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Democratic and Laissez-Faire Administrative Styles as Predictors of Teacher Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools of Naserabad Division, Balochistan

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between two major administrative styles; democratic and laissez-faire, to job satisfaction among teachers in the Naserabad Division of Balochistan, public secondary schools. The sample size (180 teachers in 3 districts of the division) was stratified by selecting 104 secondary school teachers (male and female) using random sampling. The teachers had to fill a questionnaire on the administrative style of their principals and on how satisfied they are with their jobs on a five-point scale. The outcomes revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between democratic style and job satisfaction ($r = .61, p < .001$) and a less strong but still significant positive relationship between laissez-faire style ($r = .18, p < .05$). The two styles jointly accounted 39 percent of the difference in job satisfaction, $F(2, 177) = 56.34, p < .001$ with democratic style taking the bulk of the difference (39.57). There was no significant difference in reported job satisfaction between male and female teachers when $t(178) = -1.64, p = .103$. These results impact that, when teachers are brought into decision-making and communication barriers maintained by the principals, teachers have a significantly higher level of reported satisfaction with their work as compared to when principals merely withdraw themselves and leave the teachers to their own devices. The consequences to principal training in low-resource school systems are described.

Keywords: Democratic and Laissez-Faire Leadership, Teacher Job Satisfaction, School Leadership, Balochistan, Pakistan.

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Introduction

The impact of the running of a school by a principal extends beyond test scores and lesson plans. It influences the attitude of teachers towards coming to work (on) a daily basis. One of the various methods through which principals lead continues to emerge in the literature: does a principal make decisions with teachers or does the teacher more or less independently (Lewin, Lippitt, and White, 1939). The most common approach is what can be referred to as democratic and includes shared decision-making, free discussion and delegation of responsibility. The second one, the *laissez-faire*, implies the minimum of guidance and desultory day-to-day supervision. The two styles are common in schools and might make teachers have quite different perceptions of their work (Bass, 1990; Lunenburg, 2010).

In Naserabad Division, Balochistan, principals have low budgets, schools located both in rural and semi-rural regions and access of leadership training is uneven (Rahim, 2016; Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2018). Job satisfaction among teachers, their feelings toward their work, their supervisor, and the overall role they perform daily are critical in such an environment as unhappy teachers will become more likely to disengage, demand a transfer, or leave the teaching profession altogether (Maldrine and Kiplangat, 2020). In fact, a bigger dissertation study had already studied the three administrative styles (democratic, autocratic and *laissez-faire*) and their relationship to the whole teacher performance in all the six districts of the division. This question is more specific and distinct and involves an independent sub-sample: given the two simplest and most opposite styles, democratic and *laissez-faire*, what are the relationships between them and teacher job satisfaction (the three of the six districts, not all six)?

The outcome here was selected to be job satisfaction as opposed to the larger performance measure used in the parent dissertation, as satisfaction and performance are not synonymous. A teacher may excellently perform his or her job but still feel unsatisfied, or be satisfactorily doing his job but only satisfactorily (Herzberg, 1959). The work on satisfaction alone thus contributes something to the already covered work on performance.

This smaller concentration is rather practical in nature as well. Budgets allocated to the training of head teachers on a place such as Balochistan are low, and it is such limited representation on what that training should touch on, instructional supervision, community relations or even simple communication skills. A glance, however, at two opposite styles in one and the same lot of schools enables the study to furnish District Education Officers in the Naserabad Division with a little, narrow slice of evidence, which they can utilize when organising principal training, even without a complete survey of the division upon which they might act.

Problem Statement

District Education Offices in Naserabad Division indicate very broad variance in the exercise of power of principals, at one extreme strictly rationed schools and at the other extreme where principals almost never interfere with the running of the school. However, a dearth of zonal data exists regarding the relationship between the two opposite practices on the level of job satisfaction of teachers. It is upon this evidence that training programs of head teachers can continue to be performance-outcome based and overlook the actual feelings teachers have towards their work.

Research Objectives

The aim of the study is to:

1. Determine the perceptions of teachers regarding the democratic and laissez-faire style of administration by the principals in the public secondary schools in Naserabad Division.
2. Study the way the two administrative styles are connected with teacher job satisfaction.
3. Investigate whether male and female teachers state that they are even more or less satisfied with their jobs.

Research Hypotheses

H1: Principals' democratic administrative style significantly and positively predicts teacher job satisfaction.

H2: The administrative approach of laissez-faire by principals has a significant predictive effect on teacher job satisfaction.

H3: The male and female teachers do not have a significant difference in job satisfaction.

Delimitations

The research was restricted to teachers in the three out of the six districts of Naserabad Division: Naserabad, Jafferabad and Sohbat Pur. It discussed just two of the three administrative styles that were discussed in the parent dissertation, democratic and laissez-faire, and omitted autocratic style. The principals themselves were not surveyed in this sub-study; they just gathered reports given by the teachers regarding the behavior of their principals.

Literature Review

The concept of a democratic and laissez-faire comparison of leadership is traced to the historic experiments of Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) who discovered that the groups that had a democratic leader had a higher level of morale and steady output when compared to those that had a laissez-faire leader in whose case members received little direction and performance differed significantly across groups. This preliminary study laid the foundation to the subsequent studies on leadership and degree of satisfaction at the workplace such as the two factor theory proposed by Herzberg (1959). Herzberg made supervision and interpersonal relationships as causes of dissatisfaction when they are absent, and supervision issues such as recognition and responsibility, the things a true participatory principal can give, are more likely to increase satisfaction than avoiding its loss.

Research done in Pakistan backs up the link between democratic leadership and satisfaction. In their study with public schools in South Punjab, Ali and Hassan (2022) discovered that teachers in schools with principals who allegedly consultation staff, who delegated tasks, and those who listened to disagreement, expressed significantly high job satisfaction than teachers in schools with more authoritarian principals. Iqbal and Hashmi (2015) established the same trend in a group of Pakistani school's systems and Khan and Zia (2020) noted that positive, relationship based principal behavior in secondary schools of Punjab was always associated with improved teacher attitudes.

The literature is more ambivalent about laissez-faire style. According to Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland and Hetland, under an unclear role of laissez-faire leadership, conflict, and even reduced wellbeing among employees, Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland and Hetland (2007) explain that laissez-faire leadership can be detrimental in a situation where a principal just

avoids responsibility. Other scholars note that when strictly managed, hierarchical systems, a taste of freedom on the part of the supervisors may feel to the teachers likened to honor to their professional judgment instead of disregard (Khattak & Rehman, 2021). This indicates that the association between laissez-faire practice and satisfaction is likely to be less strong and situational than the association observed between democratic practice and satisfaction.

In Balochistan, Rahim (2016) found that principals tend to operate within tribal social formations with minimal administrative training and high dependence on community go-betweens, which may make distinguishing actual delegation in such cases and outright lack of administrative supervision. Qureshi and Magsi (2022) discovered the level of teacher commitment in the Balochistan secondary schools to have been closely related to the perceived level of effectiveness of the leader by the teachers, more consultative principals being associated with a higher level of commitment and presumably also with higher levels of satisfaction. With the intervention of cultural values in regards to power distance, Hofstede (2011) has stated that the indirectiveness or directiveness of leadership may be received differently and therefore the interpretation of results of a hierarchical, collectivist society such as Pakistan can be affected.

There is conflicting evidence on gender variations in teacher response to various administrative styles. In an international review by Perera and Fernando (2021), the authors concluded that gender differences to school leadership tend to be small and context-dependent. Ali and Shah (2020) cautioned that much of the literature in the region has been based on single source and cross-section data and this does not leave anyone with a lot of confidence in the subjects of subgroup differences. The observations are the reason why a gender-comparison hypothesis became part of this research as the predictive as well as the main correlational and predictive questions. Another source (Bush and Glover, 2014) adds that the models of leadership constructed in the Western, decentralized systems have to be cautiously adjusted to allow them to be applied to the leadership practice in centralized, developing-country school systems like that of Pakistan.

The democratic-laissez-faire analogy here is, compared to other subsequent leadership models like the transformational-transactional model as propounded by Bass and Avolio (1994), old-fashioned and parsimonious; as it addresses much more on vision and one on one consideration than on decision-makers. This paper retains the older, style based framing intentionally. It is directly related to the daily question that teacher has to face whether the principal makes them feel engaged or not and not to the more generalized and harder to accurately gauge concepts such as charisma or vision which are measured by a short teacher-filled questionnaire.

Also, it is notable that the majority of prior Pakistani studies regarding the principal leadership, and the larger dissertation this sub-sample is based on have concentrated primarily on teacher performance as their outcome (Iqbal and Hashmi, 2015; Khan and Zia, 2020). Job satisfaction is commonly believed to be co-movemental with performance yet they are distinct entities and researchers who examine only performance will overlook dissatisfaction, which is yet to be reflected in a decrease in performance (Herzberg, 1959). This study bridges a gap by focusing more on the satisfaction of the job primarily as the outcome, and reducing the sample size and styles that were considered, to replicate the results already obtained on performance in relation to the Naserabet Division.

In general, the literature discussed in this paper indicates an apparent positive relationship between democratic administrative style versus job satisfaction among teachers, and their position remains unclear concerning the strength of the laissez-faire association, and the gender difference in job

satisfaction in the context of Naserabad Division. These are the questions that are directly answered in this study.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This research was a quantitative, correlational study based on the positivistic paradigm that trusts in the use of objective measurement and statistical inference of a sample to another, broader population (Creswell, 2014). Teacher perception of both their principal's democratization style and laissez-faire style, and their level of job satisfaction were only gathered at one point in time via a cross-section survey.

Population and Sample

This study used population that was a sample of teachers, including three out of six districts, Naserabad Division, Balochistan: Naserabad, Jafferabad and Sohbat Pur. This sample was quite small intentionally compared to an independent of the six-district sample in the parent dissertation on principal administrative styles and teacher performance. The sampling process was stratified random sampling where the stratification variables were the district and gender and the steps to follow were the normal proportional assignment (Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun, 2012). The sample was finally 180 teachers (104 males, 76 females): 70 in Naserabad, 60 in Jafferabad and 50 in Sohbat Pur. This is vastly less than the 346-teacher six-district sample of the parent dissertation, which corresponds with the more restricted scope of this study.

Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire (based on that utilized in the parent dissertation but reduced to three aspects) that was administered to teachers included: a 10-item scale on the Perceived Democratic Style, an 8-item scale on the Perceived Laissez-Faire Style, and a scale on Teacher Job Satisfaction with 9 items. Everything was rated on a five-point scale of 1(Strongly Disagree) to 5(Strongly Agree). There was a brief demographics section that covered questions on gender, district, academic qualification as well as years in teaching experience. The alpha of Cronbach in this sample was .84 with Democratic Style scale, .79 with Laissez-Faire Style scale, and .81 with Job Satisfaction scale, which is a good to acceptable level of internal consistency.

Procedure

The researcher visited the sampled schools as the person to request informed consent to the principals and teachers, and to administer questionnaires after getting the institutional approval to the sampled schools. The questionnaires were completed by the teachers themselves and were returned in a day or within a week.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was optional and they assured teachers that they could pull out at any time without any repercussions. There were no names in the questionnaires and the data were reported and stored in combined, anonymous format. Only the District Education offices gave their permission to conduct the survey and none of the schools were visited until the relevant teachers were informed on how their responses would be utilized.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies), Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression, and an independent-samples t-test were used in the data analysis. All tests had a significance level of .05.

Results

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the 180 teachers who took part in the study

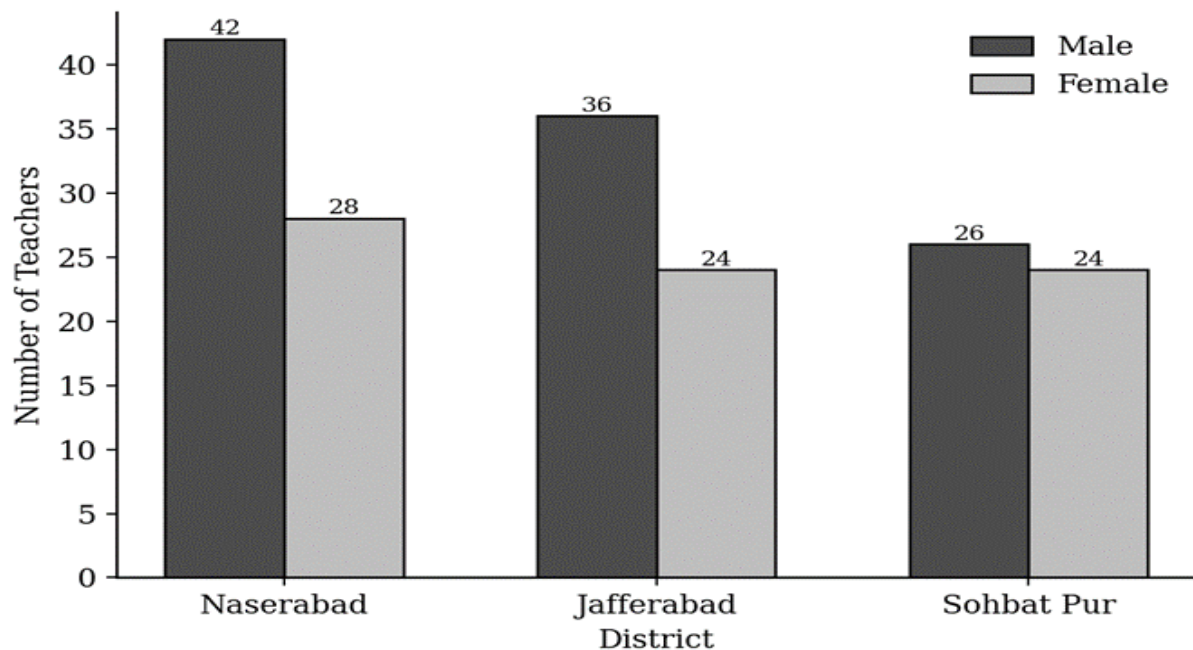
Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 180)*

Variable	Category	f	%
Gender	Male	104	57.8
	Female	76	42.2
District	Naserabad	70	38.9
	Jafferabad	60	33.3
	Sohbat Pur	50	27.8
Qualification	B.Ed / M.Ed	150	83.3
	Other	30	16.7
Teaching Experience	Less than 5 years	62	34.4
	5–10 years	74	41.1
	More than 10 years	44	24.4

Note. *f* = frequency; % = percentage of total sample.

Figure 1 shows how the sample was spread across the three districts, broken down by gender.

Figure 1: *Sample Distribution by District and Gender*



Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics of the three key study variables is presented in Table 2. The ratings of teachers according to democratic form of administration were rather high ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.58$) and the ratings of job satisfaction were also rather high ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.62$), whereas, the ratings of laissez-faire style were more moderate ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.71$).

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (N = 180)*

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max
Democratic Administrative Style	3.92	0.58	2.10	5.00
Laissez-Faire Administrative Style	3.10	0.71	1.30	4.80
Teacher Job Satisfaction	3.85	0.62	2.00	5.00

Correlation Analysis

According to Table 3, the teacher job satisfaction and democratic administrative style exhibited a strong positive correlation, which was significant ($r = .61$, $p < .001$). The job satisfaction also positively correlated with laissez-faire style, but this correlation was much weakened, yet, still strong ($r = .18$, $p < .05$). The two styles, democratic and laissez-faire were adversely correlated with one another ($r = -.22$, $p < .01$), which is understandable considering that they occupy different corners of the same spectrum of principal involvement.

Table 3: *Pearson Correlations Among Study Variables (N = 180)*

Variable	1	2	3
1. Democratic Style	—		
2. Laissez-Faire Style	-.22**	—	
3. Job Satisfaction	.61**	.18*	—

Regression Analysis

A multiple regression was conducted to determine whether a combination of democratic and laissez-faire style foresaw teacher job satisfaction. The model was significant, $F(2, 177) = 56.34$, $p < .001$, and explained 39% of the variation in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .39$). As Table 4 indicates, democratic style was the most significant predictor by a large margin ($\beta = .57$, $p < .001$) and laissez-faire style contributed little but still significant ($\beta = .11$, $p = .049$).

Table 4: *Multiple Regression Predicting Teacher Job Satisfaction (N = 180)*

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	1.42	0.21		6.76	< .001
Democratic Style	0.54	0.06	.57	9.12	< .001
Laissez-Faire Style	0.09	0.05	.11	1.98	.049

Note. $R^2 = .39$, $F(2, 177) = 56.34$, $p < .001$.

Gender Differences in Job Satisfaction

Independent-samples t-test were used to compare the level of job satisfaction between male and female teachers. As Table 5 shows, female teachers scored slightly higher on average ($M = 3.94$,

SD = 0.63) than male teachers (M = 3.79, SD = 0.60), but this difference was not statistically significant, $t(178) = -1.64$, $p = .103$. This favors Hypothesis 3, which had a no-gender difference.

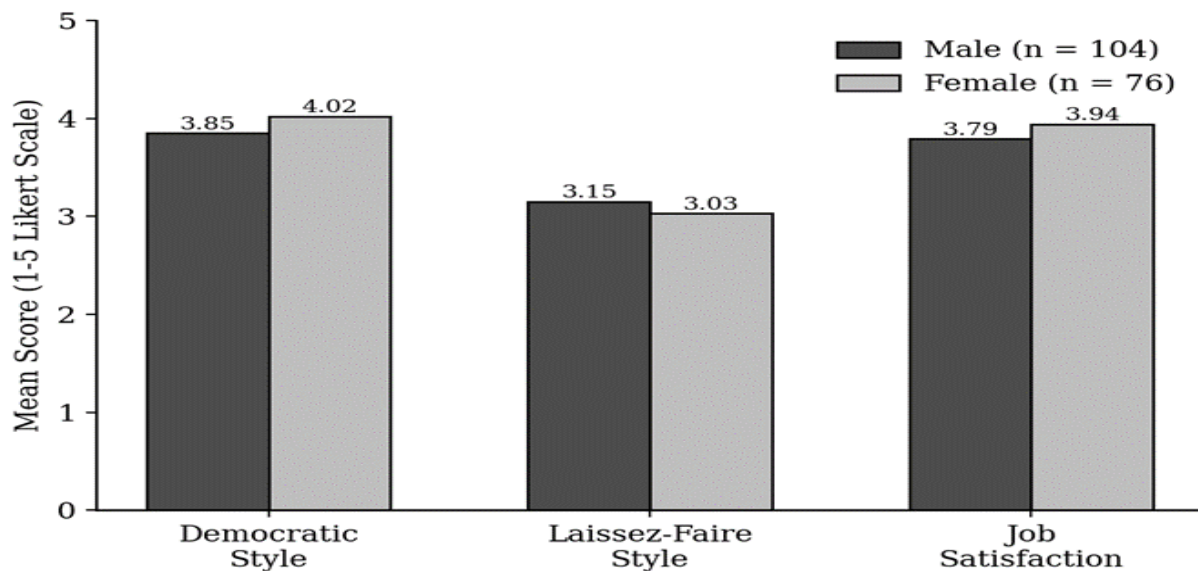
Table 5: Independent-Samples *t*-Test for Gender Differences in Job Satisfaction

Group	n	M	SD	t	df	p
Male	104	3.79	0.60	-1.64	178	.103
Female	76	3.94	0.63			

Note. Levene's test showed equal variances could be assumed.

Figure 2 shows the mean scores for democratic style, laissez-faire style, and job satisfaction, split by teacher gender. The pattern looks broadly similar for both groups.

Figure 2: Mean Scores for Administrative Styles and Job Satisfaction by Gender



The findings confirm Hypothesis 1: Democratic from the administrative side of principals was strongly and negatively correlated with teacher job satisfaction as well as in a regression analysis. That is what Ali and Hassan (2022) obtained with South Punjab teachers, and it is consistent with the older concept, dating to Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939), that consultative leadership creates more morale than a more distant supervision. Similarly, to the Naserabad Division, where principals may tend to serve as the primary interface between schools and their communities (Rahim, 2016), teachers appear to appreciate being involved in decision-making, as well as open communication, just as much as or even more than they appreciate greater access to resources as the means of enhancing teacher performance (Iqbal and Hashmi, 2015). This positive correlation, even though less important, between laissez-faire style and job satisfaction confirms Hypothesis 2, but complicates the less pessimistic image painted by Skogstad et al. (2007), who characterised laissez-faire leadership as potentially negative when it transforms into abdication of responsibility. One way to explain it is that since online public education is a highly regulated environment that is as centralized as Balochistan (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2018), even a hint of caution on the part of a principal can be interpreted as classroom autonomy instead of non-compliance by a teacher, which can be interpreted in a more sophisticated way, like Khattak and Rehman (2021). Nonetheless, the low effect size of laissez-faire style indicates that this

explanation should be handled with care instead of being used as an evidence that non-directive leadership tends to be beneficial in the case of teachers. The fact that there was no notable gender difference in job satisfaction supports Hypothesis 3 and is consistent with the findings made by Perera and Fernando (2021), i.e. that the existence of gender differences in teacher response towards school leadership is actually small and relative to circumstances rather than a pattern. The discovery also dilutes the apprehension expressed by Ali and Shah (2020) on the excess dependence on the single-source, cross-sectional data. The limitation has also been communicated in this research but the null finding of gender is accompanied with the fact that it agrees with previous international findings hence it is given some added weight. Together with the work of Hofstede (2011) on cultural values these findings indicate that despite the hierarchical and collectivist organization in education practice, teachers can be effectively led by decision-making leadership that reduces the distance between the principal and the staff by consulting them and including them in decision-making. According to Bush and Glover (2014), this would be better termed as a locally developed leadership model and not an imported leadership model. The results also correlate with those of Qureshi and Magsi (2022), which associated consultative principal behavior in Balochistan with a higher commitment of the teacher, a concept similar to, but not equal to, job satisfaction. Practically speaking, the magnitude of a democratic-satisfaction relationship here ($=.57$) implies that any slight modification in the behaviour of a principal, such as consulting with teachers more frequently, before making any decision affecting their classes, increasingly noticing effort, or delegating more committee and co-curricular responsibility, would make a meaningful positive difference in teacher satisfaction at no cost. This is important to a division such as Naserabad where a weaker infrastructure and staffing necessitate resource-based fixes being difficult to execute, but where the communication and delegation style used by a principal lie within their mandate regardless of the size or the location of the school.

Limitations

There are a few limitations of this study that should be noted. To begin with, the cross-sectional, self-reporting design will not provide any cause and effect and a teacher may already experience the level of satisfaction that will in turn reflect in the description of the principal style. Second, the sample used was limited to three out of six districts in Naserabad Division and not the autocratic style hence the results cannot be considered as a complete image of chief leadership in the entire part of the Division. Third, there was only a single self-report measure of job satisfaction compared to the multiple methods and sources of job satisfaction measurement.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research established that democratic administrative style of principals is a robust and consistent predictor of teacher job satisfaction in state secondary schools in Naserabad Division, Balochistan whereas laissez-faire style has only a weak positive association. Male and female teachers did not differ significantly in terms of job satisfaction. Combined, these outcomes indicate that when school principals are to be trained in this area, not only participatory practices and relationship-based practices, shared decision-making, open communication, and handing over real responsibility are to be considered options of building teacher satisfaction, as well as teacher performance. The education officials in Balochistan might think about including systematic training on consultative leadership to the induction and refresher courses of newly hired head teachers (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2018). This can be extended in future studies by adding the autocratic form of style, sampling in all six districts of Naserabad Division as well as by use of longitudinal or mixed methods designs that will be more effective in

demonstrating the direction of the relationships identified in this study. Concisely, this article introduces a results-oriented, satisfaction-oriented article to the bigger evidence that is already available, focusing on performance, of the Naserabad Division. Its results are generalized to the three sampled districts and the democratic-laissez-faire comparison in particular, and not to put it in the place of a complete divisional study of principal administrative style. In that narrower range, however, is the trend, as the teachers at these city secondary schools report increased job satisfaction in an environment where principals are not autocratic but consultative, recognition-based, and socially responsible.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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