses to "closed-ended inquiries," that present several alternatives. The open inquiries called open-ended questions are helpful for the researchers needing additional information (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). In this connection, three, five, seven, or even more responses are possible, "ranging from positive to negative". The questionnaire was attuned using 7-point Likert scale for current study, utilizing dyads & modified questionnaire. Bass and Avallo (1995), Denison (2000), Bizhan, Saeid and Barghi (2013) scales were used to record respondents' responses.

#### Data Analysis

The research aims to elucidate the environment through speculative solutions. It is accomplished by situational analysis and application of exact techniques. Researchers express their propositions as "if-then" statements. When it comes to data analysis, any study may encounter two distinct types of difficulties (Goode & Hatt, 1952). Comparisons are classified into two types: those that entail tools and techniques for displaying data and those that involve logical comparisons (Kothari, 1986). In this manner, anyone interested in the issue may pose and respond to questions (Sekaran, 1999). In

this sense, research refers to the methodical approach of "articulating problem, collecting data, and critically evaluating the same data" to reach at the desired findings and consequences (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results obtained over statistical procedures to examine statistical relationships are presented in this section having due support from existing available research to make a clear position of the research in existing knowledge database about the issues under consideration in order to produce the desired outcomes.

Table 1 Correlation Analysis (H1)

		Transformational Leadership	Transactional Leadership	Organizational Culture
Transactional Leadership Style	P-Correlation	.389**		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	290		
Organizational Culture	P-Correlation	.455**	.418**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	290	290	
Teachers' Performance	P-Correlation	.615**	.476**	.549**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	290	290	290

\*\* Correlation is significant at 2-tailed (0.01 level).

The hypothesis # 1 aimed to determine whether there is association amid independent, mediating, and criterion variables. The correlation process produces the results wherein R (Pearson correlation coefficients) and P (associated significance levels) offer significant results in deciding association. The last row is providing valuable information to readers, researchers, and assessors wherein the association score between all predictors and criterion is significant. The teachers' performance has strongest correlation with transformational leadership, with (R=.615 & P=.000). Transactional leadership (R=.476, P=.000) & organizational culture (R=.549, P=.000) are significant predictors of teachers' performance. The correlation found significant association amid teachers' performance and transformational leadership. As demonstrated above, hypothesis about association is accepted. The results of this study corroborate, to some extent with the results of previous research studies (Abasilim, Gochukwu & David, 2014; Irfan, Idris & Amin, 2021; Paracha, Qamar, Mirza & Waqas, 2012; Tiara & Putranto, 2015) conducted in the diverse contexts with diverse outcomes in existing knowledge database.

Table 2 Mediation Model 1 (H2)

Criterion	Predictors	R	R-Square	Coefficient	P-Value
Path a					
Organizational Culture	Constant	.5546	.4304		
	Transformational Leadership			.5134	.0000
Path b & c					
Teachers' Performance	Constant	.6241	.5540		

	Transformational Leadership			.6129	.0000
	Organizational Culture			.3034	.0000
Path c					
Teachers' Performance	Constant	.5150	.6373		
	Transformational Leadership			.8597	.0000

Predictor: Transformational Leadership, Mediator: Organizational Culture  
 Criterion: Teachers' Performance

Hayes process procedure provides different paths (both direct and indirect) about the potential relationship through mediation models. The desired information was attained by examining routes using diverse paths where path (a) reveals that transformational leadership results in 43% change in organizational culture. As evaluated by regression coefficient (p-value .0000), transformational leadership affects organizational culture. As with the second and third paths (b & c) of mediation, table indicates that predictors account for 55% variation in performance (dependent variable). It means that transformational leadership is effective more in transforming organizational culture. The organizational culture significantly affects teachers' performance (=0.30 with p=.0000), but transformational leadership has significantly higher effect (=0.61 with p=.0000). To proceed along the same lines, the table above displayed information on the route for the fourth mediation step (c) (direct relationship).

The predicting variable (transformational leadership) accounts for 64% variation in dependent variable (teachers' performance), meaning that transformative leadership significantly affects the teachers' performance. Often, p-values for each of the four possible outcomes are considered before deciding on mediation. When all paths are significant, then the coefficient value remains vital for deciding. The organizational culture mediates partially the link amid teachers' performance and transformational leadership in the present mediation paradigm. After adjusting for organizational culture when arrived as mediator (decrease in coefficient is evident from .8597 to .6129, however, relationship between teacher performance and transformational style remained significant that means that culture occupied some role from transformational leadership in prediction of teachers' performance. The findings corroborate to some extent with the previous research (Cheng & Chuan, 2011; Maamari & Saheb, 2018; Khan, Idris & Mehmud, 2021) and results are significantly validated over previous studies.

Table 3 Sobel Test

Effect	se	Z	p
.2468	.0417	5.9252	.0000

Hayes Process technique provides validation of mediation between research variables. To better understand indirect effects, researchers examine difference between c and c', which is frequently referred to as mediation effect. Above table shows that effect size is (.2468) and is statistically more significant than zero at a 95% confidence level (0.05). Similarly, a p-value (.0000) suggests that study research variables have a mediating effect. With high p-value, we can confidently assert that link amid transformative leadership and teachers' performance was mitigated to some extent by organizational culture.



Table 4 Mediation Model 2 (H3)

Criterion	Predictors	R	R-Square	Coefficient	P-Value
Path a					
Organizational Culture	Constant	.5177	.3686		
	Transactional Leadership			.5169	.0000
Path b & c					
Teachers' Performance	Constant	.5750	.4657		
	Transactional Leadership			.4280	.0000
	Organizational Culture			.4688	.0000
Path c					
Teachers' Performance	Constant	.5158	.4456		
	Transactional Leadership			.7133	.0000

Predictor: Transactional Leadership, Mediator: Organizational Culture  
 Criterion: Teachers' Performance

After implementing the Hayes Process, four mediation paths generated a variety of outcomes. The data in the above table can be utilized in research through different steps. According to this study, transactional leadership makes 37% change in organizational culture (predictor). As confirmed by coefficients of regression (p-value = 0.000), transactional leadership has a considerable impact on organizational culture. Paths (b & c) reveal that the dependent variable (teachers' performance) has a 47% variance explained by predictors (organizational culture and transactional leadership). In contrast, organizational culture ( $\beta=0.47$  with  $p=.000$ ) and transactional leadership ( $\beta=0.47$  with a  $p=.000$ ) both have significant effect upon teachers' performance. In same pole, path (c) provided the fourth mediation step.

As a result of independent variable, dependent variable (teachers' performance) varies by 44% (transactional leadership). Transactional leadership substantially affects teachers' performance ( $\beta =.71$  &  $p-.000$ ). Typically, p-value is considered while mediating between all four alternatives. Nonetheless, if all possible paths are significant, the coefficient value will be crucial. According to current mediation model, organizational culture affects connection amid transactional leadership and teachers' performance (c). When organizational culture is included as a mediator (decrease in  $\beta$  from .7133 to .4280), the association between teachers' performance and transactional leadership decreases in value but remains significant. As a result, second mediation model is partial mediation model. Results are supported over existing studies (Khan, Saqib & Idris, 2020; Kang & Chuan, 2011; Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2015).

Table 5 Sobel Test

Effect	se	Z	p
.6132	.0578	10.6017	.0000

The Hayes automatically runs Sobel test to evaluate whether or not study variables are mediated. The indirect (mediation effect) can be calculated as difference between coefficients c and c'. In the preceding table, for the Sobel test, there is an effect size greater than zero (.6132) with the 0.05 level

of significance (confidence level), significant  $p$ -value (.0000) indicates existence of the mediating impact between research variables, just as significance between research variables is shown by the significant  $p$ -value (.0000). Due to the large  $p$ -value, we can conclude that organizational culture plays the significant role in mediating the relationship between the transactional leadership and teacher performance.

### CONCLUSION

The researchers frequently observe that conclusions are meaningless unless presented in a succinct manner that enables other researchers to replicate them. The conclusion is the most critical section of any research since it summarizes the narrative and educates both the reader and researcher. The final stage of the research process is to assess all previous stages and reach a conclusion. When it comes to the study's central question(s), the researcher "makes judgments depending on nature of" research findings. Readers are more interested in research findings since they contain guidance on how to address analogous difficulties in their institutions. Consequently, the hypotheses guided the researcher towards investigation and conclusive findings. As a result of study, following conclusions are drawn:

1. According to hypothesis # 1, teachers' performance is associated with transformational and transactional leadership styles. As per literature, it was hypothesized that transformational leadership may be more popular and connected with improved teachers' performance; thus, correlation data were interpreted in another direction. As a result, we can claim that our goals and expectations were realized, as research shows stronger correlation amid transformational leadership and improved teachers' performance (0.615 with  $p$ -value .000). All-together, the relationship between transactional leadership and teachers' performance is identical (0.476 with  $p$ -value .000).
2. Mediation analysis is a technique for identifying predicting factors based on their critical role in generating variance in criterion variable. From theoretical framework, 2 statistical models were developed. First mediation model covering transformational leadership (X1), teachers' performance (Y), organizational culture (M). Second model integrates transactional leadership (X2), organizational culture (M), and teachers' performance (Y). The researchers used PROCESS Macro to address medication-related concerns. Following conclusions can be taken from these two mediation models.
  - a. The first model of mediation considers the role of mediator (M) (organizational culture) in mediating between X1 and Y. Following the procedure, Beta weight X1-Y reduces from (.8597) to (.6129). As a result, overall change in Beta weight is proportional to variation in Y. This is substantial evidence that mediator (M) mediated the relationship between X1 and Y.
  - b. It was revealed that the organizational culture acted as the bridge between leadership styles. The results of the second model are identical to those of the first model due to the presence of partial mediation. The teachers' performance improved due to mediator (M) increasing the change's Beta weight. Following procedure, Beta weight X2-Y reduces from (.7133) to (.4280). It shows that mediator (M) aided the predictor (X2) in increasing

the dependent variable variance through the partial mediation resulting from mediation procedure.

### Recommendations

1. Since, transformational leadership is more popular, practical, and effective in inspiring followers towards desired outcomes, higher institutions should use this style to get their teachers more inspired and highly committed.
2. The leadership styles have shown a significant link with culture along with performance that makes clear picture that both transformational leadership & organizational culture are significant in predicting teachers' performance.
3. Both mediation models highlight the importance of mediators in bridging the predictors and criterion variables. While mediator has a more significant impact, transformational leadership can be as effective as transactional leadership without them. So, irrespective of leadership style, idea is to improve organizational culture continually.
4. The head of departments are required to implement the transformational leadership style to make the teachers more committed towards best performances overwhelmed at higher outcomes lead to sustainable development of the higher educational institutions in the competitive environments.

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