

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP AND  
TEACHER PERFORMANCE AT ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL LEVEL**

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**Abstract**

*The study aimed to investigate the relationship between democratic leadership and teacher performance at the elementary school level. A correlational research design was used to examine the relationship between these variables. The population of the study comprised all teachers from public and private schools in Shershah, Lahore. A purposive sampling technique was used as a sample, total 60 teachers (40 males and 20 females). Data were collected through questionnaires. The reliability was 0.966. The findings indicated a weak positive relationship between democratic leadership and teacher performance; however, this relationship was statistically insignificant ( $r = .047$ ,  $p = .640$ ) at the  $p \leq .05$  level. On the Base of these results, it is recommended that educational institutions and policymakers focus on leadership development programs that enhance effective leadership practices, as democratic leadership alone may not be a strong predictor of teacher performance in this context.*

Keywords: Democratic Leadership, Teacher Performance, Elementary Schools, Leadership Practices, Educational Leadership, School Effectiveness.

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## **Introduction**

Education is often viewed as a tool for driving social, moral, and economic change and development within a nation. According to Umaimah and Musfiqon, (2022), education serves as a medium for imparting knowledge, skills, emotions, values, and information to individuals. Leadership is one of the essential administrative functions, which has captivated the interest of many global experts. In a school setting, leadership is the process by which a school leader influences, directs, and coordinates the activities of teachers to achieve desired goals and objectives. A school leader is one of the most critical figures in the development of education. Their ideas and practices significantly impact teaching staff, school success, school environment, and student achievement (Alonderiene & Majauskaite,2016).

Leadership is an unseen yet influential force necessary for achieving the key objectives of any organization (Colaco, 2018). Ahmed et al, (2019) have stated that desired outcomes, school development, and change cannot be achieved solely through the implementation of new strategies, organizational structures, or improved school climate; rather, it is leadership practices that bring about the necessary changes as defined by the government.

Democratic leadership aims to implement required changes in the system to achieve better outcomes by motivating followers in an exemplary manner Sehar and Alwi (2019). Improving the quality of education in school is closely tied to teacher performance, as teachers play a central role in the learning process. They are not only responsible for delivering instruction but also serve as mentors, educators, and role models who shape teachers' character and competencies. High levels of teacher performance are essential for the development of effective learning environments and refining the quality of national education (Raupu et al., 2021). Thus, development in teacher performance has become a key strategic priority for establishment national competitiveness and sustainable educational development. This issue is mostly critical at the elementary school level, where teachers play a dynamic role in emerging students' foundational knowledge, skills and attitudes from an early stage.

The complexity of teaching at this level is heightened by the diverse backgrounds of teachers, including variations in prior learning experiences such as early childhood education and kindergarten. Consequently, teachers are required to demonstrate strong pedagogical, professional, social, and personal competencies to effectively design and deliver instruction that meets the diverse needs of their teachers (Rohman, 2021).

A key strategic factor influence teacher performance is the leadership of the teachers. A democratic leadership style characterized by participation, open two-way

communication, and empowerment is widely regarded as effective in fostering a positive work environment and encouraging teachers' involvement in decision-making (Setiawan, 2025). Teachers who adopt this approach are more likely to cultivate a collaborative culture that enhances teachers' motivation and performance.

In addition to leadership style, the overall performance of the teachers is equally important. Teachers are expected to fulfill multiple roles as Educators, Managers, Administrators, Supervisors, Leaders, Innovators, and Motivators all of which directly contribute to improving teachers' performance (Nadir, 2021). Recent studies indicate that the effectiveness of teachers in performing these roles significantly influences 'teachers' ability to adapt to the demands of the curriculum and ongoing educational innovations (Nurhemah & Putri, 2025).

However, practical realities reveal notable gaps. A preliminary study conducted in several public elementary schools. By implementation of democratic leadership by teachers continued to face challenges such as delays in preparing instructional materials, limited creativity in teaching, and insufficient technological skills. The application of democratic leadership has not yet fully optimized teacher performance (Choi,2007).

This gap highlights the need for further investigation into teachers' perceptions of teachers' democratic leadership styles and the extent to which teachers' performance impacts teacher effectiveness. Although prior research has emphasized the importance of school leadership, studies focusing specifically on elementary school contexts in regions such as remain limited (Aftab & Iqbal., 2025).

The theory of democratic leadership has been present in several studies in different backgrounds, some examples are in the work administrative settings and also in the academic field. It is in the latter situation that democratic leadership theory has recently arrived, giving rise to what it calls "democratic Teaching". Current studies in the educational context showed that teacher leadership in the classroom was positively related to critical thinking, academic performance and classroom engagement (Setiawan, 2025). However, there are currently no studies that have analyzed how classroom leadership favors school teachers' ability to adapt to academic difficulties since current studies have focused more on aspects outside the educational context.

This research aims to investigate the effect of democratic leadership on teacher performance at elementary school level. By examining this relationship, the study seeks to provide insights into how educational institutions can better support teachers in enhancing their performance. This, in turn, is expected to foster teachers' personal development, ultimately leading to the cultivation of more well-rounded and capable individuals. This

study aims to add to the existing knowledge on educational leadership and teacher performance by explaining how leadership practices affect teachers' work. It also provides useful suggestions for policymakers and school leaders to improve school quality through better principal leadership (Beghrain, 2023).

Educational leadership focuses on improving the quality of education, supporting teachers, managing resources, and professional grooming. Colaco (2018) explains that it comprises teacher regularity and guiding teachers and parents toward common academic goals, while Sarah et al. (2023) defines it as a cooperative process that encourages innovation and expands the overall learning system.

### **Democratic Leadership**

Democratic leadership is based on teamwork and shared duty, where members of an institution work together to complete mutual goals. This style allows workers to take part in discussions and decision-making, which can increase their motivation and improve performance. Meeks (2020) explains that this style values members' opinions and encourages their active involvement in all situations.

In schools, democratic leadership supports encourages shared decision-making by allowing teachers to contribute to important school matters. Blasé (2001) states that many modern schools are increasingly adopting this leadership approach, while Beghrain (2023) describes it as a system founded on collaboration and consultation. Before making decisions, leaders consider the views of staff members, and authority is shared rather than concentrated in one person, as explained by Okumbe (1998), with duties and responsibilities distributed among employees.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

The education sector struggle to improve teacher performance and student outcomes, particularly at elementary school level, where the foundation of learning is well-known. Teacher performance is a critical issue in determine the quality of education; however, many schools still face challenges such as lack of teacher motivation, limited professional development opportunities, and weak institutional support systems. These issues hinder teachers' effectiveness and ultimately affect students' academic growth and future success.

Although democratic leadership has been recommended as a potential solution due to its focus on contribution, collaboration, and shared decision-making, its actual effect on teacher performance remains unclear. Most practices still rely on traditional leadership approaches that highlight control and routine task completion rather than engagement and innovation. Therefore, there is a need to study whether democratic leadership can

effectively enhance teacher performance at elementary school level. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the relationship between democratic leadership on teacher performance at elementary school level.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were to,

1. Find out the relationship between democratic leadership on teacher performance at elementary school level.
2. Identify the difference between democratic leadership and teacher performance at elementary school level.
3. Investigate the significant difference between the relationship of democratic leadership on teacher performance at elementary school level based on their demographic representations (Age, Gender, and Teaching performance).

### **Research Questions of the Study**

Following were the research questions of the study.

1. Is there any significant relationship between democratic leadership on teacher performance at elementary school level?
2. Is there any significant difference between democratic leadership and teacher performance at elementary school level?
3. Is there any significant difference between the relationship of democratic leadership on teacher performance at elementary school level based on their demographic representations (Age, Gender, and Teaching performance).

This study will be significant for stakeholders in the education sector, as it examines how the relationship between democratic leadership on teacher performance at elementary school level. this relationship can increase teacher motivation, enhance teaching practices, and improve job satisfaction, ultimately leading to better student results and a more effective learning environment. The findings of this study can be support for the development of professional training programs and help schools to build a culture of collaboration, improvement and innovation,

This study offers an insight to the practices of democratic leaders, which can be unified into leadership development programs to make effective upcoming school leaders. Policymakers may also use these findings to design strategies that promote inclusive and collaborative leadership approaches, thereby improving overall educational quality. It also highlights potential challenges and suggests ways to address them by discovering such

leadership fosters a collaborative and supportive school environment, the study suggest a practical leadership for establishment teamwork, shared decision-making, and innovation between teachers (Avolio, 2007).

Finally, this research contributes to the current literature by providing experimental indication on the relationship between democratic leaders and teacher performance, encouraging educators, administrators, and researchers to accept effective leadership practices that benefit both teachers and teachers.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

In any research, facing challenges and limitations is normal. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all schools, as the study is limited to public and private schools located in Shershah, Lahore.

### **Research Design**

Present study aimed to investigate relationship between democratic leadership on teacher performance at elementary school level. The study was descriptive in nature, survey research design to conduct the study. The population of the study was all teachers from public and private schools in Sharshah. Purposive sampling technique was used to include all 60 teachers (40 male and 20 female). Data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale, covering both study variables and demographic information. Th reliability was measured through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive tools summarized responses, while Pearson correlation, t-tests, and ANOVA examined relationships and differences based on study objectives.

Table. 1

*Correlation Between Elementary school teachers Democratic Leadership and Teacher Performance*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>r- value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Democratic Leadership	74.9	7.27	.047	.640
Teacher Performance	3.40	18.8		

Table 1 indicate the correlation between Elementary school teachers Democratic Leadership and Teacher Performance calculated by using Pearson r. Findings of the study

revealed that there was a positive insignificant no correlation ( $r=.047$ ,  $p=.640$ ) existed between Elementary school teachers' democratic leadership and teacher performance at  $p \leq .05$  level of significance.

Table 2

*Differences of Male and Female Teachers' Perceptions of democratic Leadership at Elementary school Level based on their gender.*

Variable	Gender	N	M	SD	df	t- value	Sig.
Teacher Performance	Male	40	59.11	14.65	89.4	2.428	.017
	Female	20	67.67	20.22			

Table 2 indicates the difference between male and female teachers' perception about Democratic Leadership at Elementary school Level was calculated by using independent samples t-test. Findings of the study concluded that there was an insignificant difference between male and female Democratic Leadership at Elementary school Level  $p \leq .05$  level of significance.

Table 3

*Differences of Male and Female Teachers' Perceptions of Democratic Leadership at Elementary school Level based on their age.*

Variable	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Teacher Performance	159.135	1	159.135	.446	.506
	35002.625	98	357.170		
	35161.760	99			

Table 3 indicates the difference between Democratic Leadership at Elementary school Level based on their age was calculated by using one-way ANOVA based on their age. Findings of the study concluded that there was insignificant difference between Elementary school teachers' perceptions about Democratic Leadership  $p \leq .05$  level of significance based on their age.

## Findings of the study

1. Pearson correlation analysis showed a weak, positive, but insignificant relationship between democratic leadership and teacher performance ( $r = .047$ ,  $p = .640$ ) at the  $p \leq .05$  level.
2. An independent samples t-test indicated no significant difference between male and female teachers' perceptions of democratic leadership at the elementary level ( $p \leq .05$ ).
3. One-way ANOVA results revealed no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of democratic leadership based on age at the  $p \leq .05$  level.

## Discussion

The study examined the effect of democratic leadership on teacher performance at the elementary level using a correlational design. A total of 60 teachers (40 male, 20 female) from public and private schools in Shershah, Lahore was selected through purposive sampling. Data collected through reliable questionnaires ( $\alpha = .966$ ) showed a weak and statistically insignificant positive relationship between democratic leadership and teacher performance ( $r = .047$ ,  $p = .640$ ). It is recommended that institutions still promote leadership development programs to enhance overall effectiveness.

The study by Baqi et al. (2026) indicates that democratic leadership positively improves teachers' motivation and helps create a supportive classroom environment. This leadership style promotes participation, improves teaching practices, and donates to better student performance and quality education. Similarly, the study by Rahayu et al. (2025) found that democratic leadership has a significant positive effect on teacher performance. Teachers' perceptions of participatory leadership increase their motivation and professional effectiveness, while the principal's performance also plays an important role in improving teacher outcomes. Together, these factors make a strong contribution to overall teacher performance and highlight the importance of collaborative leadership practices at the elementary level.

The study by Uwamahoro et al. (2024) demonstrates that democratic leadership plays a key role in enhancing teacher performance. It improves instructional planning, strengthens student assessment practices, and encourages effective collaboration between teachers and parents. The results show a very strong relationship between democratic leadership and teacher performance ( $R^2 = 0.947$ ), indicating that schools with participative leadership tend to have more effective and engaged teachers. The study concludes that promoting democratic leadership can significantly improve the quality of education in basic education schools.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the current study show that the effect of democratic leadership on teacher performance at the elementary level, using a correlational research design, is weak, positive, and statistically insignificant. Furthermore, no significant differences were found in teachers' perceptions on democratic leadership based on gender or age. Overall, these results suggest that democratic leadership is not a strong interpreter of teacher performance in the selected contextual, although its positive direction directs that it may still contribute to improved performance when supported by other institutional and professional factors.

## **Recommendations:**

Following are the recommendations of the study.

1. School principals at the elementary level should not rely only on democratic leadership but should integrate it with other effective leadership styles to improve teacher performance and overall school effectiveness.
2. Educational institutions should organize structured leadership development and training programs to enhance principals' skills in decision-making, communication, supervision, and instructional leadership.
3. Policymakers and education authorities should design balanced leadership policies that are based on school context, as democratic leadership alone showed weak influence on teacher performance in this study.
4. Teachers should actively engage in professional development activities and maintain strong collaboration with school leadership to improve their teaching practices and classroom performance.
5. Future researchers are encouraged to examine additional influencing factors such as organizational climate, teacher motivation, and transformational leadership to better understand teacher performance in elementary schools.

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