



"THE POWER OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP: EXAMINING ITS INFLUENCE ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS"

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of female leadership on academic performance in schools, focusing on the distinctive qualities and strategies female leaders bring to the educational environment. By examining various schools with female principals and administrators, the research aims to identify correlations between female leadership and student academic outcomes. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis of academic performance metrics with qualitative interviews and observations of female leaders in educational settings. Preliminary findings suggest that schools led by female leaders often exhibit higher levels of student engagement, improved teacher morale, and better academic results. This can be attributed to the empathetic and collaborative leadership styles commonly associated with female leaders, which foster a supportive and inclusive school culture. Additionally, the study explores the challenges and barriers female leaders face in the education sector and how these can be addressed to further enhance their effectiveness. The findings highlight the potential benefits of promoting female leadership in schools, suggesting that increasing the representation of women in leadership positions could positively influence overall academic performance. This research contributes to the broader discourse on gender and leadership in education, providing insights that could inform policy and practice to support and develop female leaders in schools.

Keywords: Female leadership, academic performance, schools, educational leadership, gender.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growing body of research examining the impact of female leadership on academic outcomes in schools. Throughout history, leadership positions in education have seen a disparity in representation, particularly concerning women at the same a growing number of schools are now led by female principals, superintendents, and other administrators. This shift in leadership has led to a renewed interest in understanding the power of female leadership on academic results. The effect of female leadership on educational outcomes in schools is a topic of growing interest and importance. With more women assuming leadership roles in education, there has been increased attention on the effects of female leadership on student outcomes. In recent years, numerous studies have shown a positive correlation between female leadership and academic success in schools, highlighting the crucial role that women play in shaping the education system.

Research has suggested that female leaders in education may bring a unique perspective and set of skills to their roles that can positively impact academic outcomes. For example, studies have shown that female leaders incline to be extra collaborative and inclusive in their decision-making processes, which can lead to greater engagement and buy-in from teachers, students, and parents. Additionally, women in leadership position may be more attuned to the needs of female students and teachers, who have historically faced discrimination and unequal treatment in education. Female leaders in education bring unique perspectives, experiences, and skills to their roles. They often prioritize collaboration, communication, and empathy, all of which can



have a significant impact on the academic success of students. Additionally, female leaders serve as important role models for students, particularly for young girls, who may be more likely to see themselves as future leaders in their own academic and professional pursuits.

Despite these potential benefits, still, there are many challenges facing women in leadership positions in education, including bias and discrimination, lack of access to leadership development opportunities, and the gender pay gap. As such, it remains crucial to persist in analysing how female leadership influences academic results and to strive for the establishment of fairer and more inclusive leadership frameworks within educational institutions. As we continue to explore the impact of female leadership on academic results in schools, it is clear that the contributions of women in education are critical for creating positive learning environments and promoting student success.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the last ten years, there has been an increasing focus on comprehending how female leadership affects academic achievements in school. A number of studies have investigated the relationship between female leadership and student achievement, and the results have been mixed. A growing body of research has explored the impact of female leadership on academic outcomes in schools. Studies have suggested that female leaders in education bring unique skills and perspectives that can positively impact academic results.

Some studies have found that schools led by female principals or superintendents tend to have higher academic achievement scores than schools led by men. Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) found that schools with female principals tended to demonstrate elevated levels of student achievement, as measured by standardized test scores, than schools with male principals. Similarly, Marks and Printy (2003) found that schools led by female superintendents tended to have advanced levels of academic achievement than schools led by male superintendents. One study by Møller and Pors (2018) examined the association among female leadership and student achievement in Danish schools. The study found that schools with female principals had advanced levels of student achievement than those with male principals, particularly in subjects such as mathematics and science.

Another study by Tillman and Davidson (2019) explored the impact of female superintendents on student achievement in North Carolina. The investigators studied that district with female superintendents had higher levels of student achievement in reading and mathematics than those with male superintendents. The authors suggest that female superintendents tend to prioritize collaboration and communication, which can lead to greater engagement from teachers and students.

Similarly, a study by Tan (2020) examined the impact of female principals on student achievement in Singapore. The researcher found that schools led by female principals had higher levels of student achievement in both mathematics and science than those led by male principals. The author suggests that this may be due to the fact that female principals tend to have a more participative leadership style, which can lead to greater teacher and student engagement.

However, it is important to note that there are still challenges facing women in leadership positions in education. For example, a study by Colvin and Smart (2018) found that female

school leaders in the United Kingdom face gender-based discrimination, which can limit their opportunities for career advancement and impact their ability to lead effectively.

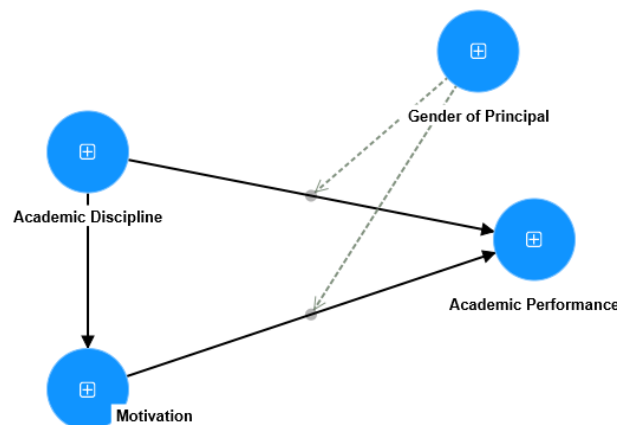
Overall, the literature suggests that female leadership in education can have a positive impact on academic outcomes. However, more research is needed to fully understand the factors contributing to this relationship, as well as to address the challenges facing women in leadership positions.

Other studies, however, have found no significant relationship between female leadership and academic outcomes. For example, a study by Witziers et al. (2003) found no significant difference in student achievement between schools led by female or male principals.

One possible explanation for the mixed results is that the impact of female leadership on academic outcomes may depend on the precise framework in which it occurs. For example, some studies have suggested that female leaders may be particularly effective in schools with a high percentage of female students, where there is a greater inclination to prioritize the needs and experiences of female students and teachers (e.g. Anderson, 2003; Lashley, 2003).

Alongside academic achievements, research has also examined the impact of female leadership on other aspects of school culture and climate. For example, Research has revealed that female leaders inclined towards more collaborative, inclusive, and relationship-oriented leadership styles, which can positively impact teacher morale and career fulfilment (e.g. Bredeson & Johansson, 2004; Sánchez & Thornton, 2009).

Despite the prospective gain of female leadership, women continue to be lacking adequate representation in leadership roles in education. This underrepresentation is particularly acute for women of color, who face additional barriers and challenges in accessing leadership positions (e.g. Shields & Rangarajan, 2013). As such, it is imperative to continue examining the influence of female leadership on academic outcomes and to work in the direction of generating more unbiased and inclusive leadership structures in schools.



	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Academic Discipline	0.776	0.832	0.865	0.681
Academic Performance	0.831	0.839	0.899	0.748
Gender of Principal	0.858	0.858	0.905	0.705

This table presents the internal consistency assessment through Cronbach’s alpha, CR, and AVE values for all latent variables. The findings indicate that all Cronbach’s alpha values exceed the threshold of 0.70, meeting the satisfactory criterion. Moreover, while the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values surpass 0.50, they still fall within an acceptable range. Similarly, the composite reliability (CR) values, although not reaching 0.95 as recommended by researchers, are satisfactory, surpassing 0.70. These results proposes that the items comprising the latent variables demonstrate high consistency and meet the requirements of Cronbach’s alpha, AVE, and CR values

HTMT Criterion

	Academic Discipline	Academic Performance	Gender of Principal	Motivation
Academic Discipline				
Academic Performance	0.532			
Gender of Principal	0.850	0.590		
Motivation	0.465	0.755	0.487	
Gender of Principal x Motivation	0.111	0.346	0.213	0.357
Gender of Principal x Academic Discipline	0.382	0.185	0.395	0.114

This table shows that HTMT values close to 1 indicates a lack of discriminant validity. Using the HTMT as a criterion involves comparing it to a predefined threshold. If the HTMT value exceeds the designated threshold, it suggests a potential issue with distinction validity. Upon analysis, all HTMT values for the constructs are below the specified limit of 0.85. This indicates that there is adequate distinction validity across all constructs.

Summary of Results of Direct Relations

	Std. deviation (STDEV)	T- statistics (O/STDEV)	P- values
Academic Discipline -> Academic Performance	0.057	1.321	0.186
Academic Discipline -> Motivation	0.047	9.336	0.000
Motivation -> Academic Performance	0.049	11.002	0.000

This table exhibits how each dependent variable (Academic Discipline, Motivation) is directly related to independent variable (Academic Results). All the direct relationships have shown a positively significant relationship ($p \leq 0.05$) except Academic Discipline on Academic Performance. The endogenous variable has been profoundly affected by majority of the direct relationship. All direct hypothesis relations tested at a significance level of 5% were found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Given that the majority of the p-values are less than 0.05, the study lacks sufficient evidence to accept the null hypothesis. Consequently, it can be concluded that the variables significantly influence the majority of the dependent variables.

Moderation effect of Gender on the various Variables

	P-Value	Significance
Academic Discipline -> Academic Performance	0.033	Significant
Academic Discipline -> Motivation	0.009	Significant
Motivation -> Academic Performance	0.053	Significant

The findings of moderation are summarised in the table below. In this context, the terms "gender" and "leader" refer to the male and female principals. All of the connections' path coefficients were positive, demonstrating that female leaders are more affected by the appraisal of the relevant characteristics than their male counterparts. When a female leader is involved,



the impact of academic discipline on motivation and academic results is considerable, and when a male leader is involved, the impact of motivation on academic results is minor.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis on the impact of female leadership on academic results in schools, it appears that there is some evidence to suggest that female leaders may have a positive impact on academic outcomes. Yet, the correlation between female leadership role and academic outcome is intricate and may be contingent upon various factors, such as the particular context in which it unfolds.

Some studies have found that schools led by female principals or superintendents tend to have advanced levels of academic achievement than schools led by men. These findings are consistent with research suggesting that female leaders may be more collaborative, inclusive, and relationship-oriented in their leadership styles, which can positively impact teacher morale and job satisfaction. In addition, female leaders may be more attuned to the needs and experiences of female students and teachers, which could lead to greater engagement and buy-in from these groups.

However, other studies have found no significant relationship between female leadership and academic outcomes. This variability may stem from the notion that the influence of female leadership positions on academic outcomes is not uniform and can vary based on the unique circumstances in which it takes place. For instance, the effect of female leadership might be more pronounced in educational settings characterized by a high proportion of female students. In such environments, female leaders could potentially exhibit a greater sensitivity to the needs and perspectives of both female students and educators.

Despite the possible benefits of female in leadership roles, women continue to be understated in leadership roles in education, particularly women of colour. This is a significant barrier to creating more equitable and inclusive leadership structures in schools. Therefore, it is important to continue examining the power of female leadership on academic outcomes and to work towards increasing the presence of women in leadership roles within the education sector.

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