

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring psychological factors influencing emerging leadership in higher education management: A comparative study

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ABSTRACT

Leadership in higher education institutions (HEIs) plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges and opportunities brought about by globalization and technological integration while ensuring quality education. This study examines the factors contributing to the development of leadership in the higher education management systems of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The participants consisted of university faculty members, and data were collected online via Google Forms from 218 respondents selected through multi-method and multi-stage sampling techniques. The findings indicate that community building and vision are the predominant leadership traits in higher education leaders from both countries. Pakistani leaders demonstrated higher levels of vision, resource utilization, and community-building skills compared to their Bangladeshi counterparts. A strong and significant correlation was observed between leaders' vision and their ability to implement policies and plans. Additionally, the analysis revealed that leaders' community-building skills partially mediate the relationship between resource utilization and teacher empowerment. Based on these findings, it is recommended that HEIs in both countries prioritize the promotion of community building and visionary leadership and integrate these qualities into student development. Furthermore, leadership development programs should be designed and implemented to align with national needs, emphasizing vision-driven policy implementation and community-building initiatives to enhance teacher empowerment.

Keywords: emerging leaders; empowering teachers; policy and plan implementation; community building; vision

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1. Introduction

Considering the implications of SDG4, to ensure the quality of education, higher education institutions (HEIs) demand dynamic and influential leadership that can contribute to students' future academic, organizational, and societal needs ^[1]. Leadership in higher education plays a vital role in influencing the future of societies by providing students with a quality education and encouraging their intellectual development ^[2]. To successfully navigate the changing environment of higher education, leaders should have the skills and foresight to address emergent challenges and opportunities ^[3]. In recent years, the dynamics of higher education administration have undergone significant changes due to technological advancements, globalization, student demographics, and funding models ^[4]. In this context, higher education administration becomes crucial for ensuring the success and longevity of these institutions ^[5].

Educational institutions place a significant focus on strong leadership. Leaders are responsible for pointing followers in the proper direction. By doing so, they will be better able to carry out their student responsibilities, overcome challenges, and ultimately succeed ^[6]. The leadership and management of any institution or service, whether it be in either the private or public sector, is crucial to its productivity and a successful outcome, as shown by several pertinent research studies as well as the lessons from shared experience ^[7,8]. Each leader relies on the direction and how it is structured and communicated in their particular setting for optimal performance ^[3,9–11].

Educational leadership is fundamental in providing the educational environment; professionals and scholars have struggled to describe and put it together steadily over time ^[12,13]. The ongoing debate surrounding educational leadership is challenged by its significance from an ethical or practical standpoint ^[14]. Leadership responsibility is an analogy for an attitude that does not require physical exertion but implies and often encourages such activity ^[15,16]. Actions are necessary for effective educational leadership, which is the process that motivates others to accomplish goals within educational contexts ^[17]. Those in positions of authority in educational systems can inspire change in others through their decisions ^[18]. A paradigm transformation in the HEIs necessitates a novel approach to leadership. Collaborative and inclusive models that emphasize shared decision-making, innovation, and strategic planning are required ^[19]. Emerging leaders play a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of HEIs in the tech-driven environment ^[20]. These leaders should possess particular abilities and perspectives to navigate challenges and seize new opportunities ^[21,22].

It is evident from the literature that adaptability to technological advancements is essential for emerging leaders in higher education management (HEM) ^[23]. Various aspects of higher education, including teaching and learning methods, administrative procedures, and communication channels, have been revolutionized by technology ^[24]. Emerging leaders recognize the potential for technology to increase student engagement, enhance operational efficiency, and broaden access to education ^[25]. Leaders incorporate digital tools and platforms, utilizing data analytics and online learning systems to individualize the learning experience and optimize resource allocation ^[26]. Moreover, educational leaders comprehend the significance of cybersecurity and data privacy, ensuring that institutional systems are robust and resilient against evolving threats ^[27].

Ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) (which is fundamental to SDG4) is another essential quality of emerging leaders in HEM ^[28]. Higher education is becoming multicultural, socioeconomically, and ethnically diverse ^[29]. Emerging leaders understand the significance of fostering inclusive learning environments that provide equal opportunities to all students ^[30–32]. Leaders seek to cultivate a sense of belonging and respect while confronting systemic barriers that impede the success of underrepresented groups ^[33]. They enhance the cultural competence of their institutions and contribute to a more equitable society through their inclusive leadership practices ^[34].

Emergent leaders in HEM are crucial in guiding educational institutions to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Considering the scope of SDG4, their ability to adapt to technological advances, embrace diversity and inclusion, engage stakeholders, and effectively communicate positions them as innovators and agents of positive change ^[35]. This research paper investigates emerging leaders' characteristics, functions, and strategies in HEM in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Pakistan and Bangladesh were chosen for the current study because of several similarities. They were one country before 1971, and most of the cultural, religious, and ethnic characteristics are shared by both nations. By shedding light on their contributions and investigating their potential impact on the future of higher education, this study offers valuable insights into the evolving nature of educational leadership in both countries and its implications for the overall development of HEIs. Based on the current study's focus, we developed one research question and three null hypotheses to guide the study's process to unfold the hidden realities.

- What are the leading factors contributing to the emerging leadership management in higher education in Pakistan and Bangladesh?
- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in leadership characteristics of the emerging leadership of higher education management in Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between higher education management leaders' vision and policy and plan implementation.
- Ho₃: Higher education management leaders' community-building skills do not mediate the relationship between resource utility and empowering teachers.

2. Literature review

Bangladesh and Pakistan's higher education administration systems are going through a significant era of transition ^[36,37]. The importance of transparency, accountability, and quality assurance is rising in both nations. A new generation of higher education leaders dedicated to these ideals has emerged due to this ^[38]. Academic leadership positions (such as Directors or Deans) are uncommon and often have issues, such as the short-term nature of role-holders (such as serving on a 3-year rotating basis). However, typical senior executive roles (such as President, Vice-Chancellor, Chief Executive, Vice President, and Pro-Vice Chancellor) are consistent with executive positions in other sectors ^[39]. It is common practice to award a senior or well-respected professor the "first among equals" position in the faculty, virtually as an honorary title ^[40]. Whether stated expressly or implicitly, faculty members are expected to take on leadership responsibilities in their many capacities as teachers, researchers, and members of the institution ^[41].

Senior academia sometimes takes on "first among equals" responsibilities founded on collegiality, but they do not mesh well with the need to maximize productivity with the available budget. Indeed, the development of "managerialism" in higher educational institutions has led to disbelief or at least annoyance inside the industry due to this clash between cultures and employment practices ^[42]. This is because "managerialism" emphasizes metrics, regulations, and audits and focuses on adaptability, openness, and commercialization. This is to be anticipated, as middle management groups (whether in academia or professional services) tend to feel a strong connection to the success of the organization as a whole and the well-being of their direct reports ^[43].

In Western higher education, leadership is perceived as a managerial function, which is centralized to senior leadership only. Whereas the middle leadership follows the orders of seniors and follows their guidelines ^[44]. Emergent leadership is of paramount importance, which sets HEIs' policy and direction by

suggesting a detailed plan for future generations ^[45]. Another study suggested that initial HEIs' leadership focuses on developing administrative leadership skills related to quality and support ^[46,47].

2.1. Emerging leaders of higher education in Pakistan

A study on HEIs in Pakistan found that leadership significantly impacts productivity. Therefore, universities may remember the importance of honesty as a hiring factor in the future. Even if servant leadership is present in the workplace, it cannot be used as a reliable indicator of success ^[48]. Another study on HEIs in Pakistan to explore effective leadership styles. They found that three leadership styles had significant effects. However, visionary leadership is becoming apparent, while team-focused and servant leadership are fading insignificantly ^[49].

A researcher carried out the study to explore the effective leadership management in HEIs and found that educational leadership was found to have a significant effect, with a beta (β) value of 0.61, on education initiatives, personal attention, observation, suggestions, and the promotion of a learning culture. These findings point to the importance of developing educational leadership characteristics among principals and management to enhance the efficiency of educational management in Pakistan's HEIs ^[50]. A study on HEIs in Pakistan found that leaders with high emotional intelligence are more likely to engage in transformational efforts. The findings also strongly link emotional intelligence and transformational leadership across all levels. Their study also provides further evidence that transformative leadership is more easily achieved by those who are emotionally capable ^[51].

A study on the faculty from HEIs in Lahore and Islamabad. They found that integrating change is essential for raising the standard of higher education, and educational leaders must take responsibility for managing change ^[52]. Another study on HEIs in Pakistan. They found that social innovation is a competitive partial mediator of the relationship between sustainable leadership and long-term achievement. However, this study's results do not indicate that sustainable leadership significantly affects social innovation when managers have much room for discretion ^[53]. Some other researchers conducted a study on HEIs. They found that both types of leadership positively shaped organizational readiness for transformation among HEIs under uncertain conditions, as exogenous structures and the existence of organizational capacity for learning acted as mediators. They emphasized the significance and advantages of intellectual and flexible management in coping with uncertainty or change, and the adaptability of HEIs ^[54].

A study on HEIs of Pakistan showed that a leader's personality traits, such as their knowledge of quality assurance (QA), attitude toward it, and procedures, influence whether they are a transformational leader or a compliance manager. The transformational leader's QA implementation aims to raise the standard of research, instruction, and learning. The compliance managers, in comparison, are mainly focused on implementing QA procedures to satisfy the demands of the outside regulatory authority ^[55]. Another study on HEIs showed that transformational leadership (TL) and authentic leadership had a favorable effect on intrapreneurial behavior (IB). However, transactional leadership had a negative relationship with it. In contrast to these findings, no connection between IB and passive-avoidant management was found. Additionally, the SmartPLS bootstrapping feature was used to do a mediation analysis. The relationship between transactional leadership, passive-avoidant management, and IB was not mediated by being empowered but by TL, authentic leadership, and IB ^[56].

2.2. Emerging leaders of higher education in Bangladesh

A study in Bangladesh highlights East-West University's experience in offering quality education and obtaining permanent approval in less than twenty years from its inception. To attract and retain students, he showed the necessity of providing excellence in education under efficient management, a highly relevant

curriculum, a competent teaching faculty, a zero-tolerance discipline, and innovative cost-sharing. He also emphasizes EWU's capacity to help graduates find jobs, contributing to the university's strong retention rates and great reputation^[57]. In another study in Bangladesh, self-leadership is a growing trend among leaders of private colleges in Bangladesh. The majority of leaders (80.12%) motivate themselves through self-leadership, while a small percentage (7.57%) is neutral, and others (12.30%) are not concerned with self-leadership. The study highlights the value of self-leadership in leadership development, arguing that leaders who can effectively lead themselves are better suited to lead others and achieve corporate goals ^[58].

Another study investigated the leadership styles in Bangladesh's private universities. In these colleges, the idea of leadership and the traits that make someone a good leader are complicated and intertwined with rules, regulations, a hierarchical structure, friendship, respect, many motivational elements, self-evaluation, self-leadership, and judgment. According to their results, each university has a unique leadership style that it uses to forge competitive advantages that decide its standing and level of performance in the industry. However, how these universities handle delegation and decentralization of power is unknown ^[59]. A researcher conducted a qualitative study on the public universities in Bangladesh and found that neither the 'instructional' nor the 'constructive' models, much less 'distributed' leadership, seem to be followed. The political authority manages the university despite not acknowledging or following a standard paradigm for educational administration. Corruption and nepotism flourish under these conditions, stifling genuine attempts at higher learning. Therefore, it is timely and appropriate to provide a novel model for university administration tailored to developing countries. ^[60].

A study examined senior female leaders in Bangladeshi higher education to examine and comprehend the problematic situations that Bangladeshi women in leadership positions must deal with and navigate throughout their careers. They offered fresh perceptions of the environment in which women pursue and obtain senior roles. The analysis also reveals a lack of knowledge of Bangladesh's higher education workforce, where the statistics available in the public domain are insufficient and unreliable. They make recommendations for improvements to address the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in higher education ^[61]. A study concluded that the education sector in Bangladesh has undergone significant changes over the past few decades. They presented a variety of studies and analyses of these changes. The authors emphasize consistent trends in education, including issues about teaching and pedagogy, curriculum planning and evaluation, policymaking, administration, and leadership. Their work aimed to provide international readers with an overview of education in Bangladesh and recent developments in this context. The authors hope that the work's combination of youthful and seasoned scholars will offer a variety of perspectives on the education sector in Bangladesh ^[62].

According to a study, poor leadership in Bangladesh's public universities has resulted in ineffective management and a lack of accountability. He looked at how relevant authorities could help fulfill existing constitutional obligations to the fullest extent possible, create the required policies and regulations in response, and oversee the policies' correct execution. The study's conclusions are presented as a triangulation of information from past vice-chancellors, deans, and heads' perspectives on their managerial and leadership experiences ^[63]. Another study on higher education found that its primary goals include knowledge creation, research exploration, economic and social development forecasting, and workforce preparation. Universities continue to be at the forefront of social transformation and technological advancement all around the globe. Bangladesh's public and private educational institutions have been established to produce a pool of highly educated citizens to aid in the country's economic and social progress. In reality, however, the influence of these schools is little. The social structure of higher education in Bangladesh can be improved by better

communication between faculty and students, the adoption of innovative teaching practices, and the commitment of both faculty and students ^[64].

A study stressed the importance of transformational leadership in educational institutions to overcome the challenges of shifting demographics, technological improvements, and the need to accomplish SDG4. The researchers suggested that the institution's leader cannot ignore the learners' technological orientation and the changing worldwide context. They urged that the principal take urgent action to realize the institution's vision and mission and enlist all teachers and students as vital and unavoidable members of the campaign of hope and prosperity^[65]. Some other researchers discussed the challenges faced by the college education system in Bangladesh and proposed policy options to improve the quality and relevance of higher education. Their work is divided into four critical areas for reform: access and equity, quality and relevance, financing, and governance. They emphasized the need for a long-term development plan for the higher education sector in Bangladesh, which should be aware of both universities and the Bangladesh National University-affiliated colleges. They concluded that strengthening public and private investments in higher education and research institutions is crucial for economic development and competitiveness ^[66].

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

The present study investigated the leading factors contributing to the emerging leadership in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The focus was to explore the crucial traits that must be developed by educational leaders while managing higher education responsibilities. To improve the study's generalisability, the authors collected data from diverse and different demographics. In such a context, a positivistic research philosophy is suited to collect data from larger participants by following the quantitative research approach. It is evident from the literature that a positivistic research paradigm helps researchers to improve findings' generalisability. Based on the argument, the authors designed the present quantitative study ^[67]. The study's research design was a descriptive survey. The data were collected using a questionnaire developed on a Likert scale. The authors collected data at a single point in time in this cross-sectional study. This design is one of the most used in quantitative studies because it improves the generalisability of the results.

3.2. Participants

The respondents for the present study were emerging leaders in higher education management in Pakistan and Bangladesh. We formulated the selection criteria for participants. For example, only deans, heads of departments, and professors were considered. Junior faculty members, such as lecturers and assistant professors, were excluded from the study so that voices from the higher authorities could be heard. Fulfilling the criteria, we contacted the faculty members of public and private universities in both countries. After obtaining informed consent, we contacted full-time professors, heads of departments, and deans of different faculties. We selected the current study's respondents using multi-methods and multi-stage sampling techniques (convenient, snowball, and random). At first, we approached participants conveniently using platforms such as ResearchGate and LinkedIn (convenient). Then, some of them referred to other respondents (snowball). Then, at the third stage, we selected participants using a simple random sampling technique from the pool of participants (random). Overall, 218 respondents from both countries responded to the questionnaire. To enrich the experience of diverse respondents and enhance the study's generalisability, they were selected from 50 universities in both countries. Their demographic information is provided below

Figure 1.

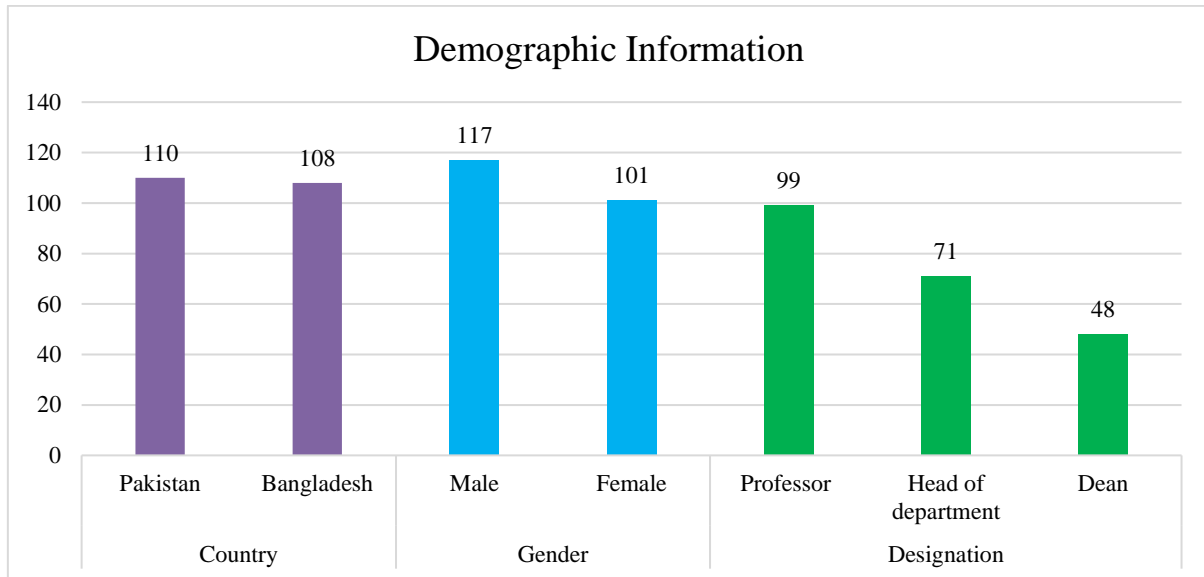


Figure 1. Respondent's information.

In **Figure 1**, the researchers presented the respondents' details. Overall, 218 respondents contributed; 110 were from Pakistani universities and 108 from Bangladeshi universities. Out of 218, 117 were male respondents, and 101 were female respondents. The majority of them (99) were full-time professors, 71 were heads of department, and 48 were working as deans at public and private universities in both countries. Their age ranged between 47 to 59 years.

3.3. Research instrument

The researchers developed a Higher Education Management Leadership Scale (HEMLS) to collect data from management leaders working in Pakistani and Bangladeshi universities. The scale was developed on a five-point Likert scale with options ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). After developing HEMLS, it was sent to four higher education management leadership experts in both countries. They provided in-depth and detailed feedback on items' relevance to study objectives, language, and content validity. After the experts' feedback, it was revised before pilot testing. Fifty-five respondents from both countries participated in the piloting, and the scale was again revised according to their feedback. The Cronbach's alpha of the scale was .87, which was highly acceptable for the social sciences. After a sociometric scale analysis, the HEMLS was initially developed on six factors and 40 statements, which were reduced to five factors and 29 items. The factors on which emerging leadership in higher education management was measured were: 1) vision, 2) resource utility, 3) empowering teachers, 4) community building, and 5) policy and plan implementation. We also ensured the construct and convergent validity of the scale by conducting exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. As it is not the subject of the paper. Thus, considering the word count constraints of the journal, we are not presenting results here. However, the measure fit model indicators ($RMSEA = .77$, $TLI = .92$, $BIC = .13$) indicate a strong model fitness of the questionnaire.

3.4. Data collection

After developing HEMLS, the data were collected using online platforms. The authors designed the scale and shared the Google form's link through Email, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger. The respondents were requested to submit their online responses. After sharing a link, the first reminder was given after three days, and the second was given after a week. The data were collected during May-June

2024. After collecting data, it was exported into an Excel sheet. Before presenting and importing it to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), it was screened and protected with a password option.

3.5. Research ethics

This study adhered to the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki to ensure the protection and well-being of all participants. The researchers took informed consent from the respondents by contacting them through email and phone. After getting consent to participate in the study, we briefed all respondents and shared the purpose of the study. They were assured that their affiliations and profiles would be kept anonymous and that their identities would not be revealed to anyone at any cost. They were also assured of data confidentiality by protecting it with a password option. It was also used in the current study only and will not be shared with anyone else at any cost. They were also allowed to withdraw from the study if they felt any inconvenience. The data were collected using online platforms, so they were asked to respond in their free time. There were no potential threats involving their status or psychological and physical health in online data collection. The study posed minimal risk, and all procedures were conducted with transparency and integrity to uphold the highest ethical standards in research ^[68].

4. Results

After collecting data, it was scrutinized to identify the missing values. Then, the authors tested the assumptions of the parametric data. The analysis revealed that the data were parametric and fulfilled the assumptions of normality, equal variance, no outliers, and independence. Hypothesis testing was also carried out using adequate statistics, and the results are presented under the relevant headings.

The study's research question was developed to measure the leading factors contributing to emerging leadership management in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The researchers used descriptive statistics to explore these factors. The results are provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Leading factors contributing to emerging leadership management in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Factors	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Vision	218	4.10	.30
Resources utility	218	4.09	.22
Empowering teachers	218	4.02	.24
Community building	218	4.22	.29
Policy and plan implementation	218	4.08	.29

In **Table 1**, the authors found that the factor concerned with community building is one of the prominent and leading factors ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .29$) contributing to the emerging leadership management in higher education institutions in both countries. Followed by the factor of vision ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .30$) and factors related to resources utility ($M = 4.09$, $SD = .22$). The lowest factor contributing to the emerging leadership management was empowering teachers ($M = 4.02$, $SD = .24$). It shows that emerging leaders of higher education management in both countries are very good at community building, sharing vision, resource utility, and implementing policy and plans. However, they still need to work on empowering teachers. As teachers are the main stakeholders in higher education, they must be empowered regarding instruction and research practices.

We designed the first null hypothesis to investigate the difference in emerging leadership management characteristics in both countries. An independent sample *t*-test was applied at the significance level of .01, and the results are presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Difference between emerging leadership management in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Factors	Country of the respondent	N	M	SD	t-value df= 216	Sig (2- tailed)
Vision	Pakistan	110	4.25	.18	8.68	.000
	Bangladesh	108	3.94	.32		
Resources utility	Pakistan	110	4.23	.23	12.50	.000
	Bangladesh	108	3.94	.80		
Empowering teachers	Pakistan	110	4.04	.29	1.23	.219
	Bangladesh	108	4.00	.16		
Community building	Pakistan	110	4.50	.11	43.86	.000
	Bangladesh	108	3.94	.80		
Policy and plan implementation	Pakistan	110	4.10	.35	1.15	.044
	Bangladesh	108	4.06	.21		

Table 2 presents the factors contributing to leadership in higher education management in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The analysis showed that overall Pakistani emerging higher education management leaders had a higher level of vision ($M = 4.25$, $SD = .18$) than their counterparts ($M = 3.94$, $SD = .32$) and this difference in vision was statistically significant at $t(216) = 8.68$, $p = .000$. It was also found that recourse utility of Pakistani higher education management emerging leaders was higher ($M = 4.23$, $SD = .23$) than Bangladeshi emerging leaders of higher education management ($M = 3.94$, $SD = .80$), this difference was also statistically significant at $t(216) = 12.50$, $p = .000$. Similarly, community-building skills of Pakistani emerging leaders of higher education management was higher ($M = 4.50$, $SD = .11$) than their counterparts ($M = 3.94$, $SD = .80$) and this difference in vision was statistically significant at $t(216) = 43.86$, $p = .000$. It was also found that Pakistani emerging leaders of higher education had better scores for empowering teachers and policy and plan implementation, but this difference was statistically insignificant at .01 level of alpha. Pakistani emerging leaders demonstrated strengths in vision, resource utility, teacher empowerment, community building, and policy implementation. However, leadership effectiveness is shaped by structural, cultural, and institutional factors, which differ between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Pakistan's higher education management has undergone reforms that emphasize leadership training, resource allocation, and community engagement, potentially contributing to a more effective leadership model. In contrast, Bangladeshi emerging leaders may face different institutional challenges that affect their approach to vision execution and policy implementation. Therefore, while Pakistani leaders show promising potential in higher education management, these differences should be understood in the context of governance structures, policy frameworks, and socio-cultural influences, rather than as a direct measure of superiority, as shown in **Figure 2**.

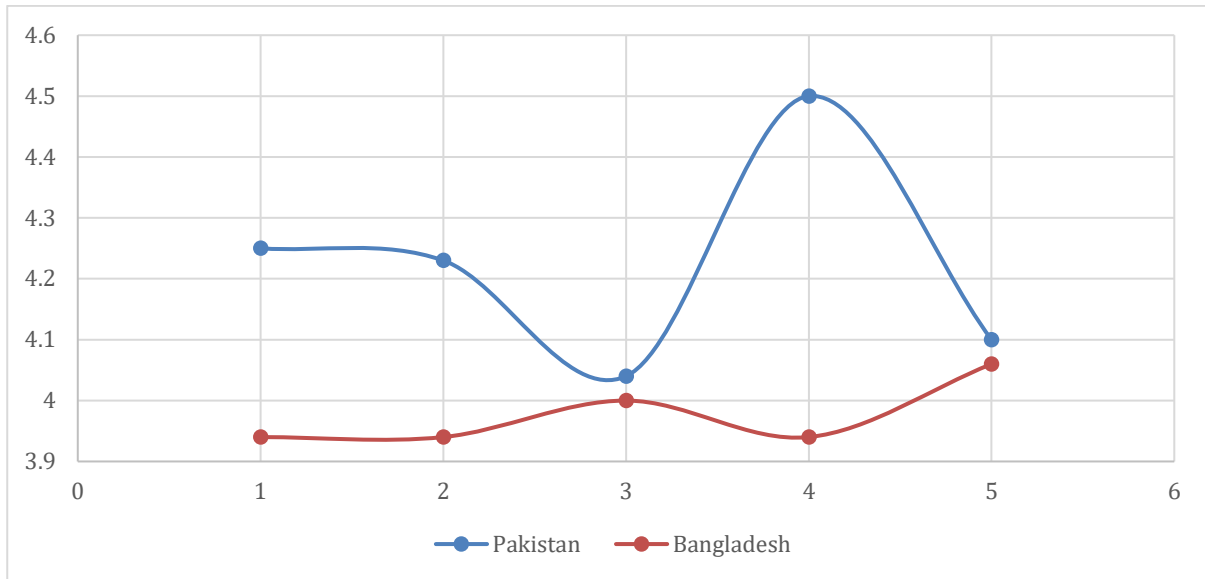


Figure 2. Factor-based difference between emerging leadership management in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In the present section of the paper, the authors test the second hypothesis to determine the relationship between higher education leaders' vision and policy and plan implementation. Pearson correlation was applied to test the null hypothesis at a .01 significance level. The results are provided in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Relationship between vision and policy, and plan implementation of higher education management leaders.

		Vision	Policy and plan implementation
Vision	Pearson Correlation	1	.75**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	218	218
Policy and plan implementation	Pearson Correlation	.75**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	218	218

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 provides an analysis of the relationship between vision and policy and plan implementation of emerging higher education management leaders. It was revealed that there was a strong, positive, and linear relationship between higher education management leaders' vision and their policy and plan implementation at ($r = .75$, $n = 218$), and their relationship was statistically significant at $p < .001$. This analysis reveals that if the leaders' vision is enhanced, their policy and plan implementation will also be improved.

We developed a third null hypothesis to measure the mediational effect of higher education management leaders' community-building skills on the relationship between their resource utility and empowerment. We tested it through a simple mediation model 4 by deploying Andrew Hayes's mediation process. The results of the mediation analysis are presented in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Meditational effect of community-building in resource utility and empowering teachers.

Relationship	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Confidence interval		t-statistics	Conclusion
				Lower bond	Upper bond		
Resource utility -> community building skill -> empowering teachers	.267 (.000)	.291 (.000)	.206	.072	.310	.529	Partial mediation

Confidence interval = 95 %, bootstrap samples = 5000

Table 4 provides an analysis of the mediational effect of higher education management leaders' community-building skills on the relationship between their resource utility and empowering teachers. The authors found a significant indirect effect of resource utility on empowering adolescents ($\beta = .206$, $t = 0.529$), rejecting the null hypothesis for the mediational impact of community building on the relationship between resource utility and empowerment. Furthermore, the direct impact of resource utility in the mediator's presence is significant ($\beta = .291$, $p < .001$). Hence, higher education management leaders' community building partially mediates the relationship between their resource utility and empowering teachers. After the analysis, the authors found that the community building of higher education management leaders partially mediates the relationship between their resource utility and empowering teachers. It was also found that higher education management leaders' resource utility strongly affects their empowering teachers' help in the presence of a mediator.

5. Discussion

The present study is an effort to find the future success and direction of the emerging leadership of higher education management in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The study explored the leading factors contributing to emerging leadership and the differences in leadership factors in both countries. This paper has practical implications for general higher education management in all countries, including Pakistan and Bangladesh. As per the argument provided by researchers, higher education management in Bangladesh and Pakistan is changing. Hence, these factors become more considerable for establishing things during this period of change^[36,37].

The present study explored that Pakistani higher education management leaders are more vigilant in implementing the vision, resource utility, and community building. It supported a study that found that effective leadership management in HEIs is based on education initiatives, individual focus, observation, suggestions, and promoting a learning culture in Pakistan^[50]. These results highlight the need for Pakistan's HEIs to improve their educational management by fostering the development of exemplary educational leadership qualities among their principals and upper management by endorsing factors such as vision, community building, and resource utility.

It was also found that Bangladeshi emerging leaders are doing a great job. They also scored higher in promoting and implementing vision, resource utility, community building, empowering teachers, and policy and plan implementation. It supported the study findings of a previous study, which conducted an investigation in Bangladesh and found that self-leadership is an increasing inclination among higher education management leaders of private colleges in Bangladesh^[58]. The majority of them were motivated through self-leadership. They highlighted the value of self-leadership in leadership development, arguing that leaders who can effectively lead themselves are better suited to lead others and achieve corporate goals.

The current investigation also found a strong, linear, positive relationship between leaders' vision and policy and plan implementation. It shows that if higher education management leaders are familiar with the

importance of implementing a vision, it can positively affect their policy and plan implementation strategies. Thus, if the leaders are eager to improve their policy and plan implementation, they are advised to work toward their vision. The authors also found that the community-building skills of higher education management leaders can mediate the relationship between resource utility and empowering teachers. It is a critical finding, as the direct effect of resource utility is significant in empowering teachers. Suppose higher education management leaders can adequately utilize resources related to time, finance, workforce, human resources, and workload. In that case, it will empower teachers to work more enthusiastically in instructional and academic processes. Higher education management leaders' community-building skills can further foster the relationship between resource utility and empowering teachers.

6. Conclusion

This paper attempted to measure the leading factors contributing to the emerging leaders in higher education management in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Understanding these factors not only contributes to leadership development in Pakistan and Bangladesh but also offers insights applicable to higher education management in other developing and emerging economies facing similar challenges. The data were collected using a self-developed scale. The analysis revealed that certain factors contribute to leadership in managing higher education in both countries to work smoothly and excel in their fields and higher education institutions. Leaders' role in managing HEIs is critical and influences the university ranking at regional and global levels. The leadership strategies identified in this study can serve as a framework for higher education institutions in other regions to enhance institutional performance, faculty engagement, and student success, ultimately impacting global university rankings. In this study, the authors found that emerging leaders' vision, resource utility, community building, empowering teaching staff, and policy and plan implementation are a few of the leading factors that can help them manage HEIs in both countries. During comparative analysis, the researchers found that Pakistani emerging leaders are leading in the factors explored in this investigation and are managing HEIs better than their counterparts. These findings suggest that leadership development programs in other higher education contexts could benefit from integrating similar strategies, particularly those emphasizing vision, policy execution, and faculty empowerment.

It was also found that emerging leaders' vision, policy, and plan implementation play influential roles in managing HEIs and are strongly correlated.

One of the crucial findings was that emerging leaders' community-building skills mediate the relationship between resource utility and empowering teachers, highlighting the importance of fostering collaborative environments in HEIs. These insights can guide leadership training programs globally, particularly in institutions aiming to strengthen faculty engagement and institutional resilience.

7. Limitations, implications, and recommendations

Despite the significant results, our study had a few limitations. For instance, one limitation was that the data were collected using the questionnaire, with limitations like biased responses and less interaction between respondents and researchers. This limitation can be addressed using multi-method data collection tools in future studies. Another limitation was that the sample was selected using convenience and snowball sampling techniques, with the simple random sampling technique. Integrating both qualitative and quantitative sampling techniques may limit the representativeness of the findings. However, this limitation can be addressed in future studies by introducing quantitative techniques of sample selection only. Our study had some practical implications. For example, emerging leaders in both countries can enhance their management in HEIs by working on their vision, resource utility, empowering teachers, community building,

and policy and plan implementation. It can also provide a platform for novice and upcoming leaders who want to start their careers as leaders in HEIs' management to learn and understand the process of improving their management skills in higher education. Based on the study findings, the authors suggest that leaders in HEI management should work on their vision, policy, and plan implementation. They can also improve their HEIs' ranking by developing the community, empowering teachers, and improving resource utilization. Future researchers are advised to conduct studies to replicate the present study's findings in different locations. To explore and understand the phenomenon deeply, the researchers are also advised to conduct studies based on qualitative or mixed-method approaches.

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Conflict of Interest

The researchers have no conflict of interest regarding the publication of the current manuscript.

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