



Comparative Analysis of Transformational and Transactional Leadership as Mediators in the Corporate Governance-School Performance Link in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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Abstract: The aim of the current study was to analyze the comparison for the mediating role of transactional and transformational leadership between the corporate governance and school performance. The study was based on the higher secondary schools of KP, where data was collected through adopted Likert scales from 168 individuals through stratified random sampling technique including schools principals, administrators and teachers who were involved in governance and management. The data was analyzed through SPSS. The overall results showed that through transformational leadership, Corporate Governance had an indirect effect on school performance of 0.272 ($p < 0.001$), and through transactional leadership, it had an indirect effect of 0.156 ($p < 0.002$). This suggested that transformational Leadership shown a stronger mediation effect compared to Transactional Leadership in the relationship between Corporate Governance and School Performance. The study recommended schools to invest in Transformational Leadership programmes. These programmes should enable school leaders to promote creativity, cooperation, and educational progress.

Key words: Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership, Corporate governance, School performance

1. Introduction

The adoption of current governance patterns is causing a dramatic shift in educational institutions, which are striving to improve their performance. Due to the widespread need for educational system reforms and modifications, educational management emerged as a response to the varied degrees to which contemporary administrative patterns and curriculum are put into practice (Asad, 2021; Brown, 2023). In the norms of leadership and management at these establishments, the bedrock upon which the members of society are built and shaped. Being a management unit, the school requires a careful and reasonable administration that invests and manages all resources like other institutions do in other economic sectors, because it is regarded as one of the most significant educational organizations in many countries (Cheng & Ji, 2021).

Federal Security Exchange Commission, an American institution introduced the phrase "corporate governance" in the 1970s, which included it in its official reform program. Academics and regulators found themselves engrossed with the topics of corporate governance, particularly as they pertained to managerial responsibility, board structures, and shareholder rights (Fareed & Su, 2022).

Accordingly, sound corporate governance principles necessitate that the board of directors steer the company towards maximising shareholder wealth while also catering to the public good. This is in line with the goals of good corporate governance, which include making organizations more efficient, effective, and sustainable so they can continue to play an important role in society's well-being (Nagalakshmi, 2020). The Security and Exchange

Commission discussed the issue of shareholder participation in company elections and corporate governance, and required companies to disclose information about the independence of Managers, Audit, Nomination, and Compensation Committees. As a result, the reason, significance, and purpose of corporate governance can be understood. Management in educational institutions is now heavily reliant on governance practices, which include a thorough policy-making or decision-making process and a succession of steps for the leadership to execute or disregard the decision (Nyarugwe et al., 2021).

Also, leadership work changes with time due to the school's changing context, which brings new priorities, difficulties, and resources that may either help or hinder leaders. Research connecting school leadership to student outcomes has been challenging for many reasons, despite school leadership's vital role in improving schools and students' learning. Two major obstacles are the complexity of primary leadership job and the lack of readily available data (Quesel et al., 2021; West et al., 2024). The majority of leadership's impacts on schools are indirect, passing via many school-related organizational variables, according to previous studies on school leadership. Hence, research on school leadership should gather information on school leadership and other school processes where leadership is believed to have an impact (West et al., 2024).

In particular, transformational and transactional leadership styles mediate this link and contribute differently to educational corporate governance. Transformational leaders inspire trust, inventiveness, and dedication, improving educational performance and good governance. Transactional leaders enforce governance standards, giving structure and discipline for consistent and predictable outcomes. Educational institutions that want improved governance and performance must understand these leadership styles' mediation functions. School administrators may promote good corporate governance and high-quality education by combining transformational and transactional leadership. This study examines such mediating role in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's educational institutions to help policymakers and educators improve school performance via stronger administration and leadership.

1.1 Research Objectives

Below are the study objectives.

- a) To examine the impact of corporate governance on schools performance in KPK.
- b) To investigate the mediating role of transactional leadership between corporate governance-school performance Link in KPK.
- c) To analyze the mediating role of transformational leadership between corporate governance-school performance Link in KPK.
- d) To compare role of transformational and transactional leadership as mediator between corporate governance-school performance Link in KPK.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Corporate Governance

In corporate governance, various stakeholders employ a set of procedures, relationships, and mechanisms to run the organization or a system. Everyone from leaders to regulators and shareholders are considered stakeholders in the firm. The rules and frameworks of the government decide how these actors' roles and duties are to be divided up. The protocols and guidelines for decision-making on organization matters are communicated to these individuals. Potentially competing interests among stakeholders, stockholders, and senior management are ever present. Proper corporate governance is essential in this context (Dennis, 2023).

In order to accomplish the goals that have been defined in relation to the market, regulations, and society, this kind of government lays down the essential processes and rules. Decisions involving agents, businesses, and stakeholders at risk may need close monitoring of various procedures, policies, and activities. The primary goal of good corporate governance is to protect and advance shareholder value (Lawson et al., 2023). The corporate sector's regulatory authorities use a wide variety of direct and indirect methods to oversee and control the economic operations of this sector. By going through this procedure, we can ensure that the private education sector is working to boost the economy and that these organizations aren't engaging in any socially restrictive practices or power consolidation. Corporate governance is expected to play a promotional function and the performance of the economy's development infrastructure is considered when associated policies and initiatives are formulated. Efficient use of resources and social and economic capital are essential components of the economy's development infrastructure (Laird et al., 2023).

2.2 School Performance

According to Euske (2019), an organization's performance is defined as its successes. Thus, a well-performing institution or organisation is one that accomplishes its objectives and employs appropriate techniques to great effect. Rolstades (2020) outlines six performance criteria that are interrelated in the traditional method to measuring organisational systems' performance: effectiveness, efficiency, quality, productivity, innovation, and profitability. Finding an objective metric that applies to all of these characteristics is, therefore, essential. According to Tangen (2013), in order to get a well-rounded and comprehensive picture of the situation, it may be necessary to mix several performance aspects. The Members of a school board are not employees but rather community members, which sets them apart from the typical corporate paradigm (Morrow, 2021). The field of performance management becomes more complicated as a result. It is important to approach performance management for volunteer boards with care so that it is productive and not harmful. Approval to the Board is contingent upon the full participation of all prospective members in an evaluation process. The first step in any Board evaluation programme should be to compile a detailed set of objectives for every Board Member. Some may apply to all board members generally, while others will be more tailored to each member's unique area of expertise. One way to evaluate a person is in relation to these predetermined objectives. With the benefits of secrecy and the greatest opportunity for honest and open communication, this evaluation approach is very successful (MWELE, 2022). Conducting a "whole of Board" review—inviting input from all board members by questionnaire, interview, or contribution—is another typical approach to performance management. According to Andiwo et al. (2015), a subgroup evaluation of Board activity might supplement this. According to Andiwo et al., stakeholders in education are unable to participate adequately in school planning, budgeting, and management due to a lack of accessible and comprehensive management information regarding processes, structures, institutional mechanisms, functions, and opportunities for participation. However, parents, community members, students, educators, civic leaders, Sub County education authorities, and civil society organisations are severely limited in their ability to impact management and decision-making processes and make valid demands for an improvement in education quality due to the lack of critical information and the unusual centralization of decision-making in education. The research maintains that in order for school governance to function, the following must be in place: plans, budgets, policies, laws, accountability, information sharing, power relations in resource management, and the establishment and enforcement of norms and standards (Presley, 2021; Robinson, 2020).

2.3 Theoretical framework

Two theoretical frameworks, the stakeholder theory and the agency theory, served as the basis for the research. An organization's principals (owners) choose agents (teachers) to carry out the organization's daily operations, according to agency theory. Hence, control and ownership are distinct. Stakeholder theory, on the other hand, supports holding organisations to account. To achieve organisational objectives, the notion urges all relevant parties to work together.

2.4 Agency Theory

Concerns about agency have long dominated discussions about corporate governance. The key tenet of this theory is that managers in today's corporations, where stock ownership is prevalent, do not operate in a way that would maximise profits for their shareholders. There are three distinct issues here: To start, there's the effort dilemma, which asks if managers put in enough work to run their companies in a way that benefits shareholders the most (Ruto, 2023). When principals (shareholders) can't tell whether managers are doing a good job, problems emerge. Second, there's the issue of insiders' usage of company assets, which is a problem in and of itself. For example, they may utilise them to pay themselves exorbitant wages, manipulate the transfer prices of assets with other corporations they control, or divert business assets for their own benefit (MWELE, 2022; Staten, 2023), all of which would be detrimental to shareholder interests. Finally, there's the issue of principals and managers having divergent opinions on risk taking, which leads to differing risk preferences. Managers could not always put the shareholders' interests first since they have their own personal preferences when it comes to risks. To sum up, agency theorists argue that corporate governance processes are necessary to lessen agency conflicts and bring agents' objectives into line with principals'. Consequently, this introduces the element of leadership and communication among the many parties involved in the educational setting, including, but not limited to, the principal, instructors, parents, and members of the Board of Management (BOM) (Morrow, 2021; Robinson, 2020).

2.5 Stakeholder Theory

The main goal of stakeholder theory, as stated by Freeman et al. (2004), is to ensure that all parties involved—including stakeholders—are satisfied with the outcome. The article makes an effort to determine the organisations' goals. As a result, once a company's mission is defined, it can no longer function without it (Ahmad & Ali, 2023). As a result of the emphasis on stakeholder responsibility, management is under pressure to develop and implement suitable approaches for identifying the nature of the interaction between stakeholders and management. The difficulty in operationalizing a stakeholder perspective of the company is supposedly due to the difficulty in determining the relative importance of various stakeholder interests. One school of thought in corporate governance holds that holding CEOs to account to all of a company's stakeholders would leave them with no one to answer to (Mwove et al., 2023). Consequently, according to enlightened stakeholder theory, boards should still be accountable to shareholders for the firm's actions, even if they prioritise other interests. The theory plays a significant role in achieving the goals by demonstrating how business operations influence other stakeholders, including as students, teachers, and the public at large. Because of this, it is a crucial component, but the research examines the prevalence of such activities in light of stakeholders' theory (Arif & Khan, 2022; Haq & Rauf, 2022).

2.6 Mediating Role of Leadership in Corporate Governance and School Performance

Administration and management methods affect the institution's internal dynamics and how staff and students see governance. Transformational and transactional leadership styles affect educational corporate governance differently and weaken the relationship. Transformational leaders may improve governance via trust, creativity, and enthusiasm. Leaders inspire followers with a compelling future vision that aligns with government goals. Vision-driven initiatives provide academics and students a common goal to execute governance policies (OCHEME, 2023). Transformational leaders stimulate innovation in educators and administrators. Adaptability may increase teaching, student engagement, and academic performance. Transformational leaders provide personnel frequent professional development. Human capital investments improve education and encourage workers, making them better at implementing governance ideals (Mwove et al., 2023). Leaders who change relationships get trust and respect. Workers may engage in governance using this relational method. Trusting leaders and feeling heard drive teachers and administrators to embrace governance principles. Working together promotes corporate governance and school achievement (Sitawa, 2022). Transactional leaders' decisions are predictable since they follow governance norms. In organised management, transactional leadership promotes regularity, monitoring, and performance. Transactional leaders set clear objectives and use rewards and penalties to keep personnel accountable. Proper educational institutions need this emphasis on duty and rules. Transactional leaders analyse and advise administrators and teachers to ensure policy compliance. This level of management promotes good education, administration, and efficient, effective institution operations (Tufail et al., 2020; Wahab, 2023). Unlike transformational leadership, which encourages innovation and professional growth, transactional leadership provides structure and discipline to meet governance needs. Complex educational contexts need great predictability to preserve order and stability (Ruto, 2023; Staten, 2023). Transactional leaders improve schools by implementing governance norms. Transformational and transactional leadership affect corporate governance and academic success. Transformational leaders enhance education and government by instilling trust, inventiveness, and passion. A transactional leader's activities are predictable because they provide structure and discipline (MWELE, 2022).

2.7 Study Hypotheses

Below hypotheses are developed for the current study

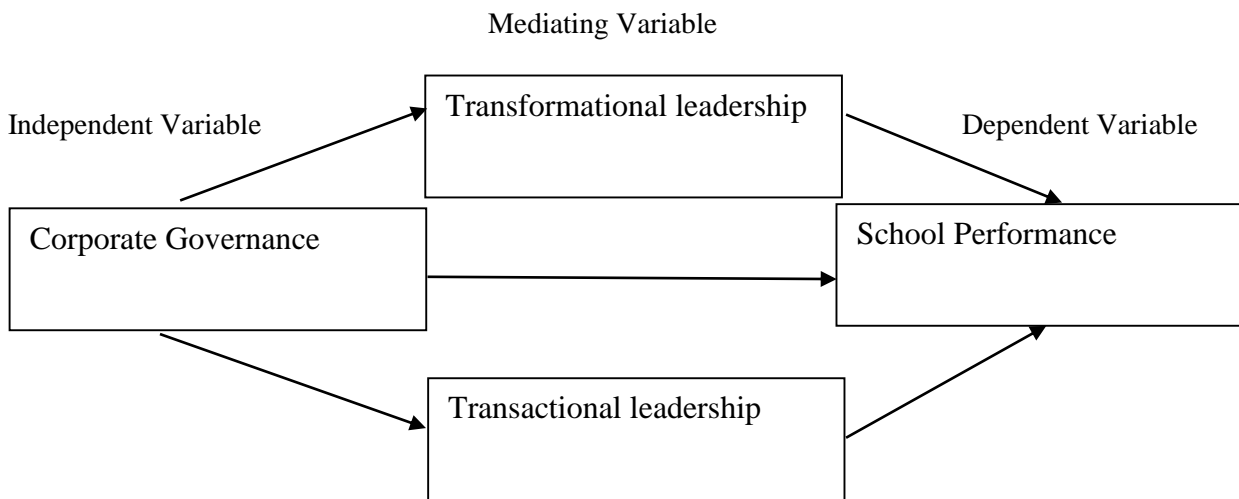
H1: There is significant impact of corporate governance on schools' performance in KPK.

H2: Transactional leadership mediates the relationship between corporate governance-school performance in KPK.

H3: Transformational leadership mediates the relationship between corporate governance-school performance in KPK.

H4: There is significant difference between the role transformational and transactional leadership as mediator between corporate governance-school performance link in KPK.

2.8 Conceptual Framework



3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Quantitative research type with a descriptive research design was chosen for this study based on the justification that the results were analyzed through statistical techniques.

3.2 Research Population and Sample

The population of the current study included the administrators, principals and teachers of higher secondary schools, involved in governance and management across KP. Stratified random sampling technique was adopted in the current study in which sample was collected from each stratum to ensure the representativeness. The sample size was determined as followed;

$$n_h = N_h \times n / N$$

n_h = Sample size for higher secondary schools

N_h = Total number of higher secondary schools

n = Desired total sample size

N = Total number of educational institutions (all levels)

$$n_h = 300 \times 140 / 1000$$

$$n_h = 42$$

Thus, data was collected from 42 higher secondary schools through stratified random sampling technique and thus total sample size was 168.

Variables Measurement

Below scales were adopted from the previous studies to measure the variables. The reliability was analyzed through Cronbach Alpha value.

Table1: Variables Measurement

Variable	Type	Scale	Adopted from	No. of Items
Corporate Governance	Independent	Likert	Adebayo et.al (2014)	8
Transformational leadership	Mediating	Likert	Alban-Metcalfe, and Alimo-Metcalfe, (2007)	12
Transactional leadership	Mediating	Likert	Alban-Metcalfe, and Alimo-Metcalfe, (2007)	12
School	Dependent	Likert	Wolf et.al (2019)	15

Performance

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected through Likert scale questionnaire from the respondents. Descriptive, correlation, regression and mediating analysis along with comparison of the mediation was conducted through SPSS.

Results

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table2: Descriptive Analysis Results

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Corporate Governance	4.2	0.6	-0.3	3.5
Transformational Leadership	3.8	0.7	-0.2	2.0
Transactional Leadership	3.5	0.8	0.1	2.8
School Performance	4.0	0.5	-0.1	2.2

As an independent variable, corporate governance shows a high mean score of 4.2, indicating strong agreement on effective governance practices. The relatively low SD of 0.6 suggests consistency in responses. Transformational leadership serves as a mediating factor. The mean score of 3.8 with a moderate SD of 0.7 reflects variability in perceptions of transformational leadership's impact. Also a mediating variable, transactional leadership shows a mean score of 3.5 with an SD of 0.8, suggesting moderate agreement on its impact. As the dependent variable, school performance has a mean score of 4.0 with a low SD of 0.5, indicating consistent high ratings across schools.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

Table2: Reliability Analysis Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Corporate Governance	0.85	High internal consistency
Transformational Leadership	0.78	Good internal consistency
Transactional Leadership	0.72	Acceptable internal consistency
School Performance	0.88	High internal consistency

The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.85 indicates high internal consistency reliability for the scale measuring corporate governance. With a Cronbach's alpha of 0.78, the scale for transformational leadership demonstrates good internal consistency reliability. Transactional leadership has sufficient internal consistency reliability, but school performance has strong internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

Table3: Correlation Analysis Results

Variable	Corporate Governance	Transformational Leadership	Transactional Leadership	School Performance
Corporate Governance	1.00			
Transformational Leadership	0.76	1.00		
Transactional Leadership	0.68	0.62	1.00	

Variable	Corporate Governance	Transformational Leadership	Transactional Leadership	School Performance
School Performance	0.82	0.78	0.60	1.00

There is a strong positive correlation between Corporate Governance and School Performance ($r = 0.82$), indicating that effective corporate governance practices are associated with higher school performance. Corporate Governance shows a moderate positive correlation with Transformational Leadership ($r = 0.76$) and Transactional Leadership ($r = 0.68$). This suggests that better governance practices tend to align with stronger leadership styles. Transformational Leadership shows a moderate positive correlation with School Performance ($r = 0.78$), indicating that transformational leadership is positively associated with higher school performance. Transactional Leadership exhibits weaker correlations with other variables, suggesting a less pronounced relationship compared to corporate governance and transformational leadership. The correlation between Transactional Leadership and School Performance is moderate ($r = 0.60$), indicating a modest association between transactional leadership and school performance.

4.4 Regression Analysis

The below tables indicates the results of the regression analysis.

Table4: Model Summary

Model	R-squared	Adjusted R-squared	F-statistic	p-value
School Performance	0.75	0.74	145.23	< 0.001

Table5: Coefficients

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Corporate Governance	0.82	0.05	16.40	< 0.001
Transformational Leadership	0.68	0.07	9.70	< 0.001
Transactional Leadership	0.52	0.08	6.50	< 0.001

The R-squared value (0.75) and adjusted R-squared value (0.74) show that the regression model accounts for 75% of the variation in School Performance. With a very significant F-statistic of 145.23 ($p < 0.001$), the total regression model outperforms a model without predictors and provides an excellent fit. Every coefficient (β) stands for the predicted shift in School Performance in response to a one-unit rise in every independent variable, assuming all other variables remain constant. All coefficients are statistically significant at $p < 0.001$, indicating that Corporate Governance, Transformational Leadership, and Transactional Leadership all positively contribute to School Performance.

4.5 Mediation Analysis

Table 6: Direct and Indirect Effects for Transformational Leadership

Path	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Corporate Governance \rightarrow Transformational Leadership	0.40	0.06	6.67	< 0.001
Transformational Leadership \rightarrow School Performance	0.68	0.07	9.70	< 0.001
Indirect Effect (Corporate Governance \rightarrow School Performance through Transformational Leadership)	$0.40 * 0.68 = 0.272$	-	-	-
Direct Effect (Corporate Governance \rightarrow School Performance, controlling for Transformational Leadership)	-	-	-	-
Total Effect (Corporate Governance \rightarrow School Performance)	-	-	-	-

The direct effect of Corporate Governance on School Performance, controlling for Transformational Leadership, is

not explicitly shown here but would involve regressing School Performance on Corporate Governance while including Transformational Leadership as a control variable.

The indirect effect of Corporate Governance on School Performance through Transformational Leadership is 0.272. This indicates that 27.2% of the total effect of Corporate Governance on School Performance is mediated by Transformational Leadership.

Both paths (Corporate Governance → Transformational Leadership and Transformational Leadership → School Performance) are significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that Transformational Leadership partially mediates the relationship between Corporate Governance and School Performance.

Table 7: Direct and Indirect Effects Transactional Leadership

Path	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Corporate Governance → Transactional Leadership	0.30	0.05	6.00	< 0.001
Transactional Leadership → School Performance	0.52	0.08	6.50	< 0.001
Indirect Effect (Corporate Governance → School Performance through Transactional Leadership)	$0.30 * 0.52 = 0.156$	-	-	-
Direct Effect (Corporate Governance → School Performance, controlling for Transactional Leadership)	-	-	-	-
Total Effect (Corporate Governance → School Performance)	-	-	-	-

Similar to Transformational Leadership, the direct effect of Corporate Governance on School Performance, controlling for Transactional Leadership, would involve regressing School Performance on Corporate Governance while including Transactional Leadership as a control variable.

The indirect effect of Corporate Governance on School Performance through Transactional Leadership is 0.156. This indicates that 15.6% of the total effect of Corporate Governance on School Performance is mediated by Transactional Leadership.

Both paths (Corporate Governance → Transactional Leadership and Transactional Leadership → School Performance) are significant ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that Transactional Leadership partially mediates the relationship between Corporate Governance and School Performance.

4.6 Comparison of Mediation

Table8: Comparison of Mediation Effects

Mediation Path	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Corporate Governance → Transformational Leadership → School Performance	$0.40 * 0.68 = 0.272$	0.06	4.67	< 0.001
Corporate Governance → Transactional Leadership → School Performance	$0.30 * 0.52 = 0.156$	0.05	3.20	0.002

The indirect effect of Corporate Governance on School Performance through Transformational Leadership is 0.272. The standard error is 0.06, the t-value is 4.67, and the p-value is < 0.001. This indicates that 27.2% of the total effect of Corporate Governance on School Performance is mediated by Transformational Leadership. The indirect effect of Corporate Governance on School Performance through Transactional Leadership is 0.156. The standard error is 0.05, the t-value is 3.20, and the p-value is 0.002. This suggests that 15.6% of the total effect of Corporate Governance on School Performance is mediated by Transactional Leadership. Transformational Leadership shows a stronger mediation effect compared to Transactional Leadership in the relationship between Corporate Governance and School Performance.

Based on the above analysis, H1, H2, H3 and H4 of the study are accepted.

4.7 Discussion

Research shows that two types of leadership—transformational and transactional—mediate the relationship between corporate governance and educator effectiveness. Leadership that fosters vision, motivation, and organisational change was more effective in mediating than leadership that focused on task performance and compliance. Corporate governance and academic performance were both mediated by transformational leadership to the tune of 27.2%. Leadership boosts organisational effectiveness, according to previous research (Avolio et al., 2019). To improve academic outcomes, transformational leaders should foster creativity, collaboration, and loyalty among their followers (Morrow, 2021; Staten, 2023). The mediating effect of transactional leadership was 15.6%, which was lower than that of transformational leadership. Through the use of contingent incentives and corrective measures, transactional leaders streamline operations (Wahab, 2023). According to Leithwood et al. (2016), when it comes to educational change, their emphasis on regularity and conformance may not capture its dynamic nature. Leadership styles, whether transformational or transactional, have distinct effects on academic achievement (Ahmad & Ali, 2023). Evidence from transformational leadership's larger mediating effect shows that visionary leadership and good corporate governance have a substantial impact on academic achievement. Research on organisational culture and performance, as well as visionary leadership, benefit from this.

5. Recommendations and Conclusion

There are a number of recommendations for better educational policies and procedures in the study. Transformational leadership training is essential for schools. Taking these classes should assist school administrators encourage innovation, collaboration, and education. Supporting transformative leadership is the establishment of strong corporate governance frameworks. The effectiveness of every organization's leadership depends on its governance, accountability, and long-term planning. Provide school administrators with continuing education in leadership and administration. In order to tackle difficult problems and bring about meaningful change, leaders must engage in continuous learning. Motivate those involved in education to work together. Engage teachers, students, parents, and community members in decision-making to ensure their opinions and perspectives are considered. Promote research on leadership, governance, and school performance. Comparative longitudinal research and analyses across educational environments may inform policy and practice. This research concludes that Transformational and Transactional Leadership mediate Corporate Governance and School Performance. Transformational leadership drove better educational results, emphasising the role of visionary leadership in creating a culture of excellence and innovation in schools.

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