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## “A Review On Leadership Styles And Their Practices In Educational Institutions”

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### Abstract

Leadership is a fundamental element in the effective functioning of educational institutions. School heads, principals, and academic administrators influence institutional success through their leadership approach, decision-making style, and interaction with teachers and staff. This review paper examines different leadership styles practiced in educational institutions, such as transformational, transactional, democratic, autocratic, instructional, and distributed leadership. The study is based on secondary data collected from published research articles, books, and academic reports. The review highlights the influence of leadership styles on teacher motivation, organizational culture, and institutional performance. The study concludes that participative and adaptive leadership styles are more effective in achieving sustainable educational outcomes.

**Keywords:** Educational Leadership, Leadership Styles, Institutional Effectiveness, Instructional Leadership, Academic Administration

### Introduction

Educational institutions face continuous changes due to technological advancement, policy reforms, and increasing expectations from stakeholders. Educational leadership is not limited to administrative control but involves motivating teachers, supporting professional development, and fostering a positive learning environment. Different leadership styles have been adopted by educational leaders to manage institutional challenges. This review paper aims to examine major leadership styles applied in educational institutions and their implications for institutional performance. Various leadership theories have evolved to explain how leaders guide and influence organizations. Classical theories focused on traits and behaviors, whereas modern perspectives emphasize adaptability, collaboration, and ethical practices. Scholars like James MacGregor Burns and Bernard M. Bass introduced transformational leadership, which highlights inspiration, vision-building, and motivation as key elements of effective leadership. In educational settings, transformational leaders encourage innovation, professional development, and shared goals among teachers and staff.

## Review of Literature

Leadership in educational institutions has been widely studied due to its direct influence on institutional effectiveness, teacher motivation, and student achievement. Early leadership theories such as trait and behavioral theories emphasized inherent qualities and leader behaviors. However, contemporary research focuses more on situational and transformational approaches within educational settings.

James MacGregor Burns introduced the concept of transformational leadership, later expanded by Bernard M. Bass, highlighting inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Studies show that transformational leadership in schools enhances teacher commitment, innovation, and organizational culture. School principals who adopt this style foster collaboration, shared vision, and improved academic performance. Instructional leadership has also gained prominence, focusing on curriculum development, teaching quality, and student outcomes. Research indicates that principals practicing instructional leadership significantly influence academic achievement through supervision, feedback, and professional development support. Distributed leadership, supported by scholars like James P. Spillane, emphasizes shared responsibilities among teachers and administrators. This collaborative model improves organizational adaptability and fosters a culture of shared accountability.

### Objectives of the Study

- To examine various leadership styles practiced in educational institutions
- To identify emerging trends in educational leadership

### Research Methodology

The study adopts a **descriptive review methodology** based on secondary sources of information. Relevant literature was collected from academic journals, books, conference proceedings, and online scholarly databases such as Google Scholar and ResearchGate. Studies published primarily during the last ten years were reviewed. The collected literature was analyzed thematically to identify key leadership styles and their impact on educational institutions. The study follows a **systematic literature review approach**. It aims to analyze, compare, and interpret previous research findings related to leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, democratic, instructional, distributed, authentic, and servant leadership in educational settings.

### Leadership Styles in Educational Institutions

**Transformational Leadership** focuses on inspiring and motivating employees by developing a shared vision and encouraging innovation. In educational settings, transformational leaders promote professional growth among teachers and foster commitment toward institutional goals. Research indicates that this leadership style positively influences teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational performance.

**Transactional Leadership** is based on structured supervision, performance standards, and reward systems. Educational leaders using this approach emphasize compliance with rules and achievement of predefined objectives. While this style helps maintain discipline and order, excessive reliance on transactional leadership may restrict creativity and long-term engagement among teachers.

**Democratic leadership** encourages participation of teachers and staff in decision-making processes. This leadership style promotes collaboration, trust, and open communication within the institution. Studies suggest that democratic leadership enhances staff morale and strengthens organizational relationships, leading to improved institutional functioning. **Autocratic Leadership** involves centralized authority and limited involvement of subordinates in decision-making. In educational institutions, this style may be useful in emergency situations or when quick decisions are required. However, prolonged use of autocratic leadership can result in dissatisfaction, reduced motivation, and resistance among teachers.

## Findings

Transformational Leadership Enhances Institutional Performance Studies indicate that transformational leadership, proposed by James MacGregor Burns and further developed by Bernard M. Bass, positively influences teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. School leaders who articulate a clear vision and encourage innovation create a collaborative culture that improves student outcomes. Democratic Leadership Promotes Participation Research inspired by Kurt Lewin suggests that democratic leadership fosters participative decision-making and open communication. Educational institutions practicing this style experience higher teacher engagement and stronger teamwork compared to autocratic settings. Instructional Leadership Improves Academic Achievement Instructional leadership, which focuses on curriculum supervision and teaching quality, has a direct impact on student academic performance. Principals who actively monitor classroom practices and support professional development contribute significantly to improved learning outcomes.

### Impact of Leadership Styles on Educational Institutions

Leadership styles significantly affect the overall functioning of educational institutions. Effective leadership contributes to positive organizational culture, increased teacher motivation, and improved academic performance. Leadership styles that encourage participation and professional growth tend to create a supportive working environment. In contrast, rigid and authoritarian leadership approaches may negatively affect staff morale and institutional effectiveness.

## Conclusion

The present review highlights that leadership plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness, growth, and sustainability of educational institutions. Different leadership styles influence teacher performance, student achievement, institutional culture, and overall organizational success. Traditional approaches such as autocratic and democratic leadership, identified by Kurt Lewin, continue to provide foundational understanding, while modern approaches offer more adaptive and collaborative frameworks.

Transformational leadership, conceptualized by James MacGregor Burns and expanded by Bernard M. Bass, emerges as one of the most influential styles in educational settings. It promotes vision-building, motivation, innovation, and professional development. Similarly, instructional leadership directly impacts teaching quality and academic outcomes, while distributed leadership encourages shared responsibility and collective decision-making among educators. The review further concludes that there is no single “best” leadership style applicable to all educational institutions. Leadership effectiveness largely depends on contextual factors such as institutional goals, organizational culture, resources, and stakeholder expectations. Therefore, successful educational leaders often adopt a blended or situational approach, integrating multiple leadership styles to address diverse challenges.

In the era of rapid educational reforms, technological advancement, and increased accountability, adaptive and ethical leadership practices are essential. Educational institutions require leaders who are visionary, collaborative, and committed to continuous improvement. Overall, effective leadership remains a key determinant of institutional excellence and sustainable educational development.

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