

LEADERSHIP STYLES AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AMONG LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS IN PAKISTANI UNIVERSITIES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract

The leadership of library professionals of Pakistani universities is more dependent on the organizational context within which they work than on the behaviours of individuals themselves. This research studies the leadership styles of library professionals and the relationship between such styles and the modern-day challenges faced by them in public and private universities recognized by the Higher Education Commission in Pakistan. Quantitative research using population survey sampling was employed to obtain data from library professionals from all provinces in Pakistan. The results show that the most predominant are transformational, democratic and, transactional styles of leadership, which is a marked deviation from previous evidence about the dominance of autocracy in Pakistani libraries. No relationship was found between the leadership style and the challenges, a result which calls into question the contingency approach to leadership and highlights structural and institutional factors as opposed to individual behaviour as the main determinants of leadership difficulty. The challenges faced included Staff resistance, lack of top management support, and resource constraints, which were the most frequently reported. The study contributes the first national-scale quantitative evidence on this relationship in Pakistan and argues that style development, while valuable, cannot substitute for institutional governance reform as the primary mechanism for improving library leadership outcomes.

Keywords: leadership styles, library professionals, university libraries, Pakistan, transformational leadership, democratic leadership, leadership challenges, higher education

1. Introduction

Organizations adopt leadership for decisions. In essence, leadership is a social influence process in which an individual influences a group of people to achieve a common goal (Silva, 2016). It is not just authority; it is the ability to affect professional behaviour, to maintain motivation and to direct collective effort in a way that formal hierarchy alone cannot produce (Yukl, 2013). An important difference exists between leadership and management: managers administer the existing system; leaders challenge, inspire, and redirect the system (Burns, 1978).

Library leadership adapts this process to a specific organizational context. This involves helping library professionals transform services, manage technological change and institutional pressure, while still providing the research and learning support functions that academic libraries are meant to provide (Hernon & Rossiter, 2007; Shahzad & Tariq, 2025). Library leadership is different from leadership in other organizations. There are several leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, transformational, laissez-faire, and transactional, each of which possesses a unique set of implications in terms of organizational success. The autocratic leadership style relies on control and surveillance of employees' actions, thus limiting creativity and employee autonomy (Bass, 1990). Democratic leadership enables collaboration and involvement of employees in decision-making processes, improving communication within the organization (Gastil, 1994; Hernon & Schwartz, 2008). Transformational leadership, arguably the most impactful style, inspires employees to follow a certain vision, empowering them to innovate (Burns, 1978; Bass & Riggio, 2006). Laissez-faire leadership implies giving employees freedom; however, this leadership style can result in inefficient use of resources due to lack of leadership, which is especially true in a setting like higher education libraries (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939; Northouse, 2016). Finally, transactional leadership implies creating an order and a clear structure within the organization, ensuring its stability through providing incentives (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Contemporary studies emphasize the importance of flexibility and inclusiveness in university libraries. There is ample literature concerning the need to face the challenges of library professionals in university libraries, who should become proficient in managing digital transformations, disruptive technologies, and organizational inclusion (McBrayer, 2025). For instance, Khan and Ahmed (2023) pointed out that transformational leadership increases digital readiness in South Asian universities. Shal, Ghamrawi, and Naccache (2024) explored associations between leadership styles and the

application of artificial intelligence in library management. Thus, one can speak of the global recognition of the necessity for innovative and inclusive leadership styles in university libraries.

Despite the above-described global discussion regarding the importance of flexible leadership styles and their challenges in university libraries, there has been relatively little empirical research conducted on this issue in Pakistan. The libraries at Pakistani universities face various challenges related to bureaucracy, resource shortages, and reluctance to embrace reforms (Ali & Hussain, 2023). They play a key role in helping institutions share knowledge and keep up with the demands of modern education (Singh, 2018). In Pakistan, however, these libraries are struggling with serious challenges. Many libraries are facing limited budgets, all while trying to keep pace with rapid technological changes and increasing demand for digital resources from students and faculty alike (Awais & Ameen, 2021).

The effectiveness of these libraries and, by extension, the academic success of their students, relies heavily on strong, adaptable leadership styles. Unfortunately, there is a noticeable lack of research focused on how leadership styles play an important role in libraries (Ameen, 2006). While there is more literature on library leadership in Western countries, the same is not true for Pakistan, where cultural, financial, and institutional factors create a very different landscape.

Though leadership style has long been acknowledged as a driver of performance and innovation in library leaders and staff, little is known about how specific leadership styles such as transformational or transactional approaches impact the skills, motivation, and job satisfaction of library staff in Pakistan (Ashiq, Jabeen & Mahmood, 2023). Most universities in Pakistan also face a shortage of leadership training tailored to their specific needs. This gap in development opportunities has led to a shortage of prepared leaders with leadership styles, making it even harder for libraries to respond effectively to digital transformation or to foster a culture of innovation and continuous staff growth. (Khan & Bhatti, 2017; Sheninger, 2014)

Because of these issues, many university libraries continue to underperform, both in terms of service delivery and professional development. Staff often lack the guidance and resources needed to keep up with changing user needs or to implement forward-thinking strategies (Ashiq, Rehman, & Mujtaba, 2021)

1.1 Research Objectives

The following are the main objectives of this study

- To find out what kind of leadership styles library professionals use in universities of Pakistan.

- To know about leadership challenges that affect the leadership styles of library professionals.

2. Literature review

Over the last couple of decades, considerable academic attention has been devoted to the topic of leadership in university libraries, which relates to the growing importance of this institution within universities. Hernon and Rossiter (2007) specified their study on traditional forms of leadership, such as autocratic and transactional styles, which facilitated organizational stability but did not allow for innovation and did not involve control and responsibility. Also, these styles restricted professional creativity. According to Hernon and Schwartz (2008), the information environment is rapidly changing. Now modern libraries have aspects such as shared decision-making and open communication called democratization. After the 2000s, the participatory approach in leadership style became more important. During the decades of the 2010s, transformational leadership style was more extensively discussed. Its attributes were based on vision, empowerment and innovation. These aspects are need of the modern libraries. Transformational leadership helps people learn and grow, and it motivates them. This is especially important now that library professionals are dealing with changes in technology. (Riggs, 2001; Keeling, 2013; Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

Laissez-faire leadership, characterized by minimal direction and low leader involvement, has been associated with role ambiguity and reduced organizational efficiency (Northouse, 2016; Yukl, 2013). The transactional style, which is based on reward and hierarchy, remains important but requires balancing with creativity (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Recent academic studies have introduced novel elements related to library leadership. In particular, Khan and Ahmed (2023) demonstrated that transformational leadership contributes to increased digital readiness in South Asian university libraries. Ali and Hussain (2023) found that bureaucratic structures and resistance to change remain serious barriers. Transformational leadership and technological innovations were also associated by Shal, Ghamrawi, and Naccache (2024). Worldwide trends in the area indicate that adaptive and inclusive leadership become especially relevant for university libraries because of the digital transition (Nguyen & Le, 2024; Zhang & Chen, 2024; McBrayer, 2025).

Therefore, it is evident that traditional models are increasingly replaced with more flexible styles, such as participatory and transformational leadership. As for Pakistani university libraries, it is important to find the balance between bureaucratism and inclusivity in the context of global changes. Current evidence shows that different leadership styles play a crucial role in determining the efficiency and resilience of academic libraries.

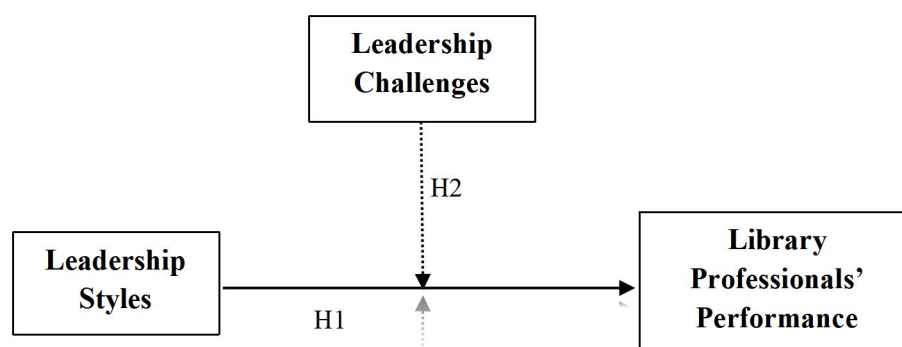
The transformational approach to leadership, in particular, is typically seen as a driver of innovation, high employee motivation, and efficient technology adaptation, thus reducing organizational problems (Meena, 2023; Emanuel, 2015; Suresh, 2022). In transactional leadership style, stability is created through incentives. Sometimes it is not flexible enough, and it cannot handle complicated problems (Martin, 2015; Dong, 2023).

Autocratic leadership is another style characterized by strict control and limited staff input, has been linked to interpersonal conflict and reduced job satisfaction, ultimately affecting staff performance (Awan, Mahmood, and Idrees, 2014; Akwa & Akwa, 2026). Laissez-faire leaders are not very involved; they do not pay attention to problems in the organization. This means that library professionals do not get the guidance they need and their work suffers (Urhefe-Okotie, 2025). Studies of libraries in universities of Pakistan consistently report that library professionals face significant challenges related to both technological adaptation and leadership capacity (Mahmood, 2014). Awan & Mahmood (2010) said that the style of leadership is connected to the culture of the organization and its committed employees. This is stronger in university libraries than in public ones.

Some other researchers, Ashiq, Rehman and Batool (2018), said that leaders need to have a vision and care about people. This is especially important now that everything is becoming digital. Ashiq, Rehman and Mujtaba (2021) said that the biggest problems for libraries in Pakistan are leadership challenges, adapting to technology and not having enough money. Hernon and Altman (2010), Davis (2017) and Kirk (2021) said that adapting the leadership style and addressing their challenges are very important for the culture of the organization. Leadership style is really important, and its effect the efficiency of library professionals.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Fig 1. Leadership Styles and its challenges Model



In this study, the conceptual model presented in Figure 1 shows leadership style as the independent variable and challenges as a dependent variable. Based on this model, two hypotheses were formulated to test.

2.2 Research Hypotheses

H1: There are significant variations in the leadership styles employed by library professionals at the universities of Pakistan

H2: Library professionals in the universities of Pakistan face significant leadership challenges regarding their leadership styles.

3. Methodology

This is a quantitative, explanatory-descriptive study. The study used a population survey sampling, approximating a census design, and focused on all library professionals working in public and private universities recognized by the HEC across Pakistan. No sampling was used because the target population is well-defined, geographically dispersed, and small enough to allow for complete enumeration. Population survey design was preferred under these conditions because it reduces estimation bias and increases external validity (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

The study population was library professionals working in all 278 HEC-recognized universities of Pakistan, including all the provinces of Pakistan, i.e., Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan and Islamabad Capital Territory, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit Baltistan. Questionnaires were distributed to all 278 HEC-recognized universities in Pakistan, targeting one library professional per institute. Of these, 221 usable responses were received (response rate 79.5%). Non-response was attributable both to non-participation by eligible professionals and to a small number of universities that did not have a designated library professional in post at the time of data collection. Data were gathered using a well-designed questionnaire based on some existing scales. Leadership style items were drawn from Likert's (1967) theory of participative management as well as from Bass and Avolio's (1994) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire for transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Leadership challenge items were based on the concepts described by Ashiq, Ur Rehman and Batool (2018), and Hernon and Rossiter (2007). These items were adjusted to the Pakistani university library setting through expert review and pre-testing of the survey. A five-point Likert scale was used in the survey, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Cronbach's alpha values indicated good to excellent reliability.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the university committee. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection and assured them its confidentiality.

4. Data Analysis and Finding

Descriptive statistics were applied to analyze the distribution of the leadership styles and the challenge responses. Pearson correlation was used to determine the correlation between leadership styles and challenges faced by the library professionals. To determine if leadership styles can predict the intensity of challenge, regression analysis was done.

4.1 Demographic Finding

Data from 221 respondents of key library professionals' demographic information patterns in the pool reveals certain distinct profiles. First, there is an observable imbalance in gender distribution: 72% males against 28% females. Secondly, ages indicate that the professionals are mostly in their career mid-life: professionals aged between 21-30 years comprise 5.9%, those aged between 31-40 years form 40.7%. thirdly 41-50 years comprise 42.1%, while 11.3% are above 50 years. As far as education qualifications are concerned, it indicates that the professionals involved are highly educated: 45.7% M.Phil. holders, 42.5% Master's holders, and 11.8% are Ph.Ds. Region wise analysis reveals that the professionals are mostly from the province of Punjab constituting 42.5% followed by Sindh (24.9%) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (18.1%) more federal region 9.0% Azad Jammu & Kashmir 3.2 % Baluchistan 1.8% and Gilgit Baltistan are 0.5%. As far as institutional affiliation is concerned, the highest share belongs to the public sector universities, constituting 61.1%, followed by private universities with 37.1% and semi-government with just 1.8%. Table 1 summarize the data.

Table 1. Demographics of the respondents. N = 221

Variable	Value	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	159	71.9
	Female	62	28.1
Age	21-30 years	13	5.9
	31-40 years	90	40.7
	41-50 years	93	42.1
	51 years and above	25	11.3
Educational Qualification	Master's degree	94	42.5
	MPhil	101	45.7
	PhD	26	11.8
Province/Region	Punjab	94	42.5
	Sindh	55	24.9

Variable	Value	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
University Status	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK)	40	18.1
	Federal Region	20	9.0
	Azad Jammu & Kashmir	7	3.2
	Baluchistan	4	1.8
	Gilgit Baltistan	1	0.5
	Public Sector	135	61.1
	Private Sector	82	37.1
	Semi-Government	4	1.8

4.1.1 Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

Table 2.

Construct	Items (n)	Cronbach's α
Autocratic leadership	6	.807
Democratic leadership	7	.882
Transformational leadership	7	.821
Laissez-faire leadership	7	.807
Transactional leadership	6	.798
Leadership challenges	9	.910

4.1.2 Styles of Leadership

Analysis of leadership styles is following:

a. Autocratic Leadership

Table 3.

Descriptive Statistics of Autocratic Leadership Style.

N=221

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation
Staff lazy	3.24	1.28
Threats and punishment	3.12	1.27
Explanation given	2.90	1.20
Decisions randomly	2.87	1.22
Close supervision	2.62	1.25
Value opinions	1.90	0.83

The descriptive statistics of autocratic leadership show that library professionals may have different perceptions of this style of leadership. The mean score of the item Library leadership values the opinions and

contributions of library staff is the lowest ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 0.83$), which means that more of the respondents agree with it; it means that leaders do acknowledge the input of the library staff at least partially. Otherwise, Threat and punishment ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.27$) and Staff lazy ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.28$) have relatively higher mean values, which reflects disagreement or indifference towards statements regarding strict control, use of threats, and negative perceptions of the staff. The general trend is that, though some aspects of autocratic leadership are present, like supervision and control, respondents do not believe that their leaders are tremendously autocratic. The values of standard deviation show a medium level of variability in answers, as the professionals had different experiences. Generally, it can be affirmed that autocratic leadership is at a moderate or low level in the Pakistani university libraries.

b. Democratic Leadership

Table 4.

Descriptive Statistics of democratic leadership style $N=221$

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation
Policy changes discussed	2.35	1.18
Clear responsibilities	2.22	1.09
Periodic meetings	2.17	1.02
Awareness policies	2.17	1.07
Goals explained	2.13	1.03
Work checked regularly	2.06	0.87
Professional development	2.01	0.98

The descriptive statistics of democratic leadership reveal that this type of leadership is a common practice among library professionals in Pakistani universities. The average scores of all the items fall between 2.01 and 2.36, which indicates a consensus among the respondents regarding statements with regard to democratic practices. An example of such is the high level of agreement between professional development ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 0.98$) and work checked regularly ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.87$): It means that employees do receive a chance to develop professionally and that their performance is reviewed regularly. Likewise, even items like Periodic meetings, clear responsibilities and goals explained to library staff reflect agreement, indicating that meetings, effective communication and setting of goals are standard practices. Though Policy changes discussed ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.18$) demonstrate the slight increase in variability, it also indicates a tendency to agree with the changes in the staff connected with the policy changes. The standard deviation values are low,

which implies that responses are consistent. In general, the results indicate that democratic leadership is both widely practiced and well-liked in Pakistani universities among library professionals.

c. Transformation Leadership

Table 5.

Descriptive Statistics of Transformation Leadership Style

N=221

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation
Information systems	1.85	0.74
Creativity encourages	1.91	0.90
Empowerment	1.92	0.84
Shared vision	1.93	0.94
Quality emphasis	2.09	0.98
Define goals	2.31	1.12
Resolve issues independently	2.35	1.25

The descriptive data about transformational leadership implies that the leadership style is predominant amongst library professionals working in Pakistani higher education institutions. Most of the scores are relatively low, with an average score of 1.85 to 2.35 indicating general agreement with the statements about empowerment, innovation and vision. As an example, the information system ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 0.74$) and empowerment ($M = 1.92$, $SD = 0.84$) are highly congruent, which implies that the information systems provided help the staff to cope with their work and the leaders assist them to gain independence and empowerment. Equally, things like creativity encourages ($M = 1.91$, $SD = 0.90$) and shared vision ($M = 1.93$, $SD = 0.94$) demonstrate that leaders encourage creativity and inspire a common vision. There is a slight difference in the mean of resolving issues independently ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.25$) and defining goals ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.12$), indicating moderate variation in answers in autonomy in complicated situations and goal setting. The values of standard deviations suggest there is moderate variability among respondents.

d. Laissez-Faire Style

Table 6.

Descriptive Statistics of Laissez-faire style of leadership *N=221*

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation
Staff make decisions	2.91	1.27
Minimal supervision	2.89	1.22
Flexible schedules	2.60	1.22
Focus only on work	2.45	1.08

Freedom in duties	2.43	1.14
Staff know responsibilities	2.31	1.12
Discuss staff problems	2.13	0.95

The descriptive statistics of the laissez-faire leadership style show that there is a medium prevalence of the laissez-faire leadership style among Pakistani library professionals in universities. The mean is between $M = 2.13$ and 2.91 , demonstrating that the respondents were agreeing and neutral in some cases. Indicatively, discussing staff problems ($M = 2.13$, $SD = 0.95$) implies that leaders discuss and judge matters relating to the staff members. In contrast, some items like freedom in duties ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.14$) and staff know responsibilities ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.12$) imply that the leaders do agree on certain matters, and the means of the staff make decisions ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.27$) and minimal supervision ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.22$) are higher, indicating more neutral attitude to the idea of complete delegation and less supervision. The values of the standard deviation show that the variability in responses is moderate. In general, the results indicate that laissez-faire leadership is not prevailing but is balanced with equal measures of autonomy and managerial participation in the libraries of the university.

e. Transactional leadership

Table 7.

Descriptive Statistics of transactional style of leadership $N=221$

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation
Creativity limited	2.28	1.17
Close supervision	2.21	1.14
Short-term goals	2.14	1.12
Rewards and punishment	2.11	.97
Obey directions	2.10	1.09
Chain of command	1.92	0.81

The results of descriptive statistics of transactional leadership show that, moderately, this kind of leadership style is applied by the library professionals based in Pakistani universities. The average scores fall between 1.92 and 2.28 , which shows the overall consensus with the statements on structured leadership practices such as well-established hierarchy, supervision, and motivation via rewards. As an example, chain of command ($M=1.92$, $SD=0.81$) demonstrates that there is strong agreement that employees work more effectively with a well-defined chain of command whereas rewards and punishments ($M=2.11$, $SD=0.97$) and obey directions ($M=2.10$, $SD=1.09$) indicate that rewards, punishments, and following the

leader instructions are viewed as close supervision ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.14$) and creativity limited ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.17$) imply a little bit of variability in perceptions on supervision and restrictions on creativity. The values of standard deviation show that there is moderate variability in responses. In general, the results indicate that we have transactional leadership that is existing and well perceived, especially in ensuring order and performance in university libraries.

Descriptive Statistic of Leadership Styles

Table.8

Leadership Style	Mean	SD
Transformational-Total	2.055	.684
Transactional-Total	2.128	.749
Democratic-Total	2.164	.798
Laissez-faire-Total	2.535	.784
Autocratic-Total	2.780	.847

4.2

Repeated Measures ANOVA Summary

Table 9.

Source	F	df	Sig.	Partial η^2
Leader Styles (Greenhouse-Geisser)	43.857	3.778, 831.112	<.001	.166

To test H1, a repeated-measures ANOVA compared respondents' scores across the five leadership styles. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was violated, $\chi^2 (9) = 25.392$, $p = .003$; therefore, Greenhouse-Geisser corrected degrees of freedom are reported. Results showed a significant effect of leadership style on scores, $F (3.778, 831.112) = 43.857$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .166$, indicating meaningful differences in the extent to which the five styles were practiced. Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparisons showed that the mean of transformational, transactional, and democratic leadership did not differ significantly from one another ($p > .05$), but each was practiced significantly more than the mean of laissez-faire and autocratic leadership ($p < .05$). Autocratic leadership showed the weakest agreement of all five styles, including being significantly lower than laissez-faire ($p = .014$). These results support H1 and indicate that transformational, transactional, and democratic leadership form a dominant cluster of practiced styles among Pakistani university library professionals, with autocratic leadership being the least practiced.

4.3 Challenges faced by library professionals regarding leadership style

Table 10.

Descriptive Statistics for challenges of leadership style N=221

Challenges	Mean	Std. Deviation
Resistance	3.23	1.15
Engaged and motivated	3.23	1.23
Lack of support	3.22	1.24
Limited opportunities for collaboration	3.17	1.24
Balance emotional intelligence	3.17	1.23
Limited resources	3.09	1.36
Balance responsibilities	3.00	1.25
Difficulties adapting leading styles	2.92	1.29
Professional development	2.71	1.31

Descriptive statistics of leadership issues have shown that professionals working in Pakistani university libraries have an intermediate degree of issues concerning leadership styles and competencies. The average scores fall between 2.71 and 3.23, indicating that the responses are quite close to being neutral or in agreement. It is interesting to see higher mean scores of the items like resistance ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.15$), lack of support ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.24$), and engaged and motivated ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.23$), indicating that the respondents also encounter significant difficulties, including staff resistance, a lack of top management backing, and staff motivation. Equally, limited opportunities for collaboration ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.24$) and balancing emotional intelligence ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.23$) show that there are difficulties within collaboration and decision-making between emotional intelligence and rational thought. Achieving slightly lower mean scores of professional developments ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.31$) and difficulties adapting leadership styles ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.29$) indicate rather less, yet still present, challenges in professional growth and changes in leadership styles. The values of standard deviation show that there was moderate variability in responses. Generally, the results indicate that the extent of leadership issues among professionals in Pakistani university libraries is moderate.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Leadership Challenges and Leadership Styles

Table 11.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.013 ^a	.000	-.004	0.96	.000	.037	1	219	.847

a. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership styles Total

Table 12

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.034	1	.034	.037	.847 ^b
Residual	202.29	219	.924		
Total	202.331	220			

a. Dependent Variable: Challenges Total

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership styles _Total

Table 13

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
(Constant)	3.018	.335		9.016	.000
Leadership styles Total	.027	.141	.013	0.193	0.847

a. Dependent Variable: Challenges _Total

The regression analysis was implemented to analyse the effect of leadership styles on leadership issues among library professionals in Pakistani university libraries. The model summary indicates a very poor correlation between the variables ($R = 0.013$), and $R^2 = 0.000$, which is an indication that leadership styles do not account for any variation in leadership issues. The lack of explanatory power of the model is also supported by the adjusted R^2 value (-0.004). The outcomes of ANOVA show that the model is

not significant ($F = 0.037$, $p = 0.847$), which proves that leadership styles do not have a significant effect on the prediction of leadership challenges. Also, the outcomes of the coefficient indicate that there is a very small positive impact of the leadership styles on challenges ($B=0.013$, $p = 0.847$), which is not statistically significant. As a consequence, it can be concluded that leadership styles and challenges do not have a significant relationship, and the hypothesis concerning the same is thus rejected as well.

4.5 Correlations

Leadership styles and Challenges

Table 14.

Correlations

		LS _Total	Challenges _Total
Leadership styles Total	Pearson Correlation	1	.013
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.847
	N	221	221
Challenges Total	Pearson Correlation	0.013	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.847	
	N	221	221

The Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the association between leadership styles and leadership challenges among the library professionals of a Pakistani university. The findings show a weak positive relationship between total leadership styles and leadership challenges ($r = 0.013$), which means that there is essentially no linear relationship between the two variables. Moreover, the value of significance ($p = 0.847$) is higher than the acceptable level (0.05), which indicates a statistically insignificant relationship. Thus, it can be concluded that the leadership styles do not significantly affect the challenges of library professionals in this research. This indicates that the challenges associated with leadership can be a result of influences other than leadership styles, which might include organizational constraints or lack of resources.

4.6 Hypothesis Summary Table

Table. 15

Hypothesis	Test Used	Result	Decision
H1: Significant variation in leadership styles	Repeated-measures ANOVA	$F(3.778, 831.112) = 43.857$, $p < .001$	Accepted
H2: Significant	Pearson correlation,	$r = .013$, $p = .847$	Rejected

relationship regression
between style and
challenges

5. Discussion

According to the findings of the study, the most prevalent leadership styles were transformational and democratic among the library professionals. These two styles agreed more consistently than other styles. Library professionals said their leadership focused on shared vision, empowering staff, creativity, and participative decision-making. Bass and Avolio (1994) are also in line with these results. According to them, in knowledge-intensive organizations populated by highly qualified professionals, where intrinsic motivation is more important than compliance and innovation is an operational requirement rather than an aspiration, transformational and participatory approaches tend to take hold. Pakistani university libraries have been digitally disrupted, professionally staffed, and operate under resource pressure. There is also a large body of literature linking the presence of democratic style leadership. Lewin, Lippitt & White (1939) did experiments to demonstrate that participative styles produce better outputs and staff satisfaction than directive styles. The findings are further supported by the theory of participative management in an organizational setting as propounded by Likert (1967), and he was part of the formulation of the instrument used in this study. This specific democratic trend is well in line with the studies and also with the findings of Jana, Bhatt, and Patel (2024) related to the democratic trend in Indian universities. Transactional leadership also showed dominant levels, which would be considered appropriate by Bass (1985). Bass argued that good leaders combine both transactional and transformational aspects, while transformational is used to create discretionary effort and personal development, and the transactional aspect helps to ensure responsibility and organization. For a library that requires development of digital services and at the same time runs its day-to-day activities.

Most autocratic behaviors were rejected by library professionals. Threat based management and assumptions of staff laziness were not practiced. 88.2% of total respondents held a postgraduate qualification (42.5% Master's and 45.7% MPhil). Such an educated workforce does not respond well to coercive management, and the literature supports this. Lewin, Lippitt, & White (1939) found time and again that autocratic approaches damage morale and creativity over time. The contrast with the finding of autocratic dominance by Awan and Mahmood (2010) in Pakistani university libraries fifteen years ago is noteworthy. If that difference is one of real behavior



change and not just of increased social desirability in survey responding, then something meaningful has shifted in the understanding and practice of leadership by Pakistani library professionals.

The first hypothesis, H1, stating that there would be considerable differences among various leadership styles, was validated. Librarians use different styles instead of adopting just one style because of the concept of adaptive leadership, as discussed by Northouse (2022).

5.1 Leadership challenges

Leadership challenges encountered were always consistent, yet not very severe, and these were related to each other, which is common in previous research performed in Pakistani libraries. Aslam (2020) highlighted that challenges included staff resistance and lack of motivation, closely followed by lack of support from upper management. Challenges that were less often highlighted included lack of opportunities for collaboration, shortage of resources, and balancing emotional intelligence with rational thinking. Lack of professional development opportunities and style adaptation was also experienced, but in a fairly minor way.

These findings are consistent with the results of the qualitative study conducted by Butt, Jabeen, and Zareef (2023) using qualitative interviews with the senior library administrators in Pakistan, where it was revealed that leadership crisis in the country's academic libraries resulted from the lack of infrastructure for development and not the failure of individuals. The same factors were found back in 2018; the organizational constraints and lack of top management support were identified by Ashiq, Ur Rehman, and Batool (2018).

There was no significant correlation between leadership styles and the outcome of the challenge. It was found that very little variance in the severity of the challenge could be attributed to the leadership style, which was statistically insignificant. The H2 hypothesis was proved rejected.

The conclusion that carries the most analytical value is the following one. Two very often cited contingency theories of leadership, namely, those presented by Fiedler (1967) and Hersey & Blanchard (1969), suggest that adopting a proper leadership style will result in better outcomes. However, it is not the case here, since there is no apparent difference in the number of problems that library specialists had to face.

It is not that staff resistance, lack of administrative backing, and lack of resources are the outcome of how the library professionals act, but they are simply structural features of the institutional context. Ashiq, Rehman and Batool (2019) have examined the professional constraints in Pakistani higher education institutions. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2024) examines such constraints as part of a main trend of underfunding at South Asian universities. Zohaib & Serban

(2024) consider political interference in university governance as the unique Pakistani element here. When such institutional constraints persist, individual behavioral choice becomes irrelevant to any challenges.

Kotter (1996) said the most common challenge was staff resistance. The reason for resistance was mostly the unavailability of resources from the institution. This research finding emphasize on a participative approach is evident, and the presence of opposition despite this reveals an institutional issue. The challenges of professional development and style adaptation were low in the findings it can be dealt with through training and improvement at the individual level. Not only at the personal level but also reforms at the institutional level with regard to governance and resource allocation, and positioning of Library leaders within the decision-making processes of universities in Pakistan are required, and Hernon and Rossiter (2007) supported the findings of the study. They said that the main challenges to effective library leadership are mainly organizational and positional. Style development never determines exit of structural challenges and there severeness.

5.2 Implications for Pakistani University Libraries

The transformational and democratic styles are already widely used among leaders in Pakistan's university libraries; leadership training programs need to emphasize sustaining these styles in spite of institutional pressures. In particular, programs need to help library leaders overcome institutional challenges such as a lack of top management support and resources, the two most commonly cited challenges in this study. Apart from individual training programs, the results of this study show that the effectiveness of leadership style cannot predict the outcome of challenges, which indicates the need for governance reform. HEC and university administrations need to delegate more decision-making power to library leaders and allow the participation of library professionals in institutional planning through formal mechanisms, and make sure that universities are accountable for providing library leaders with necessary resources for them to perform their duties. As the majority of librarians in this study possess postgraduate degrees, further capacity-building efforts need to focus on leadership navigation skills, the ability to mobilize institutional support, secure resources, and motivate staff members in the absence of systematic support.

5.3 Limitations

This Study has limitations. First, the cross-sectional nature of the design makes it impossible to make any causal inference about the impact of leadership style on organizational effectiveness. Second, the data were collected using self-report measures for leadership styles and challenges from the same respondents, raising the possibility of common method bias. Third,



the survey utilized self-rating by library professionals of their leadership styles, which might be different from that perceived by the employees of that leadership style. Future studies need to consider multiple sources of data collection.

5.4 Future research

Future research should take a longitudinal approach, or a multi-source design, to establish cause-and-effect relationships between leadership style, organizational setting, and outcome variables associated with library performance. Interviews with library staff and high-ranking university officials might help explain how structural influences such as the allocation of resources affect the nature of the problems facing leaders irrespective of their own styles. Comparative research on South Asian nations might further show whether the proposed structural explanation applies elsewhere in the region as well.

6. Conclusion

The leadership style adopted by library professionals in Pakistani universities is mainly transformational and democratic in nature, which signifies a considerable shift away from the autocratic style of leadership described by previous studies. The key result of this study is that style is not an element that influences the result of the challenge being encountered. Challenges such as resistance among staff members, absence of support from the top management, and the problem of lack of resources continue irrespective of whether or not the leader adopts a certain style of behaviours, because the challenges themselves are structural in nature and not behavioural.

7. References

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