A Study Of Instructional Leadership Of School Heads Regarding Annual School Goals: A Cross-Cultural Study

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the instructional leadership of school heads for annual school goals, focusing on two key influences: school location (rural or urban) and the head's gender. Examining their role as leaders at the core of the educational system in Pakistan, the research aimed to determine the extent of their involvement as instructional leaders within these contexts. Utilizing a quantitative approach and survey design, the study included public secondary school heads, teachers, and district education officers across Bhakkar and Mianwali districts in Punjab. Through a multi-stage stratified sampling technique, the research explored the engagement of 150 heads (including rural and urban females/males) and 400 teachers (female/male in both localities), along with four district education officers (two male and two female). Using a validated questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale, the study collected data and analyzed it via descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) for perception of involvement. Inferential statistics (t-test and ANOVA) were then employed to compare engagement across the chosen factors. There were 150 heads (Rural Females=49, Urban Females=08) & (Rural Males=80, Urban Males=13), 400 Teachers (Rural Females=116, Urban Females=117) & (Rural Males=234, Urban Males=33) and 4 DEOs (Male=2 & Female=2). The data was collected through a questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert Scale with 62 items. The data was analyzed through SPSS version 25 using descriptive statistics (Frequency and percentage) for perception regarding involvement and inferential statistics (t-test) and ANOVA for comparison. The results show that female heads were more instructional leaders than male heads and urban school heads were more instructional leaders than rural heads.

Key Words: Instructional leadership, heads, Public secondary school, cross-culture, Comparison

INTRODUCTION

Instructional Leadership

Kouzes and Posner (2002) Emerging within the Effective Schooling movement in the US, Instructional Leadership highlighted the crucial role of head teachers/principals in fostering positive learning outcomes at the secondary level. This philosophy emphasizes their active involvement in managing curricula, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources effectively, and providing ongoing teacher evaluation. Ultimately, these activities serve the dual purpose of enhancing student learning skills and ensuring the smooth operation of the school system. In essence, Instructional Leadership positions head teachers/principals as both learning facilitators and system managers, driving

success within educational institutions. (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2011).

Kouzes and Posner (2002) education leadership has always been a crucial aspect, but the emergence of the Instructional Leader brings a fresh perspective to the table. Moving beyond mere administration, an instructional leader actively impacts and improves the entire educational landscape at the school level. (Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2011).

Hallinger (2005) the life of a school head or principal is like a juggling act, constantly shifting between different roles and responsibilities as the needs of the school demand. Unlike the one-dimensional role of a classroom teacher, the instructional leader navigates diverse aspects of school life, impacting not just students but also teachers, parents, and even the broader community. While the perception of heads as mere teachers lingered in the past, this approach proved inadequate. Holding individual teachers accountable was insufficient for driving overall school improvement. Gradually, a shift emerged. Principals embraced broader responsibilities, actively participating in school activities and fostering a sense of ownership for the success of their students and staff. This evolution from passive teacher to active instructional leader marked a significant transformation in school leadership.

The role of an instructional leader is not merely outsourcing the responsibilities to the members of his or her team and staying aloof from the teaching and learning process that is taking place between teachers and students, he or she does not sit and witness the whole game as a spectator outside the game field. He or she is a player himself or herself and equally responsible for the pros and cons of the whole process,

works with team members throughout the process of education, and resolves all the issues of all the stakeholders who are participants of education (Timperley, 2011).

Annual School Goals

Hallinger and Murphy (2013) emerged in the 1980s, that instructional leadership emphasizes how head teachers (principals) use their leadership and resources to improve teaching and learning at the school level. This study fills a research gap in Pakistan's Punjab province by focusing on two key aspects:

Instructional leadership: Are head teachers in the Bhakkar and Mianwali districts acting as instructional leaders?

Influencing factors: Does gender and rural/urban location impact their role as instructional leaders?

Previous studies explored leadership styles and their effects, but this research delves deeper, examining the very existence and nature of instructional leadership in these specific districts, and considering relevant cultural and gender influences. This can provide valuable insights and inform future research on effective school leadership in Pakistan.

In a nutshell, this study breaks new ground by investigating whether head teachers in two Pakistani districts fulfill the crucial role of instructional leaders and how cultural and gender factors shape their approaches.

Harris and De-Flamins (2016) Instructional leaders drive school excellence by setting challenging, attainable goals and inspiring their whole team to achieve them. Aligning goals with vision, mission, and stakeholder needs fuels commitment and passion for shared success.

Hallinger (2018) Effective instructional leadership thrives on setting ambitious yet attainable school goals. This approach unlocks a wave of positive momentum: Teachers find themselves energized and inspired by these clear targets, readily channeling their efforts toward realizing them for their students. Students, in turn, feel a deeper connection to their studies as goals resonate with their ambitions and life aspirations. This fosters a heightened sense of purpose and fuels their drive for academic success. (Andrews, Conway, & Smith, 2017).

Framing of school goals plays a role in creating an insight of vitality meanwhile fostering a sense of collective effort and joint responsibility among teachers, students including all the stakeholders. A study by Leithwood (2019) describes the importance of framing goals to create strong collaboration, collective commitment, and accountability for achieving common school goals. An instructional leader not only frames school goals but also extends support through effective plans, policies, and meaningful practices to achieve the goal. Hakanson (2023) demonstrated the significance of extending dynamic feedback and expert support to his or her team of teachers so that they can attain the goals successfully. The instructional leader who implements a supportive approach, and provision of resources, and opportunities for professional development are found to influence the practices of teachers and the results of students positively.

Annual School Goals Regarding Gender

Davis (2016) Gender differences are involved in shaping the role of instructional leaders. Male instructional leaders usually focus on setting goals that are task and outcome-or based on measurable achievement. They give more importance to the school goals that are based on excellence in academics, scores through standardized testing, and competitive performance parameters. Smith, DeJoy, and Dyal (2020) demonstrated in a study that male instructional leaders have a directive approach in their style of leadership while framing school goals. They communicate the goals straightforwardly with assertiveness and demand strict adherence to the set targets and time assigned. Due to this approach, the setting process in the school remains clear and structured.

Female instructional leaders focus on collaboration and relationships while setting school goals (Davis, 2016). They give priority to an inclusive environment for learning based on the holistic development of students by creating strong relationships between teachers and students. They play a participatory role in the setting of school goals and involve teachers, parents, and students including all the other stakeholders through consensus and shared objectives. In this way, they build a partnership in the process (Smith, DeJoy & Dyal, 2020).

Annual School Goals Regarding Locality

Smith, Hayes, and Lyons (2017) Instructional leaders confront unique situations and challenges in rural areas that affect the framing of school goals. Research explored that the schools in rural areas according to the rural communities face challenges such as limited resources and lack of required educational opportunities.

Brown, Ekoue, and Goodban (2019) the instructional leader prefers framing school goals that prioritize community engagement, and collaboration of stakeholders in the area helps in the

development of the target curriculum. It is emphasized in the previous studies that the relationship between the local community and school is very important. It is demonstrated that involving the local community brings about enhanced educational outcomes in rural areas. It supports the norm of place-based education which prioritizes the amalgamation of indigenous knowledge and local culture with curriculum.

Cruz, Rodriguez, and Segovia (2021) point out various issues of the schools in urban areas such as students from diverse cultures, socioeconomic differences, and overfilled classrooms. Because of these reasons, school heads of urban areas focus on equity, social harmony, and a broader perspective of education while framing school goals (Garcia & Russo, 2020).

Ladson-Billings (2016) these challenges compel school heads to prioritize equity-based pedagogy and overall school practices. According to researchers, teaching methods conducive to culture can enhance students' motivation toward studies and improve academic outcomes in urban areas with diverse populations. Therefore, it requires school heads to frame goals that give importance to a variety of cultures and students' social demands in urban areas.

Davis and Boudreaux (2019) Rural and urban areas depict different socioeconomic cultures that create distinct challenges for students, teachers, and school heads while setting school goals and achieving them. This study describes that rural and urban areas need effective instructional leadership involving the development of clear expectations and continuous professional growth. The schools in both areas may reap the benefits of strong relationships with the community, business

organizations, and institutions of higher education. Vargas & Rodriguez (2018); and Hands, Armstrong & Mitchell (2020) prioritize the importance of joint partnerships for enhancing opportunities and facilities for students in both areas with different social setups.

Problem Statement
The problem understudy was, "Instructional Leadership of School Heads Regarding Annual School Goals: a cross-cultural Study"

Research Objectives
The main objectives of the study were to find out and compare the involvement of public secondary school heads regarding annual school goals as instructional leadership on gender and locality bases.

Research Questions
What was the involvement of public secondary school heads regarding annual school goals as instructional leadership on gender and locality bases?

Research Hypotheses
The main hypothesis of the study was:
H_{01a}:   There is no significant difference in the involvement of public secondary school heads regarding annual school goals on gender and locality bases.

Significance of the Study
Examining instructional leadership and annual school goals across cultures offers a treasure trove of knowledge. It pinpoints effective practices, unveils cultural nuances influencing leadership styles, and sparks global collaboration to tackle shared educational challenges. Ultimately, this understanding translates into informed policies, improved leadership behavior, and a move towards an equitable and

excellent education for all students worldwide.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design
The research design is a descriptive survey because it describes the present situation of the extent which secondary school heads are involved as instructional leaders in the process of teaching and learning. The research that deals with the investigation of any existing situation is termed descriptive research (Sidhu, 2000).

The population of the study
The population of this study consists of public secondary schools in the Bhakkar and Mianwali Districts of Punjab.

Table#1: Description of Population

Districts	Schools				Stakeholders								Administrators (DEOs)	
	Schools				Heads				Teachers				Administrators (DEOs)	
	M		F		M		F		M		F		M	F
	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R		
Bhakkar	10	74	6	44	10	74	06	44	179	1249	105	731	01	01
Mianwali	12	82	7	52	12	82	07	52	215	1501	127	891	01	01
Total (Locality)	32	156	13	96	32	156	13	96	394	2750	232	1622	02	02
Total	188		109		188		109		3144		1854		04	
Overall	297				297				4998					

U=Urban, R=Rural, M=Male, F=Female   Source: Annual School Census 2020-21 Punjab

Sampling Techniques
For the study multi-stage, stratified sampling technique was used to create a sample and collect data. The first stage comprised of selection of public secondary schools of the total existing schools in the selected districts. The second stage was comprised of the selection of male and female public secondary schools in both of the districts. The third stage was comprised of the selection of public secondary schools in rural and urban areas of the districts. The researcher followed the formula given by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) regarding the selection of a sample for the study. The details of the sample size are given below.

Sample Size
A sample of the study is described in the following table:

Table#2: Sample Distribution

Districts	Schools				Stakeholders								Administrators DEOs	
	Schools				Heads				Teachers				Administrators DEOs	
	M		F		M		F		M		F		M	F
	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R		
Bhakkar	6	38	4	22	5	35	3	20	14	97	6	52	1	1
Mianwali	7	42	4	27	6	40	3	25	16	130	9	60	1	1

Total (Locality)	13	80	8	49	11	75	6	45	30	227	15	112	2	2
Total	93		57		86		51		257		127		4	
Overall	150				137				384					

Note: U=Urban, R=Rural, M=Male, F=Female

Research Instrument

For the collection of data from the sample of respondents, a questionnaire was developed, validated, and checked the reliability through pilot testing with the help of subject matter experts and previously developed questionnaires by other researchers with their consent. The researcher intended to develop the questionnaire on a five-point Likert Scale i.e. strongly agree to strongly disagree. The reliability of the instrument was 0.804.

Data Collection

The data was collected on a 5-point Likert Scale on instructional leadership. There were three types of respondents: DEOs, Principals, and Teachers from District Bhakkar and District Mianwali. Firstly, the data was collected from 4 DEOs (Secondary) of the two districts by paying in-person visits. Secondly, the data was collected from 93 male principals (Secondary) and 57 female principals (Secondary). Thirdly the data was collected from 267 male teachers (Secondary) and 133 female teachers (Secondary).

Data Analysis

For statistical analysis, the scholar used descriptive as well as inferential statistics. For Descriptive statistics arithmetic mean, variance, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation were used to find the relevant results for the valid conclusion, and inferential statistics like an independent sample t-test, and ANOVA were used to find the relevant results for the valid conclusion.

Figure#1: Procedural Framework
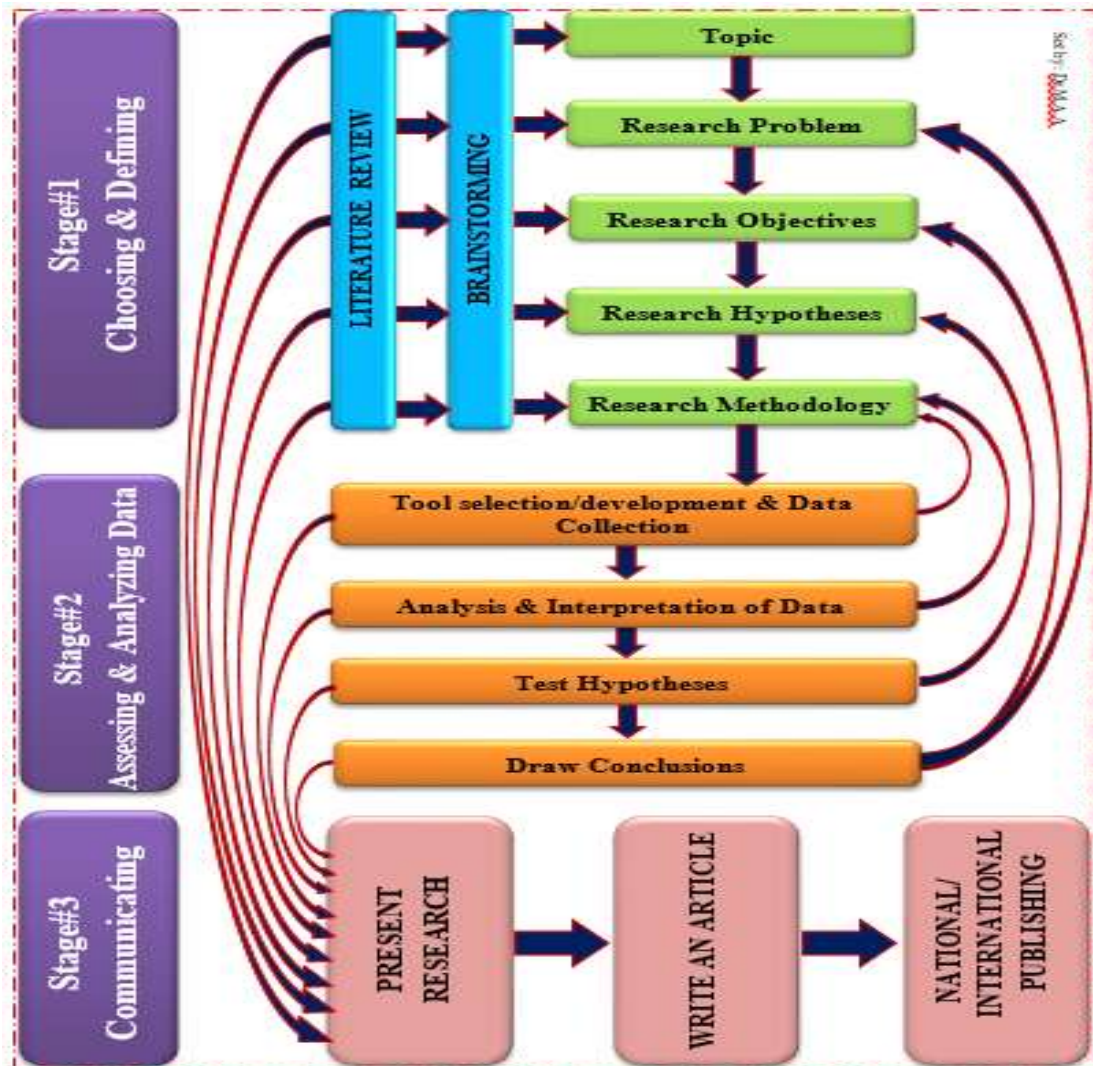
Table#3: Responses of Stakeholders about Instructional Leadership regarding Annual School Goals

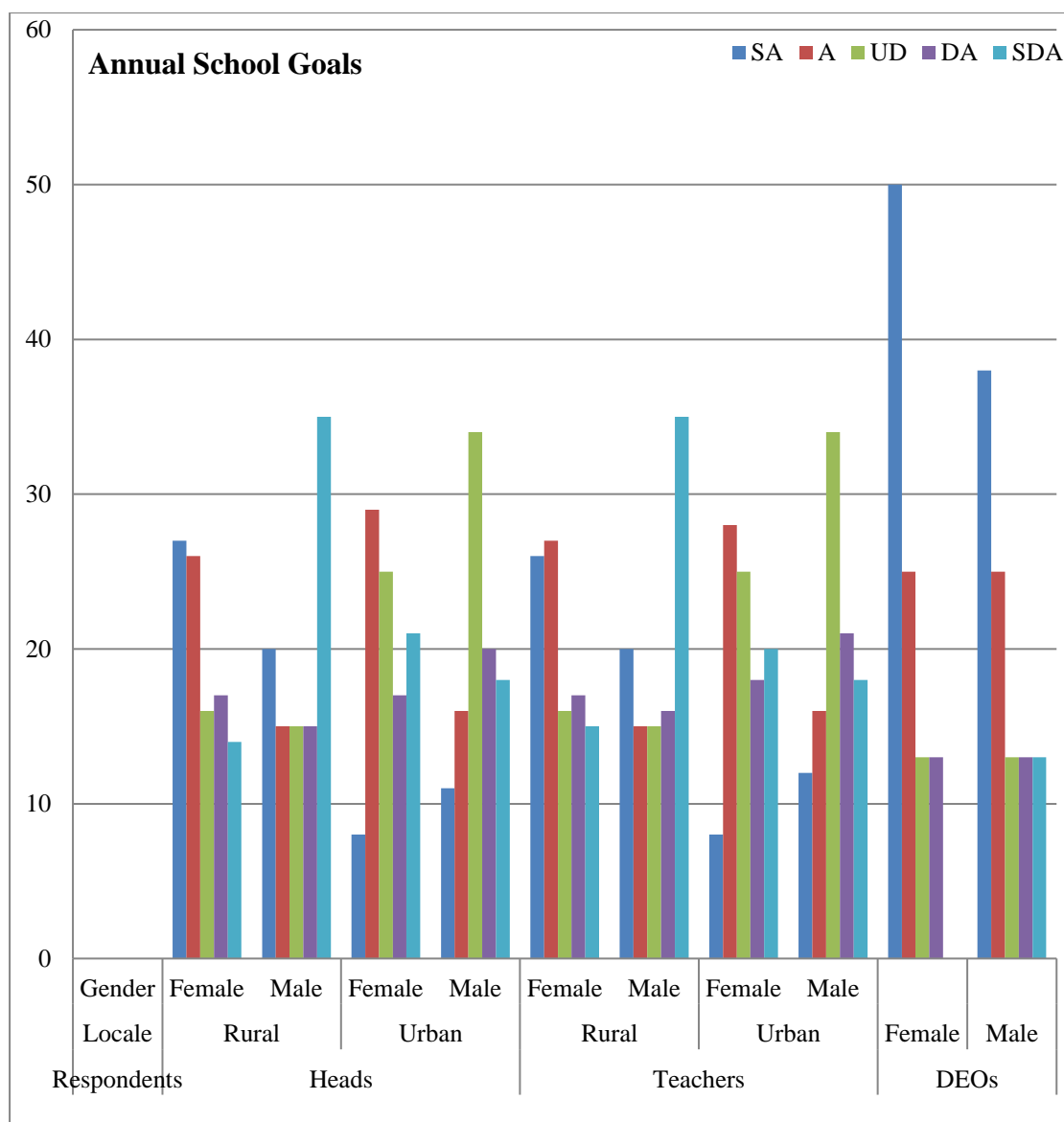| Stakeholders | School | Gender | Annual School Goals | | | | | | | | | | Total Respondents |
| | | | SA | | A | | UD | | DA | | SDA | | |
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Heads	Rural	F	48	27	47	26	28	16	31	17	26	14	45
		M	60	20	45	15	44	15	105	35	46	15	75
	Urban	F	02	08	07	29	06	25	04	17	05	21	06
		M	05	11	07	16	15	34	09	20	08	18	11
Teachers	Rural	F	116	26	120	27	70	16	77	17	65	15	112
		M	180	20	135	15	134	15	141	16	318	35	227
	Urban	F	05	08	17	28	15	25	11	18	12	20	15
		M	14	12	19	16	41	34	25	21	21	18	30
DEOs		F	04	50	02	25	01	13	01	13	00	00	02
		M	03	38	02	25	01	13	01	13	01	13	02

The above table shows responses reflecting agreement or disagreement regarding annual school goals, the first factor of instructional leadership. The responses show that in rural areas 53% of female heads were in agreement and 31% were in disagreement whereas 35% of male heads were in agreement and 50% were in disagreement. In urban areas, 37% of female heads were in agreement and 38% were in disagreement whereas 27% of male heads were in agreement and 38% were in disagreement.

In rural areas, 53% of female teachers agreed and 32% were in disagreement whereas 35% of male teachers were in agreement and 51% were in disagreement. In urban areas, 36% of female teachers agreed and 38% were in disagreement whereas 28% of male teachers were in agreement and 39% were in disagreement.

According to the responses, 75% of Female DEOs were in agreement and 13% were in disagreement whereas 63% of male DEOs were in agreement and 26% were in disagreement.

Figure#2: The percentage of Responses of stakeholders about Instructional Leadership regarding Annual School Goals

Table#4: Comparison of stakeholders' responses about Instructional Leadership regarding Annual School Goals. (In line with objective#2a)

Stakeholders	Schools	Gender	Annual School Goals			Comparison					
						Gender			Schools		
			N	Mean	S.D	t-$_{cal}$	t-$_{tab}$	P-$_{value}$	t-$_{cal}$	t-$_{tab}$	P-$_{value}$
Heads	Rural	F	45	2.77	.45	9.78	±2.00	0.00	3.61	±1.96	0.00
		M	75	1.87	0.5						
	Urban	F	6	2.66	.41	-.825	±2.13	.422			
		M	11	2.88	.54						
Teachers	Rural	F	112	2.76	.45	15.37	±1.96	0.00	6.55	±1.96	0.00
		M	227	1.89	0.5						
	Urban	F	15	2.7	.57	-	±		.		

	M	30	2.9	0.5			
DEOs	**F**	2	2.75	.51	.57	±4.3 0	.574
	M	2	2.9	.56			

The above table regarding Annual School Goals indicates that the mean score value of rural female heads (N=45) is 2.77 and rural male heads (N=75) is 1.87 with a t-calculated value equal to 9.78 and a p-value 0.000 showing significant differences. The mean score value of urban female heads (N=6) is 2.66 and urban male heads (N=11) is 2.88 with a t-calculated value equal to -0.825 and p-value 0.422 showing no significant differences. School statistics from school heads' perspectives show that the t-calculated between rural and urban schools is 3.61 and the p-value is 0.000 indicating significant differences.

The mean score value of rural female teachers (N=112) is 2.76 and rural male teachers (N=227) is 1.89 with a t-calculated value equal to 15.37 and a p-value 0.000 showing significant differences. The mean score value of urban female teachers (N=15) is 2.7 and urban male teachers (N=30) is 2.9 with a t-calculated value equal to -1.19 and a p-value of 0.24 showing no significant differences. School statistics from the teachers' perspective show that the t-calculated value between rural and urban schools is 6.55 and the p-value is 0.000 indicating significant differences.

The mean score value of female DEOs (N=2) is 2.75 and male DEOs (N=2) is 2.9 with a t-calculated value equal to 0.57 and a p-value 0.574 showing no significant differences.

Table#5: Comparison of stakeholders regarding annual school goals

Group	Df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	α	F-cal	F-tab	P-value
Between Groups	2	2.421	1.211				
Within Groups	522	214.054	.410	.05	2.952	3.02	.053
Total	524	216.475					

P > 0.05

Table 4.3 reflects that the F-Calculated value equal to 2.952 is less than the F-Tabulated value equal to 3.02 with a p-value of 0.000. It indicates that there is no significant difference in the responses of the three stakeholders (School Heads, Teachers, and DEOs). Considering the values of the above table it is concluded that the alternative hypothesis is rejected showing that there is no significant difference in the opinions of the stakeholders regarding annual school goals.

Conclusions

On the factor of Annual School Goals according to the perceptions of school heads in rural areas, female heads were significantly more instructional leaders than male heads. In urban areas, there were no significant differences found between the instructional leadership practices of female and male school heads. Whereas heads in urban schools were more instructional leaders than in rural schools.

According to the perceptions of teachers about school heads indicated that in rural areas female heads were significantly more

instructional leaders than male heads. In urban areas, there were no significant differences found between the instructional leadership practices of female and male school heads. Whereas heads in urban schools were significantly more instructional leaders than in rural schools.

According to the perceptions of DEOs, there were no significant differences found between the instructional leadership practices of female and male heads. Moreover, there were no significant differences found in the perceptions of all three stakeholders (Heads, Teachers & DEOs).

Discussions

The results of the study show that there is a significant difference found between male and female heads of schools in rural areas regarding annual school goals. This difference indicates that the gender of instructional leaders plays a role in formulating school goals in rural settings. Previous studies also indicated gender differences in leadership styles and the impact of gender on their decisions regarding annual school goals in rural areas (Johnson et al., 2021). The analysis of data in the study shows that there is no significant difference found between female heads and male heads in urban settings regarding annual school goals. This finding is different from the rural school settings, it may be because school heads in both localities face diverse challenges and their priorities to face the challenges regarding annual school goals are different. The schools in urban areas may have standardized approaches related to setting annual school goals which are independent of gender differences of school heads.

The study indicated a significant difference between rural and urban heads of schools regarding annual school goals. These results show that it is important to consider

the school locality where school heads are serving. The schools in both settings have distinct needs, challenges, and resources that impact the decisions of school heads regarding annual school goals. These results are in favor of the previous study that indicated the impact of school locality on leadership approaches regarding annual school goals (Stone & Weiner, 2022). The study found a significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers in rural schools regarding instructional leadership approaches towards setting annual school goals at public secondary schools concerning annual school goals. The results suggest that the way male and female teacher perceive the leadership style of their heads regarding annual school goals is different. The results are in line with the previous study which indicated that perceptions could be affected by gender biases, expectations about roles, or the different styles of leadership opted by male and female school heads concerning annual school goals (Shen et al., 2020).

A significant difference was found in the perception of teacher of rural and urban localities at the public secondary level regarding leadership practices of their school heads related to annual school goals. The results show that school locality influences the perception of teachers about the leadership styles of school heads regarding annual school goals. This may be due to the reason that the teachers in rural and urban localities have distinct expectations and experiences that affect the way they perceive their heads' leadership styles. The study could not find any significant difference in the way male and female District Education Officers (DEOs) perceive the public secondary school heads regarding their leadership practices concerning annual school goals. This indicates that DEOs are also playing the role of heads so they may have an objective

and standardized approach towards instructional leadership styles of school heads independent of gender differences.

There were no significant differences found among the perceptions of the selected stakeholders (DEOs, School Heads, and Teachers) regarding Annual School Goals. The leadership practices at different hierarchical levels may vary because of their job natures and expectations but towards school goals leadership at all levels is harmonized and has the same expectations. These findings are consistent with the study which indicated that leaders at the district level, school heads, and teachers have a unanimous approach concerning school goals (Johnson, 2017).

Recommendations
The training programs for public secondary school heads may be conducted on various factors of instructional leadership style to make them more instructional leaders and to achieve the school goals on the maximum level.

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